

# THE JOINT IGNTF/INTF EDITIO CRITICA MAIOR OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: ITS GOALS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

PROPOSED PAPER FOR SNTS 2005, HALLE, BY K. WACHTEL AND D.C. PARKER

## 1. The background and concept of the edition: origins and goals (DCP)

The INTF and IGNTF have the shared goal of improving the understanding and the available materials for understanding the New Testament text. In recent years, we have been exploring ways of building on these goals, in order to achieve better text-critical results and so to serve New Testament scholarship and other readers of the texts we study. An important moment of change came at the SBL meeting in San Francisco in 1997. Here two things happened. The first is that after the launch of the first volume of the ECM, its editors attended the annual meeting of the NA IGNTF committee, and we had a conversation as colleagues about the way ahead for the IGNTF work on John. The second was that a number of us went to a presentation by Peter Robinson of his work on *The Canterbury Tales*, a truly amazing electronic edition in which the user could interact with transcriptions and critical apparatus and images of the manuscripts, along with commentary and interpretative data. The result was that we both began using it, so that now the digital Nestle-Aland edition, the *Editio critica Maior* and the current editions of the IGNTF are all produced using Peter's software. In a series of consultations, we have been able to discuss the development of this. And our collaboration has led to Peter Robinson joining me in Birmingham to found the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing.

It was clear that the time was ripe for collaboration. We have gone about this by agreeing some definite immediate goals. The first has been to combine forces in the selection of witnesses for an edition of John. As I was able to report at the Durham meeting in 2002, the data has been collected and is being analysed using both the Münster Teststellen method and the Claremont Profile Method. Some of this is complete, some is nearing completion. The first ten chapters have been analysed by the selection of 153 Test Passages. For the remainder of the Gospel, we have entire transcriptions of all available witnesses in Chapter 18, which are currently being analysed in order to select the significant manuscripts with both a 'Text und Textwert style' analysis, and according to the Claremont Profile Method. The first information from the data suggests that rather more than 300 MSS fulfil the criterion of conforming to the Byzantine Majority in less than 90%. It will be necessary to scrutinise these more carefully before making a final decision as to the MSS to be included in the edition.

We have now been able to make a new agreement for yet more extensive partnership, reached in March this year. It is to collaborate in making an edition of John for the ECM. There will be 6 editors, Holger Strutwolf, Klaus Wachtel, Gerd Mink, Ulrich Schmid, Bruce Morrill and myself. The agreement covers two editions, a printed one which will continue the ECM series, and which will be the focus of the partnership, and an electronic edition. With regard to the print edition, the agreement distinguishes the tasks of collecting the data and making a critical text, as follows:

- Collection of the material (transcriptions and databases), including their accuracy, will be the responsibility of the IGNTF. The collected material will be made

available in a format similar to the current Münster Database Format. This will allow the IGNTP and INTF to import the data into appropriate software to produce analyses and to prepare the edition.

- Reconstruction of the critical text (Initial Text) is the responsibility of the Editorial Team.
- The Editorial Team will use Gerd Mink's Coherence-Based Genealogical Method. Additional methods may be applied as appropriate.
- The text and apparatus will follow the general design and principles of the ECM editions which have already appeared.

The electronic edition is the responsibility of the IGNTP. It will contain transcriptions, databases, and programs and related tools. The programmes and tools available at the conclusion of the project cannot be fully specified in advance. Their development will result from a process of continuing consultation between the INTF and IGNTP.

In order to achieve these goals, we are needing to complete a number of separate tasks, each valuable in its own right.

1. There are currently no recent critical editions of the versions included in the ECM: the Latin, Syriac and Coptic. We are therefore producing them. The edition of *Vetus Latina Iohannes* in the Beuron *Vetus Latina* edition is well under way under the editorship of Dr Philip Burton, and we have funding to complete the job. Dr Peter Williams is developing plans for making an edition of the Syriac materials, and we are in discussion with an expert group on the way to do the Coptic
2. Patristic citations are another huge area. Here at least we have some data already. Both INTF and IGNTP have files with thousands of citations. And the New Testament in the Greek Fathers series has done a good deal of analytical work. Dr Rod Mullen has been applying for funding to transfer all this material into a database.

There are also citations in Latin (particularly plentiful), Syriac and Coptic. We are developing a database which will make it possible to overview all these citations, or to focus on a specific language or other group.

All these editions will be published as a print edition in its own right. We are also able to conceive of an electronic edition in which the versional and patristic editions, with the associated transcriptions and other material, will be part of the electronic edition of the Greek text.

Putting a timescale on this process is probably tempting providence, but we are looking currently at an approximately eight-year period.

## **2. An overview of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (KW)**

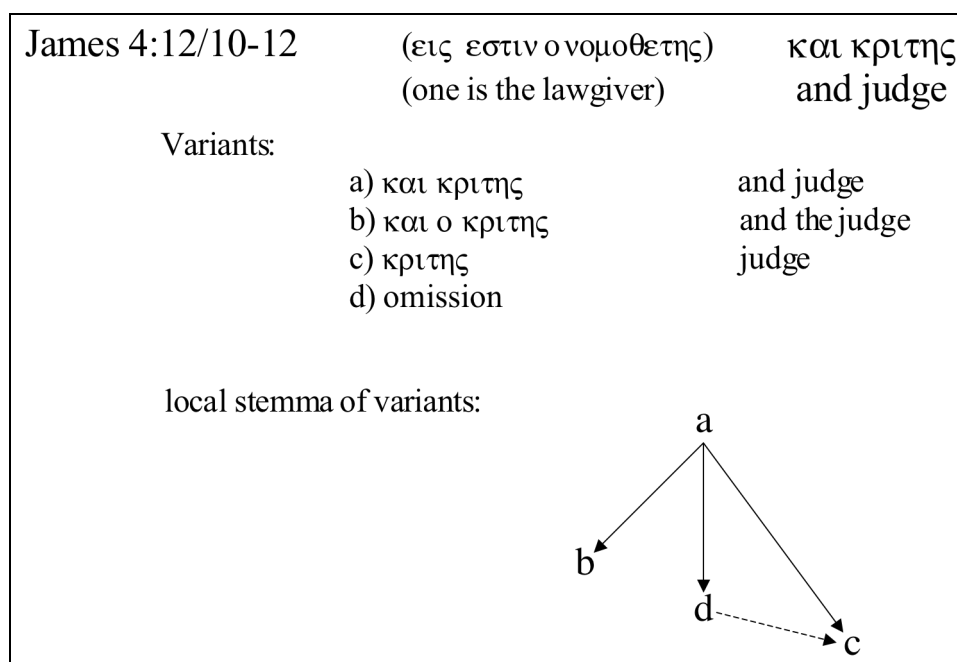
David briefly referred to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) that will be used to reconstruct the initial text of the Gospel of John. I shall now explain the main features of this method that was and is still being developed by Gerd Mink.

The basic principle of the Genealogical Method is to infer the genealogy of states of a text from genealogical assessments of readings at every variant passage of that text. If we state,

for example, that reading *x* is probably the source of reading *y*, this implies a statement about the relationship between the copies containing the readings.

Unfortunately I cannot take an example from the Gospel of John, because we have not got the relevant data yet. Our cooperation has only just begun. So I turn to the Letter of James for an example.

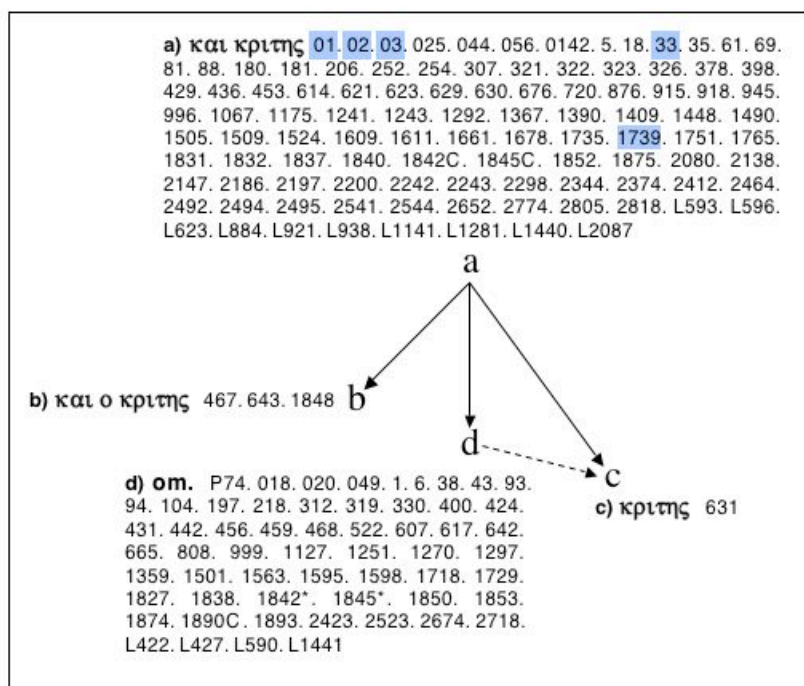
In Js 4:12 a considerable number of witnesses omit καὶ κριτής in a context that clearly demands these words: The author has just warned that *he who judges his brother ... judges the law*, and continues, εἰ δὲ νόμον κρίνεις, οὐκ εἶ ποιητὴς νόμου ἀλλὰ κριτής. εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ νομοθέτης καὶ κριτής ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι – *if you judge the law you are not a doer of the law but a judge. One is the lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy.*



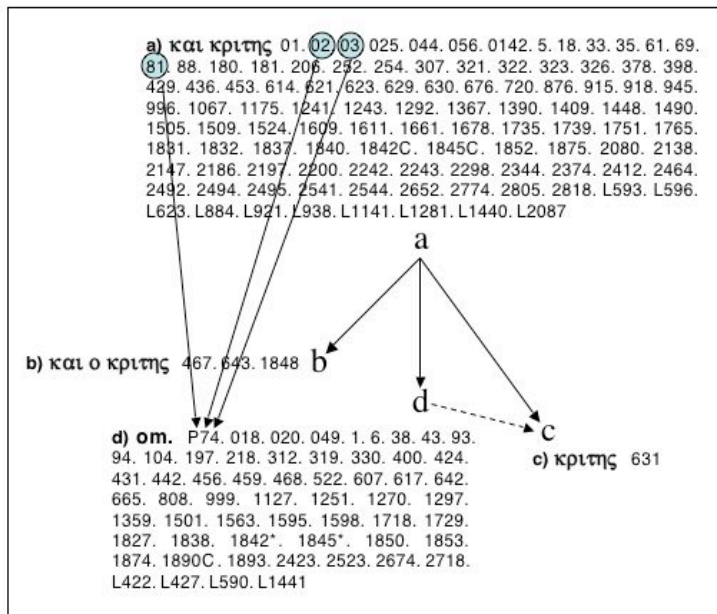
It is quite likely that the omission (reading *d*) is caused by homoioteleuton. Reading *b* can be explained easily, too: the article was added in parallel with the preceding ὁ νομοθέτης. Reading *c* may be caused by omission of καὶ or by an incomplete correction.

It follows that at this passage of variation the state of text preserved in the witnesses of reading *a* is prior to the state preserved in the witnesses of readings *b*, *c*, or *d*, unless the attestation casts doubt on this assessment. But here we do not need the Genealogical Method to state that the attestation of reading *a* is very good. Just look at the well known 01 (Sinaiticus), 02 (Alexandrinus), 03 (Vaticanus), 33 (“the queen of minuscules”), 1739 (“eine textkritische Arbeit des 10. bzw. 6. Jahrhunderts”, as its editor von der Goltz called the manuscript) side by side with manuscripts representing a pure line of the Byzantine tradition, e.g. 18, 35, 307.

In the first phase of applying the CBGM, passages like this which do not pose textcritical problems are used to collect evidence that the assessment of genealogical coherence can build on.

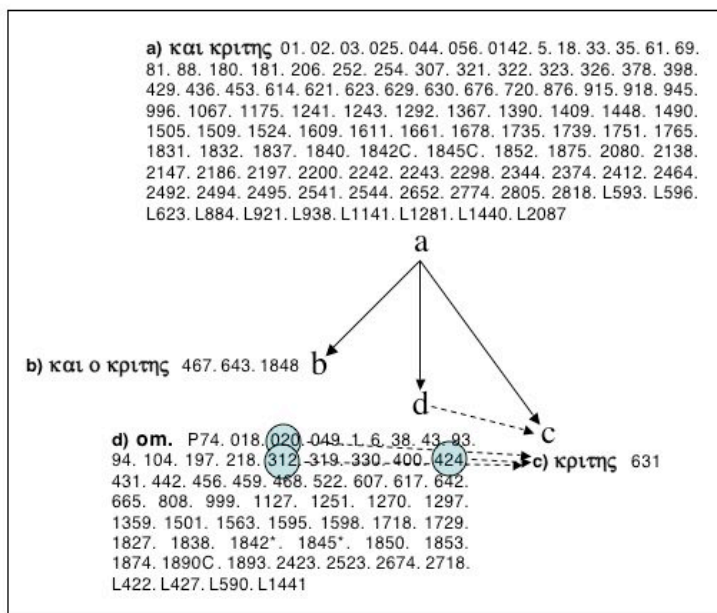


Two modes of coherence, pre-genealogical and genealogical, are to be distinguished. Pre-genealogical coherence is inferred from the degree of similarity of manuscript texts. For the assessment of variants and their relations it is useful to look at the next relatives of a witness. They will often attest the same reading, but where they don't, the pre-genealogical coherence of witnesses of different readings points to a genealogical coherence of those readings. If, for example, one cannot decide on philological grounds whether the source of reading *d* was *a*, *b* or *c*, it is best to opt for the reading that has close relatives of the witness(es) of *c* among its attestation. Such an observation may help to establish genealogical coherence. If we see, in our example, that the potential ancestors of P74 (02, 81, and 03) are found with reading *a*, this adds to the probability that reading *d* is dependent from reading *a*.

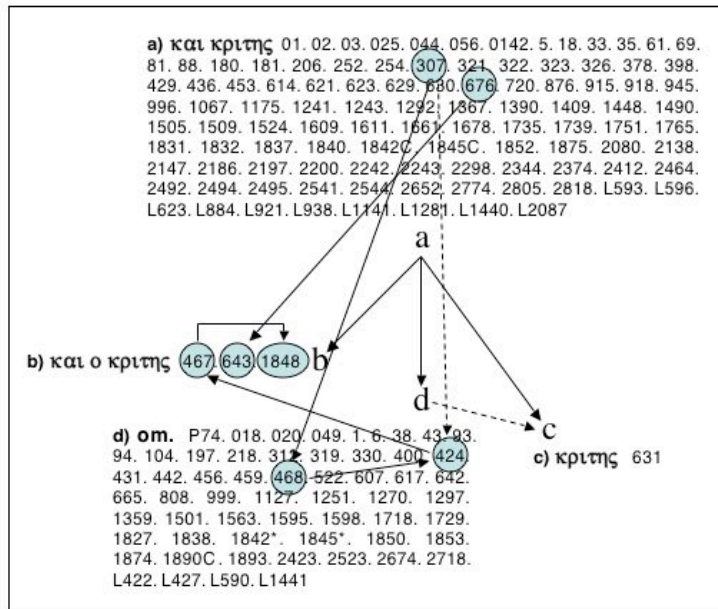


Thus we can use the disagreements between witnesses that are closely related in terms of pre-genealogical coherence to determine their genealogical relationship by summarizing the instances where they disagree and attest the prior or the posterior reading. The relevant information is stored in a database table.

In our example the witnesses of reading *d* either agree with their potential ancestors at this place, or, as is the case with P74, the potential ancestors witness to reading *a*. The closest relatives of 631, the only witness of reading *c*, are found with *d* while the reading itself shows knowledge of reading *a*.



Reading *b* clearly presupposes reading *a*, although the closest potential ancestor of 467 is 424, a witness of *d*. But as we know *d* to be a secondary reading, we have to take into account that 424 belongs to a strand of transmission that is linked to the initial text by 307. The connection to 307 is mediated by 468, the most probable ancestor of 424. 307 is the most probable ancestor of 468 and the second most of 424. The second witness of reading *b*, 643, is closely related to 676 (reading *a*). The third witness, 1848, is dependent from 467.



These statements about the attestation are derived from database tables that were created after we had subjected every variation unit of the Letter of James to an assessment of local genealogy of readings and on that basis summarised the assessments.



Zeuge1	Richtg	Zeuge2	Proz1	Kon	Proz2	Xausy	Proz3	Yausx	Proz4	Qfragl	Kv	Stellen
468		0246	100.00	30	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0	30
468		0166	100.00	8	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0	8
468		P23	97.959	48	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	1	49
468	<--	2718S	97.600	122	1.600	2	0.800	1	0.000	0	0	125
468	<--	307	95.921	729	1.842	14	1.711	13	0.526	4	0	760
468	<--	319	94.825	676	2.238	10	2.238	10	0.420	5	2	713
468	<--	5	93.026	707	3.026	23	3.026	23	0.658	5	2	760
468	<--	4	90.470	674	8.993	67	0.000	0	0.134	1	3	745
468	<--	1448	90.250	685	4.348	33	3.821	29	1.318	10	2	759
468	<--	2298	89.737	682	4.474	34	3.816	29	0.921	7	8	760
468	<--	025	89.045	634	5.758	41	4.073	29	0.983	7	1	712
468	<--	1243	89.007	672	5.430	41	3.841	29	0.927	7	6	755
468	<--	1852	88.553	673	5.132	39	4.079	31	1.316	10	7	760
468	<--	81	88.446	666	4.914	37	4.781	36	0.930	7	7	753
468	<--	104	87.872	413	5.745	27	4.681	22	0.638	3	5	470
468	<--	1175	87.599	664	5.805	44	4.354	33	1.055	8	9	758
468	<--	1739	87.237	663	6.184	47	4.605	35	0.921	7	8	760
468	<--	101	87.015	650	7.095	53	3.614	27	1.473	11	6	747
468	<--	03	86.881	649	8.568	64	2.276	17	1.606	12	5	747
468	<--	045	86.842	660	5.789	44	5.526	42	0.921	7	7	760
468	<--	048	86.076	68	6.329	5	6.329	5	1.266	1	0	79
468	<--	P100	85.882	73	9.412	8	2.353	2	2.353	2	0	85
468	<--	P20	83.673	41	10.204	5	4.082	2	2.041	1	0	49
468		P74	83.395	226	7.011	19	7.011	19	1.845	5	2	271
468		0173	80.000	16	10.000	2	10.000	2	0.000	0	0	20

This table shows the potential ancestors of 468, a witness of reading d) of the example. The closest relative of this manuscript is 307, with which it shares 760 passages of variation. At 729 or 95.9% of these the manuscripts agree with each other, at 31 they have different readings. At 4 of the 31 passages the relation is unclear, at 14 passages 307 has the prior reading, at 13 the relationship is the other way round. Thus the direction of the arrow in the second row represents a preponderance that is only slight.

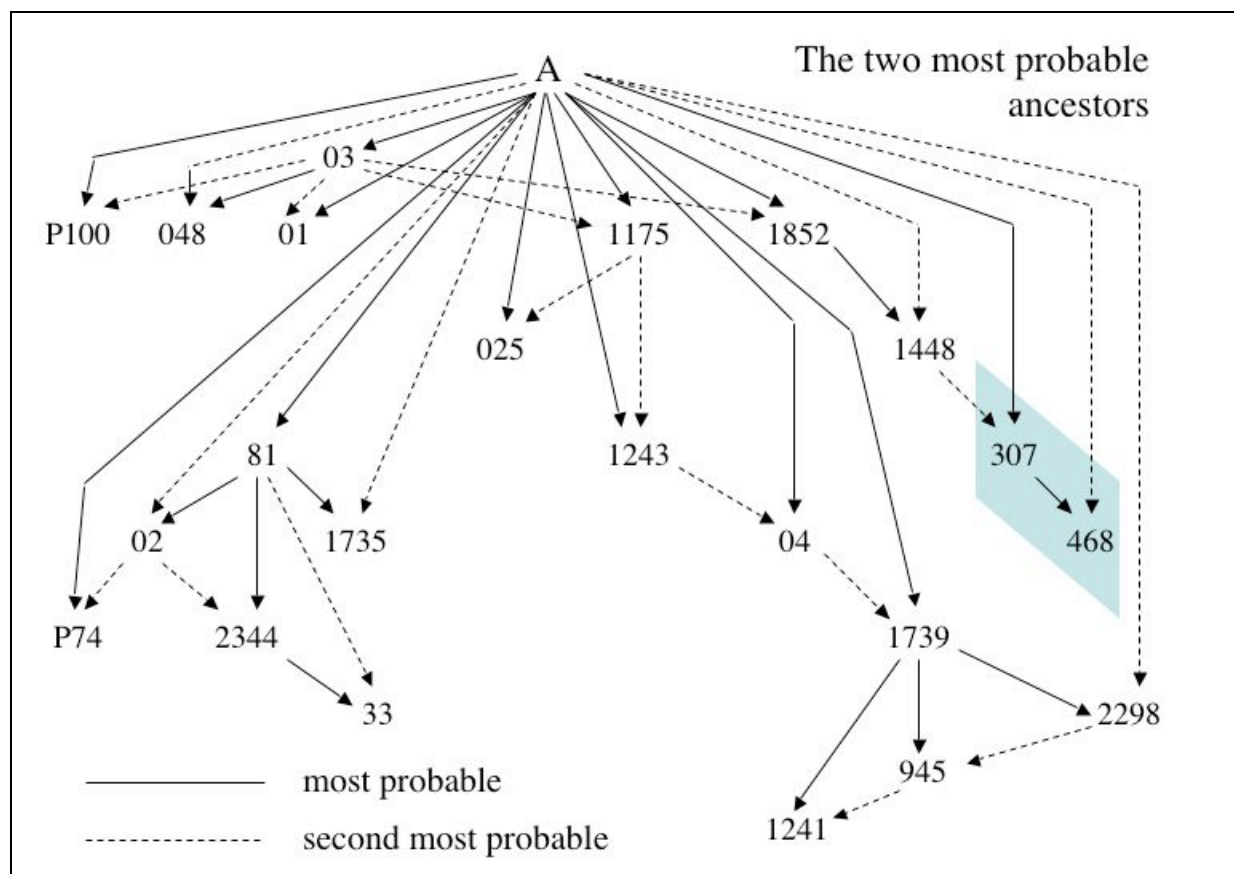
The four lines above 307 can be ignored, because they refer to small fragments and a supplement of 2718. As they cover only small passages, high percentages of agreement are reached. But they are relevant only, if at all, where these fragments are extant.

At any rate, it becomes clear that the table is sorted in descending order of the percentages of agreement, or, to put it this way, the degree of pre-genealogical coherence of the manuscript texts compared.

Just to compare this table to one referring to a better known manuscript: this one below shows the potential ancestors of 03 (Vaticanus). Apart from the inevitable small fragments there is only one, the initial text (A).

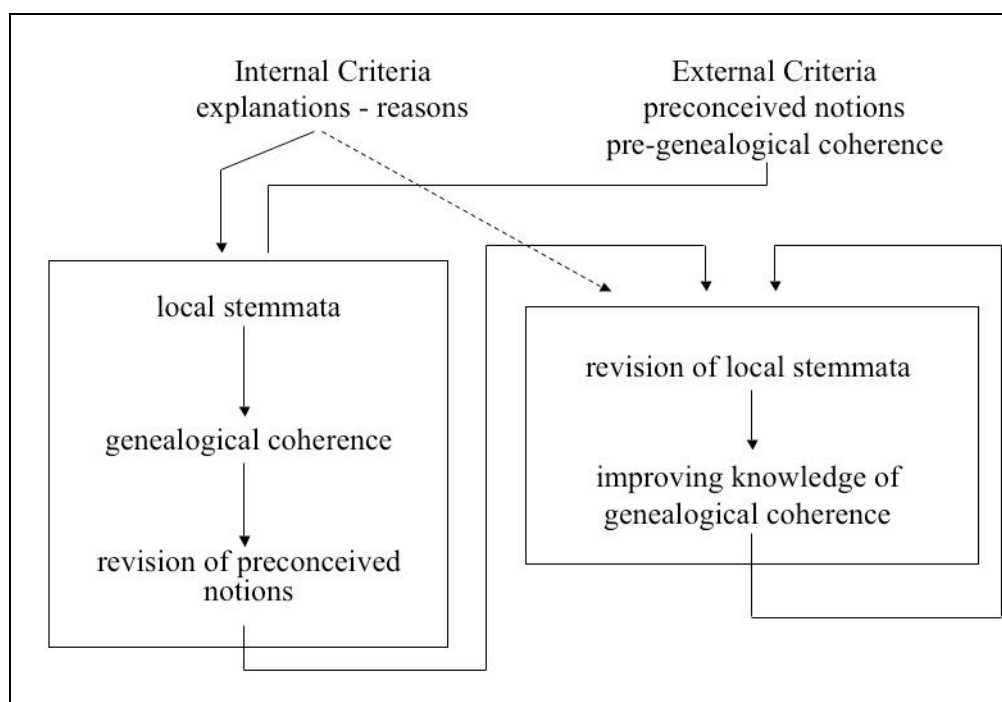
Zeuge1	Richtg	Zeuge2	Proz1	Kon	Proz2	Xausy	Proz3	Yausx	Proz4	Qfragl	Kv
03	<--	A	97.271	713	2.592	19	0.000	0	0.136	1	0
03		P23	95.918	47	2.041	1	2.041	1	0.000	0	0
03	<--	0166	87.500	7	12.500	1	0.000	0	0.000	0	0
03	<--	0173	85.000	17	10.000	2	5.000	1	0.000	0	0

The values in tables like the two shown here may be visualised by arrows in a diagram.



This one shows the two most probable ancestors for those witnesses of the Letter of James that are closely related to the initial text. Continuous lines refer to pre-genealogical coherence of the first order, dotted lines to those of the second order.

The following diagram shows the methodical steps of the CBGM.





We begin with what we know or believe to know in terms of internal and external criteria, when we start assessing the variants and build local stemmata accordingly. From these we derive genealogical coherence that helps to revise the preconceived notions we started with and then turn to the iterative process of revising our local stemmata and improving our knowledge of genealogical coherence. Internal criteria may be applied afresh in this process.

There are three important features of the CBGM that should be highlighted

1. The subjective element in applying both internal and external criteria is balanced by objective facts as provided by pre-genealogical coherence. The percentages of agreement and disagreement between manuscript texts can hardly be biased. Genealogical coherence, on the other hand, enables a far more detailed analysis of attestations to be carried out. One can opt against prevalent tendencies where ever one sees good reasons against them. But it is an integrated part of the method that such tendencies cannot be ignored.
2. Philological reasoning has a clear preponderance over stemmatological procedures. At every point it can be determined what the software we use is doing. There is no “stemmatological black box”.
3. The CBGM has the capability to integrate all kinds of traditional and new text-critical methods used to assess variants. It is open to new ideas and different thinking. It could, for example, be used by scholars who defend the priority of the majority text. (But they might ask why they should go to the trouble of philological reasoning.)

The text of ECM has been criticized for showing relatively few differences from that of NA27. The reason is that the NA27 text, being the condensation of textual research done in over 200 years since Griesbach, is not that bad. Yet it would be wrong to say that applying the CBGM was only a mopping-up exercise that has made the reconstruction of the initial text more “secure”. Quite to the contrary, the method makes us very aware of the fact that in many cases we do not know “wie es wirklich gewesen -- how it was in reality”, – that we are dealing with probabilities rather than with a fixed “Urtext”.

### **3. Defining what the Initial Text (“Ausgangstext”) will represent in relationship to the text of the author (DCP)**

The task of making a particular critical edition should always be governed by the nature and textual history of the particular text under consideration. With regard to the Gospel of John, some of the key issues concern its literary character and its status in relation to the other canonical Gospels. The following points are to be considered. But in all of these questions you must appreciate that we are trying to start with as open a mind as possible.

A critical edition has two purposes

1. The task of making an edition of a text is primarily determined by the available materials. One has above all to draw a distinction between the origin of the text at the hands of its author or authors and the archetype of the tradition. The archetype is the manuscript, whether lost or extant, from which the manuscript tradition is descended. One may think in two possible ways, of the archetype as a physical witness, or of the text carried by the archetype, which the editor reconstructs. We call this text the Initial Text, in German the Ausgangstext, that is, the starting-point for the rest of the textual tradition. The reconstruction of this Initial

Text is the first purpose of a critical edition. We know that there are many theories and possible reconstructions of the literary history of the Fourth Gospel. This needs to be expressed as the statement that it is arguable that a number of documents were produced, each containing an earlier form of the text which came to be known as the Gospel of John. The simplest theory which one can present is that there is a single Initial Text which was a single archetype presenting a single form of the text. A more complicated hypothesis would be that different literary states of the text were preserved, either in two or more Initial Texts or through the textual character of a single archetype. In the first instance, the editorial task would consist of using those tools which Klaus has been describing in order to determine and present the single Initial Text. In the second, one would be forced to attempt to reconstruct the several text forms whose survival had become apparent.

Let me emphasise again that the relationship between the Initial Text and the authorial intended text is left open. We are able to compare the extant witnesses and come up with a rational interpretation, which states that, given the evidence, the Initial Text is likely to have been such-and-such – or that we cannot reconstruct it. The reconstruction of an authorial text is not the editor's brief. Nevertheless, the fact that we insist on speaking about "initial text" and not "archetype" is significant. In traditional Lachmannian stemmatics, what happened to the text before the archetype was written was not the editor's business. But if we use text-critical arguments derived from the supposed intention of the author, we have already gone beyond merely reconstructing the first manuscript of the tradition. After all, we use arguments based on style. If we were to restrict our work to the application of transcriptional probability, this and similar arguments based on intrinsic probability would be inadmissible. We are therefore both insisting that the Initial Text is different from both the authorial text and the archetype, that we cannot reconstruct the former and that what we can reconstruct is more than the latter.

One might say that there are three stages to be distinguished:

1. The literary formation of the text
2. The textual transmission of this before the Initial Text
3. The textual transmission of this from the Initial Text onwards

2. The purpose of a critical edition is not only to reconstruct the Initial Text. No less important is its value in reconstructing later stages of the history of the text. For only by establishing an overview of the entire textual tradition can one make the necessary decisions as to the relative age of the different textual forms. In its apparatus, the print edition will provide the evidence for the variant readings. We imagine the electronic edition containing tools which will depict this material graphically, showing the development and relationship of readings and groups of readings, and providing a commentary on editorial decisions. We approach the possibilities here very openly, because there are still a number of important questions to be considered.

1. The first of these concerns the relationship between the Initial Text and the four Gospel collection. The Gospels as we possess them in our oldest complete witnesses exist not as separate texts but as one of four. This is clear from their titles, from the aids for readers, principally the Eusebian apparatus binding them together. Is the Initial Text the text of John as one of the Gospel collection? It is worth bearing in mind, for example, that Zuntz believed

that the archetype of the manuscripts of Paul was the collected *corpus* and not the previously separate letters. The situation is complicated by the fact that the collected four-Gospel canon was not necessarily initially contained in a single codex. If we look at the oldest extensive witnesses, we note that P66 contained only John, and P75 Luke and John. T.C. Skeat argued that P4 was the oldest four-Gospel codex. P.M. Head has suggested that most papyri contained only one Gospel.

Again, here the usefulness of the term "initial text" as compared with "archetype" or with "author's text" become obvious: as a category it's more than the starting point of the manuscript tradition without being simply identified with the author's text.

2. The editor faces the challenge of extant textual data unrelated to the Initial Text. In the case of John, several significant passages come to mind, namely the angel at the pool in the beginning of Chapter 5, and the even longer passage 7.53-8.11. The situation with which we begin is that, although a rather small number of witnesses omit it, this ancient piece of tradition (cf. Petersen) does not belong with the Initial Text. However, it does have its own complicated textual history (Tischendorf printed two forms in parallel because he wanted to confront the earliest available Greek text of the pericope with its TR form). It surely has to be included somehow. In the electronic text, there are rather more attractive possibilities than in print, where any decision can look like a statement.

3. Can we ask anything about the distance between the Initial Text and our oldest extensive witnesses? P66 gives us nearly all the Gospel and P75 gives us the first twelve chapters. The first is dated as early as mid-second century by Cavallo, generally as around 200, while the latter is often placed within the bracket 175-225. This seems pretty close in time, but then one has to recall how divergent the two texts are, and indeed how many signs of revision and knowledge of different readings are visible on the pages of P66. Nor, of course, does the age of a manuscript have any bearing on the date of its exemplar. the question is, how close will the reconstructable Initial Text(s) be to the beginning of the manuscript tradition? From the point of view of the exegete or historian of the first century, how much confidence will we have that the Initial Text will provide, say an early second century rather than a late-second century form of the text? Will we be able to make judgments about the size of such a gap?

How will this be valuable for NT and Johannine scholarship?

It is often said that the papyri have had very little effect on the printed text of the New Testament. This is at best only partially true, since papyrus evidence turned the scale for the UBSGNT3/NA26 editors quite often. It is however reasonable to observe that we have spent too long trying to analyse them by methods not designed with them in mind. The opportunity to make an edition of a Gospel much of which is found in two extensive ancient texts, using the techniques developed by the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, cannot but advance our knowledge, not only of the oldest forms of text we can reconstruct, but also of the relationship to it and between themselves of later forms of the text. If we consider the advances made by Gordon Fee in his study of P66, and reflect on the possibilities for John inherent in Martini's study of P75 in Luke, we can see the possibilities for yet further advance. It is evident that a text as significant for the New Testament scholar as this one deserves proper critical editing, so that everyone knows exactly what they are dealing with.

The Editio Critica Maior has the goal of providing a 'Textual history of the first millennium'. Given its huge significance in the development of Christian culture, and with it cultures in

Europe and beyond, the statement and explanation of the development of textual variation provides an essential insight into interpretative and exegetical history. The critical apparatus is available to the scholar as an essential tool in the study of the ways in which John was read and understood. Our electronic edition will go even further, by providing transcriptions and images of the manuscripts which will show not just the readings but also the entire text and format as they were available to readers of the text in different periods.

Finally, we will provide the first critical edition in which the new evidence provided by the papyri and other sources will be supported by the major majuscule and minuscule evidence. This resource will be a valuable tool for the philologist. In our electronic edition, search facilities will make the retrieval of data from such a collection a far more realistic task than in a print volume.

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