Ἐν Ἐφέσῳ AND THE DESTINATION OF THE EPHESIAN LETTER

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Statement of the Problem

Thanks especially to the manuscript findings of the last several centuries, every student of the Bible is faced with a dilemma that he otherwise might prefer to avoid, namely the problem of accurately identifying the destination of Paul's letter known as Ephesians. Interestingly enough, this epistle actually may not have been written to those beloved Ephesian Christians who were so dear to the heart of the apostle.[1]

Why is there any doubt as to whether the epistle was actually written to the church at Ephesus? In the entire six chapters of Paul's letter, only in one verse is reference made to the city of Ephesus, the traditional destination of the epistle. This one reference is found in Ephesians 1:1, where the text reads, Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ] καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.[2] The bracketed words above, which are translated "in Ephesus," are not found in the texts of some important Greek manuscripts.

For instance, the appearance of codex Vaticanus, codex Sinaiticus, and papyrus 46 (hereafter 𝔓⁴⁶) on the scene of textual criticism has heightened ancient manuscript support for the previously limited tradition that omits the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ from the text of Ephesians 1:1.[3] As Andrew Lincoln states, "The combination of the original scripts of codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus with the earliest manuscript evidence for Ephesians, 𝔓⁴⁶, is strong external evidence for the omission of the geographical location in the earliest text."[4]

The uncertainty over the originality of this phrase, and thus the uncertainty of the intended recipients of Paul's original letter, creates a profound problem for biblical studies that seek to illuminate the intent and circumstances behind the writings of the inspired authors. If the phrase "in Ephesus" is not part of the original wording, one is left to ask, "Then to whom is the letter written, and how does this effect one's overall understanding of the book?"

In order to determine the original wording of Paul's letter known as Ephesians, one must employ the tools and canons of textual criticism, a discipline that will be defined later in this chapter. For now, the words of Kenyon will suffice to accentuate the solemn—yet invigorating—role that textual criticism plays in recovering the wording in the prescript of this epistle.

> It is all well-trodden ground, and each newcomer is infinitely indebted to the labors of his predecessors; but it is ground which each generation must tread afresh for itself, if it is to keep its interest alive in a subject of such importance, and if it is to add ever so little to the knowledge which past generations have handed down to it. It is but a humble part that textual criticism has to play. It is but the temple-sweeper in the courts of the Lord; but honest

[1]One need only review the latter verses in Acts 20 to gain an immediate sense of understanding for Paul's deep affection for these Christians. He remained with them the entire time he was in Asia, humbly served them to the point of shedding tears on their behalf, did not shrink from declaring to them anything that would be to their profit, and solemnly testified to them about repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:18–21).

[2]United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Biblia-Druck, 1993), 654.

[3]Presently, the Greek manuscript support for the absence of the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant includes the following: 𝔓⁴⁶, ℵ*, B*, 6, 424ᶜ, and 1739. For a complete list of manuscript and patristic evidence, see Chapter 4 of this thesis.

[4]Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 1.

labor, even in that humble field, is not lost.[5]

Such honest labor must be practiced in any worthy attempt to uncover the reading of the text in Ephesians 1:1, in hopes of properly identifying the destination of this marvelous letter.

As far as its place among the textual problems in the New Testament, the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant ranks alongside of the ending of Mark's Gospel (16:9–20), the ending of Romans (chapters 15–16), and the *pericope de adultura* (John 7:53–8:11) as being one of the most important dilemmas facing the discipline of textual criticism. The ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant may even be the most interesting textual problem of them all. In the words of Best, "The disputed reading in Eph. 1:1 forms a fascinating study in textual criticism."[6]

The Importance of the Study

The question arises as to whether there is sufficient evidence to overturn the level of support for—and enormous inertia for the defense of—the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant. If these words are determined to be genuine, the mass of existing commentaries and study materials that assume an Ephesian destination may be consulted and trusted as before. However, if the variant is determined to be spurious, there will be much to rethink and rewrite, especially in light of the sound hermeneutical principles of grammatico-historical interpretation.

For example, biblical hermeneutics demands an understanding of the history and culture behind the events. Ramm notes that "a thousand examples can be drawn from Scripture to show the absolute indispensability to know history in order to understand the text in depth, or sometimes to understand it at all."[7] With the variety of social settings represented in Scripture, a proper interpretation of Scripture also requires one to seek to uncover the specific social culture behind a specific passage.[8]

F. F. Bruce acknowledges the importance of studying the correct historical-cultural environment of the Ephesian letter, when he writes, "If, then, they live in the province of Asia, we shall not look for them in Ephesus or its neighborhood, but in some region of the province which Paul himself had not visited."[9] Lincoln spends time discussing the setting in the area of Asia Minor where the Lycus Valley is found, as reflected in his statement, "If Laodicea was one of the churches meant to receive Ephesians, then the diagnosis of its spiritual state in this letter is somewhat different from that provided by the seer in Rev. 3, who indicts it for its ostentatious self-sufficiency yet ineffectiveness and spiritual blindness."[10]

In addition to the effects that one's understanding of the destination will have upon historical and cultural matters, the vital issue of the purpose of the epistle also would have to be addressed anew. Kenyon expresses the extent to which this decision has impact: "Since this textual question affects not only one's view of the addressees but also decisions about the authorship and purpose of the letter, and since there is no clear

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[5]Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 18.

[6]Ernest Best, "Ephesians 1:1," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* (London: Cambridge U. Press, 1979), 29.

[7]Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1970), 154.

[8]Ibid., 156. Ramm later says, "The principal purpose for studying the cultural elements in Holy Scripture is that this aids the interpreter to know what are the original things referred to in Scripture. It is the original social setting of Scripture which allows us to have genuine, controlled, literal interpretation." (Ibid., 157).

[9]Bruce believes that the affinities between Ephesians and Colossians might suggest that Ephesians, like Colossians, was addressed to Christians in the Lycus Valley, including the cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, vol. 10, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 230–31.

[10]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxiv.

consensus on it in NT scholarship, it requires extended discussion."[11] The relevance of this textual decision will be discussed further in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

The Procedure of the Study

The first step in this study will be to deal with the background matters that are vital to any study in the field of textual criticism, the area of biblical studies that seeks to restore to the modern interpreter the original text of the Bible. Fundamental to a study in textual criticism is the matter of the importance for such a discipline.

Many may ask why there might need to be such an investment of time in a venture that only restores several insignificant words to the primarily well-attested enormity of words that remain undisputed. As it has been expressed, "There are no fundamental doctrines of the Bible hanging in the balance of a few variant readings, are there?" Therefore, to one extent or another the study at hand will seek to answer this question, with a view to an examination of the relationship between textual criticism and biblical hermeneutics.

Then, an attempt will be made to identify the relationship between the manuscripts that represent modern Christianity's link to the divine writers. Do all of the manuscripts read the same? Are there significant differences between them? Can they be classified as to certain types of similar manuscripts? These questions will be addressed in order to determine whether various manuscripts may be distinguished from one another according to quality. If so, then there will be much progress made in preparation for a study which examines the manuscripts that support the absence of the variant in Ephesians 1:1, and those that support its originality.

The second step in this study will be the determination of the proper praxis of textual criticism. This chapter will survey the prevailing methods of textual criticism that are practiced, with the goal of determining the strengths and weaknesses of each, and formulating a sound practice of textual criticism that may be implemented in the later effort to obtain the original reading in Ephesians 1:1.

The third step in this study will involve the examination of the external evidence that underlies the text of the first verse of Ephesians. External evidence takes into account the Greek manuscripts, translational versions, lectionaries, and the texts of the Church Fathers in an effort to determine which of the possible variant readings is most faithful to the original text. This chapter will include the identification and classification of the variant, a study of the case for the originality of the variant, a study of the case for the omission of the variant, an evaluation of the evidence for each of those positions, and the formulation of a tentative conclusion.

The fourth step will involve a study of the internal evidence in Ephesians 1:1 in order to confirm or dispute the previous findings. The internal evidence consists of transcriptional probability, the likelihood of various readings based upon scribal alteration that may be responsible for the variation in the text, and intrinsic probability, the likelihood of various readings based upon the author's style and unique tendencies, as well as information obtained elsewhere in Ephesians. It also will be necessary to examine how the omission could be accounted for by those who assert that the variant is spurious, since one must explain the lack of a stated destination within the text of the epistle. Then, a conclusion based upon internal evidence will be reached.

The Limitations of the Study

First, it lies beyond the scope of the present work to research, document, and evaluate the ever-increasing number of conjectural emendations that are invented to resolve the problems inherent within either

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[11]Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism*, 18.

view of the validity of the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant.[12] With that qualification, it must be noted that conjectural emendation will be discussed to a certain extent in Chapter 2 of the present work.

Next, there will be no attempt to determine the origin of the Byzantine text, a task that may as yet be impossible when considering the limitations of the data currently available. Along that same line, neither can the present work offer a complete, transmissional history of the New Testament text. Such an endeavor would entail far more space than can be allotted here, even if there were enough available evidence to complete the task.

In addition, there will not be opportunity to explore every conceivable type of scribal error known to textual criticism. It is believed that the accidental and intentional scribal errors discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis will be sufficient to determine the only realistic options for the variation in Ephesians 1:1. At that point, each of the potential errors that may have led to this textual variation will be explained and examined in hopes of identifying the source of the discrepancy.

Finally, neither will the theory that the present letter is actually the head of the Pauline corpus be discussed. According to this theory, the devoted Paulinist who is said to have written Ephesians evidently feared that Paul's readers lacked a summary of the teaching contained in his letters, so this introductory treatise became known as "To the Ephesians" because the collected letters were first made known to the Ephesian church.[13]

Assumptions and Definitions

Before proceeding to the investigation at hand, two other perfunctory matters must be carried out. First, the present writer must list the assumptions with which he enters into the study. Second, he must offer definitions for several of the terms that will be encountered throughout the following chapters.

The first assumption is that the Ephesian letter is to be attributed to the apostle Paul as its author, as indicated in Ephesians 1:1 itself. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. . . ." As Guthrie concludes, "When all the objections are carefully considered it will be seen that the weight of evidence is inadequate to overthrow the overwhelming external attestation to Pauline authorship, and the epistle's own claims."[14]

The second assumption involves the date of writing, which *must* be fixed at a time no later than A.D. 95, because Clement of Rome refers to this letter in his own epistle, which commonly is dated to that very year. However, choosing a date as late as this assumes pseudopigraphic authorship and is unacceptable to those committed to Pauline authorship, as all signs point to his death having occurred before Jerusalem fell to the Romans during the First Jewish War (A.D. 70). Instead, the preferred date for the letter is sometime during Paul's first Roman imprisonment, which conservatively requires a date of A.D. 59 to 63.[15]

The third assumption centers around the place of writing and dispatch. It will be assumed that the letter was written in—and dispensed from—Rome, where Paul was imprisoned after being sent there in response to his appeal for an audience with Caesar (Acts 25:11; 26:32). Says Guthrie, "The Roman hypothesis . . . is built

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[12]For several conjectural theories that require an emendation of the text, see Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 36; Richard Batey, "The Destination of Ephesians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 (1963): 101; and A. Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, vol. 39, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1974), 79.

[13]Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 532. This view was proposed by Goodspeed, who said that the writer of Ephesians was also the one who collected the Pauline letters and compiled them into a unified corpus. The letter of Colossians was supposedly the basis for the editor's work in fashioning Ephesians. "Colossians is the letter of Paul's most familiar to the writer of Ephesians, and this encourages the impression that it was the nucleus of the Pauline collection." Edgar Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1933), 5–6. For the evidence against this theory, see Ernest Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians: Why and When the Designation 'Ephesians'?" *Aufstig und Niedergand der Römischen Welt* 2.25.4 (1987): 3262.

[14]Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 527. Guthrie's *NTI* should be consulted for further discussion on the case for Pauline authorship, as well as many of the divergent views about the authorship of the book.

[15]Ibid., 1006.

on a known imprisonment of such a character as to allow all the events reflected in Colossians and Philemon to happen. . . . The evidence from Acts seems more in support of a Roman than an Ephesian imprisonment."[16]

Finally, several terms must be defined. The *autographa* are the original biblical manuscripts composed by the inspired authors of canonical Scripture. In the case of Ephesians, the actual letter Paul wrote from prison in Rome would be the autograph (*autographum*) sent to the intended recipients. An exemplar is the usually non-extant (i.e. never discovered) archetype from which a later extant manuscript, or family of manuscripts, derived (through the process of textual transmission).

Another word for exemplar is *Vorlage*, the real or hypothetical manuscript from which a copy is made. In this sense, the Ephesian autograph would have been the *Vorlage* for the first copy made from it. A lacuna is a missing section of text or a blank space that serves as a gap between two words. Here, a lacuna will be used as the blank space that would be found in the text of Ephesians 1:1 if Paul's original letter was devoid of a destination, in lieu of his anticipation that the church leaders in each city to where he intended the letter to be sent would fill-in the name of their own city when their particular copy of the epistle would be received.

In addition, a definition of textual criticism itself is necessary. As most would agree, textual criticism must be considered both an art and a science. Elliott and Moir consider that this "collecting, classifying and collating of manuscripts is a science—a precise exercise of verifiable scholarship that can be ordered along undisputed lines. The analysis and resolution of the differences detected between manuscripts is inevitably open to debate. That is the 'art.'"[17] In NT terms, textual criticism may be defined as the art and science of attempting to restore the original readings of the inspired author where textual variations occur, by amassing and evaluating all of the available evidence that can be used to accomplish this task.

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[16]Ibid., 579.

[17]Keith Elliott and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1995), 4.

CHAPTER 2:

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The Hermeneutical Significance of Attaining Correct Readings

Before entering into a discussion about the proper reading in Ephesians 1:1,[18] one must consider the significance of such a venture. With the steady shift away from the traditional grammatico-historical method of interpretation in the scholarly and ministerial realms of evangelical Christianity, many scholars may question the importance of such an investigation.

The Supposed Unimportance of the Destination

After all, what practical difference might there be whether one considers this letter to be addressed to the Ephesian church, or to an unspecified number of churches elsewhere, or even as a general letter to Christians at large? Are there not the same six chapters of text, regardless of the destination or intended recipients? Consider the words of one recent author.

> To whom was this letter addressed? This question is not nearly as important as the one which we have discussed, namely, whether Paul or someone else wrote the Letter. These words retain their value whether they were addressed to the Ephesians alone or to others also or only to other Christians, as long as we are sure that the Letter to the Ephesians is an Apostolic Epistle.[19]

Certainly the authorship of the epistle is of vital importance, especially when one recognizes that the flurry of attacks on Pauline authorship has led to a tremendous amount of undermining of biblical truth. However, what makes the identity of the author any more important for interpretation than the identity of the people to whom he writes? If part of the interpretive process involves an examination into the historical setting of the writing, would not the destination of the letter, and thus the relationship between author and recipients, be critical for one who desires to comprehend the letter fully and to interpret it rightly?

The Indispensability of Background Matters

In his thesis on the destination of the Ephesian letter, David Alan Black affirms that matters of special introduction such as authorship, destination, date, occasion, and purpose are all indispensable to a proper understanding of the writings of Scripture.[20] Black then states, "The study is important in that the occasion, purpose, and content of Ephesians are all determined to some degree by the addressees."[21]

Black notes, for example, that if the epistle were sent to several churches in Asia Minor, it would be incumbent upon the student to have an acquaintance with that region in general.[22] In the same manner, if the epistle were addressed to the Christians at Ephesus, the Bible student would have to obtain a thorough understanding of that city and the relationship between those believers and the apostle Paul.

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[18]The only textual matter to be addressed is the ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ variant. Any further references to passages in the book of Ephesians will be noted only by chapter and verse numbers.

[19]D. D. Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, trans. Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 14.

[20]David Alan Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle" (M.Div. Thesis, Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, Calif., 1980), 2.

[21]Ibid., 3.

[22]Ibid., 4.

The Inseparable Link between Interpretation and Textual Criticism

Once the importance of background matters such as the destination of a letter has been established, one may grasp better the importance of identifying the correct reading in the opening verse of the Ephesian letter. Thus the necessary discipline of textual criticism is seen to be inseparably bound to hermeneutics, or Bible interpretation.[23]

Bart Ehrman, who agrees with this assessment, writes, "Unlike other methods discussed in this book, textual criticism is not an 'option' for interpreters of the NT. Whereas other approaches presuppose the wording of the text under consideration, textual criticism determines that wording."[24] Since textual criticism seeks to define the reading of the text as penned by the inspired authors, a proper view of the inspiration and inerrancy of the biblical text demands that it be given a voice to speak *before* the exegetical process is able to commence.

Though complete certainty over the originality of the text is difficult to achieve, one must diligently strive to pinpoint the actual wording of the text so that commentators, translators, preachers, and teachers of God's Word are both convinced that their text is reliable and aided by having a reliable starting point for their labor.[25]

The Role of Preunderstanding in Hermeneutics and Textual Criticism

Preunderstanding is one of the concepts that undergirds the New Hermeneutics, which is the most prevalent hermeneutical method used in modern scholarship. According to this theory, since one is unable to approach the field of biblical interpretation with complete objectivity, he must acknowledge his personal bias and allow for it to play its own part in determining the meaning of Scripture.

Though personal bias is extremely difficult to eliminate when attempting to come to the text objectively, should one then surrender because he would be striving after a seemingly unattainable goal? Should one tolerate his own bias and welcome it into the interpretive process? Moreover, if such pre-understanding cannot in some sense be subsumed by self-control, then what is to prevent one interpreter from discounting the conclusions of another, based solely upon a whimsical accusation that his decision was due to nothing more than personal bias?

Perhaps a few examples of the effects of preunderstanding upon textual criticism will accentuate the concern. In regard to ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, Metzger says in his *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, "*Since the letter* [of Ephesians] *has been traditionally known* as 'To the Ephesians,' and since all witnesses except those mentioned above include the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, the [UBS] Committee decided to retain them, but enclosed within square brackets" (emphasis added).[26]

Though including the variant because of manuscript evidence is another matter altogether, the decision to include the words in the text based upon the criterion of a long-standing tradition cannot stand in the way of scrutinizing examination that seeks to reproduce the text of the *autographa*.

Another example of allowing preunderstanding to interfere with unbiased textual criticism is in order. This second example also occurs in relation to the variant in Ephesians 1:1. "But the mother church, whom Paul knew and loved so dearly, is to go without [an epistle]? Ephesus *had a better right than any other single city of*

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[23]David A. Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1994), 25.

[24]Bart D. Ehrman, "Textual Criticism of the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 127.

[25]Keith Elliott and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1995), 8.

[26]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, 1994), 532.

Asia Minor to receive her own epistle" (emphasis added).[27] Though the apostle's relationship with the Ephesian church almost goes without parallel as recorded in Scripture, one cannot take a logical leap to say that this relationship demands that an epistle be written to them instead of others in Asia Minor whom he may not know personally. Such a pre-understanding must be rejected.

A final example of this type of preunderstanding that has crept into textual criticism is presented by Zane Hodges. He says that many times those who examine internal evidence are caught between the canons, "Choose the reading that fits the context," and "Choose the reading that explains the origin of the other reading(s)." When the evidence from two readings is evenly split between the two, many will feel "free to choose in terms of his [their] own prejudgments."[28]

Though a proper praxis for textual criticism is not at issue here, Hodges is correct in proclaiming that textual critics cannot merely choose their own preferred view when canons of criticism seem to offset one another. If need be, they must begin their study afresh and further examine the evidence in order to arrive at the best possible option in the quest for the original text of the New Testament.

Another hermeneutical matter is confronted in textual criticism. Many biblical critics of this century deride the idea of making an attempt to find and print the original text of the Greek New Testament, mainly because they are convinced that it is impossible to recover the original text due to the great diversity of readings that exist in so many manuscripts.[29] Nevertheless, should one not strive to achieve such a lofty goal as this simply because there is no opportunity for 100% assurance of reaching the goal?

Not only does such thinking cripple the process of laborious effort in locating the actual wording of the authors, but it creates enough doubt to cause the modern interpreter to question whether all of the actual inspired text is there to be discovered. With the presence of such doubt, many feel the freedom to emend the wording of the text when an internal difficulty arises that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction with the variant readings that are available.

Thus the practice of conjectural emendation has entered the arena of textual criticism and biblical interpretation. If, for example, the difficulty of the Ephesians 1:1 variant causes a scholar to conclude that neither the omission nor the addition of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is satisfactory, he then exercises the freedom to interject a logical "best guess" at how he believes the text most likely reads.[30]

In opposition to the practice of conjecture is the sheer number of witnesses to the text of the New Testament, which makes it virtually certain that the original text has been preserved somewhere among the extant witnesses.[31] Not only that, the early papyri found in the last century contribute essentially no new substantial variants, suggesting that all of the New Testament variants are preserved somewhere in the extant manuscript tradition.[32]

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[27]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 47.

[28]Zane C. Hodges, "The Greek Text of the King James Version," in *Which Bible?*, 5th ed., ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), 35.

[29]Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 33.

[30]One such contextual emendation for the Ephesians 1:1 dilemma is that of James Wilson, who suggests that ἑνί was the original reading. This would render the verse, "to the saints who are one and faithful in Christ Jesus." It would thus be an introductory address that was expanded to all the members of the one universal Church. He suggests that the omission came when a scribe expecting ἐν with a place name saw ἑνί, which being contrary to expectation led him to leave out this seemingly unintelligible word (James P. Wilson, "Note on the Textual Problem of Ephesians 1:1," *The Expository Times* 60 [1948–9]: 225–26). One problem with this emendation is that Paul spoke to the recipients of this letter by saying, "On account of this I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus that *is* among you, and *your* love for all the saints, . . ." (1:15). The apostle obviously could not have heard about the faith of the entire universal church.

[31]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 24.

[32]Comfort, *Quest*, 56.

Tischendorf did not admit a single emendation into his text, while Westcott and Hort considered conjectural emendation to be necessary in only a very few cases, though they declined to adopt any conjectural readings into their text.[33] Kenyon shows his strong opposition to this practice.

> It is universally agreed, however, that the sphere of conjecture in the case of the New Testament is infinitesimal; and it may further be added that for practical purposes it must be treated as non-existent. No authority could be attached to words which rested only upon conjecture; and a critic who should devote himself to editing the Scriptures on conjectural lines would be merely wasting his time.[34]

Therefore, unless a foolproof case can be made that the sum of the many surviving manuscripts has failed to preserve the original text, it should not be necessary to resort to guesswork that can only lead to a modern rewriting of the text.[35]

Even if the work of textual criticism cannot guarantee that the original text of the New Testament will be chosen in every place of variation, textual critics cannot abandon their responsibility to apply confidently the principles of textual criticism to recover the words of the inspired writers. Accordingly, neither can they resort to their own creative enterprises to emend the wording in places where an attractive option is not found in the available manuscripts.

Genealogical Relationships among Manuscripts

Also necessary before examining any given manuscript variant, or even establishing a praxis for textual criticism, is the need to ascertain a working understanding of the relationships between the extant Greek manuscripts that are at one's disposal today. Ultimately, this task far exceeds the limitations of the present work, as the formation of textual relationships among various manuscripts is referred to by Comfort as a "difficult—if not impossible—task to do for the entire New Testament."[36]

It is suggested by one author that a reconstruction of the manuscript tradition must begin by tracing the history of the textual transmission of the New Testament from the early papyri to later manuscripts, which forms trajectories or textual streams. Such trajectories must be drawn on a book-by-book basis, because each New Testament book has its own textual history.[37] But for the purpose of the present work, a comparison of the acknowledged text-types will suffice in gathering an understanding of the evidence of textual transmission history.

The Western Text-Type

The earliest attested "text-type" is known as the Western text-type, which has been characterized as the popular text of the second and third centuries.[38] It is commonly called "Western" because variants peculiar to it are firmly established in texts found in North Africa (Tertullian, Cyprian, some Old Latin), Italy (Novatian, some Old Latin), and southern France (Irenaeus). However, "Western" is somewhat of a misnomer, for many of

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[33]Eberhard Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1901), 167–68.

[34]Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 17.

[35]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 7.

[36]Comfort, *Quest*, 101.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., 23.

its peculiar variants are found in the East (Tatian, the Old Syriac) and occasionally in Egypt (some of Clement, John 6–7 in 𝔓66).[39]

Many of the early papyri reflect a mixture between the Alexandrian text and the Western text, but most scholars do not favor the Western readings found in these manuscripts. Robinson and Pierpont refer to such rejection as "well-founded, [but] basically subjective."[40] The reason these two proponents of the Byzantine text-type call this "subjective" rejection is that the same canons of internal criticism that rate the Western text as inferior also call the Byzantine text into question.

When consistently applying these canons of textual criticism, which will be discussed in Chapter IV of the present work, an objective evaluation reveals that Western readings are indeed inferior. Despite the early and wide attestation of witnesses to the Western text, it lacks the homogeneity found in the Alexandrian and Byzantine text-types.[41] "Western" thus better describes a group of witnesses, obviously related by hundreds of unusual readings, apparently reflecting an uncontrolled, sometimes "wild" tradition of copying.[42]

Because of the independence of the Western text, many consider it to be far less reliable than the Alexandrian text, though sometimes it preserves the original wording where the occasionally-polished text of the Alexandrian type is found to err. The earliness of the Western text causes Comfort to conclude, "When a variant reading has the support of both Western and Alexandrian texts, it is very likely original; but when the two are divided, the Alexandrian witnesses more often preserve the original wording."[43] Therefore, most are convinced that the Western text-type, though early and quite important, is not a reliable family of texts.

The Caesarean Text-Type

In 1868, W. H. Farrar discovered that Codex 13 and three other minuscules were so closely related that they constituted a "family" of manuscripts (now known as the Farrar group, or family 13). In 1902, Kirsopp Lake showed that a group of minuscules headed by Codex 1 formed a "family" (family 1), and that this family was in turn textually similar to that of family 13 and the minuscules 28, 565, and 700. With the publishing of Codex Θ in 1913, Lake and others showed that this manuscript fell into the company of family 1 and its relatives. When B. H. Streeter pointed out that Origen used this text-type at Caesarea, he designated this the Caesarean text-type.[44]

The Caesarean text lies somewhat between the Alexandrian and the Western texts, a distinctive mixture of the two that at times supplied its own readings. It may be slightly closer to the Western, but in general it includes neither the long additions or paraphrases of the Western text nor the long additions of the Byzantine text. Its use by Cyril of Jerusalem indicates that it was the text of more than Caesarea, so the range of its presence goes beyond its designation, as was found to be the case with the Western text also.[45]

According to Metzger, there are two stages in the development of the Caesarean text. The pre-Caesarean text consists of Origen's old Egyptian text, as preserved in P45, W, family 1, family 13, 28, and many Greek

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[39]Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21/1 (Mar 1978): 28.

[40]Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform* (Atlanta: The Original Word Publishers, 1991), xix.

[41]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 28. Because of this lack of homogeneity, Colwell declares that many scholars no longer speak of the Western text as a text-type. Ernest C. Colwell, *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Vol. 9, *New Testament Tools and Studies*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), 166.

[42]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 28.

[43]Comfort, *Quest*, 23.

[44]J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 89–90.

[45]Ibid., 90.

lectionaries. The Caesarean text proper consists of Θ, 565, 700, and many of the citations of Origen and Eusebius.[46] The value of the Caesarean text for textual criticism can be seen in Metzger's statement, "The Caesarean text appears to be the most mixed and the least homogeneous of any of the groups which can be classified as distinct text-types."[47]

The Byzantine Text-Type

The third of the four text-types is the Byzantine text, which, except for a minute amount of individual readings, has no representation in the early papyri. In reference to the time period from A.D. 150–225, "there is firm data from all over the ancient world that a variety of text forms were in use, but in all this material there is not a single illustration of the later majority text *as a text form*" (emphasis his).[48]

As a text form, the Byzantine text does have supporting witnesses in the later papyri, but only from the sixth ($\mathfrak{P}^{84}$), seventh ($\mathfrak{P}^{68}$ and perhaps $\mathfrak{P}^{74}$), and eighth ($\mathfrak{P}^{42}$) centuries.[49] In its favor, approximately 95% of the existing manuscripts of the New Testament are Byzantine texts from the eighth and later centuries, and very few differ appreciably from the basic text.[50]

Though the origin of the Byzantine text-type cannot be traced with certainty,[51] its earliest attestation as a text-type is the fifth-century codex Alexandrinus, though only in the gospels.[52] By the eighth century, this text-type was in use practically everywhere in the Greek world.[53] The relative uniformity within the text shows that its transmissional history (mainly from the tenth century onward) was to a large degree stable and regular,[54] demonstrating that the later scribes were better at following their exemplars than were the earliest scribes.[55]

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[46]Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 215.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 27. The "majority text," which will be discussed more thoroughly at the outset of Chapter 3 of this thesis, is a later form of the Byzantine text that is attested by far more manuscripts than any other form of the New Testament text.

[49]Eldon Jay Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 17.

[50]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 62. However, the Byzantine text is sometimes divided within itself, not giving a united text throughout (Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 34).

[51]"It is true that the actual origins of the Byzantine text as a text-type are shrouded in mystery, but that is scarcely an argument in its favor." Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 29. Byzantine text advocate Zane Hodges even admits that contemporary critics are by no means agreed on the way in which the MT originated (Hodges, "The Greek Text," 31. See also J. N. Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans [Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1920], 320).

[52]It may be noted that 85% of Codex W (*ca*. 400) is Byzantine, but this only includes Luke 8:14–24:53. The earliest full witnesses to it are uncials (Codices E, F, G, H, M, Ω) from the eighth and ninth centuries, and even these reflect a slightly earlier stage of the text than found in the *Textus Receptus*, the later form of the Byzantine text-type underlying the Greek text of Erasmus, Beza, and the Elzevir brothers (Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 28).

[53]Henry C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943), 72.

[54]Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), xi.

[55]Zane Hodges remarks that no one has yet explained how this long, slow process of transmission over such a wide geographical area could achieve such relative uniformity unless it represents nothing but the inspired text itself. Hodges, "The Greek Text," 33. Again, such an impressive achievement proves nothing more than the commendable job accomplished by the scribes of the later centuries, in contrast to the relative infidelity found in the work of the scribes of the first several centuries.

This long period of mostly efficient transmission has impressed many to say that the Byzantine text, especially in the form of the *Textus Receptus*, was preserved through God's providential care; with such providential care, God proceeded to oversee the preservation of this text-type into the English language in the form of the King James Bible.[56]

The weakness in this logic is that it fails to account for the fact that in the same way, God's providential care preserved the Alexandrian, Western, and Caesarean text-types as well. Says Robert Thomas, "The[y] have been preserved and used by people in other parts of the world continuously since the second century. We must accept that God in His providence has seen fit to preserve several families of readings, not just one."[57] Therefore, the extent to which each text-type was or was not preserved should not be appealed to when determining the criteria for how to judge variant readings.

The Byzantine text has been said to be characteristically smooth, clear, and full.[58] Greenlee expounds upon this idea, "The text seems to have been subjected to editing, with parallel accounts tending to become harmonized, grammatical irregularities corrected, and abrupt transitions modified, producing a generally smooth text."[59] After noting that the application of ordinary principles of textual criticism finds many Byzantine readings to be the result of scribal or editorial modifications, Kenyon states that this fact establishes its secondary nature.[60] Without doubt, the most widely attested modification suggested is that of conflation.[61]

A conflated reading is one that merges together two independent, differing readings into one combined form. Speaking of conflation Nestle says, "It is equally clear that a reading is incorrect which proves to be a mixture of two others."[62] As Greenlee considers the amount of conflated readings found in the Byzantine text, he says, "The evidence of the manuscripts indicates that the process of standardization of the text and consequent displacement of the older text-types continued from the fourth century until the eighth, by the end of which time the standardized or 'Byzantine' text had become the accepted form of the text."[63]

While Robinson and Pierpont affirm that "conflation is not exclusive to the Byzantine-era manuscripts,"[64] their admission of conflation in the Byzantine text does not deter them from choosing this text-type as their text of preference. In reality, the amount of conflation in the other text-types remains very minimal in comparison to the vast number of conflated readings present in the Byzantine text.

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[56]As David Fuller says, "The power and providence of God are displayed in the history of the preservation and transmission of His Word. . . . [The able writers of *Which Bible?*] are also deeply convinced that the inspired text is more faithfully represented by the Majority Text than by the modern critical editions which attach too much weight to the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and their allies. For this reason the reader is encouraged to maintain confidence in the King James Version as a faithful translation based upon a reliable text." (David Otis Fuller, "Why This Book?," in *Which Bible?*, 5th ed., ed. David Otis Fuller [Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975], 5, 6. See also Robert L. Thomas, *An Introductory Guide for Choosing Bible Translations* [Sun Valley, Calif.: Author, 1988], 32).

[57]Thomas, *An Introductory Guide*, 32.

[58]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 91. Greenlee proceeds to verify this claim about the character of the Byzantine text by providing numerous examples of change due to clarification, difficult readings alleviated, theology strengthened, etc. In response to this claim, Hodges and Farstad retort, "The fact is that excellent reasons almost always can be given for the superiority of the majority readings over their rivals." (Hodges and Farstad, *The Greek New Testament*, xi). However, Hodges and Farstad present no evidence to defend their response.

[59]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 62.

[60]Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3d ed., revised and augmented A. W. Adams (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Limited, 1975), 209.

[61]Black admits, "Most modern scholars who argue that Byzantine manuscripts are secondary do so on the basis of internal evidence." (Black, *A Concise Guide*, 41). For a similar statement with numerous examples, see Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," 321.

[62]Nestle, *Introduction*, 245.

[63]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 62.

[64]Robinson and Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, xxiii.

The Alexandrian Text-Type

The Alexandrian text-type is so named because of its apparent emergence in and around Alexandria, Egypt.[65] Metzger considers there to be two forms of the Alexandrian text. First is the proto-Alexandrian text, which is represented by several papyri (P45 [in Acts], 𝔓46, 𝔓66, 𝔓75), codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the Sahidic version (in part), and the church fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen (in part). Second is the later Alexandrian text, which may be found in several uncials (A and C [except in the gospels], L, T, Z, Δ [in Mark], Ξ, Ψ), the Bohairic version, and minuscules 33, 81, 892, 1241, and 1739.[66]

The Alexandrian text-type is regarded by most modern scholars as "probably the best single text of the local texts."[67] Metzger affirms that most scholars "are still inclined to regard the Alexandrian text as on the whole the best ancient recension and the one most nearly approximating the original."[68] However, not all are convinced of the quality of this ancient text-type.

Burgon and Miller contend, "Alexandria contributed largely to our textual troubles."[69] They conclude this because they believe the Alexandrian text is "a lost family of second or third-century documents, which owed their existence to the misguided zeal of some well-intentioned but utterly incompetent persons who devoted themselves to the task of correcting the text of Scripture but were entirely unfit for the undertaking."[70] This leads them to say, "The text in question was fabricated."[71]

Though Burgon and Miller were much more vocal and vehement in their belief that the Alexandrian text was a fabricated recension,[72] many modern American scholars also consider it an edited text.[73] Gordon Fee notes that recent text-critical handbooks, New Testament introductions, and articles on recent trends in textual criticism, are almost unanimous in concluding that the "Egyptian text" is now generally regarded as a text produced in Egypt and probably at Alexandria under editorial care.[74]

Philip Comfort believes, however, that there was no recension of the New Testament in the second century. Rather, this was a period in which some scribes exercised freedom in copying, while others

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[65]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 32.

[66]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 216.

[67]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 86.

[68]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 216.

[69]John W. Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 235.

[70]Ibid., 234.

[71]Ibid.

[72]According to Burgon and Miller, the Alexandrian text is derived from the Byzantine. "It is extremely improbable, if not impossible, that the Traditional Text was or could have been derived from such a document as the archetype of B-א; whereas the converse operation is at once obvious and easy. There is no difficulty in producing a short text by omission of words, or clauses, or verses, from a fuller text; but the fuller text could not have been produced from the shorter by any development which would be possible under the facts of the case." (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, 34).

[73]Greenlee announces, "The Alexandrian text is more likely to be wrong in the more 'sophisticated' variants—those involving technicalities of grammar or those in which a more literary form is substituted for a more colloquial form." (Greenlee, *Introduction*, 87).

[74]Gordon D. Fee, "P75, P66, and Origen: The Myth of Early Textual Recension in Alexandria," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 23.

demonstrated acumen. The manuscripts produced by the latter, he says, are those that come closest to preserving the original text of the New Testament.[75]

Michael Grant reinforces the Alexandrian reputation for the handling of literary works when he says, "Their methods became canonical in determining the forms of book-production and literary analysis in all Hellenistic centers, and the earlier writings they had so carefully preserved and studied were handed down to the Romans, and thus to [us]."[76] Comfort confidently asserts that Gordon Fee's 1974 study demonstrates that there was no recension of any kind in early Alexandria.[77]

In that article, Fee notes first that the Alexandrian copyists achieved such a high quality in their texts that their collators must have been able to use manuscripts superior to those current in the second century.[78] Therefore, "the Egyptian 'recension' was not so much a revising of the text as it was the producing of a text very much in accord with modern textual criticism."[79]

Studies in the texts of Luke and John in 𝔓75 were done to determine the recensional character of Vaticanus. These studies demonstrated such a close relationship between this papyrus and B that there is no longer any possibility that B reflects a late third / early fourth-century recension in any sense of the term.[80] The text of 𝔓75 now makes it certain that the text of B existed in the second century across two separate textual histories, both in its main features and in most of its particulars, laying to rest the "Hesychian hypothesis."[81]

In addition, 𝔓66 greatly assists in providing an understanding of the textual history in early Egypt, because it is the earliest piece of actual historical evidence in which recensional activity is clearly present. Thanks to the scribe's excellent calligraphy and the changes to the text made against a second *Vorlage*, it appears to have been produced in a scriptorium. "If this is true, then 𝔓66 offers us first-hand evidence of a kind of official editorial activity going on in the church in Alexandria in the time of Clement. And almost everything the scribe does points away from recensional activity of a kind that would produce the Egyptian text-type."[82]

The result of Fee's study is that 𝔓75, and thus B as well, reveal no signs of anything resembling recensional activity at all. Rather, 𝔓75 exemplifies a scribe who carefully preserves the original wording of his exemplar.[83] Moreover, 𝔓75 and B are "comparatively pure" when scrutinized against either the Western or Byzantine traditions.[84] "The conclusion to which all of this data points is that the concept of a scholarly recension of the NT text in Alexandria either in the fourth century *or* the second century, either as a created or a carefully edited text, is a myth."[85]

Summary

In this chapter, it was seen that the shift in hermeneutical principles that has moved away from the standard grammatico-historical method and toward a more subjective method that focuses on the present-day environment of the interpreter has led to the devaluation of the historical setting of the original writer. In this case, in the eyes of many, the identity of the recipients to whom Paul wrote his Ephesian letter has been relegated to the level of irrelevant or minimally pertinent.

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[75]For an excellent discussion of the high-quality textual criticism methods incorporated by the Alexandrians, see Comfort, *Quest*, 22–5, 35, 129.

[76]Michael Grant, *From Alexander to Cleopatra: The Hellenistic World* (New York: Scribner, 1982), 259.

[77]Comfort, *Quest*, 121.

[78]Fee, "P75, P66," 22.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Ibid., 24.

[81]Ibid., 28.

[82]Ibid., 30.

[83]Ibid., 32.

[84]Ibid., 44.

[85]Ibid.

In actuality, the identification of the recipients is so important that the occasion, purpose, and content of the letter are all determined to some degree by the audience to whom it was addressed. Since the identity of these Christians hinges upon a variant reading in the text, the relationship between textual criticism and sound biblical interpretation was seen to be intricately bound together.

Another important interpretive issue that surfaced was the modern hermeneutical approach that allows for one's preunderstanding to participate in the interpretive process. It was shown that one cannot predetermine his view of the recipients of the letter, then expect to approach the text-critical data in an objective fashion. Personal bias must be eliminated, or at least staved-off to the best of one's ability, so that the objective facts, through the aid of the Spirit of God, can lead one to the correct reading of the text.

Also preliminary to the task of textual criticism is the acquisition of a working knowledge of the relationships between the manuscripts that act as the primary objective source for establishing the original wording of the New Testament text. The approach utilized here for understanding the history of textual transmission was to survey each of the known text-types that have "arisen" after a comparison of all the manuscripts had revealed four major lines of common ancestry.

The Western text-type attests very ancient readings and is the preferred text of the majority of the most ancient church fathers, going back to the beginning of the second century. However, the Western text is characterized by mixed readings that are often the result of "wild" copying practices. Because of its antiquity, this text-type must be taken into account when practicing textual criticism, but distinctively Western readings are seldom considered original.

The Caesarean text-type is the most mixed and the least homogeneous of any of the groupings that are classified as distinct text-types. It generally does not include either the long additions or paraphrases of the Western text or the long additions of the Byzantine text, and sometimes its readings are found to be completely unique. Its contribution to establishing the original text is for the most part quite limited.

The Byzantine text is characterized by readings that are much fuller and longer than those of any other text-type. Though its origin is shrouded in mystery at this point, most conclude by the enormity of its conflated readings that this text-type is the result of a large-scale recension of the text that took place either in a very short period of time or gradually over a long period of time. The consolidation of the Greek-speaking world into the Byzantine empire could easily have facilitated such a recension that produced a standardized text. The readings of this later text-type are most often secondary to the original readings.

In the eyes of many, the Alexandrian text-type best represents the text found in the most ancient manuscripts. The early papyri discovered in the 19th century reveal that its readings were mostly shorter, more consistent, and superior to those of differing text-types. Supporters of the Byzantine text are quick to criticize the Alexandrian text as editorialized and fabricated, but the work of modern scholarship has proven the high level of its character and reliability. It represents the most valuable text-type in the process of determining the original wording of the New Testament.

CHAPTER 3:

A PRAXIS FOR TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Available Methods for Choosing between Variant Readings

After having demonstrated the hermeneutical significance for the implementation of textual criticism for the New Testament and having surveyed the genealogical relationships between extant manuscripts, one must next establish an acceptable praxis whereby New Testament textual criticism can accurately be carried out.

If one has not settled upon the best possible criteria for determining correct readings where the text of the biblical manuscripts vary, he cannot properly weigh the evidence at hand or hope to discover the proper readings for the right reasons. This chapter will be comprised of the presentation and evaluation of each of the praxes of textual criticism that are currently in use among New Testament scholars.

The five methods for applying textual criticism include the following: (1) Choose a favorite text-type based on numerical superiority. (2) Choose a favorite text-type based on the earliness of manuscripts. (3) Choose the reading attested by the most text-types. (4) Apply radical eclecticism. (5) Apply reasoned eclecticism.

The first three praxes listed above rely exclusively upon external evidence, which is objective evidence consisting of Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, writings of church fathers, and translated versions. The fourth praxis relies solely upon internal evidence, which subjectively considers the likelihood of a scribal error or determines the rendering most indicative of the author's style and language. The fifth praxis, to some extent or another, combines external and internal evidence in the evaluation of the variance.

Choose a Favorite Text-Type Based on Numerical Superiority

The Case for Numerical Superiority Being Best

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Byzantine text by far outweighs any other text-type in sheer amount of attesting manuscripts; even the sum total of attesting manuscripts for the other three text-types pales in comparison to the Byzantine text. The present form of the Byzantine text is essentially that of the last edition of Erasmus, later to be dubbed the "Received Text," or *Textus Receptus*.[86] Because the majority of manuscripts support this text, it is also known as the "majority text" (hereafter MT).

Thus the first line of argument in support of the MT is the overwhelming amount of manuscripts that follow this form of text. "The burden of proof, we reply, rests with our opponents. The consent without concert of (suppose) 990 out of 1000 copies,—of every date from the fifth to the fourteenth century, and belonging to every region of ancient Christendom,—is a colossal fact not to be set aside by any amount of ingenuity."[87]

The second line of support is closely related to the first: number is the most ordinary ingredient of weight. The illustration is given of a trial before a judge. If ten witnesses were called in to give evidence, and one of the ten resolutely contradicted the testimony of the other nine, which of the two parties would the judge

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[86]Vincent says that the text of Erasmus was "framed from a few modern and inferior manuscripts and the Complutensian Polyglot, in the very infancy of Biblical criticism." The term "received text," signifying that it was "received by all" (*omnibus receptum*), derived from the second edition (1633) of Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir's Greek text, a revision of the texts of Erasmus and Beza (Marvin R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1903], 60–61).

[87]John W. Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 33.

be inclined to believe?[88] He would obviously believe the testimony of the nine witnesses whose testimonies corroborate with one another.

The third line of support for the MT is that it cannot be thought that the many witnesses are "deceivers" while the few witnesses prove to be the "trustworthy guides."[89] Otherwise, "Will it be pretended that in any part of the Church for seven hundred years copyists of Evangelia entered into a grand conspiracy to thrust out of every fresh copy of the Gospel self-same words in the self-same places?"[90]

Fourth, the dominance of the MT is accounted for by its continuous transmission from the *autographa*. According to this argument, all minority text forms are merely divergent offshoots of the broad stream of transmission whose source is the autographs themselves.[91] Furthermore, the manuscript tradition of an ancient book will multiply in such a way that the copies nearest to the *autographa* will normally have the largest number of descendants.[92]

Fifth, there is a relative independence among Byzantine manuscripts. Except for several small "family relationships" that have been established, the bulk of Byzantine-era documents are not closely-related in any genealogical sense. This diversity in heritage demonstrates the relative independence of these manuscripts, as opposed to their dependence upon one another.[93] According to Robinson and Pierpont, this virtual independence of the Byzantine-era manuscripts alone suffices to refute Hort's claim of genealogical non-homogeneity.[94]

Sixth, the view that numerical superiority is the best praxis for textual criticism proposes that *number* has been ordained by God to be a factor that cannot be overlooked.[95] With this being true, inerrantists must believe that God preserved the text intact throughout all the ages. Inherent within this view is the refusal to believe that the Reformation, which restored Scripture to a place of primacy in the Church, could have been wrong as to the type of text it restored, or to believe that the Protestant Church for over three hundred years could have been using anything other than the original text.[96]

The Case against Numerical Superiority Being Best

The first argument to address in opposition to the praxis of numerical superiority being best is the claim that the amount of manuscripts favoring the MT is so overwhelming that no other praxis has the ability to contend with its dominance. As David Black puts it, "This approach has been criticized for being too mechanical and for ignoring the fact that manuscripts must be weighed and not counted. For example, if ten manuscripts are copies of a single parent manuscript, then an error appearing in the parent will appear ten times in ten copies. But these ten copies are equal to a single authority, not to ten."[97] Therefore, the mere amount of witnesses seems irrelevant in choosing correct readings.

The rebuttal to the second argument, that number is the most ordinary ingredient of weight, is closely related to the rebuttal to the first argument. It cannot be said that number is the most ordinary ingredient of

[88]Ibid., 43.

[89]Ibid., 46.

[90]Ibid., 79.

[91]Zane C. Hodges, "The Greek Text of the King James Version," in *Which Bible?*, 5th ed., ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), 34.

[92]Ibid., 37.

[93]Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Byzantine/Majority Textform* (Atlanta: The Original Word Publishers, 1991), xix.

[94]Ibid., xxiii.

[95]Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, 45.

[96]Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 1 (Mar 1978): 2223.

[97]David A. Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1994), 39.

weight, because the illustration of Burgon and Miller is flawed. The ten witnesses in the court case are contemporaries, first-hand witnesses to an event. Naturally, the one who opposes the nine witnesses who bear corroborating evidence is very likely to be proven wrong. However, in the case of New Testament textual criticism, the witnesses are not contemporaries. Bringing this realm into the current illustration, 50 or 100 tenth-hand or twentieth-hand witnesses, who are far removed from any of the ten original witnesses, command little weight if they are only derived from one (or possibly none!) of the original ten witnesses. Two or three dissenters who are closer to the original ten witnesses would be granted much more credibility in the eyes of most jurors.[98]

The third argument is that in light of the great similarity among Byzantine manuscripts, one would have to propose a grand, scribal conspiracy intended to deceive people with the wrong text-type for hundreds of years. In response, opponents of the idea that the majority of manuscripts leads to the original text do not accuse scribes of deceit. Instead, they consider MT scribes to be faithful reproducers who followed the text of their exemplars with great care. Unfortunately, these scribes were faithfully reproducing a secondary text that was the result of a later revision, as the large number of Byzantine conflations suggests.

In defense of the diligent later scribes, once a change had been introduced, be it omission, addition, or otherwise, then all subsequent copies made from that altered manuscript would perpetuate the change, whereas manuscripts produced from the unaltered copy would retain the original author's wording.[99] This scenario would account for both the reliability of the scribes and the reproduction of the wrong wording in the text.

According to the fourth argument, the dominance of the MT is accounted for by its continuous transmission from the *autographa*, and the copies nearest to the autographs will normally have the largest number of descendants, as is true of all ancient documents. Against this argument, the MT form is completely unknown by any of the evidence up to A.D. 350, with the earliest evidence being found in some of the fathers, then later in the fifth century in portions of Codices A and W. Furthermore, if the MT represents the "broad stream" that issues from the autographs, why is it true that amid all of the manuscript evidence from the first three hundred years, only the "offshoots" are attested?[100]

To say that the copies nearest to the original will normally have the largest number of descendants is an unfounded supposition that cannot be supported by the data available, a point which Hodges does not attempt to address. Says Gordon Fee, "It alone fits Hodges' understanding of what will happen to books normally in history."[101]

Greenlee calls into question the accusation that profane literature reflects the principle of greatest multiplication for copies nearest to the *autographa*. "The answer to this argument was that this was precisely what scholars had long accepted in the case of secular literature. In the ancient classics which were extant in numerous manuscripts, in every case scholars depended upon *a very few manuscripts* for an authoritative text" (emphasis added).[102] Thus that which Hodges claims to be true is the opposite of what is proven to be true.

The fifth argument in favor of numerical superiority is the relative independence of the Byzantine manuscripts, as it is said that the bulk of these documents are not closely related to one another in any genealogical sense. However, since the origin of the Byzantine text is shrouded in obscurity, such a claim has

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[98]For an excellent illustration of the way in which the 50,100 witnesses against the 23 witnesses would actually be one against one, see Bart D. Ehrman, "Textual Criticism of the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 133.

[99]Keith Elliott and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1995), 6.

[100]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 25.

[101]Ibid., 21.

[102]J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 82. So in the words of Nestle, "There is no special theory of the textual criticism of the New Testament. The task and the method are the same for all literary productions." (Eberhard Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* [Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1901], 156).

little foundation. The alleged diversity in heritage also fails to account for the fact that the majority of the Byzantine manuscripts represent a narrow spectrum of the church. “The medieval manuscripts, for the most part, represent the relatively standardized, ecclesiastically approved version used in the Orthodox Church.”[103]

What is more, the great number of diverse readings found among Byzantine manuscripts may be attributed to a recension,[104] or process of formal editing, which led to the formation of this “text-type.” After reviewing numerous examples of these edited Byzantine readings, Kenyon concludes, “Each of these alterations is trifling in itself, but collectively they amount to an extensive modification in the text, and show how freely it was handled by scribes and editors throughout the period when what we now call the Received Text was being developed.”[105]

The sixth argument for numerical superiority is that *quantity* was ordained by God as an important factor, and as such, inerrantists must believe that God preserved this text-type throughout the ages. This is clearly a theological argument rather than a logical one. The fact remains that due to the diligent work of textual critics since the eighteenth century, along with the excavations of the last 150 years, Christian scholarship now knows that God also preserved other text-types, which possess quite excellent examples of the biblical text.[106]

This argument also breaks down in that the MT is not said to be a “bad” or heretical text. It presents the same Christian message as the other three text-types. In addition, until the advent of the printing press, the church had never followed a rigidly uniform text; many variants were present within the manuscripts used by the church down through the ages.[107]

In summary, choosing the variant supported by the most manuscripts is clearly not the best criterion for the practice of textual criticism. None of the arguments issued in defense of this approach holds up under the strain of scrutiny. The principle that manuscript evidence must be weighed, not counted, shows itself to be true when confronting the case for majority support. This view also ignores altogether both the possibility that the correct readings may be found in more ancient witnesses, and the valuable canons of internal evidence.

Choose a Favorite Text-Type Based on the Earliness of Manuscripts

The Case for Earliness of Manuscripts Being Best

A second method of choosing among variants is that the most ancient testimony is probably best.[108] The first argument in support of this method is that the earliest manuscripts are generally more important than later ones.[109] This principle is thought true because the shorter the interval is between the time of the autograph and

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[103]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 30.

[104]Many associate the origin of the Byzantine text-type with the recension of Lucian of Antioch. The Lucianic text is the outgrowth and culmination of the popular text; it is characterized by smoothness of language and the conflation of variant readings. Lucian and his associates must have used many different kinds of manuscripts of varying quality to produce a harmonized, edited New Testament text (Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament*, [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992], 2425).

[105]Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3d ed., revised and augmented A. W. Adams (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Limited, 1975), 211. Elsewhere Kenyon admits that in the case of the New Testament there is good reason to suppose that many of the divergences which exist among extant manuscripts are due to deliberate editing. These deliberate alterations are no doubt due to an attempt to secure the best possible text according to the materials at hand, but such practices often resulted in departures from the original text (Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951], 10).

[106]Robert L. Thomas, *An Introductory Guide for Choosing Bible Translations* (Sun Valley, Calif.: Author, 1988), 32.

[107]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 82.

[108]Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, 40.

[109]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 34.

the transmission in question, the stronger the possibility that an earlier date implies greater purity of text.[110] Since manuscripts become increasingly more corrupt with the passage of time, because copyists both reproduce the mistakes of their predecessors and create some of their own, as a rule earlier manuscripts will be more reliable than later ones.[111]

The second argument in favor of the "oldest being best" method is that the work of Günther Zuntz[112] demonstrated how an early papyrus manuscript became the proper standard against which all other relevant manuscripts were to be measured. Zuntz did this by employing 𝔓[46] as a foil in assessing the value of, as well as the relationship between, the other witnesses.[113] In similar fashion, other early witnesses may be used as standards against which later manuscripts are judged.

Third, since the outlook of the early period of textual transmission is becoming clearer, it is much more possible to recover the original text of the Greek New Testament with confidence. All of this is primarily due to the information granted by the many early manuscripts of excellent quality.[114]

Fourth, the practice of using the antiquity of manuscripts as a guide for determining the proper readings is an ancient one. For example, Jerome evidences the use of age as a canon, as it was his habit to assign more weight to the oldest manuscripts at his disposal.[115]

Based upon the merit of this view and the importance of the early manuscripts, Comfort suggests that "one could compile a Greek text using whole manuscripts for the basic text for various books or segments of the New Testament."[116] As he continues,

> Those manuscripts that are the most reliable would comprise the basic text for a given book or section of the New Testament until they were proven faulty by other documentary evidence or unless they are manifestly faulty in certain places due to scribal error. . . . The governing principle for making this kind of text is that the earliest and best manuscripts are generally considered to be representative of the original until proven otherwise. This gives priority of place to external evidence over internal evidence. Unless the internal arguments are overwhelmingly weighted in favor of a reading supported by later manuscripts, the readings supported by the earlier testimony will be accepted into the text.[117]

Why should this approach be taken seriously? "There are those who say it is too simplistic to think that the earliest manuscripts are also the best manuscripts. These scholars argue that the original reading can be found in any manuscript of any date. This is hypothetically true, but hardly bears up when put into practice."[118] As an

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[110]Eldon Jay Epp, "The Eclectic Method in New Testament Textual Criticism: Solution or Symptom?" *Harvard Theological Review* 69/34 (July-Oct 1976): 234.

[111]Ehrman, "Textual Criticism," 133.

[112]Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1953), 11–17.

[113]Eldon Jay Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 12.

[114]Comfort, *Quest*, 20. Colwell acknowledges the importance of having a clear picture of transmissional history: "In general early manuscripts *are* more important than late manuscripts. But the crucial question for early as for late witnesses is still, 'Where do they fit into a plausible reconstruction of the history of the manuscript tradition?'" (Ernest C. Colwell, *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 9, *New Testament Tools and Studies*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969], 157). Comfort proceeds to outline the early period of textual transmission, though he has limited evidence at his disposal to answer all of the questions that have been raised (Comfort, *Quest*, 21ff.).

[115]Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 216.

[116]Comfort, *Quest*, 130.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid., 38.

example, Comfort notes that this praxis of textual criticism time and time again demonstrates that the text-type underlying 𝔓75 and B is intrinsically superior to the Western text-type.[119]

The Case against Earliness of Manuscripts Being Best

The first argument offered was that the earlier manuscripts are generally more important than the later ones. Most acknowledge that there is certainly an element of truth to this claim, even those who favor other praxes of textual criticism. Black, for example, says that this principle must be used with caution since "an early manuscript may exhibit a corrupted text, while a later copy may reflect a more reliable form of the text."[120] Another problem is that the oldest manuscripts have undergone the same type of editing as have the later ones.[121] Comfort himself admits that "an 'early' manuscript is not always the most trustworthy manuscript." But he immediately goes on to say, "nonetheless, several of the earliest manuscripts are the most reliable."[122]

The second argument proposed was that with 𝔓46 Zuntz proved that early papyrus manuscripts can be used as the standard against which all other manuscripts are to be judged. Though not enough work has been done to challenge the findings of Zuntz, many have questioned the value of 𝔓46 based upon its tendency to omit, causing the Alands to call this papyrus a "free text."[123] Thus an attack upon the credibility of 𝔓46 is the only rebuttal.[124]

The third argument is that thanks to the findings in the early papyri, the clarity in the history of transmission has better allowed scholars to arrive at the original wording of the inspired writers. The most noticeable problem with this argument is the plague of circular reasoning: the early papyri demonstrate the value of early manuscripts. Says Epp,

> So we are back to circularity. And finally, does not the predilection for a certain group of manuscripts that have "an inherent significance" (all the third/fourth century papyri and uncials) come rather close—in principle at least—to what the Alands call the "extreme" of Westcott-Hort "with their partiality to [Codex] B"? Is it not a small step from the "cult of the best manuscript" to the "cult of the best manuscripts"?[125]

Though Epp may be guilty of overstating the case with his use of hyperbole, he certainly shows how circular reasoning has come into play with this argument.

Moreover, some would dispute that the history of the text can be adequately reconstructed.[126] Epp elsewhere asks, "How representative, really, of the earliest history of the NT text are these earliest papyri? What

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[119]Ibid., 122.

[120]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 34. Burgon and Miller add, "it remains true that until evidence has been produced to the contrary in any particular instance, the more ancient of two witnesses may reasonably be presumed to be the better informed witness." (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, 40).

[121]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 34. In agreement, Burgon and Miller note, "Antiquity alone affords no security that the manuscript in our hands is not infected with the corruption which sprang up largely in the first and second centuries." (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, 40).

[122]Comfort, *Quest*, 30.

[123]Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 99.

[124]For a more comprehensive treatment of this papyrus, see Chapter 4 of this thesis, which treats the external evidence for the Ephesians 1:1 variant.

[125]Eldon Jay Epp, "New Testament Textual Criticism Past, Present, and Future: Reflections on the Alands' *Text of the New Testament*," *Harvard Theological Review* 82/2 (1989), 226.

[126]Elliott and Moir claim, "The creation of an overall stemma of manuscripts that incorporates a large family tree with most manuscripts in it is impossible. What this means is that we cannot work back through the family to the earliest ancestors, and from these to the original." (Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 24).

assurance do we have that these randomly surviving manuscripts represent in any real sense the entire earliest period of the text?"[127] Comfort responds by saying, "Yes. The early papyrus manuscripts represent not only the Egyptian New Testament text, but also the text of the entire early church."[128]

The fourth argument, that one should prefer the oldest manuscripts because the use of this criterion is an ancient practice, is irrelevant to the issue. The earliness or lateness of such a practice does not pertain to its worth or inherent value. If judged according to modern standards, Jerome may be considered "a more sagacious textual critic than Origen, well aware of the varieties of errors which arise in the transcription of manuscripts."[129] However, his favorable skills in this field cannot establish the correctness of this praxis.

In summary, choosing a variant solely because it is read in the oldest manuscripts is not necessarily the best method for establishing the original reading. The oldest papyrus manuscripts have shown that they also suffer from scribal error and transmission of prior mistakes. If the history of the text were fully—or even conclusively—known, it would lend more credence to this view, especially if the unresolved issues were resolved in a way that harmonized with the proto-Alexandrian text.

However, the Alexandrian text-type cannot even be considered the earliest text-type. "The process proposed here leads to a preference for the Western family of readings in almost every case because the testimonies of the second century fathers and versions in favor of this family are earlier than those for any other."[130] As the previous chapter demonstrated, the Western text-type is definitely not the purest or most reliable of the four.

Having said this, there is some value to the praxis of "oldest being best." First, greater antiquity means that a manuscript probably represents fewer generations of copies between it and the original, thus meaning that there will be fewer reproductions that are laden with error. It must be kept in mind, though, that errors committed early in the transmission process will only continue to be produced.

Second, if a conclusive rendition of the history of textual transmission were presented, and an early family of manuscripts (text-type) were found to be very pure in its text, Comfort's proposal would have strong merit (i.e., The reading of greatest antiquity should be incorporated into the text unless internal evidence is overwhelmingly weighted in favor of a reading supported by later manuscripts). Certainly his conclusion that external evidence, being objective, should have more weight than internal evidence, being subjective, must be strongly considered.

Choose the Reading Attested by the Most Text-Types

The Case for the Majority of Text-Types Being Best

The third view of how one should determine the original readings of the text, where deviation exists among the manuscripts, is that the greater the number of text-types in support of a reading, the greater the

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[127]Eldon Jay Epp, "Textual Criticism," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 104–5.

[128]Comfort, *Quest*, 34. Though this matter will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4 when discussing the external evidence of the Ephesians 1:1 variant, it may here be said that Comfort rests his case on the presumption that the papyri may not be local Egyptian texts and the fact that the text of the early church fathers who lived outside Egypt was actually of the Alexandrian text-type. Ibid.

[129]Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 153.

[130]Robert L. Thomas, "The Method of Textual Criticism" (Class notes, The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, Calif., 1995), 3.

probability of its originality.[131] The distinctiveness of this view is that "the reading that is the consensus of the majority of text types is most representative of the autographs."[132]

The first argument in favor of the majority of text-types being best is that if a reading has the support of good witnesses of several text-types, it is more probable that the reading antedates the rise of the local texts than it is probable that it originates in the geographical location of one of those local texts.[133]

The second argument in favor of the majority of text-types being best is that this view considers both external and internal evidence equally and prefers no single text-type as superior over all of the others. All of the text-types are on the same playing field, each being equally early, independent, and attested in the second century.[134]

The third argument in favor of this position is that the Byzantine text-type is older than the age of the earliest Byzantine manuscript since Byzantine readings once thought to be late have been found in early Egyptian papyri.[135] This is noticeably so in the corrections of $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$, with its tendency toward a smoother and more intelligible Greek, but the same phenomenon can be seen in the epistles of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$.[136] Harry Sturz lists some 150 distinctively Byzantine readings found in the papyri of the third century and before,[137] which are all unattested by the versions and church fathers.[138]

The Case against the Majority of Text-Types Being Best

This view was primarily championed by Harry Sturz, who proposed that the Byzantine text has a place of usefulness as an independent text-type and should not be assigned secondary status.[139] Sturz originated this model based on the convictions that the Byzantine readings are old, and that its text is unedited (in the sense that it has been accused of being a later recension).[140] As a result, Sturz concludes that "individual readings supported by a consensus of the major text-types should be considered as (1) heavily attested by external evidence and (2) preserved from very early in the second century."[141]

The first argument offered in support of this view is that readings with multiple traditions are prone to represent the original text since single traditions are more likely to have been created in the geographical location indigenous to that text-type. Upon first review, this argument seems to be convincing, since such a principle easily might account for a spurious variant that surfaced in a localized area but was never seen elsewhere.

On the other hand, such a canon of textual criticism would convincingly favor a later, editorialized text-type that tended to conflate, harmonize, and follow readings from earlier text-types. Not coincidentally, the Byzantine text-type has been found to harmonize, follow other text-types, and conflate readings to a far greater

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[131]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 35.

[132]Ibid., 38.

[133]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 116.

[134]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 38.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 213.

[137]Harry A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 61.

[138]Robinson and Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, xxiv.

[139]Though Black, a student of Sturz, refers to this view as "Reasoned Conservatism," he claims that it shows no bias to any text-type. Yet earlier he states that "the term 'conservative' is used here to refer to a generally high view of the traditional Byzantine text type and/or the Textus Receptus." (Black, *A Concise Guide*," 38, 37).

[140]Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type*, 48–49.

[141]Ibid., 131.

degree than any other text-type.[142] Moreover, most modern textual critics believe that the Byzantine text is the result of some type of recension.[143]

The second argument is that this view considers both external and internal evidence equally, showing preference to no single text-type over any other. One glaring problem with this view is that in reality it favors the Byzantine text, which is often in alignment with one or more of the other text-types. Speaking in regard to the Western text-type, Greenlee says it features "many readings which it has in combination with other texts."[144] A large percentage of these agreements are simply readings where it aligns with the Byzantine text.

Another problem with the second argument is that internal evidence is not actually given much practical weight, as demonstrated in an illustration of Metzger, where he ironically claims that the singular Byzantine reading in Matthew 12:47 is to be preferred over the joint traditions of the Alexandrian and Western texts.[145] Here, the more ancient witnesses join in omitting a whole verse! Verse 47 closes with the same word as verse 46, so the eyes of the copyists have chanced to wander from the end of the former verse to the end of the latter.

A final problem with the second argument is that there is no proof of the Byzantine text-type existing in the second century. Though there is no consensus of opinion as to the origin of the Byzantine text, there is also no trace of it in the manuscript tradition or the fathers before the late fourth century, and it does not appear in an extant Greek manuscript until the fifth century. Therefore, to put the Byzantine text "on the same playing field" as the other text-types is to presume a far greater antiquity for it than the evidence would allow.

The third argument is that the Byzantine text-type is actually older than the oldest surviving Byzantine manuscript, since over 150 distinctively Byzantine readings have been found in the early Egyptian papyri. First, Robert Thomas notes that this list can be reduced substantially by deleting readings that could have arisen accidentally. For example, among the "distinctively Byzantine" readings are many changes of the type that copyists could have made independently of one another, without the influence of family relationships.[146]

The simple answer to the declaration of Sturz that the discovery of 150 distinctively Byzantine readings found in the papyri proves the earliness of the Byzantine text-type is that the presence of some early Byzantine readings in the early papyri does not demand the existence of an equally early Byzantine text-type. This weakness in Sturz' theory is brought to light by one of Epp's statements.

> The Chester Beatty papyri provided readings that left untouched the generally held theory of the time [of Westcott and Hort] that three early text-types existed (the "Neutral" [B], the "Western" [D], and the more recently established Caesarean text), for $\mathfrak{P}^{45}$ seemed to fall midway between the B and D texts (hence, not threatening their existence), while $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ stood with the B text. Subsequently, the Bodmer papyri provided an even earlier witness to the Vaticanus or B text, namely $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, as well as another example in $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$.[147]

What Epp here demonstrates is that the early papyri discoveries of the twentieth century reflect readings that are predominantly Alexandrian in their allegiance. By contrast, the distinctively Byzantine readings, no matter how many of them are genuinely Byzantine, are minuscule in number.

Does the appearance of some early Byzantine readings constitute an early text-type? All that the existence of these few Byzantine readings proves is that a selective number of Byzantine readings are indeed

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142For an extensive list of conflated and fuller readings found in the Byzantine text-type, shown in contrast to the shorter forms found in the Alexandrian manuscripts, see Thomas, *An Introductory Guide*, 33–45.

143See Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 168; Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 24; Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 29; Greenlee, *Introduction*, 62; Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 209; and J. N. Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1920), 320.

144Greenlee, *Introduction*, 87.

145Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 239.

146Thomas, *An Introductory Guide*, 30.

147Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts," 14.

ancient. This falls in line with what was agreed upon by all, for no one currently disputes the antiquity of some of the Byzantine readings.

The Byzantine compilers obviously had many manuscripts at their disposal, but evidently the problem was in the judgment they exhibited in their choices. Their wholesale tendency toward conflation proves both the mass of manuscript evidence in hand and the indecisiveness to choose (only) one reading for each variant. If the Byzantine text is a later recension, would it not have had access to some ancient readings as found in the papyri?

In summary, the case for the majority of text-types being best is extremely weak, possibly devised merely as a more credible way of giving supremacy to the Byzantine text. This view clearly favors any later text-type that routinely finds itself agreeing with at least one other text-type, which is often true of the Byzantine text. However, it would gain more credibility if one could prove that Byzantine text-type was a contemporary of the other three, but even that would only address one of the many troubles with which it is burdened.

Apply Radical Eclecticism

The Case for Radical Eclecticism

Radical Eclecticism holds to what may be called a purely eclectic text, or preferring a text based solely on internal evidence. This view came into existence about one decade after the term "eclectic" first was used in the field of textual criticism.[148] G. D. Kilpatrick coined the term "rigorous eclecticism" to refer to a decidedly one-sided approach that emphasizes stylistic (internal) rather than documentary (external) considerations.[149]

The first argument in favor of radical eclecticism is that since the history of the text is untraceable, none of the text-types carries any weight.[150] With the distrust in the superiority of any one given manuscript or text-type, and the recognition that the genealogical method is impractical, the cult of the best manuscripts must give way to the cult of the best readings.[151]

The second argument in favor of radical eclecticism is that the original reading may have survived in only a few witnesses, or even in a single relatively late manuscript standing alone against the rest of the tradition. This requires the textual critic to examine all of the available variants and to be willing to follow various sets of manuscripts at different times.[152]

The third argument for radical eclecticism is that external considerations often supersede a known historical process at work in the revision of the Greek language, such as Atticisms.[153] If Atticisms were to be recognized as such, and they were often employed during the early centuries of textual transmission, internal evidence would be given its rightful voice.

The Case against Radical Eclecticism

The first argument in favor of radical eclecticism is that because of the uncertainty of the history of textual transmission, none of the text-types should be shown any preference over the others. In response, Comfort has argued that today's understanding of textual history is vastly improved, to the point at which he

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[148]Ibid., 37. Epp states that radical eclecticism is "in complete detachment from any value or weight that may be assigned to the manuscripts or groups that contain them." (Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 253).

[149]"We may then conclude our inquiry by suggesting that the textual criteria require a rigorous eclecticism." (G. D. Kilpatrick, "Western Text and Original Text in the Gospels and Acts," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 44 [1943]: 36. See also Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 212).

[150]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 37.

[151]J. K. Elliott, *Essays and Studies in New Testament Textual Criticism* (Cordoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1992), 27–28.

[152]Ibid., 28.

[153]Ibid., 31.

confidently asserts that proof exists to confirm that the text of early Egypt represents not only that region, but the entire church, and thus the original text.[154] Even if all of the pieces to the puzzle of early textual history are not in place, it may be said with confidence that radical eclectics overstate the case by calling the history "untraceable."

Logically, a method such as radical eclecticism would have no need for a reconstruction of the history of textual transmission, but few textual critics would espouse so extreme a view as this.[155] The history of the text is crucial to textual criticism, as Duplacy affirms. "La critique des textes est une discipline historique. A ce titre, son premier devoir est de prendre au sérieux ses sources. . . . Je plaiderai donc la cause de l'histoire et surtout, au nom de l'histoire, la cause des documents."[156]

The second argument in favor of radical eclecticism is that the original reading may have survived in only a few late witnesses. However, even radical eclectic J. K. Elliott is forced to admit, "The acceptance by thoroughgoing eclectics of readings which have only slight manuscript support has, quite naturally, been the area in which critics of this method have been most active."[157] Elliott himself realizes the importance of the criticism on this point.

Colwell notes in disbelief that radical eclectic Kilpatrick argues that readings found only in one late Vulgate manuscript should be given the most serious consideration because they are good readings.[158] The obvious weakness here is that manuscript evidence has great value if textual criticism is to be recognized as a historical discipline, which it is.

Early attestation and quality of manuscript evidence must mean something. Speaking of the work of Kilpatrick, Epp decries, "Yet in a real sense external criteria were seriously undermined."[159] In addition, there must be a descending value structure among witnesses, because versional readings that have no support in the Greek manuscript tradition cannot be declared to be of equal or greater value than the readings found in Greek manuscripts.

The third argument in favor of radical eclecticism is that overriding external considerations often supersede a known historical process at work in the revision of the Greek language, such as Atticisms. This argument is based on the assumption that the biblical authors consistently wrote in a non-Atticistic style. Thus the first problem with this position is that an author may have varied his usage on occasion.[160]

The other problem with this position is that a scribe who was aware of the author's prevailing usage may have altered a reading in order to bring it into harmony with that prevailing usage. Furthermore, to suggest that one should apply rigorous eclecticism merely because an Atticistic revival occurred during the early centuries is to disregard the use of other literary and stylistic tendencies that were also prevalent during the same period, some of which were deliberately anti-Atticistic.[161]

In summary, radical eclecticism suggests an extreme position that clearly cannot be accepted into the discipline of textual criticism. This view represents subjectivism that has gone out of control, as it puts the decision-making process squarely into the hands of the modern textual critic. The history of the text, so far as it is known today, is completely silenced in the matter, as the rejection of text-types destroys the bridge between

[154]Comfort, *Quest*, 34.

[155]Hodges, "The Greek Text," 36.

[156]Jean Duplacy, "Historie des Manuscrits et Historie du Texte du Nouveau Testament," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965–1966), 125. Colwell translates, "Textual criticism is a historical discipline. As such, its primary duty is to take its sources seriously. . . . I will plead then the cause of history, and above all in the name of history, the cause of the documents." (Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 155).

[157]Elliott, *Essays and Studies*, 33.

[158]Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 154.

[159]Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 251.

[160]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 178.

[161]Ibid., 179.

the history of the manuscripts and Christian thought.[162] What is more, it involves far too much guesswork as to the intentions and actions of both author and scribe.

Apply Reasoned Eclecticism

The Case for Reasoned Eclecticism

In an attempt to temper the subjectivism of radical eclecticism, modern textual critics have employed reasoned eclecticism, which evaluates the character of variants, both in light of the manuscript evidence, and in light of internal evidence.[163] The term was employed by Leo Vaganay in 1934 to describe an even-handed method that took into account the analysis of error in textual transmission as well as the assessment of both documentary evidence and the intrinsic quality of readings.[164]

In practice, there are two types of reasoned eclectics: 1) those who value external criteria over internal criteria and utilize the latter mainly to clarify cases plagued by an ambiguous array of external evidence, and 2) those who wittingly value internal criteria above external criteria and rely more heavily upon stylistic, grammatical, and contextual factors in their textual decisions.[165]

The first argument for reasoned eclecticism is that since all surviving manuscripts, as well as all four text-types, are not without error, the correct reading for each variant must be determined on a case-by-case basis.[166] This view allows for both external and internal evidence to be given full consideration in making textual choices, avoiding the extremes of basing all textual choices on external or internal evidence only.[167]

The second argument for reasoned eclecticism is that the majority of practicing textual critics and editors of scholarly editions in the twentieth century now claim to adhere to this praxis.[168] Most textual critics look for a combination of convincing arguments based on internal probability and reliable external evidence when deciding between variant readings.

Third, external evidence is not thorough enough in itself to make every decision by manuscript support alone. Whatever one's assessment of the weight to be assigned to external evidence, internal evidence is crucial for at least two reasons. It is necessary both to explain how and why the variants arose[169] and to initiate the process of evaluating external evidence, because internal evidence is used first to evaluate individual readings of manuscripts so that the overall merit of those manuscripts is able to be determined.[170]

The Case against Reasoned Eclecticism

The first argument for reasoned eclecticism is that since all surviving manuscripts and text-types contain errors, the correct reading for each variant must be determined on a case-by-case basis, giving a voice to both

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[162]Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 152.

[163]Comfort, *Quest*, 39.

[164]"[The eclectic method] seems to us to be the best way of describing the method proper to the textual criticism of the New Testament. Eclecticism, that is, no shutting up of the different branches of the science into watertight compartments; verbal criticism, external and internal criticism, all have their parts to play, and they must give each other mutual support." (Leo Vaganay, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, trans. B. V. Miller [St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Co., 1937], 91. The original French edition was published in Paris in 1934. See also Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 212).

[165]Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 214.

[166]Ehrman, "Textual Criticism," 131.

[167]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 19.

[168]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 31.

[169]Ibid., 35.

[170]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 79.

external and internal considerations. The basic tenet of this argument cannot be doubted, for all manuscripts and text-types do contain errors, so external evidence is not enough.

However, the problem is often that in actuality, the choice between readings is often made solely on the basis of intrinsic probability. Says Colwell, "By 'eclectic' they mean in fact free choice among readings. This choice in many cases is made solely on the basis of intrinsic probability. The editor chooses that reading which commends itself to him as fitting the context, whether in style, or idea, or contextual reference."[171] In the words of Comfort, reasoned eclecticism tends "to give priority to internal evidence over external evidence. But it has to be the other way around if we are going to recover the original text."[172]

One example of reasoned eclecticism giving priority to internal evidence is the tendency of Kurt Aland's Nestle-Aland text to depart from the readings found in the papyri. "As the champion of the early papyri, Kurt Aland had the opportunity to make great changes in the twenty-sixth edition of the Nestle-Aland text."[173] But of the 2,400 variants where papyri are cited, "the early papyri support the text about 1,415 times (which equals 59%)."[174]

This tendency of Kurt Aland and his committee to relegate so many early manuscript readings to the margin causes Comfort to lament, "What is quite apparent is that NA^{26} does not fully display the evidence of the early manuscripts."[175] So long as internal evidence usurps the primacy of external evidence in the decision-making process,[176] reasoned eclecticism cannot be effective. What is needed are reasoned eclectics who understand the priority of establishing their decisions on the objective basis of external evidence, so far as the manuscripts themselves will allow.

The second argument for reasoned eclecticism is that the majority of modern scholars maintain this position. Though this may prove comforting to those who support reasoned eclecticism, it cannot be considered a strong rational argument in its defense. Such an argument ranks alongside numerical superiority as a defense for giving priority to the MT as being indefensible arguments. On the other hand, such widespread support for this view may also mean that there is good reason for subscribing to it.

The third argument for reasoned eclecticism is that external evidence is not thorough enough in itself to make every decision by manuscript support alone. This argument is correct in implying that the precursor to establishing a proper level of value for each manuscript is the scrutiny of each reading by means of the canons of internal evidence. "The only adequate criterion of authority for an individual document, apart from its affinity to other documents, is the character of its text, as ascertained by the fullest possible comparison of its different readings."[177] The reason for this type of comparison is that some textual witnesses are more reliable than others.[178]

Another problem with reasoned eclecticism is that it does not take seriously enough the two basic principles of Hort, both of which have not needed drastic revision after the discovery of the papyri and other

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[171]Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 154.

[172]Comfort, *Quest*, 40.

[173]Ibid., 123.

[174]Ibid.

[175]Ibid.

[176]The principles of internal evidence often can counteract one another so that a stalemate results. It is precisely at such times that one must finally choose on the basis of the better manuscripts (Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 31).

[177]Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), 543. Modern textual critic Eldon Epp concurs: "Readings are to be preferred that are found in a manuscript that habitually contains superior readings as determined by intrinsic and transcriptional probability. Certainty is increased if such a better manuscript is found also to be an older manuscript." (Epp, "The Eclectic Method," 235).

[178]The general principle of external evidence is that witnesses that are *known* to produce an inferior text in cases where the matter can be decided with a high degree of certainty are also likely to produce an inferior text where the internal evidence is more ambiguous (Ehrman, "Textual Criticism," 134).

early manuscripts.[179] The first principle is expressed in the proposition, "Knowledge of documents should precede final judgment upon readings," while the second states that "all trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is founded on the study of their history, that is, of the relations of descent or affinity which connect the several documents."[180]

In summary, reasoned eclecticism is effective in that it alone draws upon both external and internal evidence to assist in ascertaining correct readings. If used properly, it also harmonizes with the proper method of manuscript analysis for determining the quality of each individual manuscript. As was pointed out, the danger inherent within this method is that internal evidence may easily take precedence over external evidence, with the result that the textual critic possesses more authority in the decision than he is actually warranted.

Conclusion on the Best Praxis for Textual Criticism

The case for choosing the reading that has the majority of manuscripts supporting it was found to be lacking, mainly because it counts rather than weighs evidence. This view does not consider the less conflated, less harmonized, less expanded, earlier text-types that may well feature the better readings in many cases. Neither does it respect internal considerations in any way, either to establish quality manuscripts or to assist in choosing the correct readings for individual variants.

The case for choosing the reading that has the most ancient support was insufficient also, because even the oldest manuscripts suffer from scribal error and transmission of prior mistakes. In addition, the inconclusive nature of the history of transmission deters one from choosing any single text-type, even the oldest, as the sole arbiter of variations in readings. Internal evidence must play some part in establishing the original text, even if just affirming the conclusion drawn from an examination of the external evidence. After all, one's theory of the weight of manuscript evidence is only as good as one's theory of textual history and the choice of canons of internal evidence that determines quality manuscript groupings.

Though not the best overall choice, this praxis does reflect some positive elements. For example, the older manuscripts, which often represent fewer copyings between them and the autographs, have less opportunity of being corrupted. Also, Comfort's suggestion that more weight should be given to external evidence than to internal evidence, since external evidence is more objective, was found to be correct.

The case for choosing the reading that is attested by the most text-types was found to leave a great deal to be desired. The most glaring weakness is that this view favors a text-type which tends to conflate readings, harmonize, and follow readings from earlier text-types, all of which have been shown to be true of the Byzantine text. Not coincidentally, the proponents of this view demonstrate a propensity to follow the readings of the Byzantine text, even if they arrive at this conclusion in a more scholarly fashion.

Though this view purports to grant equal consideration to internal and external evidence, there is no confirmation that internal evidence has an actual role in the process of choosing variants. Another problem with the view that chooses the reading supported by the most text-types is that its advocates believe the Byzantine text dates to the second century, of which there is no proof. Neither does the existence of some distinctively Byzantine readings in the papyri prove the Byzantine text to be earlier. Therefore, choosing the reading supported by the most text-types cannot be the best praxis.

The case for choosing a reading by applying radical eclecticism cannot be best, since radical eclecticism claims that the modern conception of textual history is in a quandary, unable to make any sense of what transpired. In reality, much is known about textual history, which contributes to the value of external evidence. The radical eclectics are simply looking for any easy way to discredit external evidence. Finally, radical eclecticism would consider accepting a reading found in a single late version as seriously as it would consider

[179]Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, 156.
[180]Westcott and Hort, *New Testament*, 543, 545.

accepting a reading found in all of the Greek text-types, a position which clearly dooms this praxis to an untenable position.

The case for choosing a reading by applying reasoned eclecticism is the strongest of the five praxes. It is the only position that has the potential to balance external and internal evidence properly, though the better form of reasoned eclecticism is the one that values external over internal criteria and utilizes the latter mainly to clarify cases where the external evidence remains ambiguous.

Several factors make this type of reasoned eclecticism best, a praxis that closely resembles Comfort's theory of choosing the reading with the support of the early manuscripts unless internal evidence clearly mitigates against it. First, it gives primary consideration to the objective weight of manuscript-evidence, though this evidence is only as good as the accuracy of one's view of the history of textual transmission. Second, it gives internal evidence a proper role in verifying or overturning the tentative conclusion that was derived from external evidence.

CHAPTER 4:

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Introduction

The external evidence for the originality or absence of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in Ephesians 1:1 reveals essentially three readings. The A text, so called because Alexandrinus (A) represents this variation, reads, τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς (omit D) οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ πιστοῖς. The B text, so called since the first hand of Vaticanus (B) followed this reading, omits the destination and drops the moveable-ν from the participle: τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς. The P text, found only in the Alexandrian witness, 𝔓46, reads similarly: τοῖς ἁγίοις οὖσιν καὶ πιστοῖς, with the only two differences between its text and that of the B text being the anarthrous nature of the participle and the addition of a movable-ν at the end of that same participle.

The P text will often, though not always, be treated with the B text (thus BP), since the issue at hand is not the article before the participle but the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant.[181] The first matter to be discussed will be the identification and classification of the variant, especially as detailed by the committee behind the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies (UBS) Greek New Testament text.

The second matter to be discussed will be the case for the originality of the variant, which bases its case on the majority of manuscript support, the patristic evidence and use of the superscription, the unanimity of the early versions (translations) of the Greek text, and the widespread geographical distribution of the witnesses.

The third matter to be discussed will be the case for the omission, or more properly the absence, of the variant. This view is based upon the quality and earliness of three majuscule manuscripts (one papyrus and two parchment), the testimony of several important minuscule manuscripts, and some early patristic evidence.

The fourth matter to be discussed will be an evaluation of the evidence presented by each of the two views previously described. Such an evaluation will hope to yield information that will both demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of each view and determine which of them better stands up to scrutiny.

Finally, a tentative conclusion will be reached as to the originality or omission of the variant. The criteria for this decision will primarily consist of the information drawn from the genealogical relationships among manuscripts (Chapter 2), that drawn from the chosen praxis for textual criticism (Chapter 3), and that drawn from the arguments surrounding the external evidence for this variant (Chapter 4). A final conclusion will not be reached until after reviewing the internal evidence (Chapter 5).

Identification and Classification of the Variant

The Rating of the Variant

Within the UBS text of Ephesians 1:1, the variant ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is enclosed in single brackets.[182] According to the Alands, single brackets are the philologists' traditional way of indicating that the authenticity

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[181]The originality of the P text has never been seriously investigated. Some believe that the scribe of this text, or maybe the scribe of an exemplar in the line of copies from which it derived, may have allowed his eye to stray and missed the second τοῖς due to the three successive οις endings. Others suggest that the scribe noticed the difficulty in reading the B text, so he thought he could render it clearer by eliminating the article (Ernest Best, "Ephesians 1:1," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* [London: Cambridge U. Press, 1979], 34–35). According to Zuntz, the omission of an article in 𝔓46 always should be viewed with suspicion (Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* [London: Oxford U. Press, 1953], 51).

[182]United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, 1993), 654. The words are also enclosed in brackets in the text of Westcott and Hort (Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Student's ed. [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946], 429).

of the words is doubtful, but that the doubt is insufficient to warrant their removal.[183] Therefore, the variant is placed within the text, but it is enclosed in brackets to communicate the tentative nature of the decision to consider it to be a part of the original text.

Since the first reading that appears in the apparatus for a given variant is the reading chosen by the editors as the reading that they believe most represents that of the original text, the ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ variant is considered by the United Bible Societies to be the original reading because it appears as the first variant in the apparatus.[184] However, the UBS committee is not the first to enclose the destination in brackets. Nineham notes that the variant was already bracketed in the Greek text of Westcott and Hort on the basis of the manuscript evidence available to them at the end of the 19th century.[185]

In Bruce Metzger's volume, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, which explains the reasoning behind many of the decisions of the UBS committee, the author discusses the decision to include ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ in Ephesians 1:1. "Since the letter has been traditionally known as 'To the Ephesians,' and since all witnesses except those mentioned above include the words ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ, the Committee decided to retain them, but enclosed within square brackets."[186] What is noteworthy in this explanation of the rationale for including the variant as original is the role of long-standing tradition that considers the epistle to be written to the church at Ephesus.

The UBS text rates each variant with a letter, either A, B, C, or D, according to the degree of certainty of its accuracy, with A representing the highest level of certainty on the part of the committee. For the Ephesians 1:1 variant, the committee chose a C rating. The letter C means that the editors found the arguments fairly equally balanced for and against the reading.[187] From this rating and the brackets enclosing ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ, it appears that the committee was rather non-committal, choosing to err on the side of conservatism, and not overtly challenging the long-standing tradition.

The Variant and Categories of Witnesses

The Alands, the driving force behind the UBS committee, have categorized the many extant biblical manuscripts into a system that rates each manuscripts and assigns to it a relative value.[188] For the purpose of comparison, the witnesses to Ephesians 1:1 will be listed according to these values, with the manuscripts of the A text listed first, followed by those of the BP text. Before the manuscript lists are able to be presented, a short description of the Alands' categories (I–V) must be offered.[189]

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[183]Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 44. Elliott and Moir note that the many bracketed words in the text means there are competing reasons favoring the exclusion or addition of those words (Keith Elliott and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1995], 34).

[184]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 225.

[185]D. E. Nineham, "Case Against the Pauline Authorship," in *Studies in Ephesians*, ed. F. L. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1956), 24.

[186]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, 1994), 532.

[187]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 45.

[188]Ibid., 96ff.

[189]Ibid., 106. Not all are convinced of the objectivity behind the Alands' classification of categories, or more specifically the implementation of the ideal. Epp concludes that there is a fair amount of pre-judgment and arbitrariness if numerous manuscripts are automatically included in Category I merely because of their age, and another manuscript (P^{74}) is included in that category despite its age. He says the inclusion of $\mathfrak{P}^{74}$ in Category I is due to its textual quality, which presumably has already been determined on the basis of its affinity with the predetermined "original text" (Eldon J. Epp, "New Testament Textual Criticism Past, Present, and Future: Reflections on the Alands' *Text of the New Testament*," *Harvard Theological Review* 82/2 [1989]: 226).

Category I: Manuscripts of a very special quality, which should always be considered in establishing the original text. Category II: Manuscripts of a special quality, but distinguished from manuscripts of Category I by the presence of alien influences, and yet still of importance for establishing the original text. Category III: Manuscripts of a distinctive character with an independent text, usually important for establishing the original text, but particularly important for establishing the history of the text. Category IV: Manuscripts of the D text, which is no more than Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D^{ea}) and its very few precursors and descendants. Category V: Manuscripts with a purely or predominantly Byzantine text. The date for each manuscript is listed according to the century in which it was produced, though some are more easily dated than others.

A text	Date	Category
$\aleph^{2}$	7c	---
A	5c	I
B^{2}	6/7c	---
D^{p}	6c	IV
F^{p}	9c	II
G^{p}	9c	III
ψ^{vid}	8/9c	---
075	10c	III
0150	9c	III
33	9c	I
81	1044	II
104	1087	III
256	11/12c	II
263	13c	III
365	13c	III
424*	11c	V
436	11c	III
459	1092	III
1175	11c	I

A text	Date	Category
1241	12c	III
1319	12c	III
1573	12/13c	III
1852	13c	III
1881	14c	II
1912	10c	III
1962	11c	II
2127	12c	II
2200	14c	III
2464	9c	II

BP text	Date	Category
$\mathfrak{P}^{46}$	200	I
$\aleph^{*}$	4c	I
B^{*}	4c	I
6	13c	III
424^{c}	?	III
1739	10c	I

Though no conclusions will yet be drawn from this list, several matters are in need of clarification. First, the date of some of the corrected manuscripts cannot be identified from the sources consulted. Further, the category designation for other corrected documents was never given, though these seem to have been corrected to the Byzantine text. Obviously, the quantity of manuscript support favors the A text, though the antiquity and quality seem to favor the BP text. More information about the quality of these manuscripts must be obtained before judging the work of the Alands' categorizing.

The Case for the Originality of the Variant

The Majority of Witnesses Contain the Variant

The textual evidence shows that almost the entire ancient tradition is in support of the Ephesian address.[190] As seen in the previous category breakdown, the UBS text lists 6 uncials, 3 corrected uncials, and 20 minuscules that support the A text in including the variant ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in Ephesians 1:1. This is in contrast to

[190] David Alan Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle" (M.Div. Thesis, Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, Calif., 1980), 13.

the BP text, which only features 1 papyrus, 2 uncials, and 2 minuscules. The question must be addressed as to the relevance of these numbers and the relative value of the manuscripts and witnesses themselves.

David Black is convinced about the weight of the evidence in favor of the heavily attested A text:

> Here the external evidence seems to favor the inclusion of the words. The longer reading is both early and widespread, being supported by the great majority of manuscripts (A, D, G, K, P, 33, Byz), ancient versions (Old Latin, Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic), and church fathers (Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, Cyril, Theodoret), as well as by the majority of text types (the Western and the Byzantine). On the other hand, the testimony for the omission of 'in Ephesus' is extremely limited (𝔓46, א, B, Origen).[191]

According to Hodges and Farstad, any reading overwhelmingly attested by the manuscript tradition is more likely to be original than its rival. "In any tradition where there are not major disruptions in the transmissional history, the individual reading which has the earliest beginning is the one most likely to survive in a majority of documents."[192] In the case of Ephesians 1:1, the majority of the documents favor the variant, thus demonstrating its originality and greater antiquity than its rival.

Parchment Majuscule and Minuscule Evidence

The phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is found in nearly all of the uncials and minuscule manuscripts, even in א and B as later corrected.[193] A survey of some of the more important of these manuscripts will demonstrate the quality of support as well as the diversity of both number of text-types and geographical location.

A. This handsome codex, dating to sometime in the fifth century, contains the Old Testament—minus several mutilations—and most of the New Testament. The quality of the New Testament text preserved in codex Alexandrinus varies according to which book is under consideration. In the Gospels, it is the oldest example of the Byzantine text, but elsewhere it ranks along with B and א as representative of the Alexandrian text-type.[194]

The Alands consider the text of Alexandrinus in the gospels to exhibit the quality of a Category V text, while elsewhere, which would include Paul's Ephesian letter, it rates as a Category I text.[195] Since the Pauline epistles are of such high quality, and the text of the Pauline epistles is considered to be a representative of the Later Alexandrian text,[196] one would expect Alexandrinus to follow B and א in the omission of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. This oddity reveals division among the Alexandrian witnesses themselves, so the variant must not have been fully dispersed within this local text of Egypt.

D^p. Codex Claromontanus, which contains only the Pauline epistles and Hebrews, is a sixth-century bilingual (Greek and Latin) manuscript with the Greek on the left hand page. The work of at least nine different correctors has been identified, with the fourth corrector having added accents and breathing marks in the ninth

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[191]David Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1994), 48.

[192]Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), xi.

[193]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 11–12. Despite Black's regard, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus will not be cited here independently as manuscripts that support the originality of the variant. Since correctors from later centuries added ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the margins of their texts (see Plates 2 and 3), these manuscripts are better left as witnesses to the absence of the variant.

[194]Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 46–47.

[195]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 109.

[196]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 216.

century. Like codex Bezae (D, which does not contain the Pauline epistles), Claromontanus has a distinctly Western text.[197]

With the addition of this codex to the list of manuscripts that support the variant, the testimony of an early manuscript from the Western text-type is added to the aforementioned codex from the Alexandrian text-type, displaying the diverse geographical range of attestation. As mentioned in the Chapter 3 of this thesis, the Western text represents the text of the majority of the earliest of the church fathers.

F^p and G^p. Codex Augiensis (F^p) and codex Boernerianus (G^p) both date to the ninth century, and both feature a text that is of the Western type. Augiensis contains the Pauline epistles in double columns of Greek and Latin. Boernerianus contains the Pauline epistles in Greek, with a literalistic Latin translation between the lines. But with this manuscript, after Philemon there stands a superscription for the Epistle to the Laodiceans, though the text of this apocryphal letter is not present. These two codices probably go back one or two generations to a common archetype.[198] Nonetheless, they represent further Western support for the addition of the variant.

33. Since the early nineteenth century, minuscule 33 has often been called "The Queen of the cursives." This important minuscule codex, containing the entire New Testament except for Revelation, dates to the ninth or possibly the tenth century. It is an excellent representative of the Alexandrian text-type, but it also shows the influence of the Byzantine text, particularly in Acts and the Pauline epistles.[199] B. H. Streeter says of the Queen of the cursives and several other minuscules, "a late cursive may be a direct copy of an early uncial."[200]

81. Written in A.D. 1044, this manuscript is one of the most important of all the minuscule manuscripts. It contains the text of Acts in a form that agrees frequently with the Alexandrian text-type.[201]

104, 256, 424, 436, 459, 1175, 1241, 1319, 1573, 1881, 1912, 1962, 2464. Among other minuscules, these may be used as representative of the many later manuscripts that are aligned in support of the variant. As Metzger notes, most minuscule manuscripts that contain the text of the Pauline epistles are part of the Byzantine family.[202] With the addition of these minuscules that reflect a Byzantine text, a third text-type is found to support the originality of the variant.

Therefore, the supporting witnesses for the originality of the variant include uncials from both the Alexandrian and Western text-types, and minuscules from both the Byzantine and later Alexandrian text-types.

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[197]Ibid., 51.

[198]Ibid., 52–53.

[199]Ibid., 62. Metzger does not discuss the level of agreement between 33 and the Byzantine text in the Pauline epistles. However, a survey of the variants recorded in the UBS edition of Ephesians shows that of the 18 readings where the Alexandrian and Byzantine texts depart, excluding Ἐφέσῳ, minuscule 33 aligns with the Alexandrian text at least 11 times (1:15; 1:18; 2:5; 3:19; 4:8; 4:9 [κατέβη]; 4:28; 5:15; 5:22; 5:30; 6:24). Of the seven times when 33 is aligned with the Byzantine text (3:20; 4:9 [μέρη]; 4:32; 5:2; 5:19; 6:12; 6:20), twice there is only one Alexandrian representative in opposition ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ in 3:20; 4:9), and twice there are only two that oppose ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B in 5:19; 6:12); see United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 654–671. Therefore, to say that 33 should be considered a Byzantine witness in Ephesians might not be an accurate statement. Why limit the data of Alexandrian-Byzantine disagreements to Ephesians and not the other Pauline epistles? Comfort affirms the importance of limiting a reconstruction of the history of the early transmission of the text to a book-by-book analysis, "because each book or portion has had its own textual history." (Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992], 101). Whether 33 is "more Byzantine" in other Pauline epistles is unimportant to the present study.

[200]B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1951), 28.

[201]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 63.

[202]Ibid., 213.

“The Greek manuscript evidence shows that the omission was known only in Alexandria,”[203] and even there not all manuscripts agree in omitting it. Moreover, *every* Greek manuscript, including the few that omit the variant, contains the superscription ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ at the beginning of the epistle.[204] With three of the four text-types represented in attesting to the city-name destination, there seems to be little doubt about its genuineness.

The Muratorian Canon and the Superscription

The Muratorian Canon. Before considering the patristic evidence that supports the originality of the variant, one must briefly discuss the Muratorian canon and the superscription at the head of the epistle. The importance of the Muratorian canon is reinforced by the Alands’ observation that regarding the Pauline corpus, the only three known sources from the second century are 𝔓46, Marcion, and the Muratorian canon.[205] With 𝔓46 and Marcion favoring the omission, only the Muratorian canon contains the variant.

In 1740, a Latin list of New Testament books was published by Lodovico Muratori from a codex copied in the seventh or eighth century. The date at which the list was originally drawn up is disputed; it is most commonly held to belong to the end of the second century.[206] The Latin text has suffered from being copied by one or more barely literate scribes. Many scholars have held that behind the Latin wording lies an original Greek text, which has been completely lost, but more likely it was written in Latin, dating to the time when the Roman church began to be bilingual.[207]

The Canon is a list of New Testament books recognized as authoritative in the Roman church of the time. It both names the canonical books and makes a number of observations about them. The following excerpt is found with the Pauline epistles.

> [Paul] writes to seven churches in the following order: first to the Corinthians, second to the Ephesians, third to the Philippians, fourth to the Colossians, fifth to the Galatians, sixth to the Thessalonians, seventh to the Romans. . . . There is said to be another letter in Paul’s name to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrines, {both} forged in accordance with Marcion’s heresy.”[208]

From a normal reading of the words in the Canon, one sees that the writer ascribes the second letter as “to the Ephesians,” evidently implying that the superscription ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ stood at the top of the epistle.

Says Black, “This tradition [that supports the Ephesian address] includes the ancient Muratorianus, which pushes the date of the Ephesian address to at least the beginning of the second century.”[209] The letter “to the Laodiceans” that was forged according to Marcion’s heresy was evidently a spurious apocryphal letter. Foulkes affirms that it seems to be a separate letter altogether: “The evidence is complicated at this point in that the second-century Muratorian Fragment on the Canon refers to two letters, one to the Ephesians and one to the Laodiceans.”[210]

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[203]Black, “The Address of the Ephesian Epistle,” 11.

[204]Ibid., 12. Amazingly, 𝔓46 includes the superscription, though with no destination included in the text, and this manuscript safely can be dated from A.D. 150–200.

[205]Alands, *Text of the N. T.*, 79.

[206]F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 158. Bruce notes that A. C. Sundberg presents a strong case for a fourth-century date in “Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List,” *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973): 1–41.

[207]Ibid., 158.

[208]Ibid., 160.

[209]Black, “The Address of the Ephesian Epistle,” 13.

[210]Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians*, vol. unspecified, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 22.

The Superscription. Some would suggest that the earliest ascription of this epistle as Paul's letter to the Ephesians may be found in a letter of Ignatius,[211] who lived during the end of the first century and into the early second century. In chapter 12 of the letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians he writes, "You are initiated into the mysteries along with Paul, who was sanctified and well approved, . . . who makes mention of you ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ in Christ Jesus."[212]

In the mind of Stoeckhardt, the expression ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ cannot mean that "Paul mentioned the Ephesians 'in every one of his letters.' That is an evident falsehood. Even though Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:32 and in 16:8 and in 2 Corinthians 1:8 mentions his former and his future visit to Ephesus, that does not amount to a mention of the Ephesian congregation."[213]

Instead, Stoeckhardt suggests that the way to understand "πάσῃ, if it is to have a meaning at all, [is] in the sense of 'all,' just as it is used in Matthew 2:3, πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα, 'all of Jerusalem,' [or] in Romans 11:26, πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ, 'all Israel.'"[214] Therefore, Paul remembers the Ephesians "in his entire letter," meaning that he is referring to the canonical letter known today as "Ephesians." This makes Ignatius an extremely early witness in favor of ascribing the epistle "to the Ephesians," though he does not use the phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.

Many church fathers certainly read the superscription, "to the Ephesians," in their texts (e.g. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and the Muratorian Canon), whether Ignatius be considered among them or not. When did the superscription appear? From where did it arise? The evidence from the Pauline epistles seems to show that the titles of Paul's letters originated from the addresses that were in the opening of the letters themselves, and not the reverse.[215]

> If these words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were lacking in the original text, it is altogether out of the question that they should then have appeared in nearly all preserved codices and in all versions and that the Christian tradition from ancient times should have quite unanimously accepted this letter as addressed by Paul to the Ephesians. The old titles of Paul's letters have doubtless originated from the addresses which were prefixed to his letters.[216]

As Stoeckhardt's words show, the superscriptions derived from the opening verses of Paul's individual letters at a very early time.

The superscription probably cannot be traced back with certainty beyond Irenaeus (d. c. 202), though that is not to say it was not so recognized earlier.[217] Irenaeus, who lived primarily in the late second century, makes numerous references to the epistle, including one where he prefaces a quotation from Ephesians 5:30 with the words, "Just as the blessed Paul says in the epistle πρὸς Ἐφεσίους."[218] Here Irenaeus refers to Paul's epistle "to the Ephesians," which is the first clear reference to the superscription of the letter among the church fathers.

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[211]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 31.

[212]Ignatius, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Translations of Christian Literature: The Epistles of St. Ignatius Bishop of Antioch*, trans. J. H. Srawley (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919), 46–47. The Greek text reads, πάραδός ἐστε τῶν εἰς θεὸν ἀναιρουμένων, Παύλου συμμύσται τοῦ ἡγιασμένου, τοῦ μεμαρτυρημένου, . . . ὃς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ μνημονεύει ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. (Ignatius, *Ignatius to the Ephesians*, in *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, in Loeb Classical Library, trans. Kirsopp Lake [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985], 186).

[213]D. D. Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, trans. Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 19.

[214]Ibid.

[215]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 32.

[216]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 19.

[217]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 31.

[218]John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), xx.

The Church Fathers and the Appearance of the Variant

As most would agree, patristic citations are an important source of information for New Testament textual criticism.[219] However, disagreements occasionally exist as to the true readings found among the fathers, as some of them may only have known the letter as being written "to the Ephesians," based upon the title or tradition. Only a direct quotation using the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ signifies conclusively that the father read the variant in the text before him.

Nonetheless, as Metzger notes, "Despite the difficulties which attend the determination and evaluation of patristic evidence for the New Testament text, this kind of evidence is of such great importance in tracing the history of the transmission of the text that the labor of refining the ore from the dross is well worth the effort."[220]

According to the UBS text, the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is attested in the following church fathers: Ignatius, Chrysostom, Theodore, Victorinus of Rome, Ambrosiaster, Jerome, and Pelagius.[221] Church fathers often refer to the epistle as being sent "to the Ephesians," including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian. In fact, the only early dissenter to challenge the superscription was Marcion.[222]

The Appearance of the Variant. Though not offering direct evidence, Lightfoot contends that manuscripts to which Basil refers in the latter half of the fourth century are the earliest in which ἐν Ἐφέσῳ can be confirmed.[223] Wikenhauser clearly establishes evidence of the variant among the fathers. "The oldest [patristic] sources for the words 'in Ephesus' in 1:1 are the Latin commentary of Victorinus Afer in the second half of the fourth century, and the late manuscripts which Basil and Jerome know."[224]

Confirmation of this claim comes through the words of Jerome (c. A.D. 345–420) that are found in his commentary on Ephesians 1:1.

> Some, with an excessive refinement, think from what was said to Moses—'These words you will say to the children of Israel, HE WHO IS, has sent me'—that the saints and faithful at Ephesus are addressed by a term descriptive of essence, as if from him WHO IS, they had been named THEY WHO ARE. Others, indeed, suppose that the epistle was written not simply to those WHO ARE, but to those WHO ARE AT EPHESUS, saints and faithful [emphasis his].[225]

Jerome makes reference in an obscure fashion to the comment of Origen, showing that Jerome probably failed to understand the drift of Origen's explanation.[226] However, the statement of Jerome does reveal that there can be little doubt that the manuscripts in his possession included the variant.

At this point, one must agree with MacPherson, who says that "the result, then, of early documentary evidence may be stated thus. In the middle of the fourth century, the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ was generally

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[219]Black, *Concise*, 24.

[220]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 88. The "difficulties" spoken of will be discussed further when evaluating the external evidence under the case for the originality of the variant.

[221]United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 654.

[222]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 11.

[223]J. B. Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1893), 381.

[224]Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, trans. Joseph Cunningham (New York: Herder and Herder, 1958), 424.

[225]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxiv. On the following page of his commentary, Eadie acknowledges that the "some" Jerome refers to is Origen and any who follow his teaching.

[226]J. Armitage Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1980), 292.

current"[227] among the manuscripts known to the church fathers. In contrast, however, the superscription is known to date back at least to the latter half of the second century.[228]

Early Versions

A word may also be said about the versions, or translations of the Greek text. The extant copies of all of the versions, apart from Latin, early as well as late, contain the words in the text. "The old versions are unanimous in their favor,"[229] that is, unanimous in attesting to the genuineness of the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.

Included in the ancient versions that attest to the variant phrase are the Latin Vulgate, the Harclean Syriac version, the Peshitta Syriac version, the Sahidic dialect of the Coptic version, the Bohairic dialect of the Coptic version, the Armenian version, the Slavonic version, the Ethiopic version, and the Gothic version.[230]

Most amazing to Black is that the Egyptian Coptic versions, the Sahidic and Bohairic, are included among them.[231] This means that further disagreement exists among the Alexandrian sources, as one might expect these two versions to agree with the ancient Egyptian Greek manuscripts that omit the variant.

Widespread Geographical Distribution

The reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is not limited to manuscripts of only one geographical area, as is true of its omission. The reading that includes the variant is widespread, encompassing most of the civilized ancient world, including Rome and the West, Greece, Syria and Palestine, and even parts of Egypt itself.[232]

All things being equal, a geographically widespread reading is more likely to be original than a reading preserved in only one locale. "A reading, for example, with support from Rome, Asia Minor, Caesarea, and North Africa is more likely to be original than one supported only by Alexandrian witnesses.[233]

The antiquity of some manuscripts should not deter one from favoring the more widespread reading. Since the unparalleled climate of Egypt best allows the preservation of ancient texts, basically all of the most ancient manuscripts will naturally derive from Egypt.[234] "It is, therefore, most likely that the text on which our modern translations rest is simply a very early Egyptian form of the text whose nearness to the original is open to debate."[235]

Summary Statement for the Originality of the Variant

The external evidence reveals that the vast majority of manuscripts include the variant in their texts. The reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is supported not only by the Western and Byzantine text-types, but also by several important

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[227]John MacPherson, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892), 49.

[228]With the Muratorian Canon referring to the epistle "to the Ephesians," the date of the superscription may be pushed back to the early part of the second century (Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 13).

[229]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxii.

[230]United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 654.

[231]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 12.

[232]Ibid.

[233]Black, *Concise*, 35.

[234]Zane C. Hodges, "The Greek Text of the King James Version," in *Which Bible?*, 5th ed., ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), 28.

[235]Ibid. In the introduction to the Greek Bible of Hodges and Farstad, it reads, "The Egyptian type is probably a local text which never had any significant currency except in that part of the ancient world. By contrast, the majority of manuscripts were widely diffused and their ancestral roots must reach back to the autographs themselves." (Hodges and Farstad, *The Greek New Testament*, x).

Greek witnesses to the Alexandrian text. In contrast, the omission is supported by the sparsest of evidence of only a single text-type.[236]

Being that the inclusion of the variant attests from such a wide geographical area, it is highly improbable that there is any genealogical relationship between these witnesses. Thus, the testimony of the manuscripts, versions, and church fathers forms a strong array of witnesses that cannot easily be challenged.[237]

The Case for the Omission of the Variant

By sheer numbers, the support for the BP text pales in comparison to that of the A text. There are 4 fewer uncials, if uncorrected manuscripts are left uncounted, and 18 fewer minuscules. However, the BP text, unlike the A text, has the distinction of being supported by a very early papyrus manuscript[238] in its short list of adherents. $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, dated at A.D. 150–200, predates any of the A text manuscripts by 200–350 years. Both $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and the other manuscripts must be considered more closely in order to determine their reliability.

Papyrus Majuscule Evidence

$\mathfrak{P}^{46}$. The only papyrus manuscript that prints the text of Ephesians 1:1[239] is this ancient witness from the Chester Beatty collection.[240] According to the Alands, $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ is the earliest extant manuscript of the Pauline letters.[241] Normally $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ is dated near A.D. 200, but recently Young Kim dated it to the reign of Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96).[242] The end of the first century was chosen mainly because all literary papyri which have a handwriting style which is comparable to that of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ are dated in the first century,[243] and because there are no parallel papyri dated to the second or third centuries. If correct, this theory would place $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ in or just after the decade in which some believe the Pauline corpus was assembled (A.D. 75–85).[244]

Such a proposal is probably unjustified on several counts. First, it is possible that the scribe of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ deliberately archaized the script as he copied from his exemplar.[245] Second, it must have taken some time for the nine epistles that are preserved in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ to have been collected, then an archetypal copy made for the corpus, and

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[236]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 15.

[237]Ibid., 13.

[238]It should be noted that whether a text is transmitted on papyrus, ostraca, parchment, or paper is of no major importance in itself. The crucial point is the quality of the text preserved on it, meaning whether the text itself is of a high quality or not (Søren Giversen, "The Pauline Epistles on Papyrus," in *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie*, ed. Sigfred Pedersen [Forlaget Aros Århus, Denmark: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980], 205).

[239]See Plate 1 for the text of Ephesians 1:1 in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$.

[240]The circumstances of the Chester Beatty find have never been fully revealed. "They are known only to the natives who made [the find], and their statements, for obvious reasons, are not very dependable. The first reports spoke of the district of the Fayyum, to the west of the Nile; but information given to Dr. Carl Schmidt was to the effect that the actual site was on the opposite side of the river, near the remains of the ancient city Aphroditopolis." (Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How It Came to Us* [New York: Dutton, 1937], 112). At least one scholar believes that the Chester Beatty papyri constituted a church library, located somewhere in the Fayyum of Egypt, which survived the Diocletian persecution of A.D. 303 (Comfort, *Quest*, 74).

[241]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 49.

[242]Young K. Kim, "Palaeographical Dating of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ to the Later First Century," *Biblica* lxix (1988): 249.

[243]Thus $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ is considered to be written in first-century majuscule style (Comfort, *Quest*, 51).

[244]Ibid., 30. Others believe that 2 Peter 3:15–16 demonstrates Peter's knowledge of the Pauline corpus in existence at the time Peter writes, thus "a clear indication of the earlier existence of a Pauline corpus of letters." This would require the assembly of the corpus by A.D. 68, the date commonly assigned as the last possible year Peter could have lived (Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991], 986, 844).

[245]Comfort, *Quest*, 31.

finally a copy of this to reach the interior of Egypt.[246] Third, 𝔓46 uses an extensive and well-developed form of *nomina sacra* ("sacred names"), which is a system that abbreviates certain proper names that are considered to be holy. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that at such an early date this elaborate *nomina sacra* system could have existed not only in 𝔓46, but presumably in its exemplar as well.[247] It remains best to assign a date of no earlier than A.D. 150–200 for this ancient papyrus manuscript.[248]

Since the text of the early period was many-faceted, each manuscript had its own peculiar character.[249] The Alands consider 𝔓46 to be a "free text," meaning that the scribe followed his exemplar in a relatively free manner, with no suggestion of a program of standardization involved.[250] However, there is certainly no consensus that such a classification for this ancient text is warranted. Epp believes it does not "seem helpful to designate a papyrus manuscript's fidelity to or deviation from the 'original' in terms of 'normal, free,' or 'strict' text."[251]

Philip Comfort is also one who staunchly calls this claim into question, specifically in reference to 𝔓46. "Regardless of whether one agrees with their classification [of texts as 'strict, normal, free,' or 'D']—I disagree with 𝔓46 being called 'free.'"[252] Elsewhere, he says that 𝔓46 represents the text current in Egypt during the early third century, and it is relatively free from correction.[253] Adds Epp, "It is not at all clear how it can so easily be determined that a manuscript has or has not strictly followed its exemplar or to what degree it has done so."[254]

What is the character of the papyrus if there is disagreement as to the quality of its text and transmission? To understand the strengths and weaknesses of this papyrus better, one must turn to the work of a scholar who has studied 𝔓46 thoroughly and weighed its value in relation to other important manuscripts. For this requirement, attention is turned to the work of Günther Zuntz and his book entitled *The Text of the Epistles*, which sheds much light on the value of 𝔓46.

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[246]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 265.

[247]Ibid., 266. Comfort theorizes that the codification of *nomina sacra* did not occur until the middle of the second century in Alexandria (Comfort, *Quest*, 53), because Zuntz convincingly argues that by the middle of the second century the Alexandrian bishopric possessed a scriptorium that, by its output, set the standard for the Alexandrian type of biblical manuscript (Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 273). Also, Comfort is convinced that 𝔓46 was produced in a scriptorium, because several correctors worked on the manuscript near the time of its production (Comfort, *Quest*, 78).

[248]A final reason for discouraging a late first-century or early second-century date is supplied by Kenyon, who speaks in relation to the characteristics of writing during these two centuries. "With the assistance of a very large number of dated documents (several to each year) it is possible to trace the development of the non-literary hand with some minuteness; but for the literary hand the extant specimens are too few to enable nice distinctions to be drawn, and the first two centuries of our era must be grouped together as a single palaeographical period, within which a precise accuracy of arrangement is not to be expected until further evidence is available." (Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951], 38).

[249]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 69.

[250]Ibid., 59. The Alands' system classifies manuscripts as being either "strict, normal, free," or "D." These classifications attempt to describe the degree of freedom or strictness with which a manuscript follows its exemplar. A "strict text" transmits its exemplar's text with meticulous care, departing from it only rarely. A "normal text" represents a relatively faithful tradition that departs from its exemplar only occasionally. A "D text" resembles the text of Codex Bezae. They list nine manuscripts as "strict," eleven as "normal," eleven as "free," and three as "D text" (Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 93–95. See also Epp, "Textual Criticism Past, Present, and Future," 224).

[251]Eldon Jay Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 15.

[252]Comfort, *Quest*, 123.

[253]Philip Wesley Comfort, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1990), 52.

[254]Epp, "Textual Criticism: Reflections," 224.

In spite of its neat appearance, 𝔓46 contains many scribal blunders, possibly being liable to fits of exhaustion; from Hebrews 5 onward, the blunders seem to be much more frequent than before that point.[255] Zuntz quickly notes that one finds reason to be particularly wary in considering omissions in 𝔓46, though there are clearly places where the papyrus appears to be correct in offering a shorter reading.[256] In 1 Corinthians 8:2, for example, 𝔓46 stands alone with Clement of Alexandria in omitting τὸν θεόν, which prompts Zuntz to say, "Here again, then, 𝔓46 appears to be right against all other witnesses. Its consistently shorter text bears the mark of genuineness."[257]

At the end of the chapter, Zuntz states that "this text, again, is by no means free from faulty readings; but we have found the papyrus giving the true wording, sometimes alone or with few and unexpected allies, more often in numerous but not uniform company."[258] The remark comes on the heels of many thorough examinations of variants where this papyrus has been tested by other readings.

Textually, 𝔓46 is most frequently in agreement with the Alexandrian family (B, ℵ, A, C), less often with the Western family (D, F, G), and occasionally with the later Byzantine witnesses.[259] In respect to these "unexpected allies," agreements between 𝔓46 and some Byzantine readings previously unsupported by earlier witnesses, the credibility of the papyrus is greatly bolstered. No less noteworthy than the emergence of these ancient readings in a few late manuscripts are those instances where 𝔓46 agrees with the Byzantine text against earlier Greek manuscripts.

In isolated cases one might be inclined to ascribe this to chance; one and the same error, it might be held, could be made independently on two separate occasions, and an ancient fault could have been removed by conjecture. However, an examination of a number of these instances disproves such an assumption. "𝔓46 actually shows that readings (faulty as well as genuine ones) which so far had appeared to be late do in fact go back to the earliest times."[260] If this be true, why would not 𝔓46 agree with the Byzantine reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ against other Alexandrian authorities, if the variant were in fact ancient and genuine?

The most impacting statement on the reliability of the papyrus comes in a later summary given by Zuntz:

> The excellent quality of the text represented by our oldest manuscript, 𝔓46, stands out again. As so often before, we must here be careful to distinguish between the very poor work of the scribe who penned it and the basic text which he so poorly rendered. 𝔓46 abounds with scribal blunders, omissions, and also additions. In some of them the scribe anticipated the errors of later copyists; in some other instances he shares an older error; but the vast majority are his own uncontested property. Once they have been discarded, there remains a text of outstanding (though not absolute) purity.[261]

With these considerations, it must be asked whether the scribe would have accidentally omitted two words as crucial as ἐν Ἐφέσῳ at the beginning of the epistle. This becomes all the more unlikely when considering that this professional scribe[262] had his manuscript "corrected—but very imperfectly—by an expert."[263] Thus

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[255]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 18.

[256]Ibid., 31.

[257]Ibid., 32.

[258]Ibid., 56.

[259]Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Paleography* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1981), 64.

[260]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 49–50.

[261]Ibid., 212.

[262]"The scribe of 𝔓46 was a professional scribe who worked in a scriptorium. We know this because several of the books are marked with stichometric notations (316 for Ephesians), a practice employed only by professional scribes who earned their wage per stichos." (Comfort, *Quest*, 78).

[263]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 18.

Comfort is able to conclude, "𝔓46 is a prime example of the kind of early Alexandrian text that—discounting scribal blunders—preserves nearly all the original wording of Paul's inspired writings."[264]

Parchment Majuscule Evidence

B. Codex Vaticanus (B) was written near the middle of the fourth century[265] and contained both Old and New Testaments, as well as the books of the apocrypha (with the exception of the Maccabees). The scribe wrote in small, delicate uncials, making it a simple and unadorned manuscript. Unfortunately, the beauty of the original writing has been spoiled by a later corrector, who traced over every letter, omitting only those letters and words that he believed to be incorrect. The complete lack of ornamentation in Vaticanus has generally been taken as an indication that it is slightly older than Sinaiticus.[266]

Regarding the quality of Vaticanus in the Pauline epistles, where in numerous cases it joins the Western text in its readings,[267] the Alands make the following observation: "The text of B is extremely inferior in the Pauline letters to its text in the gospels."[268] This lessens the weight Vaticanus carries in the present discussion, but it by no means invalidates the importance of its omission in Ephesians 1:1.

In regard to this ancient codex, the original hand of Vaticanus did not include the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant. A later corrector, known as B^2, wrote the variant in the margin to the right of the text.[269] This sixth or seventh century corrector[270] was greatly benefited that the participle οὖσι came at the end of the line of text in the manuscript. He simply added the Greek consonant ν to the end of the line and followed it with ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the margin, though in a smaller font. There is no doubt that the original text did not include the prepositional phrase in question. As Lightfoot says, "In the Codex Vaticanus they have no place in the text, but are supplied in the margin by a later corrector."[271]

Though many textual critics who wrote prior to the Chester Beatty and Bodmer papyri finds doubted the textual quality of B and considered it to be the work of a fourth-century recension, the text of P75 has clearly proven that Vaticanus was not a fourth-century recension, but a copy of a manuscript that preserves a very ancient and very pure text.[272]

Where then does Vaticanus rate in relation to the ancient papyrus 𝔓46? "Direct dependence of B upon 𝔓46 being evidently out of the question, we conclude that these two manuscripts belong to one and the same ancient and narrow branch of the tradition."[273] This is true because 𝔓46 is often found supporting B when it previously "stood alone," proving the antiquity of B's text.[274]

In fact, the percentage of affinities between 𝔓46 and B is greater in Ephesians (84%) than in any other Pauline epistle.[275] One author speaks to the importance of readings supported by these two manuscripts by

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[264]Comfort, *Quest*, 80.

[265]There is no direct evidence to show where B was written, but there is some palaeographical evidence that points to Egypt, notably the use of the Coptic form of μ in the titles of some of the books and a peculiar form of ω (with the middle upright stroke excessively prolonged upward) on some occasions (Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3d ed., revised and augmented A. W. Adams [London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Limited, 1975], 215–16).

[266]Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 47.

[267]Kenyon, *Text of the Greek Bible*, 215.

[268]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 50.

[269]See Plate 2 for the text of Ephesians 1:1 in Codex Vaticanus.

[270]The dating of the corrector's work is per the Alands (Alands, *Text of the N. T.*, 108).

[271]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 380.

[272]Comfort, *Quest*, 121.

[273]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 62.

[274]Kenyon, *Text of the Greek Bible*, 71.

[275]Comfort, *Quest*, 78.

stating that a number of readings supported by $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and B, by themselves or with manuscripts of all text-types, show themselves to be most likely Pauline.[276]

The high quality and value of Vaticanus for establishing the original text has remained intact throughout the age of lower criticism, causing Comfort to say, "A hundred years of textual criticism has determined that this manuscript is one of the most accurate and reliable witnesses to the original text."[277] For closing remarks on Vaticanus, Zuntz may be cited:

> Codex B is indeed an outstanding witness. It stood alone in the days when Dr. Hort pinned what might seem to be an exaggerated faith upon it. It has now been freed from isolation. Within the wider affinities of the "Alexandrian" tradition, the Vaticanus is now seen to stand out as a member of a group with $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and the pre-ancestor of1739. . . . B is in fact a witness for a text, not of c. A.D. 360, but of c. A.D. 200.[278]

Therefore, Codex Vaticanus must be considered a valuable source in determining the answer to the question of the originality of the variant in Ephesians 1:1.

א. Codex Sinaiticus (א), the only extant uncial manuscript with four columns per page, once contained the entire Bible written in a carefully executed uncial hand. Today, parts of the Old Testament have vanished, but fortunately the entire New Testament has survived. Sinaiticus, dated by A. T. Robertson at A.D. 375,[279] remains the only known complete copy of the Greek New Testament in uncial script.[280]

In general, this codex belongs to the Alexandrian family, but it also has definite Western strains. Before the manuscript left the scriptorium, it was proofread by several scribes who did the work of a διορθωτής (corrector).[281] At a later date, roughly about the seventh century,[282] a corrector known as $\aleph^{2}$ entered a large number of alterations into the text of both Old and New Testaments, representing a thoroughgoing attempt to correct the text to a different standard.[283]

If one were to glance through a photographic facsimile of א, he would discover that there is hardly a page without correction, though the codex is a handsome, expensive copy produced in a regular scriptorium, written by a professional scribe and corrected by a careful διορθωτής.[284] This corrector, one of two א correctors who worked at the library of Caesarea,[285] made most of his editions into conformity with the Byzantine text.[286]

This was clearly the case for Ephesians 1:1, as one of these Caesarean correctors added ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the left margin, between the third and fourth columns.[287] In Sinaiticus, the participle οὖσι is found in the middle of a column, unlike the convenient position it had at the end of a line in Vaticanus, so there was no open space to add a moveable ν to the end of the word, along with the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant; therefore, the correction had to be added awkwardly between the two columns of text.

Though this codex is assigned Category I status, the Alands add this about Sinaiticus: "The text, with numerous singular readings (and careless errors), was highly overrated by Tischendorf, and is distinctly inferior

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[276]Comfort, *Early Manuscripts*, 52.

[277]Comfort, *Quest*, 26.

[278]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 83.

[279]A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928), 83.

[280]Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 42.

[281]Ibid., 46.

[282]Alands, *Text of the N. T.*, 108.

[283]Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 46.

[284]Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 134.

[285]Ibid., 105.

[286]Ibid., 40.

[287]See Plate 3 for the text of Ephesians 1:1 in Codex Sinaiticus.

to B."[288] However, when this manuscript concurs with numerous texts of early origin, it supplies a formidable claim to authenticity. As Robertson said in his day, "Sinaiticus is next to B in date and value."[289]

Minuscule Evidence

As the discussion moves to minuscules without the ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ variant, Streeter's comment about cursives must be heard. "Many cursives are quite as important as any uncials after the first five, א B L D Θ; the practice of citing uncials by a capital letter, cursives by a number, makes the difference between them appear far greater than it really is."[290]

424c. This important minuscule manuscript is corrected from an 11th century text.[291] The corrector of 424, who often preserves ancient readings,[292] evidently edited this codex using a vastly different exemplar of great excellence now lost.[293] Lightfoot shows high regard for 424c: "The second corrector of 67 (or 424) has marked the words ἐν ἐφέσῳ as spurious. The corrections by this hand have the highest value, having been evidently made from some very early text."[294] Lightfoot adds, "It may be safely said that a reading in St. Paul's Epistles which is supported by such a combination as א B 672 [or 424c] can never be neglected, and almost always represents the original text."[295]

1739. The minuscule 1739, also known as codex Athos, was penned near the middle of the tenth century by a monk named Ephraim, from whose hand three other manuscripts survive. The extant portions of this codex contain the book of Acts, the Pauline corpus, and the general epistles.[296] The original subscription of Acts and part of that of the Pauline epistles have been cut away, and many of the precious marginal notes have been erased.[297]

The prescript of the codex informs the reader that the 14 Pauline epistles (including Hebrews) were copied from a manuscript that was commended for two reasons: it was extremely ancient, and it proved to be of outstanding quality (ἐπιτετευγμένον).[298] The qualitative difference between the Pauline letters and the other

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288Alands, *Text of the N. T.*, 107.

289Robertson, *Textual Criticism*, 83.

290Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 28.

291Alands, *Text of the N. T.*, 132.

292A. H. McNeile, *St. Paul: His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge U. Press, 1920), 214.

293A. Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, vol. 39, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1974), 75.

294Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 380.

295Ibid. Lightfoot's statement is reiterated in both Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 75; and T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, vol. unspecified, *The International Critical Commentary*, eds. S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Briggs (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), i.

296The texts of Acts and the general epistles are derived from a manuscript similar to the text of Origen, but the margins preserve fragments of Irenaeus and other church fathers. This "rich repository of ancient lore" was copied by Ephraim, probably through one intermediary, with commendable accuracy (J. N. Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans [Cambridge, England: Cambridge U. Press, 1920], 324).

297Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 71.

298Ibid., 72.

parts of 1739 is due to the use of this "very ancient manuscript," which the scribe no doubt had found in the famous Caesarean library.[299]

In assessing the value of 1739, it is often said that this manuscript is "closely allied to the text of Origen's commentaries," because the learned scribe of the exemplar identified his text as corresponding closely to that used by Origen in his commentary on Romans and in other works.[300] The manuscript Ephraim used is a text of critical importance that originated in the fourth century.[301] The analysis of Zuntz, as found where he discusses "the most remarkable variant" ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in Ephesians 1:1, highlights the value of this minuscule.

> In preserving these rare, ancient readings 1739 proves itself to be a faithful representative of its archetype and therewith of the παλαιόν which served as its model. The παλαιόν in turn joins itself to a branch of the tradition which centers on 𝔓46 B; indeed, it is, or was, even nearer to the papyrus than to codex Vaticanus. It is therefore incorrect to say—as is so often done—that 1739 gives us "the text of Origen." As already observed, this statement holds good only for the larger part of Romans. . . . For the rest of the Pauline letters, the Athos manuscript represents something even more valuable, namely, a second witness besides Origen, as old as, or even older than, he.[302]

In agreement with this conclusion, Birdsall adds that 𝔓46 has been shown to have a close textual relationship to the archetype of this minuscule in the Pauline epistles.[303]

<u>Patristic Evidence</u>

Marcion. Tertullian, writing against Marcion in about the year A.D. 208, accused Marcion (known as a heretic) of changing the title of the epistle, in contradiction to the true testimony of the church.[304] In the Pauline epistles, Marcion's canon, drawn up before the middle of the second century,[305] was listed in this order: Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.[306] Tertullian's text reads,

> On the Epistle to the Laodiceans. By the church's truth we have it that this epistle was sent to the Ephesians, not the Laodiceans; Marcion has been at pains at some time to falsify its title, in this matter too an industrious discoverer of new ways. But the title is of no concern, since when the apostle wrote to some he wrote to all, and without doubt his teaching in Christ was of that God to whom the facts of his teaching rightly belong.[307]

From the expressions Tertullian used, it seems highly probable that Marcion did not read "in Ephesus" in his text of Ephesians 1:1.[308] Best articulates this conclusion, "It is generally held that Tertullian's accusations relate to the superscription to the letter and not to the text itself; in that case Marcion cannot have had the A text."[309] Tertullian's quote speaks of Marcion's falsifying the title, and oddly enough Tertullian appeals only to

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[299]Ibid., 73.

[300]So McNeile, *St. Paul*, 215. Twentieth-century scholarship confirmed the Origenian affinities of the text utilized (Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," 324).

[301]So Comfort, *Quest*, 79. According to Birdsall, the exemplar is dated instead to the sixth century (Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," 324).

[302]Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 81.

[303]Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," 324.

[304]D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 2, *The Pauline Epistles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 261.

[305]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 380.

[306]Robertson, *Textual Criticism*, p. 135.

[307]Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1972), 613 (v. 17).

[308]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 424.

[309]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 30.

the received heading of the letter. He neither directly states nor indirectly hints that anything in the letter itself contradicts this hypothesis. But strictly interpreted, the language of Tertullian reveals that Marcion refers only to the title of the letter.[310]

Hiebert then comments on the earliness of the superscription. "Yet Marcion's action shows the great antiquity of the received title, since Tertullian charged him with changing the title. The tradition for the received title thus reaches back to about 70 years or so of the actual time of its composition."[311] However, Hiebert's point is worthy of dispute, since Tertullian neither presented evidence of such tampering from the documents of Marcion nor cited anyone of equal or greater antiquity as using the traditional title.

The last person to question the accuracy of the traditional address until Genevan reformer Theodore Beza in 1598,[312] Marcion probably happens to preserve a reading that has been lost from most or all of the other evidence.[313] Since the end of the second century, the epistle has been regarded and cited within the church as the epistle to the Ephesians.[314] Can the early testimony of Marcion (the heretic) be trusted to overturn such later unanimity?

For three reasons, Lightfoot affirms the witness of Marcion regarding the title to the letter.

> 1) Marcion lived nearer to the times of the Apostles than any of the Catholic writers mentioned above. 2) He was moreover a native of Pontus, a neighboring province of Asia Minor, and therefore not unfavorably situated for forming an opinion. And, 3), as the question has no theological bearing whatever, his opinion is free from all suspicion of bias, and must be received with the respect due to so ancient a writer.[315]

The readings recorded in Marcion's text are often not at all far-fetched. "It turns out in many cases that what seems strange in Marcion's text to one who compares it with the *Textus Receptus*, or with one of our modern critical editions, without knowing much about the history of the text, is by no means peculiar to Marcion, but was pretty common in the West in early times."[316] Marcion reflects a mostly Western text, which is to be expected in his day, with readings that he did not invent but took from the Church's Bible of that time.[317]

Nestle agrees with Lightfoot in questioning whether Marcion may not really have preserved the original text, and whether his text, so far as it is corroborated by any independent tradition, should not be esteemed much higher than it is by modern textual critics.[318] "A text attested by Marcion and the Church in common is surely entitled, even in respect of its antiquity, to much more consideration than has been paid to it heretofore."[319]

Tertullian. This Latin father twice refers to the title of the epistle under review.[320] The first reference is found in Tertullian's previous quote, and the second reads, "I forbear to treat here of another epistle to which we give the title To the Ephesians, but the heretics To the Laodiceans."[321]

If Marcion only recorded the title, "to the Laodiceans," in the heading of the epistle and mentioned neither Laodicea nor Ephesus in the text, it is possible that Tertullian took the reading τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ as

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[310]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 382.

[311]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 260.

[312]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 424.

[313]Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 229.

[314]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 424.

[315]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 390.

[316]Eberhard Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1901), 208.

[317]Ibid.

[318]Ibid., 209.

[319]Ibid., 212.

[320]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 381.

[321]Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 585 (v. 11).

his text.[322] However, if this was the reading of Tertullian, it is extremely odd that he appealed only to the traditional title and not to the Ephesian destination in the text of the Pauline letter. After commenting that Tertullian's statement about Marcion (v. 17) related to the superscription and not the text itself, Best says, "In that case Marcion cannot have had the A text; this would also imply that Tertullian did not have 'in Ephesus' in his text."[323] Abbott agrees with this line of reasoning.

> For he [Tertullian] does not charge Marcion with falsifying the text but the title, and he vindicates the title "ad Ephesios" by an appeal to the "veritas ecclesiae," not to the actual words in the text, which would be conclusive. Moreover, how strange the remark, *nihil autem de titulis interest*, etc., if he had ἐν ἐφέσῳ in the text of the apostle! It is clear that "titlus" here means the superscription, not the address in the text.[324]

The only response to the claim that Tertullian did not read the variant in his text because he did not appeal to its presence to contradict Marcion is that "we are not to apply to the methods of Tertullian the criteria used in the argumentation of modern critics."[325] That Tertullian disputes this designation and says that the true church knows it as "Ephesians" does not mean that the great majority of the church so knew it at the beginning of the third century; Tertullian is only a witness here to the way the church in his own area knew the title of the epistle.[326]

Origen. This Alexandrian father, who lived from A.D. 185–254, ran a school in that city from 202–232, then proceeded to Caesarea to complete an illustrious writing career.[327] Origen has been called "one of our best witnesses to the text of the NT during the earliest period of transmission."[328] A well-written and well-preserved 11th century manuscript of Origen's commentary on Ephesians 1:1–14 was published by J. A. F. Gregg; this text produces the B reading, τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι, with the variant absent.[329]

Gregg's own footnote says, "But the comment shows that Origen's text did not contain the words [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ], at any rate in this position."[330] Although Origen knew of the ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ superscription, he neither read the reference to the city of Ephesus in his text nor used a lacuna, because he expounds the B text and has to devise an explanation in order to escape the grammatical difficulty of no place-designation for the letter.[331]

Lightfoot translates Origen's comments on Ephesians 1:1, "In the case of the Ephesians alone have I found the expression 'to the saints that are,' and I am led to ask, unless the clause 'that are' is superfluous, what can be meant by it? May it not be then, that as in Exodus He who speaks to Moses declares His name to be 'He

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322Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 75.

323Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 30.

324Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, ii. For another statement against Tertullian's text that features the variant, see also Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 261.

325Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 15.

326Ernest Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians: Why and When the Designation 'Ephesians'?" *Aufstig und Niedergand der Römischen Welt* 2.25.4 (1987): 3261.

327Howard Vos, *An Introduction to Church History* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 16.

328Bart D. Ehrman, "Textual Criticism of the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 143.

329J. A. F. Gregg, "The Commentary of Origen upon the Epistle to the Ephesians," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 3 (1902): 235.

330Ibid.

331Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 30. Origen follows $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ in including the superscription but omitting the variant. This is no contradiction if the superscription was an early addition followed faithfully by later scribes, and the variant was a later, spurious addition rejected by Origen and others.

that is.'"[332] In Lightfoot's analysis of this quote, he notes that Origen speaks in such a way as to show not only that the variant was absent from the text he used, but that he himself was unaware of its existence in any copies of the epistle within his reach.[333]

Basil. With the witness of Basil (A.D. 379), the patristic testimony turns from the third century to the fourth. Basil's comments on the opening of Paul's epistle are found in *Contra Eunomium* 11:19. "Moreover, when writing to the Ephesians, as men truly united through perfect knowledge to Him who is, he called them in a special sense 'those who are,' saying, 'to the saints who are, and faithful in Christ Jesus.' For so we learn from the statements of previous writers; and we ourselves have found [this reading] in those copies which are ancient."[334]

Here Basil repeats the interpretation of Origen, of whom he was a diligent student, and to whom he was doubtless indebted for his view.[335] For certain, Basil's comments indicate that many of the older manuscripts, if not all, that have crossed his path lack the 'in Ephesus' wording.[336] Eadie concurs, "The fact is plain, that in ancient manuscripts handed down from previous centuries, he had found the first verse without the words ἐν ἐφέσῳ."[337] In Basil's estimation, the omission of the destination was the correct reading in the text.

Basilius. Basilius, church father who dates to about the end of the fourth century, writes in *Adversus Eunom.* 2:19, "Writing to the Ephesians as to such as were genuinely united with the Being through knowledge, he called them, apart from others, by the name of the being ones, in the words: 'To those that are and the believers in Christ Jesus.' For thus also our forebears transmitted it and we ourselves have found it in the old copies."[338]

This quotation of Basilius proves two things as indisputably true. First, Basilius had personally accepted as authentic the letter known as Ephesians. Second, Basilius had access to old manuscripts in which the name of the recipients was not found in Ephesians 1:1.[339] Though this English translation of the quote found in Basilius certainly might be improved upon, the early father obviously knew of many ancient copies that did not include the variant within their texts.

Summary Statement for the Omission of the Variant

Though the amount of manuscripts in support of the variant clearly outweighs the number that omit it, the quality and antiquity of the few that omit must be taken into account. With the support of the only papyrus manuscript that features the text of Ephesians 1:1 and the two oldest parchment manuscripts, all three of which are reputed among the best New Testament documents known today, the absence of the variant seems to be the logical choice.

Though 𝔓46 is referred to by the Alands as a "free text," the work of Zuntz and others has shown that such loose terminology does not properly describe the high quality of the text or the usually trustworthy efforts of the professional scribe who penned it sometime before the end of the second century. This early papyrus lends credibility to B and א, two fourth-century uncials of enduring excellence, which show no sign of the

332Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 377–78.

333Ibid., 377.

334Ibid., 379. Although this translation was derived principally from Lightfoot, at several points Eadie's translation was found preferable, and thus at those places his text was incorporated into the translation offered here (Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxiii).

335Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 377.

336Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 30.

337Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxiii.

338Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 18.

339Ibid.

variant in the writing of the original hands. All three of these documents begin the epistle with the superscription, which means that it would be odd for them to preserve a faulty omission which was contradicted by the title of the letter.

These three uncials are joined by several important minuscules, 424^{c} and 1739, as well as a number of important early church fathers. Marcion's second-century ascription of this letter as "to the Laodiceans" shows either that the Ephesian superscription was not known everywhere or that the practice of ascribing the letter to the Ephesians was not in keeping with correct tradition. Not only does the early third-century father Origen not read the variant, but he seems to be unaware of its existence in any of the manuscripts known to him. Basil and Basilius also omit the variant, with the latter choosing the omission as genuine because the older and better manuscripts do not include it.

Evaluation of the Case for the Originality of the Variant

Numerical Superiority Does Not Assure Accuracy

Does a majority of manuscripts in support of a reading lead to the original text? The majority of modern scholars do not affirm such a presupposition because numerical superiority is no assurance of accuracy of reading. Also, it was discovered in Chapter 3 of this thesis that numerical superiority is not an acceptable praxis for sound textual criticism.

Streeter also adds, "When at least three of the leading representatives of any local text support a reading, very little is gained by citing the additional evidence of mss. which normally support the same local text."[340] Therefore, many of the additional later minuscules that support the A text are superfluous to the determination of the matter at hand.

A spurious addition to the text that was repeatedly copied, then dispersed widely enough to gain general acceptance, could easily become a standard reading after an organized (or even non-purposeful) recension of the text. If the theorized Byzantine recension did occur, this would account for the perpetuation of the spurious variant ἐν Ἐφέσῳ and the great minority of later manuscripts that omit the reading. This is also in keeping with the consolidation of the Greek-speaking part of the empire, later centralized in Byzantium.

Parchment Majuscule and Minuscule Evidence

A. Clearly Alexandrinus here departs from the proto-Alexandrian reading, which omits the variant from its text. But since this codex is considered to be Later Alexandrian in the Pauline epistles,[341] it cannot be considered altogether unusual. If the influence of the Byzantine text has produced Byzantine readings in the gospels of Alexandrinus, it cannot be considered improbable that the Byzantine reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ was current in the fifth century.

D^{p}, F^{p}, and G^{p}. These three uncial texts represent the primary witnesses to the Western text in the Pauline epistles, although their lateness (6c, 9c, 9c) begs the question as to what was the actual Western reading for Ephesians 1:1 in the early centuries. Then again, the spurious addition of the variant at some point in the Western tradition may have led to its incorporation into the Byzantine text.

33 and 1175. It must be said that the A text has several important minuscule witnesses which include the variant, with 33 and 1175 both boasting Category I quality. Minuscule 33 especially has strong credentials, as this ninth century manuscript is an excellent Alexandrian ally. However, in Acts and the Pauline epistles, it

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[340]Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 78.
[341]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 216.

often shows the influence of the Byzantine text.[342] Therefore, its alignment with the Byzantine and Western texts is expected, and thus quite unimpressive. Even when displaying Alexandrian readings it is categorized as Later Alexandrian.[343]

81. This 11th-century manuscript may be one of the more important minuscules, but its conformity here with the Byzantine and Later Western texts is also no surprise. As with 33, the text of 81 in the Pauline epistles is considered Later Alexandrian, and by A.D. 1044 the inclusion of the Ephesians 1:1 variant was so widespread that it would only be eventful if the scribe of 81 omitted the reading.

The Muratorian Canon and the Superscription

Muratorian Canon. Though this may appear to be a simple case of the authenticity of Ephesians and the spurious nature of the apocryphal letter to the Laodiceans, it might instead mean that the advocates of the Canon either refused to acknowledge that Marcion refers to their "Ephesians" as "Laodiceans," or that they purposely misrepresented him. Either way, the Canon does not account for the presence or absence of the variant, only the attribution of titles.

Superscription. Before one puts too much emphasis upon the titles of inspired letters, a reminder from David Black, an advocate of the originality of the variant, is in order.

> The canonical editors were most likely responsible for most of the titles, superscriptions, to the majority of the New Testament writings. While these titles for the most part reflect the ancient and honored traditions of the church and thus hold a certain authority, they were, in all likelihood, not part of the original composition.[344]

Though it is uncertain how that which is not part of the original composition can be expected to maintain any semblance of authority, Black correctly notes that the biblical authors were not responsible for the titles. Taylor speaks more emphatically, saying, "The superscription was not part of the original document. Titles were added when several letters were recopied together onto one scroll or codex."[345]

Commenting on the superscription to 1 Corinthians, Godet notes that "the title, as we find it in the oldest manuscripts, has been edited by those who formed the collection of St. Paul's letters."[346] If the superscriptions were attached when the corpus was compiled, at a very early point the oddity of a canonical letter without a stated destination would have met with uneasiness on the part of the compilers or those who came after them.

Though the theories are innumerable as to why and when the variant may have been added to the text of the epistle, it may be suggested that if the title were added in order to bring it into conformity with the other letters in the Pauline corpus, the variant easily could have arisen to simplify the grammatical difficulty and to harmonize it with the other titled letters. Taylor notes, "Apparently the superscription [of Ephesians], which was becoming fixed by the end of the second century, gave birth by the beginning of the fifth century to the words 'at Ephesus.'"[347]

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[342]Ibid., 62.

[343]Ibid., 216.

[344]David Black, *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 276.

[345]Walter F. Taylor Jr., *Ephesians*, vol. unspecified, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Roy A. Harrison, Jack D. Kingsbury, and Gerhard A. Krodel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 18.

[346]F. L. Godet, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. A. Cusin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 35.

[347]Taylor Jr., *Ephesians*, 18.

Patristic Evidence

Church Fathers. Caution must be shown before assigning too much weight to patristic evidence, because it is often difficult to tell whether a scriptural text is being quoted directly or only being paraphrased or alluded to.[348] "To be sure, the patristic sources are themselves incomplete and survive by chance, and the quotations of Scripture in them are spotty, often periphrastic, and likewise subject to the vagaries of textual transmission."[349]

Moreover, when copying their manuscripts, scribes would sometimes alter the texts of the fathers in order to conform their texts to the readings prevalent in their own day and time.[350] Says Fee, "The later medieval copies of a father's Biblical text are conformed to the prevailing ecclesiastical text (the so-called majority text)."[351] Therefore, even the fathers who are attributed with including the variant in their texts may not actually have read it in their texts or written it in their original writings.

Nonetheless, the list of fathers whose text features the variant—Ignatius, Chrysostom, Theodore, Victorinus of Rome, Ambrosiaster, Jerome, and Pelagius—seems unimpressive. Regarding Ignatius, Stoeckhardt claims that in this father's Ephesian letter he wrote that Paul referred to the Ephesians "throughout his letter." Such a rendering of ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ is certainly an unusual way to translate this phrase in its context, despite Stoeckhardt's attempts to liken it to other constructions that are said to be parallel. Srawley also contends, "There are, however, references to the Ephesian Christians and to Ephesus in several of St. Paul's epistles, e.g. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 15:32, 16:8, 19; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:18, 4:12."[352]

In agreement with Srawley, Schoedel adds that Ignatius is using hyperbole and cannot be referring to the entirety of Paul's Ephesian letter. "For similar hyperbole see 1 Thess. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:2; etc. . . . Our phrase (ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ) cannot mean 'in a whole letter' and so refer to the NT letter to the Ephesians."[353] It remains impossible since no analogous example has been found where an anarthrous form of πᾶς is used in this sense. The alleged instances are either proper names, highly poetical passages, false readings, or illustrations of wholly different uses of πᾶς.[354] Therefore, Ignatius cannot here be relied upon with certainty as one who attributes the recipients of Paul's letter as being the Ephesian church.

John Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407) is also reputed to be a father whose text featured the variant in Ephesians 1:1. If the original wording of his text did read ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, it would date the variant to the second half of the fourth century, the same time period as the Latin commentary of Victorinus Afer and the manuscripts known to Basil and Jerome, which all record the variant. Fee, though, offers this reservation, "I have found one invariable: A good critical edition of a father's text, or the discovery of early MSS, *always* moves the father's text of the NT *away from* the TR and *closer to* the text of our modern critical editions. This is especially true of a father such as Chrysostom, whose texts were copied hundreds of times throughout the Greek Church."[355]

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[348]"Modern editors are trying to be more selective and informative when adding patristic testimony—but we still have some way to go before we should accept blindly that just because a patristic reference appears in an apparatus it really supports the reading in question." (Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 23).

[349]Bart D. Ehrman, "The Use and Significance of Patristic Evidence for NT Textual Criticism," in *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, ed. Barbara Aland and Joël Delobel (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994), 120.

[350]Black, *Concise*, 24.

[351]Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21/1 (Mar 1978): 27.

[352]Ignatius, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Translations of Christian Literature: The Epistles of St. Ignatius Bishop of Antioch*, trans. J. H. Srawley (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919), 47.

[353]William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, ed. Helmut Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 73.

[354]J. B. Lightfoot, in Ignatius, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 65.

[355]Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism," 26–27.

Early Versions

Though the unanimity of the versions appears formidable, it must be said that the existing manuscripts of these translations are all far too late for an assurance of the variant in their original readings, since an insertion that would harmonize a version with the dominant Byzantine Greek text would be irresistible to scribes.[356] Although the versions contain the variant, there is no extant manuscript of any of them nearly as old as א or B.[357] In fact, the earliest of these versions is at least two centuries later than these two ancient uncials.[358]

Widespread Geographical Distribution

The case is made that, all things being equal, a geographically widespread reading is more likely to be original than a reading preserved in only one locale. Certainly it seems true that a reading dispersed over a larger area would have more likelihood of originality, since a unique reading confined to one area seems to bear the mark of a singular error confined to a particular geographical region. However, the nature of the distribution is based upon texts that were composed centuries apart from one another, with the later ones witnessing to the state of the Greek text after the Greek-speaking part of the empire had consolidated, and the vast majority of the manuscript production disseminated from that one locality.

It must also be remembered that while some argue that the testimony of a few Alexandrian manuscripts is not as potent as a voluminous number of manuscripts of various text-types over a diverse area, in most cases the diverse witnesses display expansions and editorial tampering, while the Alexandrian manuscripts exhibit the brevity and terseness of the original text.[359]

The quality of the manuscripts representing the various readings is paramount. Comfort notes, "The testimony of א and B is to be preferred over all other combinations of later manuscripts. . . . The testimony would be all the more reliable if there were three early witnesses such as P^{75}, א, and B."[360] This certainly holds true in the case of Ephesians 1:1, where the testimony includes 𝔓^{46}, א, and B.

It is also claimed that the critical text of the modern translations simply rests upon an early Egyptian form of the text, and the preservation of these early texts is no more than the mere fortune of favorable climatic conditions in Egypt. In response, neither can the favorable climate of Egypt be used to criticize the texts represented in these recent archaeological finds. The credibility of the texts must stand upon its own merits.

Moreover, the ancient Egyptian papyri may not simply represent the local text of Egypt. "Given the nature of the history of transmission, we can never be absolutely certain where the papyri documents were produced."[361] Recently it has been shown from the profane papyri that during the first centuries A.D. in Egypt there was a vigorous movement of people between Alexandria and the Greco-Roman world to the east, west, and north. Thus the textual witnesses from Egypt did not necessarily originate in Egypt, as they could have been transported from anywhere in the Mediterranean world.[362]

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[356]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 386.

[357]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, ii.

[358]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 387.

[359]Comfort, *Quest*, 133–34.

[360]Ibid., 133.

[361]Ehrman, "Use and Significance," 119. Kenyon says that the place of origin for the Alexandrian text-type cannot be known with finality, but the witness to it in the earliest papyri and its agreement with the Coptic versions points strongly to Egypt (Kenyon, *Text of the Greek Bible*, 215).

[362]Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts," 8. Epp goes on to describe the ease and speed with which correspondence traveled from Alexandria to Asia Minor (800 miles in two months) and to Transjordan (350 miles in 36 days).

Many of the ancient New Testament papyri may have been produced in scriptoria outside Egypt, such as Rome or Antioch. Rural Egypt, where most papyri are now found, was not isolated from the rest of the world. "Numerous non-literary papyri discovered there show regular communication between the Fayyum and Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome. This communication included general correspondence about works of literature and scriptorial practices."[363] All of this evidence causes Epp to conclude that "in contrast to the common view that the papyri represent 'only' the text of 'provincial Egypt,' it is much more likely that they represent an extensive if not the full textual spectrum of earliest Christianity."[364]

Evaluation of the Case for the Omission of the Variant

Papyrus Majuscule Evidence

The importance of the omission of the variant in 𝔓46 is not fully convincing, because by the time the major extant papyrus texts were copied, the New Testament was roughly one-century old. A reading attested by such a witness, and found only in a small number of other manuscripts, is not at all likely to have survived from the autograph.[365]

Though most of the papyri are early, some of them show evidence of having been copied without the greatest of care, which especially lessens their dependability in matters of detail.[366] In response to this point, it was seen that 𝔓46 represents an excellent text, copied by a professional scribe and later corrected to ensure the quality of the reproduction. "The adjustments of the correctors in manuscripts such as 𝔓46 and 𝔓66 show that the manuscripts were, in fact, made more accurate."[367] Also, the designation of 𝔓46 as a "free text" was shown to be an unjustified pejorative label.

Finally, one proponent of the variant is forced to declare, "True, we cannot explain how it happened that the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are missing in some of those manuscripts which circulated in Asia Minor, namely in א and B, and also in the old manuscripts examined by Basilius."[368]

Patristic Evidence

Marcion. The heretic[369] Marcion, among his other interpolations, altered the title of the epistle and addressed it to the Laodiceans.[370] The evidence in support of this claim is found in the words of Tertullian quoted earlier.

> On the Epistle to the Laodiceans. By the church's truth we have it that this epistle was sent to the Ephesians, not the Laodiceans; Marcion has been at pains at some time to falsify its title, in this matter too an industrious discoverer of new ways. But the title is of no concern, since when the apostle wrote to some he wrote to all, and without doubt his teaching in Christ was of that God to whom the facts of his teaching rightly belong.[371]

363Comfort, *Quest*, 37.

364Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts," 9.

365Hodges and Farstad, *The Greek New Testament*, xii.

366J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 36.

367Comfort, *Quest*, 57.

368Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 20.

369Heretics felt the necessity to seek support for their peculiar doctrines, which would secure for them a place within the annals of the Church (Marvin R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1903], 43).

370Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxv.

371Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 613 (v. 17).

In the same letter, Tertullian later says, "I forbear to treat here of another epistle to which we give the title To the Ephesians, but the heretics To the Laodiceans."[372] Therefore, the attribution of Marcion was not merely a mistake but a forgery. His view not only contradicts the whole church, but his other literary misdemeanors immediately cast doubt upon the motives of his procedure and the trustworthiness of his judgment.[373]

It is also to be remembered that Marcion's own words do not fully bear out this testimony that the letter "to the Ephesians" was actually "to the Laodiceans." For according to Epiphanius, Marcion elsewhere put into his canon as the seventh of Paul's epistles the letter "to the Ephesians."[374]

Tertullian. Though this church father mentions only the *titulus* of the letter to the Ephesians and its interpolation by Marcion, one may infer that Tertullian still presumes an agreement between the *titulus* and the Pauline address in the text of Ephesians 1:1.[375] One should not expect that Tertullian did not read ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in his text simply because he appealed to the testimony of the church instead of appealing to the text itself.[376]

Basil. Basil only states that ἐν Ἐφέσῳ was lacking in the earliest copies that he consulted. But the inference is that the words existed in the copies then in circulation, and Basil himself considered the epistle to be ascribed to the church in Ephesus. In addition, Basil neither states how many old copies he saw, nor from where they originated, nor what was the general character of the manuscripts regarding accuracy. The corroborative assertion that he himself had seen these earlier manuscripts seems to indicate that they were neither numerous nor of easy access.[377]

In response, it is granted that the variant was found in the copies contemporary to Basil, but it would be impossible to suggest that Basil himself preferred the variant. Basil's quote begins by saying, "when writing to the Ephesians . . . he [Paul] uses. . . ."[378] The significance of these words is that Basil uses this formula to introduce a quotation from the apostle, and since he is about to quote sacred Scripture, Basil proceeds to reproduce the text that he himself preferred. The quote that follows, τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς, does not include the variant.[379] Therefore, Basil does not prefer the variant in his text.

Tentative Conclusion Based upon External Evidence

If, as David Black pointed out earlier, the great majority of manuscripts supplies one with the proper reading, the text with the variant is the decided victor.[380] With at least four more uncial witnesses and 18 more minuscules witnesses than the BP text, the A text clearly outweighs its competitor. However, Campbell's comment is worth considering. "In evaluating the above we must keep in mind that the *quality* of manuscripts is more important than the bulk of them."[381]

If quality is the greater issue, one must consider the relative value of the manuscripts attesting to each reading. According to the Alands' categorization for establishing the value of manuscripts,[382] the BP text boasts

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[372]Ibid., 585 (v. 11).
[373]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxvi.
[374]Ibid., xxviii.
[375]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 16.
[376]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxvi.
[377]Ibid., xxiv.
[378]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 379.
[379]Ibid.
[380]See The Case for the Originality of the Variant: The Majority of Witnesses Contain the Variant, as found earlier in Chapter 4.
[381]Ernest Campbell, *Ephesians* (Silverton, Or.: Canyonview Press, 1986), 14.
[382]Alands, *Text of the N.T.*, 106.

four manuscripts with Category I status, while the A text is supported by only three Category I manuscripts. When considering Category II manuscripts, the text with the variant outweighs the omitting text by a margin of seven to zero.

The dates for the four Category I manuscripts that omit the variant are as follows: 200, 4c, 4c, 10c; the three Category I manuscripts that have the variant are dated much later: 5c, 9c, 11c. The seven Category II manuscripts with the variant range from the ninth century to the 14th century. Based on antiquity, the omission is clearly favored. Nevertheless, the quality of manuscripts is more important than both their quantity and their age.

Consistency of readings also factors-in heavily. 𝔓46 was found to be an extremely pure text, once accidental scribal errors are eliminated, and no proponent of the variant asserts "the omission" in Ephesians 1:1 to be accidental. In addition, 𝔓46 occasionally agrees with readings that were previously attested to only by the Byzantine family, which gives it more credibility when the papyrus is pitted against a Byzantine reading in a particular text.

While speaking to the quality of 𝔓46 in relation to other important witnesses, Zuntz observes, "Community of error binds together the papyrus with Vaticanus (B) and the minuscule 1739, and this relationship is underlined by some genuine readings being preserved by these witnesses alone or with very few others."[383] Zuntz refers to this combination as "a most outstanding group of manuscripts (𝔓46 B 1739)."[384] Comfort adds that when 𝔓46 and B agree, it is likely that they preserve the original wording; he also lists Ephesians 1:1 as one variant where this is true, and where Greek texts that use brackets should omit the variant.[385]

Batey offers this assessment of the minority evidence in omitting the variant: "The testimony of our two oldest NT manuscripts (א, B), also supported by the Chester Beatty papyrus, makes it apparent that ἐν Ἐφέσῳ was not in the original address of Ephesians."[386] A. T. Robertson adds, "In Ephesians 1:1 ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is rejected by the Neutral class alone (א, B, 424c, Origen), while the Western, Alexandrian, and Syrian classes give it. But the Neutral class is certainly right."[387]

The versional evidence all favors the addition of the variant, though it must be remembered that the earliest manuscripts from these versions are at least two centuries later than Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. In regard to the patristic evidence, there are far more fathers who are cited as reading the variant. However, the later manuscripts known to Basil, the text of Chrysostom, the text of Jerome, and the Latin commentary of Victorinus Afer, all from the latter half of the fourth century, are the earliest witnesses that include the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant.

Origen and Tertullian from the third century and Basil from the fourth century all favor the omission of the variant. Lightfoot addresses the patristic testimony, "The silence of Origen is confirmed by the direct statement of Basil; and their joint testimony, sufficiently strong in itself, is further strengthened by the phenomena of the extant manuscripts, and by the belief of Marcion. On the other hand, we have no direct evidence that a single Greek manuscript during this period contained the words in question."[388]

In light of the external attestation, the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ must be denied authenticity. As Comfort suggests, "But whatever the arguments concerning the intrinsic nature of this textual variant, the documentary evidence points to the absence of the phrase in Ephesus."[389] A thorough examination of the internal evidence will be needed in order to confirm or overturn this tentative conclusion.

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[383]Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 56.

[384]Ibid., 30.

[385]Comfort, *Quest*, 80.

[386]Richard Batey, "The Destination of Ephesians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 (1963): 101.

[387]Robertson, *Textual Criticism*, 203.

[388]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 381.

[389]Comfort, *Quest*, 152.

CHAPTER 5:

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Introduction

Having completed an extensive study of the external evidence for the Ephesians 1:1 variant, attention now must be turned to the internal evidence. "Being more subjective than external evidence, we should not appeal to it [internal evidence] until we have first ascertained the evidence of the documents."[390] In this phase of textual criticism, the problem of the variation in readings in Ephesians 1:1 will be considered from the standpoint of the scribe and the author.

The matter of internal evidence may be divided into two separate categories: transcriptional probability, and intrinsic probability. Transcriptional evidence takes into account the error that leads to variant readings, but specifically from the perspective of the scribe. This includes both accidental and intentional errors that a scribe tended to make. Intrinsic evidence seeks to determine which reading is most logical in the context of the epistle or other genre of biblical literature, and is most in harmony with the author's known style, writing habits, and way of thinking.[391]

The first matter to be discussed will be the transcriptional probability for the originality of the variant, which will examine both accidental and intentional errors common to scribes. This will be done in order to explain the absence of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ from the text of some of the NT manuscripts that include the text of the letter known as Ephesians.

The second matter to be discussed will be the intrinsic probability for the originality of the variant. Here the primary canon of intrinsic probability will be studied in order to understand why the admission of the variant best represents the typical style of writing displayed in the indisputably Pauline letters. It also will be shown why the text displays a much smoother rendering if the variant is included, as well what is the reason for Paul's writing to the Ephesians at this point in his ministry.

The third matter to be discussed will be the transcriptional probability for the omission of the variant. Here, both the accidental and intentional types of transcriptional errors will be reviewed, in order to attempt to learn how to account for the presence of the variant in the vast majority of the later NT manuscripts. Then, the canons of transcriptional probability will be presented and discussed in order to show why—at least from the perspective of a scribe—the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant is more likely to have been added to the text than deleted from it.

The fourth matter to be discussed will be the intrinsic probability for the omission of the variant. In this section, a survey will be conducted as to how and why the variant made its way into the text. The Ephesian destination cannot be taken to be original because of the lack of personal greetings and references, the identification of these believers as Gentiles, the references to Paul's unfamiliarity with the recipients, and the unusual benediction. Then, a case will be made for two theories that might account for the lack of a stated destination at the beginning of the epistle.

The fifth and sixth matters of discussion will be the evaluations of the internal evidence for the originality of the variant, then for the omission of the variant. The final matter of discussion will be the drawing of a conclusion based upon internal evidence. This conclusion will not take into account external evidence, nor will it be a final conclusion based on both external and internal evidence. The final conclusion, based on both types of evidence, will be reserved for Chapter 6.

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[390]Henry C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943), 75.

[391]Ibid., 75–77.

The Transcriptional Probability for the Originality of the Variant

The process of making copies for any document of appreciable length guarantees the introduction of errors into the text, a fact that was true of all ancient literature.[392] Each New Testament book was altered from its original state due to the process of manual copying decade after decade, century after century.[393] The two basic categories of errors are accidental and intentional, though it is not always possible to tell one kind of error from another.

Accidental Errors

Errors of Sound. One widespread mode of producing manuscripts was the use of a scriptorium, where a lector would read aloud from an exemplar while scribes seated around him would simultaneously write as many new copies as there were transcribers to write.[394] Accidental errors often resulted from the text being read aloud and from the scribes relying upon their hearing to record properly. These errors often account for the transposition of letters, such as ο for ω, η for ει,[395] combinations of letters, or entire words.[396] However, none of the errors of sound seem to apply in Ephesians 1:1, because the omission of two entire words—especially of their magnitude—at the beginning of the copying process would be difficult to fathom.

Errors of Sight. There are numerous possibilities for how scribes could have made errors of sight: wrong division of words (ΑΛΛΟΙΣ for ΑΛΛ ΟΙΣ), confusion of one letter for another (Θ for Ο), homoeoteleuton—where the scribe's eye skips from one occurrence of a group of letters or a word to the same group of letters or a word farther down the page, thus resulting in the omission of the intervening words (see 1 John 2:23), or metathesis—where the positions of two letters or words are put in reverse order (ΕΛΑΒΟΝ for ΕΒΑΛΟΝ).[397] Again, there are no errors of sight that seem to fit the present variant. The closest possibility, homoeoteleuton, can hardly have taken place, since there were so few words (10) on the papyrus at this point in the epistle (1:1).

Omission. Accidental omission is a common slip among scribes, who "tended to shorten accidentally the text they were copying rather like heavily laden travelers, who lose a piece of luggage each time they change trains."[398] Such lost words can only be recovered by comparison with other manuscripts or by sheer guesswork.[399] Errors of omission can often be explained if there is a visual reason why an accidental shortening

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[392]J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 60.

[393]Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 21.

[394]Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*, 2d ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 280.

[395]David Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1994), 16.

[396]Eberhard Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1901), 236.

[397]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 63–64.

[398]Keith Elliott and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1995), 33.

[399]Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 8.

of the text in the exemplar was facilitated.[400] Yet in the text of Ephesians 1:1 there is no explainable cause, so "accidental omission, therefore, can be ruled out as a plausible explanation for the shorter reading."[401]

Conclusion Regarding Accidental Errors. It is difficult to see how the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ could have been omitted accidentally. The well-known phenomena of homoiteleuton, haplography, itacism, and so forth do not seem to apply in this case. It is also difficult to explain the omission on the basis of an error of sound, memory, or judgment.[402] As a result, accidental error on the part of the scribe can safely be eliminated from possibility.

Intentional Errors

Intentional errors comprise a significant number of scribal mistakes, although much less numerous than unintentional errors. They primarily derive from attempts by scribes to improve the text in various ways.[403] "These changes were no doubt made in good faith under the impression that a linguistic or theological error had crept into the text. . . . Sometimes a scribe believed a marginal notation to be part of the original text and copied it."[404] Indeed, few are the errors where heretical or destructive variants have been deliberately introduced into the manuscripts.[405]

Grammatical and Linguistic Changes. Errors due to grammatical and linguistic changes include corrections of first aorist endings put onto second aorist verbs (ΗΛΘΑΝ for ΗΛΘΟΝ), an incorrect or less desirable form (ΕΑΥΤΟΙΣ for ΑΥΤΟΙΣ), and a different syntax than that which the scribe's exemplar implied (ΜΟΝΟΝ for ΜΟΝΟΣ).[406] Among all of the conceivable possibilities for omitting ἐν Ἐφέσῳ for grammatical or linguistic improvement, none of them merit consideration in Ephesians 1:1.

Liturgical Changes. If a passage were used in a slightly altered form in church liturgy, this type of change might find its way into some of the manuscripts. The doxology to the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:13) may have originated from this type of error. On some occasions, the changes that were made in the opening words of lectionary passages doubtless became manuscript variants.[407] There appears to be no chance for such a liturgical error in Ephesians 1:1.

Conflation. Conflation is the practice of combining two or more variants into one reading. In Luke 24:53, the variants ΕΥΛΟΓΟΥΝΤΕΣ and ΑΙΝΟΥΝΤΕΣ are apparently conflated to form a third reading, ΕΥΛΟΓΟΥΝΤΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΙΝΟΥΝΤΕΣ, which is found in the Ethiopic version.[408] With reference to the task at hand, conflation cannot be responsible for the error, because there is no third variant that combines two other readings.

Elimination of Apparent Discrepancies. These variants may include discrepancies of biblical reference, as in the change from "Isaiah the prophet" to "the prophets" in Mark 1:2. They may involve historical

[400]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 38.

[401]David Alan Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle" (M.Div. Thesis, Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, Calif., 1980), 31.

[402]Ibid.

[403]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 66.

[404]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 17.

[405]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 66.

[406]Ibid.

[407]Ibid.

[408]Ibid., 67.

difficulties, as in the use of “on the third day” for “after three days” in Mark 10:34.[409] Once again, there is no theological or historical discrepancy in the salutation of Paul’s letter of Ephesians that would cause such a variant.

Omission. Another form of error purposely committed by scribes is that of omission, though certainly accidental omissions are more common than intentional ones. Such omission often may be due to the elimination of unwanted material. The shortened rendering of the text in Ephesians 1:1 may be the result of intentional omission on the part of early scribes or copyists with an agenda. There are several reasons why this may have been done.

The first reason why a scribe may have omitted the address from the text is that the Alexandrians were known to make learned corrections.[410] The short reading of B and 1216 in Matthew 13:44, where they omit πάντα, leads Metzger to speak of “the Alexandrian penchant for pruning unnecessary words.”[411] If the Alexandrian scribes omitted words on other occasions, the earliest and “best” witnesses “could also be wrong in [Ephesians] 1:1.”[412]

The second reason an omission may have been made is that there might be the need to omit the destination to resolve the internal difficulties created by the later statements Paul makes, such as the statement that he did not know his readers personally (1:15). Says Black,

> The possibility that [such omission] could have happened is strengthened by the impersonal style and general theme of the epistle. On the surface at least, the fact that Ephesians contains no personal greetings, and addresses itself to the theme of the Universal Church, makes the epistle appear that it was intended for a wider circulation tha[n] Ephesus alone.[413]

Because of the apparent contradiction this would leave for the readers, the scribes may have relieved the difficulty by omitting the destination altogether.

The third possible reason for an intentional omission is that it would make Ephesians a universal letter. “Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that the address was omitted in order to make the letter a ‘catholic’ epistle, intended for the church at large rather than for a specific congregation.”[414] Why would the early church want this to be made a universal letter?

Black notes, “recent scholarship has shown that the early church struggled with the ‘peculiarity’ of the Pauline epistles,”[415] where Black relies upon the words of Van Roon for proof.[416] Says Van Roon, “There was a

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[409]Ibid.

[410]Ibid., 115.

[411]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 34.

[412]Black, “The Address of the Ephesian Epistle,” 17.

[413]Ibid., 35.

[414]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 48. As Dahl adds, “The text without any concrete address is to be understood as a result of a secondary ‘catholicyzing.’” (Nils A. Dahl, “The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church,” in *Neotestamentica et Patristica*, vol. 6, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* [Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1962], 267).

[415]Ibid., 49.

[416]“If Gamble’s conclusions are correct, the Roman epistle is a clear example of what Van Roon mentioned was the tendency in early Christianity, namely, to make Paul’s epistles catholic. Why could this same thing not have happened in Ephesians?” (David A. Black, “The Peculiarities of Ephesians and the Ephesian Address,” *Grace Theological Journal* 2/1 [1981], 68).

tendency in ancient Christianity to stress the ecumenical validity of the epistles of Paul; cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* V, 17: 'But the title is of no concern, since when the apostle wrote to some he wrote to all.'"[417]

In support of the notion that the words may have been omitted to adapt the epistle for universal application, one may turn to the book of Romans, where a similar absence of a destination can be observed. Textual support for the omission of ἐν Ῥώμῃ in Romans is found in codex Boernerianus (G, 9th c), which omits "in Rome" from both 1:7 and 1:15.[418]

Two cursives (1739 and 1908) of the 10th and 11th centuries include the variant in both verses, though in both cursives a marginal note at 1:7 states that the variant was not present in the text used.[419] According to the marginal note in 1739, Origen's commentary on Romans also omitted the words.[420] Finally, Ambrosiaster and some Vulgate manuscripts lack the address, but only in 1:7.[421] It is therefore not difficult to suppose that at an early time Paul's letters were adapted for more general use in an unsophisticated way by textual omission.[422]

On account of the general nature of the Ephesian letter, it may have been no mere coincidence that this letter was one of the three Pauline epistles to have its address tampered with. Then in time, it came to be generally recognized that the letters of Paul, as canonical and therefore universal, no longer needed to be adapted for a more general use, and the shorter format of the address was rejected.[423]

The Intrinsic Probability for the Originality of the Variant

The term "intrinsic probability" considers the likelihood that the author would have written the text in a particular way, and usually refers to the internal considerations applied when searching for a reading that fits the language, style, theological stance, or context of the book.[424] This part of the investigation must be approached with caution since "there is constant danger here of wanting to make an author say what we prefer that he should say, rather than to let him say what he wants to say."[425]

Primary Canon of Intrinsic Probability

One of the most important canons in the study of variant readings[426] is the one stating that the reading most characteristic of the author's own style generally is preferable.[427] If competing variants seem to be of nearly equal weight, the reading that is most in conformity to the usual practice of the author may be instrumental in the search for the original text. However, "This principle cannot be adhered to too rigidly, as an author must be granted the privilege of using some words or forms only rarely."[428]

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[417] A. Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, vol. 39, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1974), 81. The quote of Tertullian, written and documented as a primary source in the preceding chapter, is here supplied in English, whereas the text of Van Roon records the original Latin.

[418] It may be added that it^g, the literalistic Old Latin translation between the lines of the Greek text of codex G, follows the omission, though it probably does not deserve independent status.

[419] D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 2, *The Pauline Epistles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 262. See also Harry Gamble Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 31.

[420] Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles," 267.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Gamble Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans*, 117.

[423] Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 69.

[424] Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 32.

[425] Thiessen, *Introduction*, 77.

[426] Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 20.

[427] Greenlee, *Introduction*, 114.

[428] Ibid.

Pauline Style of Including an Address. An examination of the text of Ephesians 1:1 shows that the omission of the variant ἐν Ἐφέσῳ would be a noticeable change from the normal Pauline style of addressing his letters.[429] Notice the addresses in the following letters of Paul:

Romans 1:1, 7	"Paul . . . to all those who are in Rome."
1 Corinthians 1:1	"Paul . . . to the church of God that is in Corinth."
2 Corinthians 1:1	"Paul . . . to the church of God that is in Corinth."
Galatians 1:1, 2	"Paul . . . to the churches in Galatia."
Philippians 1:1	"Paul and Timothy . . . to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with the elders and deacons."
Colossians 1:1, 2	"Paul . . . to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ in Colossae."
1 Thessalonians 1:1	"Paul . . . to the church of the Thessalonians in God."
2 Thessalonians 1:2	"Paul . . . to the church of the Thessalonians in God."

Without exception, in each of these addresses included within inspired Pauline letters, the recipients are mentioned specifically.[430]

Furthermore, Hendricksen found that elsewhere in Paul's epistles the words "who are," when present in the original and associated with a church, are consistently followed by a place-designation.[431] Accordingly, there is no valid reason to assume that the occurrence of the words "who are" in Ephesians was to be an exception to this rule.[432] In summary, if the variant were omitted in the original text, "the address of Ephesians 1:1 would be a strange and singular departure from the Pauline style of addressing his letters" with a clearly delineated place-designation.[433]

Smooth Rendering if the Variant is Original

If the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are original to the letter, the flow of the text remains smooth and harmonious. Yet if the words are absent, a syntactical problem ensues.[434] "The address 'to the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus' is most unnatural; after τοῖς οὖσιν a geographical designation must have been left out."[435] Van Roon adds, "Whatever geographical indications the reader may choose to read or add, [without the variant] the clause . . . remains contorted and unclear and differently formulated from the other Pauline prescripts."[436]

Exegetes who read the omission as original have tried to translate the verse in different ways. In the following quote, Stoeckhardt lists a number of options that have been offered.

> Some suggested this rendering: 'the saints who are also believers,' as if there were saints who were not believers. Some offer this: 'saints who are also faithful,' or 'saints who are there and who are known to be there,' namely, in Asia Minor, where Tychicus was to deliver this Letter. But all these renderings and explanations are just so many linguistic monstrosities without meaning or purpose.[437]

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[429]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 20.

[430]Ibid.

[431]See passages such as Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; and Philippians 1:1.

[432]William Hendricksen, *Ephesians*, vol. unspecified, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), 57.

[433]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 21.

[434]Ibid., 22.

[435]Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles," 267.

[436]Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 73.

[437]D. D. Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, trans. Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 20.

As Stoeckhardt's quote demonstrates, there are no alternative renderings that have presented a satisfactory answer to the grammatical problem created by the omission of the destination. Until an acceptable option surfaces, the burden of proof lies with those who do not consider ἐν Ἐφέσῳ to be original.

The Καί Conjunction Rendered Nonsensical. Another grammatical problem with the omission concerns the use of the conjunction καί. To take this conjunction "in an adjunctive ['also'] or ascensive ['even'] sense would make the sentence read unnaturally and would intimate, at least to this writer, that Paul maintained a distinction between those who were 'holy' and those who were 'faithful.'"[438] None of the available options for handling the conjunction seems to do justice to the passage.

In summary, the omission makes little sense if the text is to be read in any natural capacity, and there has yet to be provided a translation that will render the sentence grammatically acceptable. It appears, therefore, that all attempts to make sense of the text of Ephesians 1:1 without a place designation are subject to insurmountable grammatical difficulties.[439] As Black points out, "The omission also leaves the text with insoluble syntactical problems which make the translation and interpretation of Ephesians 1:1 without ἐν Ἐφέσῳ (or some other place designation) extremely difficult, if not impossible."[440]

Paul's Reason for Writing to the Ephesians

Lost amid all the claims that the general nature of Ephesians makes it a letter that Paul could not have written to his beloved Ephesian church is evidence of Paul's love for them *as shown through* this epistle. His intense affection for them was indeed shown later by his farewell address to the elders upon his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17ff.). Paul's care there suggests that during his imprisonment, he gave much loving thought to this congregation, and as soon as he had an opportunity he wrote this letter to them also, highlighting the most important matters he had already communicated to them.[441] The intrinsic probability, therefore, clearly seems to favor the originality of the variant in question.

The Transcriptional Probability for the Omission of the Variant

Accidental Errors

None of the types of accidental errors that were presented and considered during the discussion of the originality of the variant need to be discussed here. They no more qualify under the case for the absence of the variant than they qualified under the case for its originality. The addition of these two words cannot qualify as an accidental scribal error.

Intentional Errors

Correcting a Manuscript Error. The scribe may have attempted to correct what he thought was an error in his exemplar. Thus in Romans 8:2, σε may be the original wording, but it was changed to με by a well-meaning scribe because of the sense of the previous verses.[442] Nestle notes that grammatical corrections are one

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[438]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 26.
[439]Ibid., 28–29.
[440]Ibid., 38.
[441]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 29.
[442]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 67.

of the conscious errors that belong to this category.[443] In this way, a scribe who knew that most of the Pauline letters had addresses and knew that the grammatical difficulty of this prescript easily might have added ἐν Ἐφέσῳ to bring resolution and consistency.

Addition. Another intentional error common in the transmissional process is addition. Says one textual critic, "I have no doubt that in the very earliest ages after our Holy Scriptures were written, and before the authority of the church protected them, willful alterations, and especially additions, were made in them."[444] Additions were often introduced by bishops, who had the sole authority over the public reading of Scripture. These changes would soon become as familiar as the old readings and would pass into the versions.[445] One of several types of additions may be responsible for the rise of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.

Adding Marginal Readings into the Text. Sometimes a scribe believed that a marginal notation was original, which led to his copying it "back into" the text.[446] Says Kenyon, "One [error] that is frequently invoked in the criticism of classical authors is the intrusion into the text of words that were originally explanatory notes written in the margin."[447] In this sense, an earlier scribe may have written ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the margin or between the lines of the text, only to have a later scribe incorporate it into the text.

There is a number of possibilities as to why this variant may have been written in the margin, or between the lines, to begin with. First, Ephesus was the leading city of Asia, which makes it simple to understand how the epistle would have become associated with the church at Ephesus.[448] As Abbott notes, "There is no difficulty in understanding how the title 'to the Ephesians' would come to be attached to the epistle, since it was from Ephesus that copies would reach the Christian world generally."[449]

Second, perhaps the citation of Ephesus came to be accepted in later official copies due to Paul's long association with the city.[450] "For various reasons–*primarily because of Paul's long association with that church* and the importance of that congregation in Asia Minor–it became attached to Ephesus" (emphasis added).[451] If this is indeed the reason for the variant's finding its way into the text, a key component could be how the marginal note was already on the manuscript in bold form: a superscription on every page of the letter.

Third, the words may have been written in the margin by someone who knew that this letter had close association with the church of that city, since it would have been the first major stop Tychicus would have made after leaving Europe and journeying into and through Asia.[452]

Fourth, considering the status of Ephesus as the provincial capital,[453] the *autographum* may have come to reside there, and thus it could become known as the letter "to the Ephesians."[454] This possibility is made more likely when realizing that Ephesus was a center of communication between Asia and other important regions.[455]

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[443]Nestle, *Introduction*, 239.

[444]Marvin R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1903), 42.

[445]Ibid., 44.

[446]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 17; Greenlee, *Introduction*, 65.

[447]Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism*, 9.

[448]J. A. M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 283.

[449]T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, vol. unspecified, The International Critical Commentary, ed. S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Briggs (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), viii.

[450]Leslie C. Mitton, *Ephesians*, vol. unspecified, New Century Bible, ed. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black (Greenwood, S. C.: The Attic Press Inc., 1976), 40.

[451]Arthur Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. unspecified, New International Biblical Commentary, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 122.

[452]Mitton, *Ephesians*, 40.

Fifth, since the letter undoubtedly was distributed from Ephesus, perhaps it soon came to be known as the epistle "to the Ephesians." In time, the variant may have found its way into the text of one document, and from that document, its inclusion was perpetuated into practically all of the manuscripts and versions.[456]

Sixth, the Ephesian copy may have been the one to enter the *corpus Paulinum*. If Tychicus stopped at Ephesus on his way to the Lycus Valley, the Ephesian believers certainly may have read the epistle and made a copy for themselves while Tychicus rested from his travels. When the compiler of Paul's letters went to Asia for an accurate copy, he may have looked no further than the ancient copy in the archives of the Ephesian church.[457] In order to give the epistle a distinguishing address, in accordance with all of the other letters in the collection,[458] he may have inserted the words ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ at the top of the letter, which eventually created the natural opportunity for the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant to be added into the text, in order to match the existing title.[459]

Though all of these hypotheses are indeed hypothetical, they represent quite feasible scenarios, one (or more) of which may have accounted for the incorporation of this variant into the text. Only further evidence, which at this point remains undiscovered, will be able to confirm or reject the viability of each of these possibilities.

Adding Words Directly into the Text. Scribes who were convinced that the text before them was lacking in some way may have felt the liberty to improve the wording. With the epistle at hand, if the superscription, which possibly predated the variant because a title would have been pertinent after the Pauline corpus was collected and circulated as a whole, were added to the top of the first page of "Ephesians," an ambitious scribe easily could have incorporated the variant into the letter. This potential sequence of events led Wilson to conclude, "It seems clear that they [the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ] are not authentic but probably introduced from the title πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, which apparently dates from the second century."[460]

Harmonization. A very common intentional error, especially in the synoptic gospels, was harmonizing the wording of one passage with that of a passage with similar wording. Usually scribes harmonizes passages in

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453This metropolitan city of Asia attained to the same category of importance as Rome, the capital city of the Empire, and Corinth, the capital city of Achaia. Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 83.

454Harold J. Ockenga, *Faithful in Christ Jesus: Preaching in Ephesians* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1948), 18.

455Ernest Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians: Why and When the Designation 'Ephesians'?" *Aufstig und Niedergand der Römischen Welt* 2.25.4 (1987): 3254.

456Thiessen, *Introduction*, 244.

457In the words of Sanders, "It may have been indeed in the church chest at Ephesus." (J. N. Sanders, "Case for the Pauline Authorship," in *Studies in Ephesians*, ed. F. L. Cross [London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1956], 15).

458McNeile mentions that "the awkwardness of 1:1 without a place name was felt, and when the Pauline collection was made, 'in Ephesus' may have been inserted." (A. H. McNeile, *St. Paul: His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge U. Press, 1920], 217). Campbell adds, "Granting . . . the need for a mark of identification on it, the words 'in Ephesus' would be most logical." (Ernest Campbell, *Ephesians* [Silverton, Or.: Canyonview Press, 1986], 15).

459F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, vol. 10, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 245. Wikenhauser concurs with Bruce when he says, "When [the epistle] was taken into the *corpus Paulinum* it was headed πρὸς Ἐφεσίους; at a later date this slipped into the blank space in the introductory greeting in the form ἐν Ἐφέσῳ." (Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, trans. Joseph Cunningham [New York: Herder and Herder, 1958], 426). If the superscription did appear before the variant, Best concludes that "it is easy to see why the name entered the text." (Ernest Best, "Ephesians 1:1," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* [London: Cambridge U. Press, 1979], 34).

460James P. Wilson, "Note on the Textual Problem of Ephesians 1:1," *The Expository Times* 60 (1948–49), 225.

order to eliminate the appearance of error. For example, the words that belong in John 19:20, "It was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek," have been introduced into the text of many manuscripts in Luke 23:38.[461] Adding these words would have made Luke's gospel account "correct," since it was otherwise omitting true material. Metzger acknowledges the scribal habit of harmonization and provides another example.

> Sometimes the copyist succumbed to the natural desire to fill out the account in one biblical book with a phrase from a similar passage in another biblical book. Thus, in Colossians 1:14 only the later and more corrupt manuscripts have the words "through his blood," which some well-meaning scribes introduced into this verse from recollecting the parallel passage in Ephesians 1:7.[462]

Similar to the tendency of scribes to harmonize passages within the synoptic gospels, there may have been a tendency to harmonize the companion volumes of Colossians and Ephesians. The variant in Ephesians 1:1 could have been introduced by a scribe who wanted to harmonize its salutation with that of Colossians, or even with that of the other Pauline letters with superscriptions.

Canons of Transcriptional Probability

Prefer the Shorter Reading.[463] Since scribes more often added to the text than omitted words from it, an important canon of textual criticism is that the shorter reading should be preferred.[464] Greenlee agrees with this preference: "Intentional changes were more likely to be additions, as explanations or from other traditions, rather than omissions; thus a shorter reading is generally preferable."[465]

Black disseminates the reasons why this principle should be used with caution: "Since scribes sometimes omitted material either accidentally or because they found something to be grammatically, stylistically, or theologically objectionable in the text."[466] Being that none of those reasons apply to the omission in Ephesians 1:1, it seems safe to conclude that the shorter reading should be preferred here in Ephesians 1:1.

Prefer the More Difficult Reading. Another important principle of textual criticism is that "the harder reading is to be preferred, other things being equal. This principle assumes that, if a reader was confronted with a knotty problem, he would try to improve the text and clarify the meaning."[467] Many times a scribe misunderstood his text and changed it to a reading that seemed easier to comprehend, or seemed more natural.[468] As seen in the earlier discussion of the grammatical difficulty with the omission of the Ephesians 1:1 variant, choosing the more difficult reading leads only to the view that sees the variant as spurious.

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[461]Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 197.

[462]Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background*, 281.

[463]Not all are convinced that the shorter text is to be preferred; Elliott and Moir remark, "'The *longer* text is to be preferred' seems a better principle provided the contents, language, and style of that longer text are compatible with the rest of the author's writings." (Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 33). They are certainly in the minority in believing that omissions outweigh additions in textual criticism. This conviction is usually a presupposition of MT adherents, who know that their readings normally are longer than competing, non-Byzantine readings.

[464]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 35.

[465]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 78.

[466]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 35.

[467]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 34.

[468]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 78.

Prefer the Reading that Best Explains the Rise of the Other Readings. The reading from which the origin of the other reading(s) most easily can be explained is to be preferred as original.[469] This principle may overlap with the two previous principles, since either a shorter reading or a harder reading may give rise to other readings.[470] Black refers to this principle as "the basic principle of internal evidence."[471] Metzger calls this "the most basic criterion for the evaluation of variant readings."[472] Elliott and Moir call it a "worthy principle of textual criticism."[473]

With the importance of this canon of textual criticism to most scholars, one must examine its impact upon the Ephesians 1:1 variant. To believe that the presence of the variant led to the absence of the variant, one must have the faith to believe that a scribe would take a syntactically easy reading and make it more difficult, expecting later scribes to follow such a reading when it would go against the prevailing tradition of the Ephesian destination. Would any later scribe follow such an omission when *all* of the other manuscripts at his disposal included both ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the text and ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ at the beginning of the letter, especially considering the great antiquity of the superscription (as found in 𝔓⁴⁶)?

On the other hand, the lack of the variant easily explains the introduction of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ into the text. Any scribe who realized the grammatical complexity of the omission, the way in which this salutation would depart from every other Pauline letter, and who saw the superscription at the beginning of the epistle certainly would be inclined to eliminate the difficulty altogether. It would be an easy, clean, concise addition to the text, all done with the intention of "restoring" the wording to its original form. This logically explains the addition.

The Intrinsic Probability for the Omission of the Variant

In his introductory book on textual criticism, A. T. Robertson speaks of the Golden Canon of Intrinsic Evidence. "No reading can possibly be original which contradicts the context of the passage or the tenor of the writing."[474] With that, the following discussion will focus upon the characteristics of the epistle that demonstrate that Paul could not have written it to the Ephesian church. Following that discussion, the attention will turn to two possible theories as to the identity of the recipients, since the text would otherwise offer no destination.

Lack of Personal Greetings or References

If Paul were to write a letter to the Ephesians, one would expect there to be a marked individuality of character in it. Would the apostle not pour out his heart to his converts—or at least to the converts of Epaphras, who likely was converted through Paul—as a friend speaking to friends?[475] In writing to them, Paul would be expected to allude to his own labors among them, or at least their attachment to him.[476] This omission of greetings is all the more odd when considering that it was Paul's habit in other letters to include such matters.[477]

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[469]Nestle, *Introduction*, 157.

[470]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 115.

[471]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 35.

[472]Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 207.

[473]Elliott and Moir, *Manuscripts*, 6.

[474]A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928), 165.

[475]J. B. Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays* (London: Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1893), 387.

[476]Ibid., 388.

[477]Kenneth S. Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), 18.

The lack of any personal allusion prompts this comment from Abbott: “When we turn to the Epistle itself we find its whole tone and character out of keeping with the traditional designation.”[478] Nineham expresses his stupor, “St. Paul must have known the Ephesian Christians better almost than he knew any Church, and if the letter had been addressed by him to them, the absence of any personal references or greetings is inexplicable.”[479]

It would be natural for the apostle to write a letter to a church where he had labored for so many years, but it seems strange that no more of that personal relationship would be brought out in this letter if indeed the letter was intended especially for the church at Ephesus.[480] Wikenhauser offers a definitive statement for this concern when he says that the tone of the epistle is so impersonal that Paul cannot have written it to a community that he had founded and taken care of for three years.[481]

Recipients Declared Gentiles

It is quite clear that Paul’s recipients were exclusively Gentile Christians, as they are addressed as such in 3:1. “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— . . . .” The injunctions are intended for former pagans exhorted to lay aside entirely the vices of their pagan past (3:5 ff.; 4:17 ff.; 4:25 ff.). Conversely, Acts describes a strong Jewish element in Ephesus,[482] with whom Paul reasoned in the synagogue for three months.[483] Therefore, the exclusively Gentile audience that comprises the recipients of the letter obviously is not congruous with the semi-Jewish church in Ephesus that was founded by the apostle Paul.

Paul’s Unfamiliarity with the Recipients

Paul does not appear to know personally the readers of this letter, as seen in the following verses: 1:15, 3:2, and 4:21. The reality of Paul’s lack of a relationship with his readers prompts Young to remark, “The Apostle has heard of the faith which prevails amongst his readers, not only that they had heard about Christ, but also that they had accepted Christ and were taught in Christ according as the truth is in Jesus.”[484] As Paul wrote in 1:15, “For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints. . . .” Upon a natural reading of this verse, the text suggests that Paul only had heard of his readers secondhand,[485] which absolutely cannot be said about his relationship with the Ephesian church.[486]

In fact, Paul had spent the large part of three years at Ephesus, and he had “gone about among them preaching the kingdom of God” (Acts 20:25). In addition, Paul’s final meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus is a striking picture of the intimate relationship he shared with the Ephesian church.[487] Reacting to Ephesians 3:2, Campbell notes, “If there was any New Testament church that should have known about the special dispensation of Grace committed unto the Apostle Paul, it should have been the Ephesian church.”[488]

Best accentuates the absence of signs of Paul’s bond with the Ephesians when he states that the closing of the letter is uncharacteristic of Paul. “The lack of precise identification of the readership implied in either of

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[478]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, iii.

[479]D. E. Nineham, “Case Against the Pauline Authorship,” in *Studies in Ephesians*, ed. F. L. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1956), 24.

[480]E. S. Young, *Ephesians: Sanctification by Faith in Christ* (Claremont, Ca.: Bible Student’s League, 1923), 28.

[481]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 423.

[482]See Acts 18:19; 19:8, 13–17, 34; and 20:21.

[483]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 423.

[484]Young, *Ephesians*, 28.

[485]Ephesians 1:15 implies “that he had not seen them face to face.” (Ockenga, *Faithful in Christ Jesus*, 18).

[486]Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 509.

[487]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 387.

[488]Campbell, *Ephesians*, 14.

these renderings is supported by the final blessing. . . . The concluding grace is not only much more elaborate (than the other Pauline letters) but it is also couched in the third person and contains a qualification in 6:24 where grace is said to be 'with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.'"[489] Barth concurs, "The final blessing is warm enough. But if compared with the ending usually found in the Pauline letters, it has an impersonal flavor and bears the mark of majestic distance."[490] Moreover, there is not a single word of familiarity or endearment in the entire letter, and the benediction is given in the third person, not in the second person as everywhere else.[491]

The conclusion that Paul did not know the recipients of this letter personally can be traced back at least to Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 350–428), who believed that Romans and Ephesians agree in that both were addressed to churches not as yet visited by Paul. "*Scribit Ephesiis hanc epistolam beatus Paulus, eo modo quo et Romanis dudum scripserat quos necdum ante viderat, et hoc evidenter ipse ostendit, in ipsa epistola sic scribens: propter hoc et ego audiens eam fidem quae in vobis est in domino Iesu, et caritatem quam in omnes sanctos habetis, non cesso gratias agere pro vobis*" ["Blessed Paul writes this letter to the Ephesians, in the way he also had written to the Romans at another time, whom he had not yet seen before; and this itself is clearly made evident in that very letter, so he wrote: 'On account of this I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you and the love that you have for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you.'"].[492] Ironically, Theodore acknowledges that the Ephesians are indeed the recipients, while still holding to the conviction that Paul did not know his audience personally.

Blank-Space Theory

According to the blank-space theory, in the original letter of Paul, a vacant area was left after the words, "to the saints who are", rendering the Greek text, τοῖς ἁγίοις (τοῖς) οὖσι(ν) καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. In the copies made for distribution, the blank would be filled-in with the name of the individual church for each given city that was to receive the letter. By implication, the epistle would be designed as a circular, intended not merely for one church but for many. This view is hinged on the idea that the letter known as Ephesians was written at the same time as Colossians and Philemon, and was probably delivered by Tychicus to various churches in the province of Asia.[493]

Some forms of the blank-space theory assume not only that there was a vacant area left in the original, but blank spaces were also left in the copies carried by Paul's trusted letter-bearer Tychicus, who was requested to fill-in the name of each city when he stopped to deliver copies to the churches.[494] Others believe that in the church at large, some copies would be circulated with the blank spaces. In the course of later copying, the blank was disregarded, and the text read, "to the saints that are and faithful brethren."[495]

Several-Specific-Churches Theory

One alternative to the blank-space theory[496] worth considering is that the epistle was sent to an unspecified number of local churches[497] in—and perhaps nearby—the Lycus Valley, including Laodicea,

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489Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 36.

490Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 1–3* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1981), 11. See also M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 282.

491Thiessen, *Introduction*, 243.

492Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Epistolam B. Pauli Ad Ephesios*, vol. 1, in *Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, ed. H. B. Swete (Cambridge, England: Cambridge U. Press, 1920), 112. The translation is that of the present writer.

493Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 530.

494Ibid.

495Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 392.

496"Perhaps the first verse originally read, 'to the saints who are also faithful,' without a blank space for the name of the church. We regard this as the more probable theory." (Thiessen, *Introduction*, 243–44).

Hierapolis, and possibly other churches (Philadelphia?) evangelized by the Colossians.[498] "If St. Paul had written directly and solely to the Laodiceans, he would naturally have given his salutations to the Church of Laodicea and to individual members of it in the letter addressed to them."[499] However, if Paul were writing to more than just the Laodicean church, he would have had good reason to omit specific city names altogether.

It is supposed by many that the letter was destined for a number of churches in Asia Minor that Tychicus was directed to visit in the course of the journey from Rome to Colossae.[500] The Ephesian letter may have arisen out of the conversations between Paul and Epaphras concerning the condition of other churches in Asia Minor that were not yet affected by incipient Gnosticism, but needed instruction and comfort from the apostle.[501] Support for this view begins with a reconstruction of the events that led up to the writing of the letter.

Background Matters. During the time of Paul's three-year residence in Ephesus, the knowledge of the gospel had spread throughout the region, whether by the direct or the indirect influence of the apostle. The gospel certainly had spread to Laodicea, with her attendant satellites Hierapolis and Colossae (Colossians 1:2; 4:13).[502] However, Paul appears never to have visited these cities, because from the first day that he set foot in Asia, he was with the Ephesians the whole time (Acts 20:18).

Colossae was evangelized by a Colossian citizen named Epaphras (Colossians 1:7; 4:12), who probably was converted during Paul's ministry at Ephesus. It is extremely plausible that either Epaphras, or the Colossians whom he evangelized, spread the gospel to the surrounding cities of the Lycus Valley, leading to the conversion of the Laodicean believers who had not seen Paul's face (Colossians 2:1). M'Clymont notes, "That the epistle was not meant exclusively for Ephesus is evident from a number of passages which imply that the readers had no personal acquaintance or connection with Paul, *though they may have received the Gospel from some of his disciples* (1:15–19; 3:1–4; 4:17–22; Colossians 1:3–9)."[503]

When Paul heard a good report about the enduring faith both of the Colossians and of the recipients of the Ephesian letter, which evidently came through Epaphras himself (Colossians 4:12), the apostle was compelled to write both audiences. Since Epaphras informed Paul of the progress among the churches, this Colossian obviously could have offered more insight into the circumstances in Colossae than he could have offered about the situations in the other cities that were evangelized. This accounts for both the personal references in Colossians and the treatment of specific events there, such as the "Colossian heresy."[504]

Paul then dispatched Tychicus, who probably visited Laodicea on the way to Colossae. While there, he may have delivered "the letter from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16),[505] then resumed on his journey. Tychicus might have taken along this "letter from Laodicea," or at least a copy of it, to Colossae when he delivered the Colossian letter, as Paul instructed them to "read the *letter* [that Tychicus just brought] from Laodicea"

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[497]Best considers that the most popular solution to the problem of the recipients of the letter regards them as a group of churches (Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians," 3252). Sanders adds that it is not as improbable as is sometimes suggested that Paul may have written an epistle destined for more than one church, which Sanders believes he did in the case of the Ephesian letter (Sanders, "Case for the Pauline Authorship," 14).

[498]Since Ephesians and Colossians are closely related in content, and both letters were delivered by Tychicus, Wikenhauser concludes that Ephesians must have been addressed to communities near Colossae (Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 425). This argument, though certainly not fail-safe, is indeed a weighty one.

[499]Ibid., 393.

[500]Young, *Ephesians*, 28.

[501]Ockenga, *Faithful in Christ Jesus*, 18.

[502]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 394.

[503]M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 283 (emphasis added).

[504]For a fuller discussion of the Colossian heresy, see Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 565–571.

[505]"If the original document did not contain the name of any specific church, Paul could refer to it as 'the Epistle from Laodicea.'" (Thiessen, *Introduction*, 244).

(Colossians 4:16). This scenario may account for Marcion's attribution of the title, "to the Laodiceans,"[506] as Laodicea's geographical proximity to Colossae would have made it the most prominent of the churches for whom the letter was intended.

Colossians as a Companion Volume. One of the most fascinating of the various enigmas that surround the letter to the Ephesians is the nature of its relationship to another letter in the Pauline corpus, namely Colossians.[507] The relationship between these two letters is by far the closest among all of the letters within the Pauline corpus,[508] which has led many scholars to refer to these two epistles as "companion letters."

Hiebert claims that the affinity between this epistle and Colossians (and Philemon) is so close that the epistles many be dated contemporaneously, to about A.D. 62.[509] The three letters were dispatched at the same time, but in the epistle to the Colossians, they are directed to exchange letters with the Laodiceans.[510] Colossians is also the only other Pauline letter to describe its recipients as "faithful . . . in Christ" in its prescript.[511]

The similarity also extends to style, vocabulary, and specificity, as seen in McNeile's statement, "This [affinity] is shown by the close similarity of the language, and by the mention of Tychicus (6:21–2) in words almost identical with Col. 4:7–8)."[512] Moreover, one-third of the words in Colossians reappear in Ephesians, and in Ephesians 6:21–22 as many as 32 consecutive words (apart from an omission of two words) are equivalent to those found in Colossians 4:7–8.[513]

No Mention of False Teachers. Paul's greater knowledge of the people of Colossae, as seen in the personal references in that epistle, is confirmed by the way he handles error in each letter. "In Colossians he combats error directly; he here combats it indirectly: whereas there he is special, distinct, personal, here he speaks broadly and generally."[514] In striking contrast to Colossians, Paul makes no mention of any false teachers in Ephesians, nor does he hint at any attack on his apostolic authority,[515] which seems to affirm his greater awareness of the circumstances in Colossae than in the cities to which he writes Ephesians.

Laodicea as One of the Recipients. Many believe that the letter "from Laodicea" which is spoken of in Colossians 4:16 is synonymous with the epistle known as Ephesians,[516] and thus Laodicea is one of the cities to

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[506]M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 282.

[507]Says Nineham, "The most noteworthy characteristic from which any explanation of Ephesians must start is its connection with Colossians." (Nineham, "Case Against the Pauline Authorship," 26).

[508]Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), xlvii. M'Clymont agrees, stating, "The similarity between the two Epistles is greater than exists between any other writings attributed to Paul, half of Ephesians being full of expressions found in Colossians." (M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 281).

[509]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 265. Being in complete agreement, M'Clymont states, "[T]he simplest and most natural supposition seems to be that they were written within a very short time of each other, the interval being even shorter, and the consequent similarity even greater, than between 1 and 2 Thessalonians." (M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 281). Johnston even goes so far as to say, "The best one can do is to note that the writer of Ephesians had been familiar with the *corpus* of Pauline letters for some considerable time and probably had Colossians before him when he wrote." (George Johnston, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, vol. unspecified, *The Century Bible*, ed. H. H. Rowley and Matthew Black [London: Thomas Nelson Printers Ltd., 1967], 7).

[510]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 391.

[511]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 3.

[512]McNeile, *St. Paul*, 214.

[513]Mitton, *Ephesians*, 11.

[514]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 395.

[515]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 265.

[516]M'Clymont, *New Testament Criticism*, 282. Miller declares that "'the epistle *from* Laodicea' is almost certainly to be identified with that primarily addressed to the Ephesians." (Herbert G. Miller, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* [London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1899], v). Moule adds, "It is more than probable

whom Paul writes.[517] "Ephesians is most probably the epistle which according to Col. 4:16 was to come to the Colossians from Laodicea. Most of the supporters of this theory would not include Ephesus among the communities in question."[518]

Indeed, there are compelling reasons to avoid counting Ephesus among the churches to whom Paul wrote. Besides the obvious and damaging fact that Ephesus does not fit the description of a church Paul does not know personally, it is not located within geographical proximity of the Lycus Valley. Instead, it was separated from Colossae and the neighboring cities both by a distance of 100 miles and by the high mountain ranges that bound the valleys of the Meander and Lycus to the north. "This mountain barrier, while not prohibiting, would serve somewhat to retard intercourse between the metropolis and those cities to the south of it."[519]

Yet many commentators oppose the several-specific-churches theory. For example, Lenski says "the general opinion is that this is another of those letters that are now lost to us; it is like the one mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9."[520] Yet how could Paul have asked them to read a non-canonical letter in the church at Colossae when it was the practice of the early church to read only Scripture in their public gatherings?[521]

It must be observed that "the epistle in question is not the 'epistle *to* the Laodiceans,' but the 'epistle *from* Laodicea.' The former designation would not be very well suited to our epistle: the latter exactly describes it, for the Colossians got it from Laodicea" (emphasis added).[522] Thus the Laodicean reference in Colossians 4:16 easily could refer to a canonical epistle that arrived first in Hierapolis and later in Laodicea.[523] Such an epistle most certainly would be another prison epistle that was a companion to the Colossian letter.

Laodicea seems to fill the role of a church that Paul did not know personally. Colossians 2:1 mentions a prayer for the faithful in Laodicea and others of the faith whom Paul had not personally encountered. If Ephesians originally was intended for Laodicea and at least one nearby church, the prayers in Ephesians manifest the agony of the apostle for these faithful Christians, at least those from Laodicea, whom he never met, as expressed in Colossians 2:1.[524]

If Ephesians is the epistle of Colossians 4:16, it would be fitting that Laodicea would be named, above any of the other church(es) where the letter was intended to travel, as the place from where it would be sent.

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that "the letter from Laodicea means the copy of 'Ephesians' sent there, to be passed on to the minor stations of the district." (Handley C. G. Moule, *Ephesian Studies* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900], 20).

[517]For a list of 18 commentators who hold to the view that the letter was meant for the Laodiceans, see John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), xxvii.

[518]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 425.

[519]Miller, *Commentary on Ephesians*, v.

[520]R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians*, vol. 8, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 332.

[521]As Justin Martyr wrote in the middle of the second century, "And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits." (St. Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, vol. 56, in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, trans. Leslie William Barnard [New York: Paulist Press, 1997], 71). However, other writings were read in public worship by about A.D. 170. Eusebius says, "In this same letter [Dionysius] also quotes the letter of Clement to the Corinthians, showing that from the beginning it had been the custom to read it in the church." (Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 1, in Loeb Classical Library, trans. Kirsopp Lake [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992], 383). Yet Harnack hesitates to assume that such public reading was practiced much earlier, "But we have sure evidence that other writings were likewise read at public worship, though perhaps not at first as a regular practice." (Adolf Von Harnack, *The Origin of the New Testament and the Most Important Consequences of the New Creation*, trans. J. R. Wilkinson [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925], 27).

[522]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 393.

[523]Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 82.

[524]Ibid., 84.

This fact is confirmed by Laodicea's being selected in Revelation as of superior importance to either Hierapolis or Colossae, both of which were in its immediate vicinity.[525]

Synopsis of the View. Near the time when Paul wrote Colossians and Philemon, he also wrote Ephesians, which was delivered by Tychicus and couched in predominantly general terms. It was sent to a group of communities in or near the Lycus Valley, including Laodicea, probably Hierapolis,[526] and possibly others.[527] Abbott summarizes, "The epistle, then is best regarded as addressed not to a church, but to the Gentile converts in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae, and elsewhere in Phrygia and the neighborhood of that province."[528]

Abbott does not explain why the churches in and around Phrygia are to be considered co-addressees, but since the apostle wanted to show no favoritism to any one church, he refrained from using greetings or personal allusions, which is also in harmony with Paul's admission that he had not personally seen the Laodiceans. His relationship with the recipients of the letter seemed to be based entirely upon second-hand information.

Evaluation of Internal Evidence for the Originality of the Variant

Transcriptional Probability

Deliberate Omission Problematic. According to the theory for the originality of the variant, the omission of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ arose from intentional scribal error. Before addressing this claim, it must be noted that "few indeed are the evidences that heretical or destructive variants have been deliberately introduced into the [New Testament] manuscripts."[529] Now if an intentional error were committed, would it not have been more logical to omit οὖσιν also.[530] If the scribe did not omit οὖσιν, it would leave the text far more difficult to construe.[531] Zuntz succinctly states the point: "Anyone wanting to expel the mention of an addressee—supposing that the text contained one from the first—would surely have had the sense to delete also τοῖς οὖσιν and thus to produce an understandable phrase."[532]

Alexandrian Penchant for Pruning the Text. It was suggested that Alexandrian scribes were guilty of learned corrections, the tendency to over-omit words when questions arose. The implication is that these ancient "pruners" omitted the destination from Ephesians 1:1. How much of a learned improvement could it be to omit ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, when the text would have been left so much more awkward? What scribe could create such a grammatical challenge and expect his reading to be accepted? It is even more difficult to understand when considering how many ancient Alexandrian manuscripts agree in their failure to include the variant.[533]

Made into a Universal Letter. Supporters of the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant argue that a scribe omitted the phrase in order to make Paul's letter universal. But why would the early church need to omit sacred Scripture to gain applicational value? As Tertullian put it, "But the title is of no concern, since when the apostle wrote to

[525]Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 393.

[526]Hierapolis is included based on its relationship with Laodicea, as cited by Paul in Colossians 4:13, a verse located in close proximity to the instructions for the exchange of letters between the two cities (4:16).

[527]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 426.

[528]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, viii. See also Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 391.

[529]Greenlee, *Introduction*, 66.

[530]Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians," 3249.

[531]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 32.

[532]Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 228.

[533]The list of omitting Alexandrian witnesses includes at least 𝔓[46], B, ℵ, possibly Marcion, possibly Tertullian, Origen, the old manuscripts known to Basil, the exemplar of the corrector of 424, and the ancient exemplar of 1739.

some he wrote to all, and without doubt his teaching in Christ was of that God to whom the facts of his teaching rightly belong."[534]

Though Tertullian's hermeneutics may need refinement, if he represents the average thinker of his day, there would be no reason to remove the destination in order to understand how the text applies to all. Nils Dahl agrees when he says, "The edition of Paul's collected letters would in itself imply the general importance of all of them. In order to show that Paul was speaking to all churches, when he wrote to one, it would be neither necessary nor sufficient to give the first letter in the collection a general address."[535]

Whatever the motive would be for such a deletion in Ephesians, one must remember that the "omission" of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ dates back at least as far as A.D. 200, a quite conservative number, over 600 years before the first of these deletions in an extant manuscript of Romans. Thus there truly is no comparison between the absence in Ephesians and the absence in Romans. Moreover, the omission of the address in the Roman letter may have been made purposely, in order to create a general letter, as was thought to be true of the Ephesian letter, which already was understood to have been written without a destination in its original form. Gamble adds,

> The important point for the question at hand is that for Ephesians there was not an exclusively correct original address, and this accords very well with the general cast of the letter as a whole. In this, Ephesians stands on a different footing from Romans and 1 Corinthians, and inferences about the latter are not immediately to be made from the former.[536]

This is not to mention the much greater level of manuscript support for the omission in Ephesians than for the omission in Romans.

Internal Difficulties Due to Lack of Personal References. It was claimed that scribes may have omitted the variant to resolve the internal difficulties created by the intimation that Paul did not know his readers personally (1:15). However, there is no actual evidence to support the notion that the general nature of the letter was a problem for the early church. Why would the Church Fathers universally fail to lodge any complaints? Moreover, if there is such a difficulty with the grammar of the verse when the variant is absent—and proponents of the variant call it an impossibility—would such a scribe not be creating far more problems than he solves?

<u>Intrinsic Probability</u>

The Pauline Style of Including a Destination. Supporters of the originality of the variant propose that since Paul always included destinations in his letters, the omission of a destination in this letter would not be representative of his style, thus necessitating that the omission should be considered spurious. In response, this is an argument from silence, which cannot offer conclusiveness simply based on the lack of Pauline precedent.

Santer notes that other NT epistles contain no particular addressee: James, 2 Peter, and Jude.[537] If James, Jude, and Peter all can write authentic epistles without a declared recipient, why cannot Paul? Moreover, even if all of Paul's other epistles contained stated destinations, there is nothing binding him to a similar practice with this letter, especially if the occasion called for an exception to his normal method. As Eadie notes, "Nothing is more unjust than to restrict the apostle of the Gentiles, in his writings, to one unvarying method."[538]

The Syntactical Difficulty of a Construction without Ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. It must be stated at the outset that Ephesians 1:1 certainly may be considered sensible when omitting the variant, though admittedly it becomes a

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534Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 613 (v. 17).

535Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles," 270.

536Gamble Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans*, 119.

537Mark Santer, "The Text of Ephesians 1:1," *New Testament Studies* 15 (1968–69): 248.

538Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxxii.

more difficult reading. Would professional scribes such as those who copied Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, 6, the corrector of 424, or 1739 be so naïve as to be duped into following an impossible omission when they obviously were well aware that no other Pauline epistle featured the absence of a destination?[539]

What is more, each of those manuscripts contains the familiar title ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ, a fact that would render their scribes quite foolish if they overlooked the opportunity to rectify the "omission" of the destination when the presence of the title would provide them with ample excuse to correct such an inconceivable grammatical blunder. As Black emphasizes, "Anyone wishing to delete the mention of an address in Ephesians 1:1 would surely have had the sense to delete also τοῖς οὖσιν so as to produce an understandable phrase."[540]

Hiebert further argues against the notion that the grammar of the text cannot warrant the absence of a destination. "It is scarcely fair to say that the Greek of Ephesians 1:1 is absolutely incapable of a rational explanation without the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ."[541] The words of the Greek scholar Abbott are even stronger. "There remains the perfectly grammatical construction, 'the saints who are also faithful.' The difficulty of the construction is actually diminished by the absence of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ."[542]

Paul might simply be complimenting these saints at the outset of the letter, as he invariably does, by noting that they are *indeed* faithful in Christ Jesus, which may have been told to Paul by one who was reporting on their progress. This emphatic use of καί is both unquestionable and frequent.[543] "What grammarians call the ascensive use should, in my opinion, be widened in scope and called intensive or emphatic, and should be translated by several emphatic words such as *indeed*, *verily*, *really*, *in fact*, *yea*, *certainly*, etc., instead of by the one word *even*."[544] This argument effectively counters Black's objection to the ascensive use of the καί, as an emphatic use of καί would make the construction quite understandable and acceptable. Morever, it would provide a strong word of compliment from Paul to these believers that he did not know personally. Therefore, an emphatic use of καί here in Ephesians 1:1 remains a viable option, one that completely succeeds in overcoming an otherwise difficult grammatical construction, which cannot be said of any of καί's other uses/translations.

Westcott claims that the clause τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is integrated naturally with the phrase τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς. He then says that the corresponding enlargement in Colossians 1:2, τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς αδελφοῖς, brings out the meaning clearly.[545] The possibilities for an alternative translation are numerous, though it may be granted that none are as easily defensible as the option to include the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ variant.

Evaluation of Internal Evidence for the Omission of the Variant

Transcriptional Probability

Intentional Error of Addition Impossible. The charge has been made that scribes intentionally incorporated the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ into the text of the letter to give it a proper Pauline destination, mainly because of the prominence of Ephesus in the missionary career of Paul and in the provincial region of Asia.

However, it seems incredible that all those congregations which became acquainted with this letter and recognized it as addressed to them by the apostle would have forgotten about this so soon. Would their

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539Greenlee mentions that the employment of professional scribes for copying New Testament manuscripts would tend to reduce the amount of further variation in the text. Greenlee, *Introduction*, 62.

540Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 28.

541Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 261.

542Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, viii. Abbott does not attempt to explain how the difficulty is diminished by the absence of the destination.

543H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1957), 250.

544Ibid., 250–51.

545B. F. Westcott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Publishers, 1906), 3.

remembrance of its original destination have vanished so soon as to cause them, without any opposition, to permit the congregation at Ephesus to claim unjustly that the letter was their own?[546] "For the Ephesian church to lay claim to an epistle which was not designed for them would amount to nothing less than epistolary piracy."[547]

Prefer the Shorter Reading. As a rule the shorter reading is indeed to be preferred. However, under certain circumstances this principle should be abandoned, and the longer reading should be preferred in its place. According to Griesbach, the long reading should be chosen "if the shorter reading is less in accord with the character, style, or scope of the author" or "if the shorter reading utterly lacks sense."[548] As Black notes, "It has already been shown that the verse without the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is not in accord with the characteristic Pauline style of address, and that the reading τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν καὶ πιστοῖς is highly questionable syntactically."[549]

Prefer the More Difficult Reading. Syntactically, the omission of the variant is obviously the more difficult reading, but it has been shown that this reading is not only difficult, but impossible. There have been no logical presentations offered in defense of the omission which present a grammatically acceptable rendering of the verse. In a case such as this, the canon, "Prefer the more difficult reading," does not apply.[550]

Intrinsic Probability

Lack of Personal Greetings. Much stress indeed has been laid on the absence of salutations to individual members of a church so familiar to Paul. How could Paul have omitted personal references in a letter to a church with whom he had spent at least three years of his ministry? There is a ready reply to this argument.

> In writing to brotherhoods with whom he was most intimate, to the Corinthians and Philippians, for instance, he sends no special salutations: in writing to the Roman church, which he had never visited, he greets by name a large number of individual members. The reason for this is obvious: in a community of strangers it is easy to single out and enumerate friends. Where all alike are known to us, it becomes irksome, if not invidious, to select any for special salutations.[551]

In actuality, the lack of personal greetings is nothing new in Pauline letters. Romans has more greetings than any other epistle of Paul, yet this church was not founded by the apostle. Of the nine Pauline epistles which are addressed to churches, five of them lack personal greetings (2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Ephesians), while four contain greetings (Romans, 1 Corinthians, Colossians, and Philippians).[552]

Black goes so far as to say that one should expect a noticeable lack of personal greetings in an epistle written by Paul to a church he had founded and in which he had served for three years.[553] Yet simple logic

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546Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 27–28.

547Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 48.

548J. J. Griesbach, in Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 120.

549Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 30. Black errs in presenting the proper reading of the omitting text. Either the article before the participle should be dropped, as in the text of 𝔓46, or the movable-ν should be dropped from the participle, as in B and ℵ.

550Ibid.

551Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 388. As Eadie concurs, "Paul's long years of labor at Ephesus must have made him acquainted with so many Christian people there, that their very number may have prevented him from sending any salutation." (Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxx).

552Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 62.

553Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 52.

would require that the exact opposite of Black's expectation should be expected, especially given that Paul regularly addressed individuals in churches where he knew people personally.

Hendricksen suggests that it is hardly conceivable that Paul, who had spent so much time and energy in Ephesus, would write a letter to the churches of proconsular Asia and exclude Ephesus.[554] In response, the greater issue is the purpose of the letter, and if Paul's purpose was to communicate critical truth to believers whom he did not know personally, why would the Ephesian church be expected to exhibit selfish envy for the love that Paul expressed in writing these fellow Christians? Moreover, what need would there be for him to write to the Ephesian church, where he labored to the point of fatigue for nearly three years, about God's ultimate purpose for all things, when this foundational truth was so rudimentary that undoubtedly he would have expounded greatly on this theme during his initial days or weeks of discipling the new converts at Ephesus?

Paul's Unfamiliarity with the Recipients. The ancient solution of Theodorus of Mopsuestia to the problem of Paul's unfamiliarity with the recipients was that he had written the epistle at a time when he had not yet met the Ephesians.[555] This reply is inadequate, however, in that it overlooks the fact that nothing is known of any imprisonment as described in this epistle, prior to the period of Paul's activities in Ephesus.[556]

Hiebert points out the best modern objection; he says that the words point to the report of their continued abounding in Christian graces, and not to their initial conversion. Moreover, "Since Paul had been absent from the province of Asia then for about five years, he would rejoice to *hear* that report. Why should not Paul be permitted to say that he had *heard* of their faith and love after that length of time?"[557]

In addition, there is no clear statement that Paul has never personally seen the recipients before.[558] In Colossians Paul writes, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face" (2:1). However, in the letter to "the Ephesians there is nothing even similar to this."[559] While Paul was gone, the congregation undoubtedly grew, and there were probably many new members whom Paul did not know personally. When he wrote Ephesians, he may not have wanted to offend the newcomers by only referring to those he knew.[560]

Furthermore, in Ephesians 1:15 Paul is referring to the continuance and progress of the Ephesians' faith since his departure from Ephesus.[561] As Black notes,

> Paul could write to people whom he had never met that he had heard of their faith (Col. 1:4), but he could also say to his friend and co-worker (συνεργός) Philemon, "I hear of your love, and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints" (Philemon 5). Lenski writes in this regard: "One may hear about persons whom one has never met (the Colossians) as well as about persons whom one has met(the Ephesians, Philemon)." [Lenski, *Ephesians*, 388]. For Paul, therefore, to say that he had "heard" of these believers' faith and love does not necessitate the conclusion that he had not previously known them. The verse can easily be interpreted as a reference to the progress of the Ephesian Christians since Paul's departure from Ephesus.[562]

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[554]Hendricksen, *Ephesians*, 58.

[555]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxxi.

[556]Van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 72.

[557]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 261.

[558]Black remarks that Paul is not stating that he never instructed these believers or knew them personally (Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 55). Although technically this is true, a more Pauline way of reminding personally-discipled believers about their accountability to his teaching would be to include a statement such as, "just as you learned/heard from me," which is indicative of the kinds of personalized reminders found in Philippians 4:9; Colossians 1:7; and 2 Timothy 1:13.

[559]Ibid., 56.

[560]Ibid., 53.

[561]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 22.

[562]Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 64.

Therefore, the argument that the recipients had not been instructed in their faith by means of the apostle himself cannot be founded upon Ephesians 1:15.

Two other passages often cited in opposition to the Ephesian destination are 3:2 and 4:21, both of which begin, "if indeed you have heard. . . ." To some, this introduction indicates that the readers did not learn Christian truths through Paul, which could not be said of the Ephesians. However, the force of εἴ γε connotes certainty, not doubt. "Paul is not stating here that he had never instructed these believers or that he did not know them personally. When Paul wrote to congregations with which he was not personally acquainted, he always mentioned that fact."[563]

Some would also mention that it would be odd for Paul not to discuss specific doctrinal or schismatic difficulties in the life of the Ephesian church, as are found in the Colossian letter. However, "all the news Paul had received from Ephesus was favorable (1:15). No troubles of any kind had developed. This explains the general character of Paul's letter."[564] Therefore, there was little need for correction to be administered.[565]

Blank-Space Theory. Proponents of the omission of the variant are faced with the problem of identifying the recipients of the letter, if Paul did not address it to the Ephesians. One of the theories proposed to alleviate the problem is the blank-space theory, which purports that Paul sent the letter to circulate among all of the churches, and thus in the original letter he left an open space in order for the churches to fill-in their own city-names. There are numerous problems with such a proposal.[566]

First, the blank-space theory would be more intelligible if the ἐν were not also omitted.[567] As Lincoln reasons, "Would not such a circular have included ἐν, which after all would remain a constant in the address?"[568] One would certainly expect the preposition to be found in the manuscripts that do not contain the destination, if the practice of having the churches fill in the blank was to continue smoothly.

Second, Hiebert takes issue in that a circular theory would probably require the author to indicate within the salutation of the letter that it was indeed a circular, as he did in Galatians 1:2 ("to the churches of Galatia").[569] Best concurs with this objection, "He writes to the churches of Galatia. Could he not have written then to the churches of Asia or to those of the Lycus Valley or wherever the area was in which the alleged churches lay?"[570]

This is a valid concern, and it challenges any form of the circular theory. One would expect some type of destination included by Paul. However, if the letter were written to several specific churches in a proximity where Paul had not traveled, he may not have been prepared to designate a particular area, especially if two or more churches were included in such unfamiliar territory.

Third, to omit all place-designations and make this a catholic letter addressed to Gentile Christians in general is inconsistent with the letter's contents, since 1:15 and 6:22, among other references, show that Paul had a definite audience in mind.[571] As Wikenhauser notes, "The praise in 1:15 and the mention of why he is sending Tychicus would be more fitting in an epistle to a single community than in a circular letter."[572] Best adds, "internal evidence shows that the letter was sent to a Christian community, or more probably

[563]Ibid., 65.

[564]Lenski, *Ephesians*, 327.

[565]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 56.

[566]Lincoln strongly expresses his opposition to this theory when he says, "But there are a number of considerations that tell decisively against this suggestion." (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 3).

[567]Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 511.

[568]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 3.

[569]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 263.

[570]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 32.

[571]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 261.

[572]Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 426.

communities, which Paul had not visited."[573] The criticism that these references considerably damage the blank-space theory is valid and difficult to dispute.

A fourth problem with this theory is that it seems rather unduly influenced by modern "carbon copy" methods. In antiquity, when each copy had to be produced by hand, such a multiplicity of copies would not have been conceived.[574] "The theory smacks too much of the age of printing and duplicating. . . . The most natural thing would have been for the scribe to draft separate copies for separate destinations; certainly no parallels to the suggested 'encyclical' procedure can be cited from the ancient world."[575]

Fifth, this theory states that after the participle came a lacuna, which was filled in by Tychicus upon delivery.[576] However, "O. Roller has shown that there are no examples of ancient letters with such lacuna."[577] Since no historical evidence exists for an encyclical letter with a blank space that anticipates a local address to be filled in by the recipients,[578] there is no justifiable reason to assume that Paul would implement such an obscure practice in Ephesians.

If blank spaces were used, why is there no evidence that preserves such a practice?[579] The texts of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus shows no signs of a lacuna at this point in the letter.[580] "If a place name was inserted in each copy delivered by Tychicus as he traveled from town to town, one must have been inserted in the archetype of א and B. Why was it omitted by subsequent scribes between the archetype and א and B?"[581]

Sixth, if the place-name was to be filled-in by each church receiving a copy of the epistle, why would there be no written record remaining with any of the other destinations intact?[582] "The objection most strongly urged against this [blank-space] view is that there is no trace of copies with any other name in the place of Ἐφέσῳ in the text, and that it is highly improbable that none such should have been preserved."[583]

Stoeckhardt considers it strange that only such copies of the letter should have been passed down in which Tychicus forgot to omit the blank space.[584] The theory of a gap, therefore, does not have a single manuscript to support it, and in the end it is nothing more than a conjecture,[585] possibly deserving of no more recognition than other theories of conjectural emendation.

Seventh, the lack of a movable-*ν* suffixed to the participle οὖσι, as found in every Alexandrian manuscript except $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, mitigates against the likelihood that these scribes who did not read the variant were anticipating a word that began with a vowel to follow the participle. At this point, it is necessary to recreate the text that blank-space proponents would propose: τοῖς ἁγίοις (τοῖς) οὖσι(ν) καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Since all of the parchment codices that omit the variant do not include a suffixed movable-*ν*, an important principle of orthography would be violated if the next word (ἐν, as in ἐν λαοδικείᾳ) were to begin with a vowel.

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[573]Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians," 3247.

[574]Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 264.

[575]Nineham, "Case Against the Pauline Authorship," 25.

[576]Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians," 3249.

[577]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 3.

[578]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 49.

[579]Beza's theory that Ephesians was originally an encyclical with a blank in the address, which was to be filled-in with the appropriate local name, is unsatisfying. No manuscript with the appropriate blank is extant (Richard Batey, "The Destination of Ephesians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 [1963]: 101), which is a potent, incriminating lack.

[580]Though these manuscripts are sometimes cited as favoring the blank-space theory, "The reading preserved in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, א, B, and others shows only an uninterrupted sequence of words." (Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 61). See also Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 43.

[581]McNeile, *St. Paul*, 216.

[582]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 44.

[583]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, vii.

[584]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 21.

[585]Ibid., 44.

In Moulton's Grammar, W. F. Howard establishes the principle that demonstrates why one would expect a movable-ν to be placed at the end of the participle, by noting that "final-ν is so universal in the forms which admit at all, it is only necessary to take note of omissions. Modern use, by which ν is inserted before vowels only, is known to be wrong even for classical writers, and in Hellenistic it is altogether to be set aside."[586] Furthermore, Gordon Fee found that in almost every case where he studied the use or non-use of the movable-ν, the MT reflects "modern use," while the earlier manuscripts, especially those from Egypt, reflect first-century usage.[587] Why would such important Egyptian manuscripts abandon standard practice by not including the movable-ν before a phrase that would certainly begin with a vowel (as in ἐν . . .)?

Now it is left to bring the significance of these facts to bear upon the task at hand. First, 𝔓46, which is the only destination-omitting manuscript to have the movable-ν, follows the first-century practice of inserting the ν before a consonant (οὖσιν καὶ). However, fellow Alexandrian manuscripts B, א, 6, 424c, and 1739 all omit the ν. Since Fee found that Egyptian manuscripts tended to follow first-century practice, one might at least expect B and א to add the movable-ν if it were anticipating the κ in καὶ. However, one would certainly expect them to include the ν if the participle was to be followed by ἐ, (as in ἐν. . . .).

Against this scenario it may be argued that the later scribes, such as those of B and א, would have tended to avoid adding the movable-ν since the original concept of the blank-space would have been forgotten by this time. However, this would mean that a much more difficult grammatical construction would have been accepted by the scribe who first chose to omit the inspired ν, instead of learning the significance of its presence from other scribes or clergymen.

Several-Specific-Churches Theory. Another theory based on omission is that Paul wrote the letter to several specific churches, namely those churches in (and maybe near) the Lycus Valley, consisting of at least Hierapolis and Laodicea. Several objections may be raised against this theory.

First, any attempt to associate this letter with the one mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:16 is nothing more than tenuous.[588] There is no certainty that the letter "from Laodicea" was a canonical letter,[589] let alone a letter that was contemporary with Colossians. "There is not in all of Christian literature a single trace that would tend to identify our letter with that letter from Laodicea, and it is incredible that a letter of Paul's known by both congregations, that at Laodicea and that at Colossae, should so early have been re-stamped as a letter of Paul's to the Ephesians and have been generally recognized as such."[590]

Instead of assuming that this letter from Laodicea is the Ephesian letter, one may explain its existence by suggesting that before Paul wrote the Colossian and Ephesian letters, he wrote a letter and sent it to Laodicea. This letter was later lost, just as were the non-canonical letters of Paul to the Corinthians.[591]

Second, if Paul had planned to write a letter to the churches in Asia, he easily could have addressed it with a designated address, such as "to the churches of Asia." As Best wonders, "He writes to the churches of Galatia. Could he not have written then to the churches of Asia or to those of the Lycus Valley, or wherever the area was in which the alleged churches lay?"[592]

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[586]W. F. Howard in J. H. Moulton, *Accidence and Word-Formation*, vol. 2, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. Wilbert F. Howard (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1919), 113.

[587]Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21/1 (Mar 1978): 32.

[588]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 45.

[589]"Whatever may be meant in Colossians 4:16 by the epistle from Laodicea, it is plain that it cannot be the epistle before us." (Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxviii).

[590]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 23.

[591]Ibid., 26.

[592]Best, "Ephesians 1:1," 37. Abbott adds, "Indeed, we have examples in 2 Corinthians 1:1 and Galatians 1:2 of the form of address which he would be likely to adopt in an encyclical letter." (Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, vii).

Or, Paul specifically could have cited each church he had in mind. If the letter were addressed to a number of congregations, "the different cities in which these congregations lived should have been mentioned."[593] For Paul to address this letter in any other way would make Ephesians a singular exception to the consistent manner in which Paul's salutations are recorded.[594]

Third, the address is not at all what one would expect to find in a letter sent to a few specific churches.[595] Lenski writes, "The omission of the phrase 'in Ephesus' would make this letter, not an encyclical, but a catholic letter that is addressed to all saints and believers everywhere."[596]

Fourth, Paul's statement in 1:15 is a testimony against the encyclical purpose of the letter. The participle, "having heard," presupposes a limited number of readers concerning whose spiritual condition Paul had received positive information, seemingly limited to one church. "It is difficult to imagine that he became informed concerning the life, activity, and fortune of all the congregations of Asia Minor through members or certain acquaintances at these places."[597]

Fifth, the tenor of the letter suggests that Paul wrote not to several communities but to one. As Eadie states, "These statements are also direct language, pointedly addressed to one community, and not vaguely to an assemblage of churches, unless they were regarded as one with it."[598] According to Black, the wording of Ephesians 6:21–22 implies that Paul had a definite church in mind when he wrote the epistle.[599]

Sixth, the notion that the similarities between Ephesians and Colossians make them contemporary letters, called companion volumes, can cut both ways. They can just as easily be viewed as similar letters going to two different parts of Asia Minor, one on the coast at Ephesus and the other in the Lycus Valley to Colossae. "Paul had entrusted to his faithful co-laborer Tychicus both of these letters, the one to the Colossians, the other to the Ephesians, in order that he should deliver them to those for whom the letters were intended."[600]

Seventh, the evidence from the text of Ephesians suggests that the recipients of the letter were close friends of Paul. For example, the intercession of Paul in 1:16 ff. and 3:14 ff., along with the specific admonitions in the last three chapters of the letter, show that Paul intended the epistle for certain people who were dear to him.[601]

Eighth, since the purpose of the letter was for Paul to leave behind his greatest work related to the Christian church, Ephesus would be a more likely candidate to receive this *magnum opus* than would several churches comprised of people who were strangers to Paul. In Ephesians, Paul seeks to magnify the Christian church and to remind his readers of their glorious union with Christ (Ephesians 1–3) and of the duties which arose from such a union (Ephesians 4–6).[602]

When the letter is seen in its historical context, with Paul's sitting in place of Roman imprisonment, one should realize that Paul had the opportunity to contemplate the full significance of the new organism that had come into being, and to formulate for the first time the full meaning of the doctrine of the church. The question arose as to which church should receive the letter, and Paul chose the assembly of believers at Ephesus.[603] "In

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[593]Ibid., 27. "The 'general address,' the τοῖς οὖσι, without the mention of any particular place, remains an unsolved problem even if we assume that the letter was addressed to a number of congregations. In that case the different cities in which these congregations lived should have been mentioned." (Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 27).

[594]Black, "The Address of the Ephesian Epistle," 46.

[595]Ibid., 47.

[596]Lenski, *Ephesians*, 494.

[597]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 27.

[598]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxxii.

[599]Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 66.

[600]Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians*, 25.

[601]Ibid., 27.

[602]Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 70.

[603]Ibid.

short, the letter is intended for advanced Christians; and such surely were those, so many of whom had for so long a period enjoyed instruction from the apostle's own lips."[604]

Conclusion Based upon Internal Evidence

Because the external evidence was immediately followed by a tentative conclusion, it is necessary at this point to proceed to an evaluation of the internal evidence. Before proceeding, an admonition of David Black on the two types of evidence is in order. "If in the end you are still undecided, you should pay special attention to external evidence, as it is less subjective and more reliable."[605] First, the evidence regarding the transcriptional probability will be discussed, followed by the evidence for the intrinsic probability.

None of the accidental errors, such as errors of sight, errors of sound, or even accidental omission were found to apply to the variant under review. Regarding intentional error, most of the them were also eliminated, such as grammatical and linguistic changes, liturgical changes, conflation, and elimination of apparent discrepancies. Supporters of the originality of the variant, however, find that intentional omission was possible.

The most common reason cited for such omission was that the early church saw the general nature of the letter and took out the destination so that it could be treated as a universal letter written—and thus applicable—to all. For support, an appeal was made to the similar example of omission in Romans, as well as the problem that the early church had with particularity.

Both of these lines of support break down, though. The manuscript evidence for the Ephesian letter and that for the Roman letter are not worthy of comparison, as the manuscript evidence for the latter cannot be found until over 600 years later than the late second-century support for the omission in Ephesians. Additionally, there was no evidence from the early church that was strong enough to substantiate the claim that they had problems with letters being addressed to particular churches. No other destinations in epistles of the early centuries show any signs of being "tampered with," as is the accusation with Ephesians.

On behalf of the view that favors the spurious nature of the variant, the only intentional error that seemed to apply was that of addition. If the epistle did not have an address, which would be unique to Paul's letters, there would be much reason to harmonize it with Paul's other letters that had addresses. Ephesus would be a likely candidate for several reasons: Tychicus would have stopped there; it was the leading city of the province; Ephesus may have been the place to which the churches of the Lycus Valley traced their spiritual heritage; Paul had a long and favorable association with that church; the autograph may have ended up there; and because copies were undoubtedly distributed from there.

More importantly, the canons of transcriptional probability favor the omission of the variant. The omission is clearly the shorter reading, the more difficult reading, and the reading that best accounts for the origin of the other. None of the critiques posed by the adherents to the variant's originality were successful at refuting the evidence presented.

Regarding intrinsic probability, the case for omission is not without problems. As noted, the text reads smoother with the variant included, as most would agree. The lack of a destination after the participle, "who are," would be unprecedented in Paul's writings. Therefore, the intrinsic probability related to the author favors the originality of the variant. However, the case for omission better addresses a number of other intrinsic problems.[606]

The case for omission resolves the problem of Paul's declared unfamiliarity with the readers, which is the more natural way of understanding Ephesians 1:15, as well as the lack of personal references. It better

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[604]Eadie, *Ephesians*, xxxii.

[605]Black, *A Concise Guide*, 36.

[606]In fact, the avowed advocate for the originality of the variant, David Black, even admits, "When all the evidence is considered, the peculiarities of the Ephesian epistle are *at least as difficult to explain* on the encyclical hypothesis *as they are for the Ephesian destination*." (Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians," 70 [emphasis added]).

explains the fact that the letter was directed to Gentiles, who were only part of the makeup of the Ephesian church. In addition, if the destination were omitted from the ancient documents, it is inconceivable that the participle would remain in the text when it would be much tidier grammatically to remove it while removing the destination. In addition, the presence of the superscription at the head of all of the omitting manuscripts shows that each of these scribes independently would have disregarded the presence of the word ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ in the title while willfully omitting ΕΦΕΣΩ several strokes later.

As a result of these matters, a number of conclusions may be drawn. First, the transcriptional probability clearly favors the case for omission. Intrinsic probability is split between both views. Matters related to the author's normal style of writing favor originality, while matters related to the role of the variant in the context of the epistle support the omission. The obvious question forthcoming is the identity of the recipients, if the letter was not written to the Ephesians.

The blank-space theory was found to be lacking greatly. There is no precedent from biblical or profane literature for such a practice, and the idea of mass-producing a document at such a rate would be unthinkable in the ancient world. How is an objective reader even to assume that Paul had the distribution of numerous copies in mind when he wrote? Would more than one copy be canonical, and what if some of the copies were found to contain errors? Which one would be the standard for subsequent copying? Moreover, no surviving manuscripts with either a blank space or a different city-designation exist to confirm this view as being more than theoretical. More importantly, the view does not satisfy the internal data, which strongly suggests a specific audience intended by the author.

This leaves the several-specific-churches theory, which includes Laodicea and one or more of the neighboring churches in or around the Lycus Valley, as the only viable option. This view addresses most of the difficulties, explains the absence of local references, yet allows for the local limitation implied in 1:15 and 6:22. It also escapes the difficulties of supposing a blank space in 1:1, explains the remarkable expression in Colossians 4:16, and integrates well with the other evidence that links this great letter to Colossians.[607]

[607]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, viii.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, the problem of locating the correct reading for the text of Ephesians 1:1, and thus the proper destination of the entire letter, is one of the more formidable tasks known to textual criticism. Fortunately for the present writer, it has also proven to be one of the most enjoyable, for the conclusion one draws based upon this variant will greatly influence the way in which one understands the entire letter.

In Chapter 2, it was discovered that the matter of determining the correct readings for the text of the Bible is paramount to sound biblical interpretation. If one adheres to a form of inspiration that takes into account every word of the text as given from God, in the order in which he chose it, textual criticism must be considered a powerful tool for assisting in that process.

Though some have chosen to believe that the book of Ephesians may be interpreted apart from any resolution of the textual problem in 1:1, it was seen that such a position is guilty of denying the historical element of Scripture, an element that is foundational to the grammatico-historical method of interpretation. If one believes the letter was written to Ephesus, for example, it would be incumbent to spare no expense in researching the ancient city of Ephesus as carefully and deeply as possible.

In addition, those who come to the text—or to the textual problem in Ephesians 1:1, for that matter—with an agenda or a predisposition as to what they want it to say will only find exactly what they are seeking: confirmation. One must come to the text and/or a textual variation with great objectivity, or at least suppress personal biases to the point that they can have as little impact on the interpretive process as possible.

In regard to the history of textual transmission, the Western text-type was seen to be an extremely early text, though it is characterized by a mixed text and oftentimes wild readings. Its contribution to textual criticism is important because of its antiquity, but the value of the Western text is somewhat limited because of its inconsistency. The Caesarean text-type was seen to be the most mixed and the least homogeneous of any of the distinct text-types. It generally neither includes the long additions or paraphrases of the Western text nor the long additions of the Byzantine text. Sometimes its readings even are found to be fully distinct, so its contribution to establishing the original text is often quite limited.

The Byzantine text was found to be characterized by readings that are much fuller and longer than those of any other text-type. Though the origin of the Byzantine text cannot be determined presently, most conclude from the amount of conflations that this text-type is the result of a large-scale recension that took place sometime between the second and fourth centuries, which probably is true. The consolidation of the Greek-speaking world into the Byzantine Empire easily could have facilitated a recension that produced such a standardized text. The readings of this later text-type are most often secondary to the original text.

The Alexandrian text-type was found to be the best of the four. The early papyri found in the 19th century reveal that its readings were shorter, more consistent, and superior to those of the other text-types. Supporters of the Byzantine text-type are quick to criticize the Alexandrian text-type as editorialized and fabricated, but the work of modern scholarship has proven the high level of its character and reliability. It represents the most valuable text-type in the process of determining the original wording of Scripture.

In Chapter 3, all of the prevailing methods of textual criticism were presented and reviewed. The method that chooses a reading based upon numerical superiority was found to be lacking, because manuscripts must be weighed and not counted. The method that chooses a reading based upon the earliness of the manuscripts was found lacking, because even the oldest manuscripts have undergone editing and corruption.

The method that chooses a reading based upon radical eclecticism was found lacking, because an exclusive emphasis on internal evidence neglects the important matter of the antiquity and quality of many manuscripts, a much more objective criterion. The method of reasoned eclecticism was found to be best, though it must be embraced with the precaution that internal evidence only has the power to overturn a decision reached by external evidence under the right conditions, not the power to marginalize the value of external evidence.

In Chapter 4, an investigation was made into the external evidence supporting the omission and the originality of the Ephesians 1:1 variant. The majority of manuscripts and text-types favor its originality, but the criterion of numerical superiority was earlier determined to be an inferior praxis of textual criticism.

In reference to the Greek manuscripts, the quality of the few uncial texts that support the omission was found to favor the omission of the variant. The versions are all in support of its originality, but they are a secondary source of support. The testimony of the Church Fathers is split, though Marcion's attribution of the letter as "to the Laodiceans" is significantly older than the witness of any Church Father who supports the reading. Not until the late third century did the variant appear in the text of any church father, though the presence of the superscription ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ does date to late in the second century.

Though the variant is attested by a widespread geographical distribution, most of the texts that support it are centuries later than those that omit it. The oldest manuscript that supports the variant is Alexandrinus, which dates to the fifth century and often displays a late-Alexandrian text in the Pauline epistles. With all of this considered, the tentative conclusion based on external evidence favors the absence of the variant.

In Chapter 5, transcriptional probability was found to favor the omission of the variant because it was shorter, more difficult, and better able to explain the origin of the other reading. A scribe would have been much more likely to add the variant to the text than to delete it.

The intrinsic evidence was found to be split between the two readings. From the perspective of the biblical author, the originality of the variant is preferred because the difficulty of the text with the variant omitted is much greater. Though its reading is not beyond sensibility, the omission represents a reading more challenging to resolve. The best way to explain the reading is to interpret the καί emphatically, rendering the translation, ". . . to the saints who are indeed faithful in Christ Jesus." In opposition to this view, it would be Paul's only letter that does not include a destination in the salutation, though this argument from silence was found to inhibit the author's prerogative to make an exception to his normal salutation-formula.

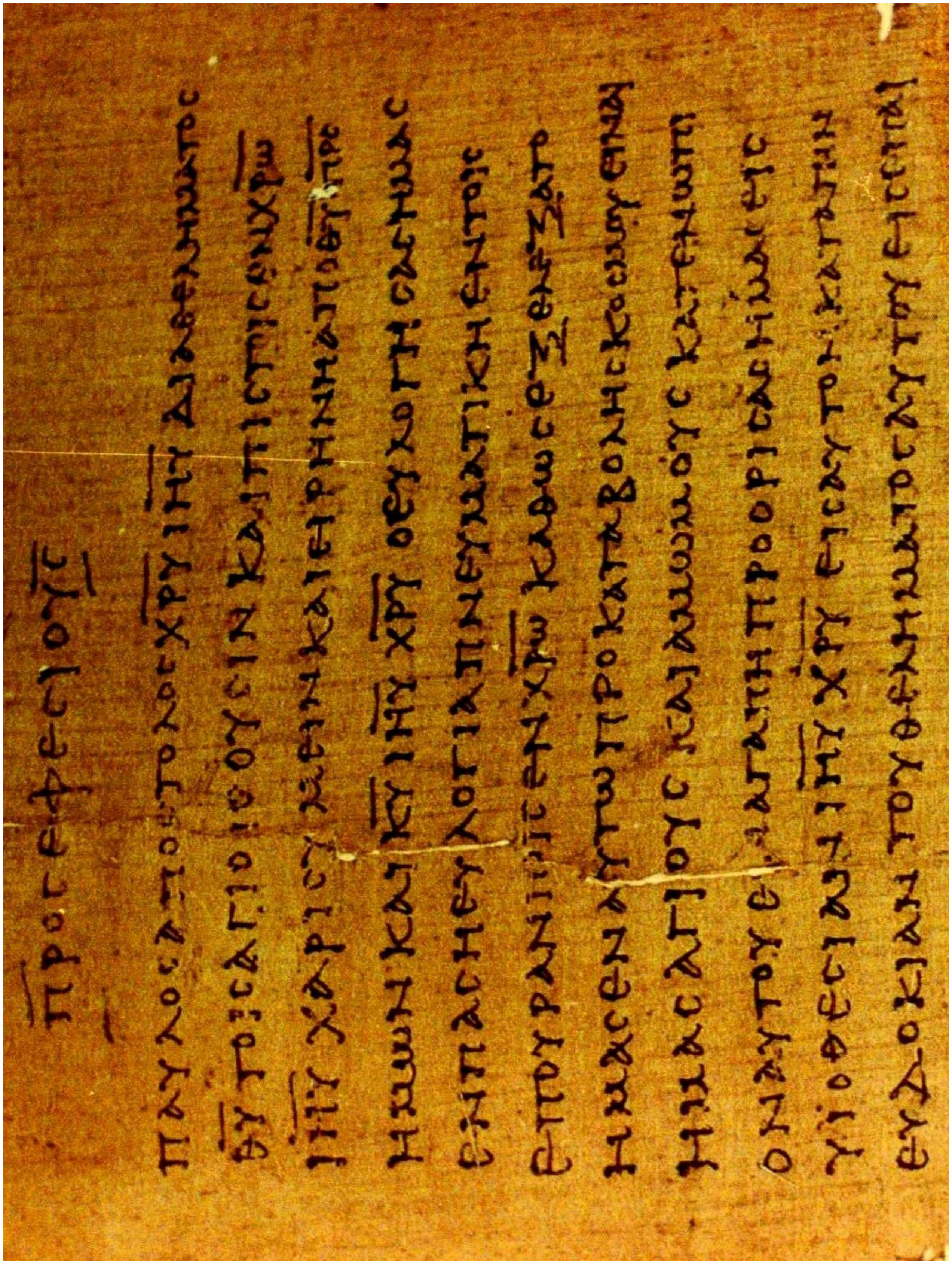
From the perspective of the letter's context, something equally or more important than an attempt to delve into the author's mind, the omission clearly is favored. The lack of personal greetings to the Ephesians whom he loved so dearly, the recipients' seeming ignorance of the writer, and the references to the way in which he had heard of their faith, all combine to show that Paul probably did not know his audience personally.

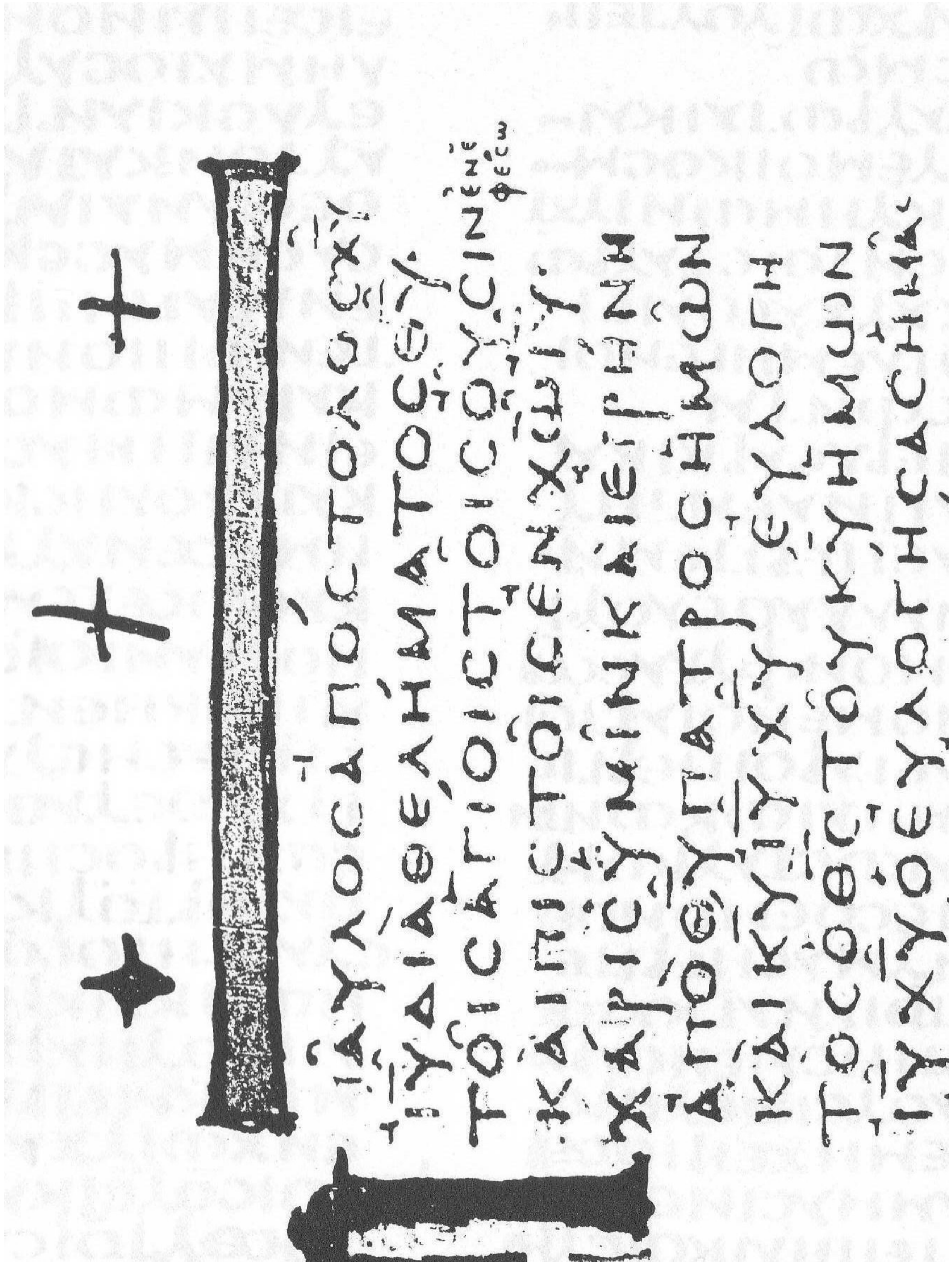
With the intrinsic evidence split between the two readings, and the transcriptional evidence favoring the omission, the external evidence must be said to favor the reading that rejects the variant. Ephesians probably was not written to the church at Ephesus, but to a specific group of churches whose overall identity is only a matter of speculation. The idea that Paul's letter was written to a group of churches in the Lycus Valley, whom Paul had never met, is a much more tenable hypothesis than the blank-space theory, which asserts that the epistle was intended to include a blank space for each city to fill-in its own name in the hypothetical space.

As for the origin of the variant, most likely the superscription ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ predated the variant. The natural occasion for the advent of the title would have been the assembling of the Pauline corpus. This would have occurred after the death of Paul and probably before the end of the first century. Since a destination was found lacking in the text, the compiler or someone after him probably attributed the letter to the Ephesians.

This attribution may have been due to one or more factors: the prominence of Ephesus in the province where the letter was originally sent, Paul's long association with Ephesus (which otherwise would be without a Pauline epistle), the distribution of copies from Ephesus, the original autograph's later residing at Ephesus, or other factors. Whatever the reason, the variant was either added directly to the text as a result of the superscription, or it was moved from the margin into the text itself. Once the variant began circulating, it later was able to overtake its predecessor, probably because of its greater readability and its compatibility with the other Pauline epistles.

PLATE 1: 𝔓46





ΠΑΥΛΟϹΑΠΟϹΤΟΛΟϹΧΥ
ΙΥΔΙΑΘΕΛΗΜΑΤΟϹΘΥ
ΤΟΙϹΑΓΙΟΙϹΤΟΙϹΟΥϹΙΝ
ΚΑΙΠΙϹΤΟΙϹΕΝΧΩΙΥ
ΧΑΡΙϹΥΜΙΝΚΑΙΕΙΡΗΝΗ
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