

THE «LONG» AND THE «SHORT» TEXTS OF ACTS: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE QUANTITY AND TYPES OF VARIATION

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It is a well-known fact that the text of the book of Acts has been transmitted in two main forms, and that there are witnesses to both of them among the earliest manuscripts as well as among the writings of the Church Fathers. This knowledge, however, is frequently accompanied by generalized notions and inaccurate information which prevent a true picture of the manuscript tradition of Acts from being seen. The perpetuating of some of these popular ideas about the state of the text of Acts tends to reinforce prejudices concerning the relative value of the manuscripts and hinders the opening up of new areas of research. While the work of determining which text corresponds most closely to the original version is a long and complex matter involving a careful and thorough examination of the contents of the manuscripts, there is specific information concerning the quantity and the nature of the variation which can be given relatively easily and with some precision. The aim of this article is chiefly to offer a methodology for comparing manuscripts. The task of accounting for the variant readings or of explaining them belongs to another stage of textual criticism.

A preliminary step is to clear up an important misconception which has to do with the grouping of the manuscripts of Acts. It is customary to think of the manuscripts which contain the book of Acts as falling into two families, the Alexandrian text and the Western text. Whilst this corresponds broadly to the reality of the situation, it masks the fact that among the witnesses of each group there are significant variant readings. This is true to a small extent of the Alexandrian manuscripts which, despite agreement most of the time, differ in some of the details. It is especially true of the so-called «Western» manuscripts whose chief point of agreement is that they differ from the Alexandrian text! Furthermore, most of the manuscripts which display a «Western» text are early versions (Latin, Syriac, Aramaic, Middle Egyptian) and so many of what may have been their points of difference in their exemplars are obscured by transla-

tion. The variety among the manuscripts in each group means that global comparisons between the two main traditions are likely to produce misleading results. A comparison of actual representatives of the two groups allows more accurate conclusions to be drawn, conclusions which then can be developed to take account of the variation within the families.

For the purpose of the comparative analysis presented here, Codex Vaticanus (B03) has been taken as the representative of the Alexandrian tradition. Similar numerical results would have been produced if Codex Sinaiticus (S01, previously \aleph) had been used instead.¹ Among the «Western» manuscripts, Codex Bezae (D05) is the only manuscript in Greek to have a text which differs consistently from the Alexandrian text, and from that of Codex Vaticanus in particular. It is unfortunate that the lacunae in the Bezan text at 8:29-10:14; 21:2-10, 16-18; 22:10-20, 22:29-28:31, mean that the analysis has to be restricted to something less than the entire book of Acts but in the absence of a complete Greek witness to the 'Western' text, there is no way to avoid this shortcoming.

The discussion and the tables which follow, set out the results of the comparative analysis between D and B. The variant readings are considered in three different ways. Firstly, they are taken *en masse* and counted in the manuscripts overall as well as in the individual chapters. This gives a general idea of the size of the difference between the manuscripts and shows the distribution of the variation throughout the book of Acts. In the second analysis, the global number of variants is broken down into different types of variation which are numerically compared among themselves, again in the manuscripts overall and then in the individual chapters. This allows the initial picture to be refined and more detail to be filled in. A final step is to compare the amount and distribution of variant readings in the narrative portions of the text with those in direct speech in order to see if the two kinds of discourse are affected differently by variation.

In this survey, little attempt will be made to interpret the significance of the figures. An accurate evaluation of the patterns and the fluctuations which appear in the tables and charts will necessarily depend on a thorough examination of the reasons for variation in specific passages, an exercise which cannot be undertaken within the scope of a journal article.

I. PROPORTION OF TEXT AFFECTED BY VARIATION

In the first instance, the two manuscripts were compared and every difference between them noted.² The number of words in the Bezan text was counted from the transcript of the manuscript as was also the number of words

1. B agrees with D against S at 103 places, whereas S agrees with D against B at 114 places. The majority of these disagreements between S and B occur within the category which I refer to as «Alternative material» (see #II).

2. The text used for Codex Bezae was the transcription by F. H. SCRIVENER, *Bezae Codex*

which varied from the reading of the text of Codex Vaticanus. The total number of words affected by variation is over three and a half thousand. The exact figure needs to be compared with the number of words in the book overall to see what proportion of the whole it represents. (It should be borne in mind that D has lacunae and that the sections of B corresponding to these gaps are therefore not included in the count of words in Codex Vaticanus.)

TABLE 1

		<u>Percentage of text affected by variation</u>
Number of <i>vll</i>	3,642	
Total words in D	13,904	28%
Total words in B	13,036	26%

The overall difference in the length of the two texts is 868 words. If this figure is expressed as a percentage of the shorter of the two texts, then the D text of Acts can be seen to be 6.6% longer than that of B.

These global results already shed light on the nature of the differences between the Alexandrian and the «Western» traditions. They tend to tell a somewhat different story about the state of the text of Acts from that traditionally presented. The two texts are often referred to as the «short text» and the «long text», as if the greater length of the «Western» text were the most remarkable feature which distinguished it from the Alexandrian text. This idea is bolstered by figures given by F.G. Kenyon who compared the text of Westcott and Hort (Alexandrian) with that of A.C. Clark (Western) and found the latter to be 8.5% longer. Kenyon's figure has generously been rounded up to 10% in more recent publications such as Metzger's Textual Commentary that accompanies the UBS edition of the Greek New Testament.³ When the two MSS selected for this study were examined exhaustively, it was found that the difference in the overall number of words in D compared with B is much less than 10% and that, as

Cantabrigiensis (repr.) Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978. This edition is now out of print but Scrivener's transcription of the Greek side of Codex Bezae has been reproduced in a new edition by A. AMMASSARI, *Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis*, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996. The text of Codex Vaticanus is available in J.H. Ropes' «The Text of Acts», vol III of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, F.J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake eds., London: Macmillan, 1926. Eberhardt Nestle's collation of Codex Bezae against Tischendorf's edition of the Greek New Testament (*Novi Testamenti Graeci. Supplementum editionibus de Gerhardt Tischendorfianis. Codicis Cantabrigiensis Collatio*, Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1896) is a valuable aid for checking variant readings.

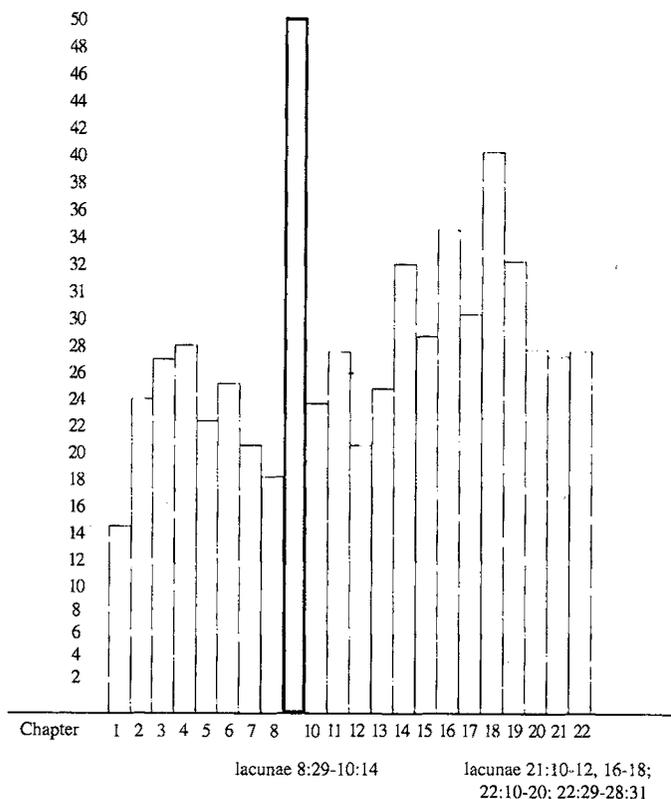
3. B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London/New York: UBS, 1975, p. 260, where reference is made to Kenyon's calculations. In contrast, W.A. STRANGE (*The Problem of the Text of Acts*, Cambridge: CUP, 1985, p. 213) makes a more rigorous comparison between the MS traditions by setting the number of words in D05 (which he counts as 14,062 rather than our 13,904) against the number of words in the N-A²⁶ text as the Alexandrian base (mostly a combination of S01 and B03), given as 13,236. On Strange's figures, the difference in length is 6.24%, which again is considerably less than Metzger's 10%.

we shall see in #II, there are other types of variation than those of addition/omission which means that difference in length is only one aspect of a more complex state of affairs. The use of the terms «longer» and «shorter» to describe the two texts can, in consequence, be somewhat misleading although it may be convenient when referring to specific units of variation.

Our next step is to see how this variation is distributed across the chapters of the book of Acts. For this analysis, the number of variant words in each chapter of D was counted and compared with the total number of words in the chapter, and then the relationship between the two figures was expressed as a percentage. The block graph of Table 2 clearly displays the quantity of variation in each chapter (the figures on which it is based can be found in the right hand column of the final line of Table 4, #II).

TABLE 2
A comparison of the quantity of variation in each chapter

Percentage of
variant words



From Table 2 it can be seen that there is a general difference in the proportion of text affected by variation between the two halves of the book of Acts. The opening chapter of Acts has the lowest proportion of variation, following which the figure climbs to a first peak at chapter 4. The highest figures correspond to the journeys of Paul in chapters 14-19. At chapter 20, the level drops once more and appears to even out, but unfortunately what can be inferred from the change at this point is rendered uncertain by the absence of the final eight chapters of the book. The figures for chapters with lacunae may possibly have been different if the entire chapter could have been taken into account, but this would not necessarily be the case since those figures given are restricted to calculations based on the extant Bezan material.

The reasons for the fluctuation in the amount of variation may have something to do with the subject matter of the individual chapters. For the most part, a detailed exegetical comparison of the texts is necessary to establish in what way the number of variant readings reflects the difficult or sensitive nature, for example, of particular passages. Another possibility which can be more easily determined from a numerical count is that there may be significant differences in the amount of variation contained in the apostolic or missionary speeches. A way to explore this possibility is to separate the variation in speech in each chapter from the variation which occurs in the narrative. For this purpose, the tables in #III display a comparison of the proportion of variation in speech and in narrative. It is also worth noting that variation is often concentrated in the introductions to new episodes or in the transitions between episodes which transmit the narrator's comments and evaluation. Variation at these points is frequently complex and is of such a nature as to suggest differences in the viewpoint and the purpose of the author of each text.

II. CATEGORIES OF VARIATION

Within the total amount of variation, four categories can be identified which help to break down the large number of words into something more workable.⁴ Although for practical purposes the categories take Codex Bezae as

4. M. WILCOX («Luke and the Bezan Text of Acts» in J. Kremer ed., *Les Actes des Apôtres: tradition, rédaction, théologie*, Gembloux: Leuven University Press, 1979, pp. 447-55) also identifies four categories which correspond to some extent to the four which we have identified here. Wilcox divides the variant readings into: *a*) additions *b*) omissions *c*) substitutions and *d*) alterations to sense. In this grouping, our category of word order change is included either in category *c*) as a substitution or in category *d*) as an alteration to sense, according to whether the alteration in word order affects the meaning or does not. The problem with this sub-division is that it is often not apparent which variants do or do not affect the meaning until the whole passage in which they are found is analysed both linguistically and exegetically, and even then some of the decisions are necessarily tentative.

their starting point, that is a pragmatic decision which is not intended to be a statement about the primary or secondary nature of one text or the other. The four categories are:

1. Additional – present in D, absent in B
2. Alternative – same material in a different form
3. Word order – same words in a different order
4. Omitted – absent in D, present in B

The first category of variants represents material (which can be anything from a definite article to several verses) which is found in Codex Bezae but not in Codex Vaticanus.

The second category is more diverse. It groups together words, phrases or sentences which are present in both texts but not in identical form. The difference may be lexical (synonyms are used) or grammatical (e.g. tense or number vary) or syntactical (the sentence is constructed differently). The only variation in this category which was disregarded when it came to the actual count of words, was spelling differences which are purely orthographical and can have no possible effect on the meaning of the word. These include changes of vowel/diphthongs and single/double consonants which may reflect regional or historical differences of pronunciation.⁵ They do not include the variation in the spelling of the city of Jerusalem since the difference in that case is more than one of pronunciation, involving a choice between a Hellenistic and a Hebrew-derived form.

Occasionally, it is the alternative syntax which produces a different number of words (e.g. πρὸς αὐτόν/αὐτῷ). In such cases, the additional words are not included in the count of words in Categories 1 or 4 because they do not properly constitute supplementary material.

The third category is specific to variation in word order, where identical words are used but in a different order. Where alternative words (Category 2) are found in a different place in the sentence (Category 3), such words are counted for both categories, unless the change in the position of the words is due to a grammatical constraint (e.g. καί occupies first place in a clause, whereas the alternative conjunction δέ cannot do so).

5. J.H. MOULTON, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol II, Edinburgh: T+T Clark, 1929, pp. 40-46, gives a summary of the shifts which occurred in pronunciation in the first centuries AD. He essentially finds that there was a great deal of fluidity and that the situation varied very much according to locality as much as to social class, the same class adopting different standards at different periods. His conclusion is that «A history of Greek pronunciation in the Hellenistic period is greatly needed, showing both when and where the various developments first appeared... Such a history would have an important bearing on textual questions» (p. 46). Although among the manuscripts generally there is a great deal of variation and inconsistency, a fair degree of regularity can be observed within the text of Acts in Codex Bezae itself with regard to

The final category consists of material found in B but not in D, so creating a category the reverse of the first.

Table 3 shows the amount of variation for each category as it is found in the whole of the extant text of D.

TABLE 3

The distribution of categories of variation between D and B

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>VII</i>	1448	1352	263	579	3642
%	39.7	37.1	7.2	16	100

The highest percentage of variation is accounted for by additional words in D. It is important to note, however, that the amount of variation brought about by alternative forms is almost as high. Word order variation is comparatively small but the reasons for its occurrence need to be carefully studied, looking to see how the variation corresponds to the diverse word order of the text where there are no variant readings.⁶ Words omitted by the Bezan text represent a considerable proportion of variation, showing that the portrayal of D as an expanded text is somewhat simplistic.

From Table 3 it is possible to obtain a general idea of the distribution of the types of variation in the book of Acts. It is interesting to see if the variation is evenly spread throughout the chapters or whether, on the contrary, it tends to cluster around certain points. The next table, Table 4, sets out the figures for each chapter of Codex Bezae. Against the chapter number, the total number of words in that chapter is given. The first line of the breakdown of figures then displays the number of variant words in each of the four categories which add up to the total number of variant words in the fifth column (cf. Table 3). The middle line expresses the relationship between each category of variant reading as a percentage of the total number of variant words. This allows the changes in the proportion of each type of variation which occur from chapter to chapter to be observed. The last line expresses the number of variant words as a percentage of the overall number of words in the chapter. Thus, the figures displayed in the right hand column of the final line are those used to construct the chart of Table 2.

such things as reading ετ for ε, υ for οι, ν for υν. Given the unusual extent of consistency, a history of pronunciation could potentially be of value for determining with some precision the date of the Bezan text.

6. The problems of word order and the particular variants which involve the word order of the noun phrase have been examined in my article, «Word Order in Koine Greek Using a Text-Critical Approach to Study Word Order Patterns in the Greek Text of Acts», *Fil Neo* IX/18, 1996, pp. 139-180.

TABLE 4

A breakdown by chapter of the distribution of categories of variation between D and B

Chapter 1. Total text: 540 words

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	31	28	6	14	79
% of <i>vll</i>	39.25	35.4	7.6	17.75	100
% of total text	5.8	5.1	1.1	2.6	14.6

Chapter 2. Total text: 839

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	60	76	16	49	201
% of <i>vll</i>	29.8	37.8	8.0	24.4	100
% of total text	7.2	9.1	1.9	5.8	24.0

Chapter 3. Total text: 501

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	56	49	7	24	136
% of <i>vll</i>	41.2	36	5.2	17.6	100
% of total text	11.2	9.8	2.0	5.0	27.0

Chapter 4. Total text: 498

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	53	49	9	30	141
% of <i>vll</i>	37.6	34.8	6.4	21.2	100
% of total text	10.6	9.9	1.8	6.0	28.3

Chapter 5. Total text: 831

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	82	54	21	28	185
% of <i>vll</i>	44.3	29.2	11.4	15.1	100
% of total text	9.8	6.8	2.5	3.3	22.4

Chapter 6. Total text: 317

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	50	19	5	6	80
% of <i>vll</i>	62.5	23.8	6.2	7.5	100
% of total text	15.8	6.0	1.8	1.8	25.2

Chapter 7. Total text: 989

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	68	98	17	22	205
% of <i>vll</i>	33.2	47.8	8.3	10.7	100
% of total text	6.9	9.9	1.7	2.2	20.7

Chapter 8. Total text: 480

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	31	33	7	16	87
% of <i>vll</i>	35.6	37.9	8.1	18.4	100
% of total text	6.5	6.8	1.5	3.3	18.1

Chapter 10. Total text: 667

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	67	58	15	20	160
% of <i>vll</i>	41.9	36.2	9.4	12.5	100
% of total text	10	8.7	2.2	3.0	23.9

Chapter 11. Total text: 591

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	71	57	6	29	163
% of <i>vll</i>	43.5	35.0	3.7	17.8	100
% of total text	12.1	9.6	1.0	4.9	27.6

Chapter 12. Total text: 556

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	50	42	12	11	115
% of <i>vll</i>	43.5	36.5	10.4	9.6	100
% of total text	9.0	7.6	2.1	2.0	20.7

Chapter 13. Total text: 1008

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	112	90	13	36	251
% of <i>vll</i>	44.6	35.9	5.2	14.3	100
% of total text	11.1	8.9	1.3	3.6	24.9

Chapter 14. Total text: 542

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	85	60	9	20	174
% of <i>vll</i>	48.9	34.5	5.1	11.5	100
% of total text	15.7	11.0	1.7	3.6	32.0

Chapter 15. Total text: 784

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	114	69	15	27	225
% of <i>vll</i>	50.7	30.7	6.6	12	100
% of total text	14.5	8.8	1.9	3.5	28.7

Chapter 16. Total text: 793

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	129	89	20	36	274
% of <i>vll</i>	47.1	32.5	7.3	13.1	100
% of total text	16.3	11.2	2.5	4.6	34.6

Chapter 17. Total text: 696

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	59	80	22	49	210
% of <i>vll</i>	28.1	38	10.5	23.4	100
% of total text	8.5	11.5	3.2	7.0	30.2

Chapter 18. Total text: 579

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	111	66	19	37	233
% of <i>vll</i>	47.6	28.3	8.2	15.9	100
% of total text	19.1	11.4	3.3	6.4	40.2

Chapter 19. Total text: 808

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	98	107	17	38	260
% of <i>vll</i>	37.7	41.2	6.5	14.6	100
% of total text	12.2	13.2	2.1	4.7	32.2

Chapter 20. Total text: 712

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	62	96	9	31	198
% of <i>vll</i>	31.3	48.5	4.5	15.7	100
% of total text	8.7	13.5	1.3	4.3	27.8

Chapter 21. Total text: 628

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	46	82	7	36	171
% of <i>vll</i>	26.9	48	4	21.1	100
% of total text	7.3	13.0	1.1	5.8	27.2

Chapter 22. Total text: 345

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Vll</i>	13	50	11	21	95
% of <i>vll</i>	13.7	52.6	11.6	22.1	100
% of total text	3.8	14.5	3.2	6.0	27.5

When a comparison is made of the distribution of the four types of variation in each chapter, some interesting facts emerge, for it is now possible to consider the fluctuation in the quantity of variation in each chapter (displayed in Table 2) in the light of the figures given here in Table 4. The category of va-

riation which contributes least to the fluctuation can be seen to be that of variation in Word Order: the proportion of the total text affected by variation in the order of words is typically between 1% and 2.5% of words in a chapter, except in chapters 17, 18 and 22 where it rises above 3%. In other words, Word Order variation is constantly a minimal factor in the difference between Codex Bezae and Codex Vaticanus.

The range of variation represented by Omitted material is a little greater (1.8%–7%). Of the chapters where the figure for this category is particularly high (2,3,4,17,18,21 and 22), three (17,18 and 22) are the ones which have just been noted as having exceptionally high figures for Word Order variation. Some chapters also show a peak for overall variation in Table 2 (3,4,18). What these associations might mean cannot be deduced without further examination of the contents of the chapters in question, and of the combination of the particular variants.

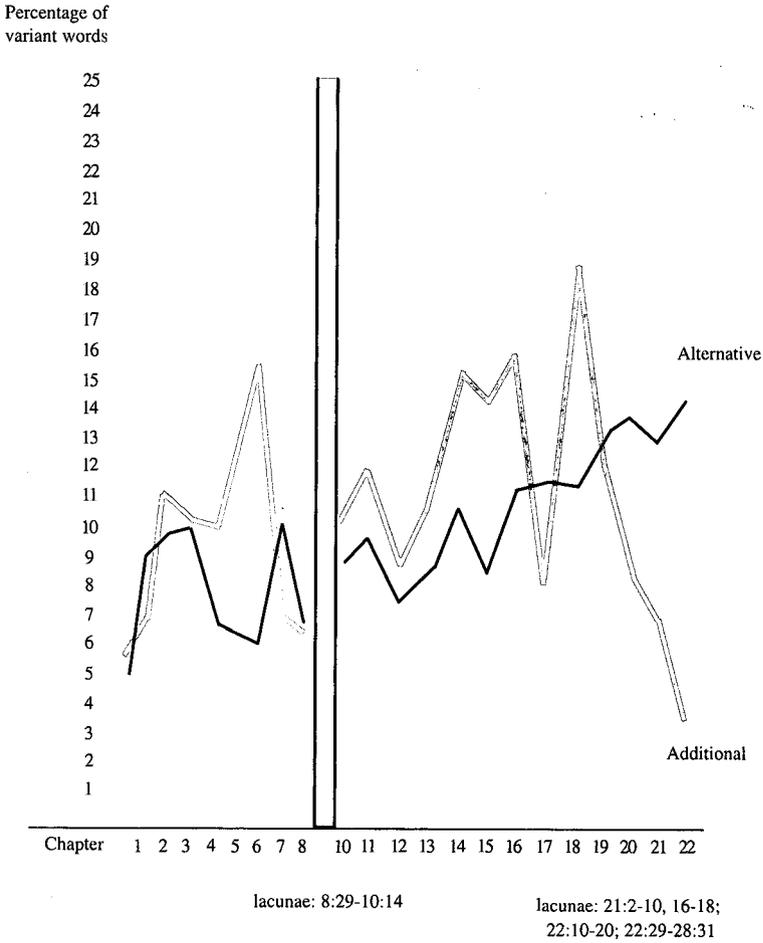
Most telling is the information about the Additional and Alternative material. On the one hand, both categories show their highest figures in the second part of the book from chapter 14 onwards. On the other hand, the category of Alternative material can be seen to dominate the picture in this latter part of the book first in chapter 17 and then more consistently as the category of Additional material drops away after a peak in chapter 18. The phenomenon may well have something to do with the subject matter of the latter chapters which move on from Paul's missionary activity to focus on his journey to Jerusalem and his relations with the churches. Again, a detailed consideration of the variant readings would be necessary to shed further light on the reasons for the change in the pattern of the types of variation in these chapters.

The change in pattern may, however, be a clue to account for another matter. In his study of the manuscript of Codex Bezae, D.C. Parker made some suggestions about the original contents and length of the manuscript.⁷ He noted that if Acts were the final book of the codex, then the end chapters of the text of Acts which have been lost from Codex Bezae must have been «very compressed» if they were to fit into the number of leaves which he calculated as missing. If those final chapters continued to contain relatively less additional material than those up to chapter 18, and if they also maintained a high figure for omitted material, this could perhaps account for the latter chapters of Acts taking up rather fewer leaves than could be expected from a projection based on the average number of leaves taken up by the other chapters.

In the following table, Table 5, the figures which indicate the percentage of the total text of each chapter represented by the Additional and the Alternative material (i.e. given in the last line of Table 4) are displayed in graph form in order to show the shift more clearly.

7. D.C. PARKER, *Codex Bezae*, Cambridge: CUP, 1992, p. 8.

TABLE 5
A comparison of the distribution of additional and alternative material



III. NARRATIVE TEXT COMPARED WITH DIRECT SPEECH

It is useful to consider the narrative discourse, which makes up the majority of the text of Acts, separately from the portions in direct speech in order to examine if there is any difference in the amount of variation by which the two types of discourse have been affected during the transmission of the text. «Direct speech» includes, of course, the apostolic speeches but also, without distinction, any other exchanges or utterances which are recorded in Acts.

Table 6 takes the figures of Table 3 and subdivides them to show the distribution of variation for narrative and speech. The analysis does not show at this point what proportion of each kind of text is affected by variation; this will follow in Table 7. The aim here is only to indicate the distribution of the four different categories of variation in narrative text and in speeches.

TABLE 6

The distribution of types of variation in narrative and in speech

	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Word Order</u>	<u>Omitted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Narrative</u>					
<i>Vll</i>	960	797	150	341	2248
% of <i>vll</i>	42.7	35.5	6.7	15.1	100
<u>Speech</u>					
<i>Vll</i>	488	555	113	238	1394
% of <i>vll</i>	35.0	39.8	8.1	17.1	100
					<u>Overall total</u>
					3642 <i>Vll</i>

Overall, the greater proportion of Additional material is found in the narrative text. In contrast, there is more Alternative material in the speeches. The proportion of variant readings represented by Word Order variation and Omitted material is likewise slightly higher in the speeches than in the narrative sections of the text.

To complete the comparison of narrative text with direct speech, the fluctuation across the chapters shown in Table 2 can now be broken down to distinguish between the two types of discourse and to compare the relative amount of variation in them. Table 7 sets out the figures for each chapter, showing the quantity of variation found in a) narrative b) speech, and expressing the number of variant words in each case as a percentage of the total number of words of narrative text and speech respectively.

TABLE 7

The quantity of variation in narrative compared with the quantity of variation in speech, by chapter

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Narrative</u>		<u>Speech</u>	
	<u>Total no. of words</u>	<u>% of <i>Vll</i></u>	<u>Total no. of words</u>	<u>% of <i>Vll</i></u>
1.	259	17.7	281	11.7
2.	312	29.2	527	20.9
3.	195	38.0	306	20.3
4.	208	46.6	290	15.2

Chapter	Narrative		Speech	
	Total no. of words	% of <i>Vll</i>	Total no. of words	% of <i>Vll</i>
5.	448	22.8	383	21.7
6.	225	28.4	92	17.4
7.	86	19.8	903	20.8
8.	364	17.9	116	19.0
10.	223	31.4	444	20.3
11.	320	36.6	271	17.0
12.	493	22.3	63	11.0
13.	433	23.1	575	26.3
14.	444	32.4	98	30.6
15.	389	35.0	395	22.5
16.	617	37.3	176	25.0
17.	394	35.0	302	23.8
18.	483	43.7	96	22.9
19.	548	36.0	260	24.2
20.	377	28.6	335	26.9
21.	366	28.1	262	26.0
22.	102	29.4	243	26.3

When the amount of variation in the narrative portions of the text is compared with that in the speeches, it becomes apparent that there is often markedly more variation in the narrative than in the speech portions of the text. Only in chapters 7, 8 and 13, where there is slightly more variation in the text of the direct speech, is the pattern reversed. Chapter 7 like chapter 13 is made up of an unusually large proportion of direct speech, in the mouths of Stephen and Paul respectively, but the percentage of these speeches affected by variation is not exceptional compared with the percentage of variation in speeches elsewhere. This means that the explanation for the disruption of the pattern in chapters 7 and 13 is not to be found in the presence there of key speeches. It is rather that in these chapters, as indeed in chapter 8 too, the narrative text is somewhat *less* affected by variation than is the narrative text on average in other chapters. The figures for the amount of variation in speech do not appear to be conditioned by the amount of speech in a chapter. Chapter 7, for example, with 903 words of direct speech has only an average 20.8% of variation; 63 words of speech in chapter 12 have 11% variation whereas 30.6% of the 98 words in chapter 14 have variant readings, the highest proportion of variation found in speech.

Table 7 can be studied alongside Table 2 where the overall fluctuation in the quantity of variation in each chapter is displayed in graph form. The exceptionally low amount of variation indicated there for chapter 1 can now be seen to be brought about by low figures for both narrative and speech portions of the chapter. This is also true of the dip at chapter 12. The troughs in chapters 7 and 8, on the other hand, are a reflection of a marked decrease in variant readings in the narrative portions of those chapters, as was noted in the previous para-

graph. Similarly, it is the quantity of variation in the narrative of chapters 4 and 18 which is responsible for the peaks of the graph in Table 2.

The increase in variation in the second part of the book, which is apparent from Table 2, begins at chapter 13 for the speech portions of the text. Indeed, the speeches in which Paul is involved, either as the speaker or as addressee, show considerably more variation than those involving other characters in the first half of the book. The figures for narrative variation, in contrast, rise sharply for chapters 10 and 11, but then fall for chapters 12 and 13. From chapter 14 onwards, the average figures of both narrative and speech variation remain higher in the second part. However, whereas the amount of variation in narrative tails away in the last three chapters, the amount of variation in speech rises at this point. This rise in speech variation is due especially to the increase in the number of variant readings involving Alternative material (cf. Table 5).

CONCLUSIONS

The usefulness of the analyses reproduced here, of the variation between the text of Acts in Codex Bezae and Codex Vaticanus, is that they make available precise information which enables the two texts to be compared with greater ease and also greater accuracy. At the same time, it is wise to acknowledge that there are certain limitations to the uses to which the information can be put. This is because the actual content of the variant readings needs to be examined in order to understand the reasons for their existence.

The fluctuation in the amount of variation from one chapter to another becomes apparent from a numerical count of variant words. The peaks and the troughs, however, do not have an obvious connection with the subject matter of the chapters. There is a drawback, in fact, in taking the chapter divisions as units for measuring quantity or type of variation, which is that it does not allow the uneven distribution of variation within a chapter to show up. It may, therefore, be more profitable to compare episodes rather than chapters. Yet even within episodes, the quantity of variation does not necessarily correspond to the importance of the variation. Peter's speech in chapter 1, for example, has little variation of any kind between the manuscripts but that which it has, is of much significance.⁸

8. The variant readings of the text of Acts are studied exhaustively in J. RIUS-CAMPS *Commentari als Fets dels Apòstols*, Barcelona: Herder, 1991-5. Peter's speech in Acts 1 is dealt with in Vol I, pp. 69-92. Cf. the shorter account in Spanish, *De Jerusalén a Antioquía. Génesis de la iglesia cristiana*, Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1989, pp. 47-58; and also «Las variantes de la Recension Occidental de los hechos de los Apóstoles (III)», *Fil Neo* VII/13, 1994, pp. 53-64. I have also written on this speech in «La tradition targumique et le Codex de Bèze: Actes 1:15-26» in *La Bíblia i el Mediterrani* Vol II, eds. A. Borrell, A. de la Fuente and A. Puig, Montserrat: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1997, pp. 171-80; and «Barnabas in Acts: A Study of His Role in the Text of Codex Bezae» in JSNT forthcoming.

Furthermore, as already noted above, variant readings are often found in clusters at crucial points in an episode, notably at the beginning or the end.

More precise information is derived from the grouping of the variant readings in different categories. This presentation shows that the designations «long» and «short» to describe the chief differences between the two textual traditions of Acts are too simplistic when applied to particular manuscript representatives of the different traditions. Not only is there a fair amount of omitted material from some passages of the Bezan text of Acts, notably in certain speeches, but there are other types of variant readings which do not involve a difference in the number of words. It is rather the order of the words, or the choice of vocabulary or grammatical form, which differs.

From the further breakdown of the text of Acts into direct speech and narrative discourse, it emerges that there is less overall variation in the speeches than in the narrative. Moreover, since the figures for the amount of variation in direct speech are contained within a relatively narrow range, it is the variation within the narrative text which is chiefly responsible for the fluctuation in the quantity of variation between the chapters.

The analyses presented here belong to the preliminary stages of comparing the manuscript traditions of Acts. They prepare the ground for proceeding to a linguistic and exegetical comparison which seeks to understand the reason for the variation and to discern the inner coherence of each text. For that larger, and inevitably slower, task, it will be important to consider each text as one standing in its own right, in which the variant readings are viewed no longer as separate and random entities but as parts of larger units of variation.⁹ Such a perspective will allow each of the two texts to speak for itself and to reveal its own distinctive message.

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9. Exactly what constitutes a unit of variation in textual criticism requires careful definition. E.C. COLWELL, *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden: Brill, 1969, discusses the span of a variation unit which he defined as «those elements of expression in the Greek text which regularly go together» (pp. 97-9). The difficulty with this definition is that it is now clear from recent developments in the field of linguistics that there are strong bonds between elements on a much larger scale than was previously thought and it can no longer be maintained that only elements within the same clause or sentence «go together». In practice, many contemporary textual critics tend to adopt an eclectic approach to the manuscripts and to treat each individual instance of variation as independent of another even though there are others which occur in close proximity. Such an approach often has the effect of obscuring the intention of variant readings, making them appear to be gratuitous. When variant readings are, in contrast, studied in the context of neighbouring variant readings within the same speech or episode, it is frequently the case that their function becomes clear as they are seen to depend upon one another.

Resum

L'existència de dues formes del text dels Fets dels Apòstols és un fenomen textual del Nou Testament ben conegut. Tanmateix, pel que fa a la natura i la quantitat de variacions entre els dos textos, hi ha molts conceptes erronis. Aquest article s'esforça per aclarir la situació, utilitzant els manuscrits Bezae i Vaticanus. D'una banda, l'autora proposa una classificació dels diversos tipus de variants i, de l'altra, proporciona un recompte exacte de les paraules que no coincideixen en els manuscrits. Resulta que la pretesa llargada del text anomenat «occidental» no és tan important com hom es pensa i que les diferències principals amb el text alexandrí són sovint molt subtils i entrellaçades.