A CLOSER LOOK: *TEXT UND TEXTWERT DER GRIECHISCHEN HANDSCHRIFTEN DES NEUEN TESTAMENTS: DIE KATHOLISCHEN BRIEFE*

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The Institute of NT Textual Research in Münster continues to publish an impressive amount of information on the NT text in the series Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textsforschung (ANTF), which now has reached volume 25. By far the most important volumes are those comprising a major subseries:*Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*. When completed, the *Text und Textwert* series will have accomplished what appeared to be an insurmountable task: the collation of all of the 5,400 known Greek manuscripts containing all or portions of the NT. In order to achieve this admirable goal, the Institute developed a method which utilizes carefully selected test passages (*Teststellen*) for each book. By collating a manuscript only in a relatively small number of readings, rather than having to do a complete collation, it will be possible to know the quality of *every* NT Greek manuscript, at least as determined by the test passages. Under the dynamic leadership of Professor Kurt Aland, much of the work already has been completed. The Institute began this huge undertaking by applying its method to the Catholic Epistles, producing the three volumes here reviewed.

To classify all available manuscripts (approximately 552) containing the Catholic Epistles, 98 *Teststellen* were used. Using the same format employed in that study, the Institute has published four volumes on *Die Paulinischen Briefe* (ANTF 16-19) and two on *Die Apostelgeschichte* (ANTF 20-21). A number of book reviews have been published on these volumes, and at least two articles have been written specifically on the methodology used by the Institute (see endnote*). No critique of any of the volumes, however, has been done on the *use of statistics* and the implications for classification purposes.

Because the volumes on the Catholic Epistles were the first volumes to use the new "tool," and because these volumes served as a pilot (1:xviii) to demonstrate the process for all of the succeeding

volumes, we have chosen these volumes to critique. Furthermore, subsequent volumes, as Aland stated in 1987, would study only manuscripts of value for determining the original text; thus most of the Byzantine manuscripts would not be involved (1:vi). Apart from key introductory information about the tables, most of the pages of the three volumes consist of tables. We first describe the tables and then discuss five questions that confronted us in using them.

The statistics appear in *Text und Textwert* in different formats, some of which overlap but nevertheless facilitate the interpretation of the data. In volume 1 (ANTF 9), there are eight tables, two of which comprise most of the pages. First, following the format used in the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (ANTF 1, updated in 1994 from the original 1963 edition), we are given a list of all 600 NT Greek manuscripts that contain the Catholic Epistles, approximately 50 of which have been destroyed, are missing, or are not yet available on microfilm (1:xi). Then comes the heart of the three volumes, "das Zentrum dieses Werkes" (1:xii): *Die Resultate der Kollation*. This is a list of every known reading from all of the manuscripts in each of 98 test passages, and is the basis (via computer) for all the other tables in the three volumes (ibid.).

At each *Teststelle*, the reading from the Nestle-Aland 26th ed. (NA[26]) is given as the lead line and contains information regarding the nature of the variant. The major variation is identified either by an underlined portion of the text, or by the word "ADD" at the appropriate place in the NA[26] reading. Then all of the possible readings in this passage are given in the following order: Reading "1" is always that of the Majority text; reading "2" is that of the "original" text, i.e., the same as NA[26]. Other variants are then listed, each given its own number, including singular readings. In those instances where a reading deviates only slightly from the major reading, it is given a letter following the number of the variant (e.g., 1B, or 2B, 2C, etc.). Finally, we are told which manuscripts are not included in the data at a given reading for the following reasons: homoioteleuton, uncertainty about the original reading or about film, or lacunae (1:xiv-xv). For each category of readings, beginning with number "1" and ending with the lacunae, all of the supporting witnesses are listed by Gregory number, and each category includes a figure giving the total number of manuscripts listed for that particular category.

In the second major table, the data are centered around each individual manuscript rather than around the reading. A profile is given for each manuscript (*Handschriftenprofile*), indicating at each test passage what a given manuscript reads (with the total number of other manuscripts out of 552 that share the reading at that *Teststelle*). All of

the manuscripts profiled are listed in a vertical column on the left. Across the top are the *Teststelle* numbers. It is thus a simple matter to know what a given manuscript reads at each *Teststelle*. This is particularly helpful in "sensing" the quality of a manuscript by simply tracing the number of "1"s and/or "2"s across the page in the *Teststellen*.

Five smaller tables complete the first volume. The first two tables give a fairly clear picture of what the test passages tell us about the classification of a manuscript. The data come from two opposite perspectives. In the table *Abweichungen vom Mehrheitstext*, in descending order, we see how many times the 98 test passages in each manuscript deviated from the Majority text. In the next table, *Anteil des alten Textes*, a list indicates, in descending order, the number of times a manuscript shares the reading of the ancient text. The three remaining small tables tell us (1) what the singular readings are for each manuscript, and in which *Teststellen* they occur; (2) the manuscripts that have corrected readings, and also at which *Teststellen* the correction was made; and (3) where in each manuscript the omissions occur (by *Teststellen*).

ANTF 10 is divided into two books, consisting primarily of the *Hauptliste* (Main List), which gives a breakdown for each manuscript compared with every other manuscript in all of the readings *not shared* by the Majority text. This total consists of the 98 test passages minus the number of readings that agree with the Majority text and minus the number of any singular readings. Below the lead line are three subheadings. On line 1, the number of the *Teststelle* is given for comparison. On line 2, at each of the entries is given the total number of manuscripts (out of 552) that share the same reading as the control manuscript. In the *Ergänzungsliste* (Supplementary List), added in the jacket of volume 10,1, the more traditional form of statistics is given: what agreement each manuscript has among the other manuscripts, based on all of the 98 readings.

For both the Main List and the Supplementary List, only the top-ranked 66 manuscripts are published. The reasons for giving only the top-ranked 66 are practical. Apart from the fact that it would be impossible to publish the data in this format for all 552 manuscripts, providing the information for the highest 66 gives us an adequate amount of information to know which manuscripts are related to the subject manuscript. Furthermore, 66 happens to be the exact number of manuscripts that fit on two facing pages. In the introduction to volume 2 of *Text und Textwert*, Aland gives detailed information on basic procedures used to compile the Main and Supplementary List; Barbara Aland gave this information in English in *The Text of the New Testament*

(321-337). We summarize how these tables function. The Main List gives each manuscript's percentage of agreement relationship with every other manuscript in descending order *in the non-Majority text readings,* that is, Majority text agreements and singular readings are left out (2:xi and xiii). On the first line, we see how often the control manuscript agrees *with the Majority text.* When that agreement is high, a relatively high number of manuscripts shows an agreement ratio of more than 90 percent—most of the manuscripts are always the same Byzantine manuscripts (*Text*, 323). Conversely, a low percentage of agreement with the Majority text generally shows agreement ratios in the 60-70-percent range. The Supplementary List distinguishes manuscripts of the Majority text by identifying the manuscripts which read the Majority text in 60 to 70 percent *or more* of the test passages (ibid.). The manuscripts that agree less than 60 percent ("50 percent is better") with the Majority text should be considered for a critical edition and deserve more careful examination (ibid., 323-325). If two manuscripts rank high on both Supplementary and Main List to each other, there is high probability that the two manuscripts are related to each other (2:xiv). A high percentage of agreement on only one of the two lists means very little (*Text*, 325).

Finally, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, volume 3 (ANTF 11) provides a summary for each manuscript as to the number of times each manuscript reads "1," "2," "1/2," a singular reading, or a special reading (including the number of the *Teststellen* found in these various readings). The actual Greek text for the singular readings and the special readings is repeated.

All of the tables in these three volumes give us a huge amount of helpful data, but not always a clear view of how the various percentages have been or should be interpreted. We turn now to our five questions.

1. The first question concerned the "1/2" readings. In those cases where the manuscript support for the "1/2" readings is given (a reading that is considered to be both a reading of the Majority text and a reading of the ancient text), we are told that such readings are calculated in percentages against the Majority text and in support of the ancient text because in these places the Majority text has preserved the ancient text (2:vii). Acknowledging the need for caution (1:xiv), Aland refers to these readings as having an ambivalent character: How did these ancient readings become a part of the Byzantine manuscript tradition? Were they in the manuscripts from the earliest period (i.e., original to them), or were they added later? (ibid.). Our question is: What was the rationale for including readings which for all practical purposes have no value for showing percentage relationships? The purpose for retaining

these readings (11 out of 98) obviously goes beyond percentage relationships in the traditional sense.

2. The second question is related to both the data in *Text und Textwert* and the classifications assigned to the 552 manuscripts given in the Alands' book, *Text of the NT* (107-142). The classifications, of course, are based on the data taken from *Text und Textwert*. In *Text*, the manuscripts are classified by categories (I-V, with Category I representing the original text, and Category V representing the Byzantine text, whose composition is farthest from the original). By establishing the range of percentage agreement that encompassed the manuscripts classified within each category, we discovered that some assignments did not always coincide with the percentages. We found instances in which the range of percentage agreement for one category overlaps with that of another category. We cite illustrations from the table *Anteil des alten Textes* (ANTF 9: 400-409). A tabulation of the ranges of percentage agreements with the ancient text for each of approximately 110 randomly selected manuscripts in categories I-V showed that for Category I, the percentage range was from 90 percent participation with the ancient text down to *60 percent*. For the range of percentage agreements in Category II classifications, the range of agreement with the ancient text was from 51 percent up to *65 percent*. That is, we found some manuscripts assigned to Category II that agreed with the ancient text up to as much as five percent more than some manuscripts assigned to Category I. The same type of disparity occurs between Categories III and V. The range of percentage agreement for Category III is 16-48, and for Category V, 7-25 percent. Two of the manuscripts checked in Category V (MSS 69 and 181) share readings of the ancient text, 22 and 25 percent of the time, respectively. On the other hand, manuscripts in Category III have percentages as low as 16 percent agreement with the ancient text.

3. Another aspect of interpreting percentages is related to the table *Abweichungen vom Mehrheitstext* (1:394-398). As noted above, the table is designed to show how closely related a manuscript is to the Majority text. Obviously, the *lower* the number of readings, the *closer* a manuscript is to the Byzantine text. We use MS 020 to illustrate the question we have. According to the Institute's table, this manuscript deviates from the Majority in 17 places out of the 98 *Teststellen* (17 percent deviation) (1:395). Conversely, MS 020 agrees in the other 81 test readings *with* the Majority text for 83 percent agreement. The number "81" also is given in *Text* (113). I believe, however, by using precisely the same data given in *Text und Textwert*, that MS 020 is related to the Majority text 11 percentage points more than the percentage given (by inference) in the Institute's table.

I arrived at a higher percentage of relationship using the following procedure. We know that nine of the 98 readings support the "1/2" category (3:12), which means that these readings are neutral for any classifications based on percentage calculations. Furthermore, three of the 98 readings for MS 020 do not support either the "1" or the "2" categories (ibid.), and therefore also should be considered neutral for determining MS 020's affinity with the two major textual divisions delineated by the Institute. The percentages present a more realistic picture of where MS 020 belongs vis-a-vis the Majority or ancient texts if one subtracts the readings that are shared by both the Majority text and the ancient text (nine such readings), and the readings that are special and do not agree with either of the two major texts (three such readings). This leaves five readings that deviate from the Majority text (17 minus 12). But the same 12 readings (nine and three) must be deducted from the 98 as well as from the 17. This means that the final calculations should be based on 86 readings. Deviations from the Majority text would be five out of 86 for *94-percent agreement* with the Majority text for MS 020 (versus *83-percent agreement*), and conversely, an agreement of six percent with the ancient text. Based on full collations, MS 020 agrees with the Majority text over 94 percent of the time. The percentage agreement for MS 020 with the ancient text in the table *Anteil des alten Textes* is five percent when the "1/2" readings are excluded from the calculation! This clearly seems to be more realistic than the inflated 14-percent agreement with the ancient text that results from including the "1/2" readings, as given in the adjoining column (1:402). Aland states that both sets of percentages are given in the table because of the ambivalence regarding the "1/2" readings (1:xvi).

4. For Aland the Main List is the most important for determining the quality of a manuscript, particularly as it relates to other manuscripts. We suggest that the conventional use of percentages, even with the Main List, favorably alters a classification. We use MS 104 to illustrate. MS 104 was classified as a Category III manuscript by the Institute and in 1 John as a Byzantine manuscript (Aland's Category V) by me. In the *Hauptliste*, on the lead line, following the Gregory number of the control manuscript, we are given the total number of readings out of 98 that is used for all of the tabulations (98 test passages minus both the number of readings that agree with the Majority text and the number of singular readings, if any). For example, MS 104 (the control manuscript) has 33 readings out of 94 that do not read with the Majority text (no singular readings), which means, of course, that the remaining 61 do agree with the Majority text. This is how the data are entered for these 33 readings: The number of the *Teststelle* is given on

line 1 of the headings; on line 2, at each of these 33 entries we are told the total number of manuscripts (out of 552) that share the same reading as control MS 104; line 3 gives us what MS 104 actually reads in these 33 places. These 33 readings become the basis of comparison with the 66 manuscripts highest- ranked to MS 104. Blank spaces ("white areas") mean that MS 104 and the manuscript being compared agree at that reading. When the manuscript being compared does not agree, its reading is entered. The number of places where they disagree is then subtracted from the 33. For MS 104, the 33 readings consist of 15 readings that are shared with the ancient text (two of these are variations, 2c and 2b); 13 readings are "special," that is, readings which differ from both the Majority and the ancient texts; and the remaining five readings share the "1/2" category of readings, those found in both the Majority text and the ancient text. The 61 readings that are shared with the Majority text are presumably those that led to the Category III classification (*Text* 129), because the 61 readings out of 94 amount to a 65-percent agreement with the Majority text. Since, however, this same manuscript agrees with the Byzantine text over 90 percent of the time in 1 John (based on full collations), we were curious to see what would happen in the *Teststellen* if we applied a more conventional use of percentages. Thus, similar to the procedure for MS 020 above, we deducted the 13 "special readings" and the five "1/2" readings, leaving a total of 76. The calculation then showed 61 Majority text readings out of 76, for an 80-percent agreement with the Majority text. And that would make this manuscript a Byzantine manuscript even by the Institute's standards. In the second part of the next question, using the figures given in the Main List, we look at the relationship of MS 104 to other manuscripts.

5. Our final question, also connected to the Main List, addresses the issue of manuscript relationships. Because the manuscripts listed in this table contain the 66 manuscripts top-ranked with each of the other manuscripts, one at a time, Aland holds that we have adequate information for all investigations (2,1: xiv-xv). MS 614 is used to illustrate his point. The table shows that for MS 614, MS 2412 agrees 98 percent of the time. Both of these manuscripts, along with MSS 2138, 1611, 206, and 1505, belong together and are in Category III. According to a study I did in 1977, this same group of manuscripts is closely related, but they were classified as Alexandrian, i.e., in Aland's Category I or II. (MS 1505 was added to my list in a later study and one other manuscript, MS 1799, not examined by Aland, was also in this group). The first question that arose, therefore, was about the Category III classification given by the Institute. If these closely related manuscripts belong to

Category III, how is it that other manuscripts which have such a drastically different makeup vis-a-vis the Majority text are also in Category III? In the discussion on MS 614, Aland uses a profile-method technique, that is, he notes a reading (*Teststelle* 3) in which four manuscripts all share a special reading (11b). This shared reading, Aland states, represents an unambiguous connection among the four manuscripts that share it (614, 2412, 1505, and 2138). As indicated just above, in my original work on the classification of the manuscripts of 1-3 John, I did not have access to MS 1505. In a later study, I classified it by using quantitative analysis as an Alexandrian manuscript (i.e., not in Aland's Category III). In the study on the Johannine Epistles, three Alexandrian groups emerged, and quantitative analysis did not show where MS 1505 belonged in these three Alexandrian groups. In conjunction with this review, I did a more detailed study of MS 1505. After plotting the readings of MS 1505 against the three Alexandrian group profiles, I had no question but that MS 1505 belonged to the group that contains the same manuscripts discussed above (A^1). In 1 John there are 53 A^1 group readings and MS 1505 shares 46 of them, for an 87-percent agreement. It therefore ranks just below the middle of the group members: MS 1611 has the highest number of the group readings (95 percent), followed by: 2138, 206, and 1799 (all with 93 percent), 1505 (87 percent), 614 (82 percent), and then 2412 (78 percent). The Alexandrian nature of the text of these manuscripts is partially supported even by the *Teststellen*, in that MSS 03, 02, and 1243, all Category I manuscripts according to *Text*, all rank high in the Main List with MS 614, the manuscript Aland uses to illustrate his point. Full collations along with the profiles show that these manuscripts not only belong together, as the *Teststellen* demonstrate, but also have a high level of affinity with the Alexandrian text. In fact, the important point here is that the use of profiles was able to show that these manuscripts do indeed belong together, but further, they are definitely manuscripts that should have the same Alexandrian ranking which Aland has reserved for Categories I and II. Furthermore, in comparison with the entire range of classifications, this group of manuscripts has far more shared group readings against the Majority text than do the manuscripts placed in Aland's Category I (01, 02, 03, etc.).

The last issue we wanted to resolve, at least partially, was to determine whether Aland's use of MS 614 was typical. We asked: Why is it that when we looked at *other* manuscripts and their rankings, the manuscripts that are top-ranked to the control manuscripts are *not* related? Was MS 614 singled out as an example because it showed the right rankings? If the procedure for determining relationships is valid for

MS 614, should not the same procedure work for other manuscripts? We decided to use the Main List to check out two other manuscripts that are considered related: MS 104, which we looked at above, and MS 1838. After we excluded the manuscripts in the list that involve only a few readings, we found that these two manuscripts rank first to each other in the Main List. Furthermore, MS 1838 is also a Category III manuscript, although it is in Category III with reservations (*Text* 135). With MS 104 as our control manuscript in the Main List, we give here the six highest top-ranked to MS 104, indicating for each manuscript its Gregory number, percentage relationship to MS 104, and the classification taken from *Text*: (1) MS 1838, 75 percent, Category III (with reservations); (2) MS 459, 64 percent, Category V; (3) MS 2344, 61 percent, Category I; (4) MS 1735, 58 percent, Category II; (5) MS 1842, 58 percent, Category III (with reservations); and (6) MS 1067, 65 percent, Category II.

This picture is considerably different from the one we saw for MS 614. The manuscript in second position is a Category V manuscript, and the one immediately below it is a Category I manuscript. Since, however, the closest manuscript in the Main List under MS 104 is MS 1838, and this is a reciprocal relationship, we looked to see what happened in the Main List to MS 1838. Providing the same information as for MS 104, we found the following in the Main List for control MS 1838: (1) MS 104, 83 percent, Category III; (2) MS 459, 58 percent, Category V; (3) MS 1842, 58 percent, Category III (with reservations); (4) MS 1852, 53 percent, Category II; (5) MS 1758, 53 percent, not available; and (6) MS 2344, 52 percent, Category I. Again, as with MS 104, we have manuscripts ranked to MS 1838 that have a wide range of classifications. When we checked the status of these manuscripts, listed in the top six for both control manuscripts in the Supplementary List, we found a higher number of manuscripts related to both control manuscripts than we did in the Main List. But the interesting point here is that the Supplementary List, according to full collations, more accurately portrays the nature of the text in these manuscripts than the Main List does. The four manuscripts that show up in the top six for both control manuscripts are Byzantine!

The Alands believed that the Supplementary List was most valuable when its rankings corroborated those of the Main List. We conclude that it would be precarious to look at the Main List and automatically conclude that the highest-ranked manuscripts are related, even if there are parallels with the Supplementary List, as in the case of the two control manuscripts examined. The same evidence that gave MSS 104 and 1838 a Category III classification, coupled with the

traditional application of quantitative analysis, could very well be used to support a Category V classification!

One final observation of a different nature. The Alands have frequently indicated their disdain for using the TR as a basis for collation. By using the NA^{26} as a collation base, textual critics at the Institute surely realize that future changes in the critical edition will either have to be ignored for the sake of consistency (thus causing another inconsistency), or make use of the changes and thereby create confusion. Perhaps the Institute has already determined how such a scenario would be handled; they may have concluded, as one possibility, that we have the original text already firmly established in NA^{26} and will not have to face such a problem.

Although there are a number of differences with regard to the application of statistics, particularly in connection with the classification process, and a number of points in need of clarification, the *Text und Textwert* volumes are definitely an important part of the ongoing research of the NT text. In spite of their high cost, the wealth of information in these volumes will make them indispensable for any serious investigation into the Greek NT text.

*The two studies referred to on the Institute's methodology (p. 37) are articles I have written: "Test Passages or Profiles: A Comparison of Two Text-Critical Methods" *JBL* 115 (1996): 253-271; and "An Analysis of Aland's *Tetstellen* in 1 John," a paper read at the 1995 Annual SBL Meeting in Philadelphia and accepted for publication by *NTS*.