EVALUATION OF VARIOUS READINGS ACCORDING TO THE THEORY OF RATIONAL ECLECTICISM¹

EVALUATION OF EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

- 1. <u>Date</u>. Preference should be given to the reading having the earliest attestation.
- 2. Geographical Distribution. Preference should be given to the reading having the most widespread attestation, especially as seen in the versions and fathers which can more easily be located geographically than most Greek MSS.
- 3. <u>Textual Relationships</u>. Alexandrian witnesses have primary value. Byzantine witnesses have minimal value.

CLA	SSIFICATION OF Alexandrian (Aland I-II)	WITNESSES ² Western (Aland IV)	Unclassified (Aland III)	Byzantine (Aland V)
G	<u>p</u> ⁴⁵ p ⁶⁶ p ⁷⁵ ¾ B C L	D 0171 it syr ^s ?	A W (formerly Caes. Mk. 5:31-16:20) Z	E F G H K M N O P Q R S U V X Y
O	T-0113-0125-	syr ^c ?	$\Delta (\underline{\Theta} = Aland II)$	ΓΛΠΣΦΩ063
	0139 33 892	Diatess Ir	Ξ Ψ 070-0110-0124-	0135 0211 <u>28</u>
S	copsa copso	Tert Cyp Ephr	01780179-0180-	(Mt, Lu; Jo?)
	Clem Or		190-0191-0193-	1010 1424 (Mt,
P	Did Ath		0194-0202 0141	Lu; Jo?) goth
	Cyr-Alex		0233 0250 <u>f</u> ¹	Bas Greg-Nys
E			<u>f¹³28</u> (Mk) <u>565</u>	Chr
			579 <u>700</u> 1009 1071	
L			1079 1195 1216 1230	
			1241 1242 1253 1344	
S			1365 1424(Mk) 1546	
			1646 2148 2174 syr ^p	
			syr ^h syr ^{pal} vg <u>arm</u>	
			geo eth Hip Orpt	
			Meth Eus Lcf Cyr-Jer	
			Hier	
٨	-4574 \	2938	Ψ 88 104 181 323	H V I D 040 220
A	p ⁴⁵ p ⁷⁴	$p^{29} p^{38}$ $p^{48} D E$	326 436 629 630	H K L P 049 330 451 1241 1877
C				2127 2412 2492?
C	81 1175 1739	0165? (614 =	945 1505 2495 syr ^p syr ^h syr ^{pal}	
T	cop ^{sa} cop ^{ba} Clem Or Did	Aland III) it		Bas Greg-Nys Chr
1		it cop ^g 67 Ir	vg arm geo eth Hip Meth Eus Lcf	CIII
C	Ath Cyr-Alex	Tert Cyp Ephr		
S			Cyr-Jer Hier	

P	p ⁴⁶ ⅓ A B C	\mathbf{D} (F G =	НР Ψ 88 104 181	KL 049 goth
	I 048 33 81	Aland III) it	323 326 436 629	Bas Greg-Nys
A	1175 1506	Ir Tert Cyp	630 1241 1877 1962	Chr
	1739 1881	Ephr	1984 1985 2492	
U	2127 2464		2495 syr ^p syr ^h	
	cop ^{sa} Clem		syr ^{pal} vg cop ^{bo}	
L	Or Did Ath		arm geo eth Hip	
	Cyr-Alex		Meth Eus Lcf Cyr-Jer	
			Hier	
C	$P^{72} P^{74} \cancel{x} A$	it Ir Tert	H P 88 104 181 326	L 049 330 451
	B C (Ψ=Aland	Cyp Ephr	436 614 629 630 945	1877 2127 Bas
A	II) 33 81 323		1505 2412 2492 2495	Greg-Nys Chr
	1241 1739		syr ^p syr ^h syr ^{pal}	
T	1881 cop ^{sa}		syr ^{ph} vg cop ^{sa}	
	Clem Or Did		cop ^{bo} arm geo eth	
H	Ath Cyr-Alex		Eus Hip Meth Lcf	
			Cyr-Jer Hier	
_	47		0.74.04.40.40.40.70	D 044 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 -
R	p ⁴⁷ ℵ A C		051 94 1828 1859	P 046 052 2138
	1006 1611		2020 2030 2042	
E	1841 1854		2065 2073 2081	
	2050 2053		2351 2377 2432	
V	2062 2329		syr ^h syr ^{ph} it vg	
	2344 cop ^{sa}		cop ^{sa} cop ^{bo} arm	
			geo eth	

EVUALATION OF THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE

- 1. Transcriptional Probabilities, i.e. what scribes likely did when copying the N.T.
 - (1) <u>Shorter/Longer Reading</u>. Most textual critics give preference to the shorter reading where deliberate alteration seems to be involved on the assumption that scribes were more willing to add to the text in attempting to correct it than to remove anything from it. In fact scribes seem to have had a horror of omitting anything from the Word of God as can be seen in conflate readings. The shorter reading should not be preferred if accidental omission appears to have resulted from similar endings or beginnings of words or as the result of a whole line being skipped. (Rigorous eclectics make much of the latter and usually prefer the longer reading.)
 - (2) <u>Reading Different from Parallel</u>. Preference should be given to the reading which is different from the one in a parallel passage because scribes could not tolerate inconsistencies and contraditions and tended to harmonize parallel passages. This is often a factor in the Synoptic Gospels, Ephesians/Colossians, II Peter/Jude and where a quotation from the O.T. is involved.

- (3) More Difficult Reading. Preference should be given to the more difficult reading, i.e. difficult for ancient and medieval scribes, because scribes often attempted to eliminate difficulties from the text on the assumption that they could not be original. This criterion is especially weighty if upon a more mature reflection the difficulty can be resolved. It does not apply if the difficulty is an impossibility, because accidental errors sometimes resulted in nonsense.
- (4) <u>Reading Which Best Explains Origin of Other(s)</u>. Preference should be given to the reading which if assumed to be the original best explains the origin of the other(s). Each reading should be tested in this way, and if only one can explain the origin of the other(s) it is highly probable that it is the original. This is probably the single most important criterion.
- 2. Intrinsic Probablities, i.e. what the author himself likely wrote.

One must study each author's vocabulary, grammar, style, theological concepts, etc. and then determine if a reading is in accord with such things. A concordance is indispensible in doing this. Except perhaps in such books as Hebrews, James, and I Peter, N.T. writers are more likely to have employed semitic constructions than later scribes, and N.T. writers are more likely to have employed a Koine than an Attic construction. It is often very difficult to determine intrinsic probabilities, and it should be recognized that good writers often express themselves in different and unexpected ways. (Nevertheless, rigorous eclecties make most of their textual decisions on the basis of intrinsic probabilities alone, and they especially emphasize the originality of semitic constructions and the secondary nature of Attic ones.)

CONCLUSION

It is not often that all of the above criteria will point toward the same reading. In such cases the textual critic must weigh the probabilities and decide which criterion or criteria is or are most relevant in the particular textual problem under consideration. Doing this is the essence of rational eclecticism.

¹Taken from system prepared and used by Dr. James A. Brooks. Used by permission.

²Adapted from Metzger, <u>Textual Commentary</u>, xxix-xxx; and Aland, <u>Text of the New Testament</u>. <u>Underline</u> = formerly classified Caesarean. **Bold** = Aland class II.