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P^{45} and the Problem of the 'Seventy(-two)': A Case for the Longer Reading in Luke 10.1 and 17

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At Luke 10.17, most modern critical editions incorrectly cite the wording of P^{45} as ἑβδομήκοντα δύο (72) instead of ἑβδομήκοντα (70). As this is one of the two oldest witnesses to the verse, this revision of external evidence calls for a fresh examination of the textual problem as a whole. Previous discussions have focused almost exclusively on the perceived symbolic values of ἑβδομήκοντα (+ δύο) to identify the 'more Lukan' wording, but this essay argues on the basis of new transcriptional evidence that the earlier reading is more likely ἑβδομήκοντα δύο.

Keywords: textual criticism, numerals, Chester Beatty Papyri, Bruce M. Metzger

> Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα °[δύο] ... (Luke 10.1)
> Ὑπέστρεψαν δὲ οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα °[δύο] ... (Luke 10.17)

1. Introduction

I recently had the privilege of examining several folios of P^{45} at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.[1] This first-hand inspection confirmed my suspicion that most modern critical editions incorrectly cite the papyrus at Luke 10.17. In this uniquely Lukan passage manuscripts are evenly divided over whether Jesus sent out seventy or seventy-two disciples, an unresolved textual problem that occurs once in 10.1 and again 10.17. While the first instance in P^{45} is lost due to fragmentation, the second is visible although its unfavourable position at the deteriorated edge of the papyrus has caused some confusion. Personal examination

1 Thanks to Ms Fionnuala Croke, Director of the Chester Beatty Library, and her curatorial staff for granting direct access to P^{45}, and to Professor Larry Hurtado for organising the visit. I would also like to thank Professor Paul Foster, Elijah Hixson and Jesse Grenz for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this paper.

verified that, contrary to the presentation of standard critical texts, P^{45} should be listed in support of ἑβδομήκοντα (70) rather than ἑβδομήκοντα δύο (72) – an error that has been observed by others but never sufficiently rectified.

As P^{45} is possibly the earliest extant witness to the passage, this revision of evidence invites a renewed look at the textual problem. Previous attempts to work out this 'insolvable' problem have relied almost exclusively on appeals to the perceived symbolic meaning(s) of the numeral(s), mostly drawn from traditions in the Jewish Bible. Unsurprisingly, this approach has only led to an impasse. Both seventy and seventy-two have numerous possible symbolic meanings that could have motivated the evangelist to use them in Luke 10, and simply choosing one over another as 'the more Lukan' seems hopelessly unprovable. In spite of the obvious limitations of this reliance upon numerical symbolism, little reflection has been given to other, more promising, paths of research. Specifically, no serious consideration has been given to the scribal techniques of number writing and, in particular, the transcriptional factors that led copyists to alter numerals.[2]

In a brief treatment of this variation unit, Bruce M. Metzger remarked on the transcriptional probabilities involved in the problem and saw no hope of a resolution:

> The factors bearing upon the evaluation of internal evidence, whether involving transcriptional or intrinsic probabilities, are singularly elusive. It is likely that in most of the early manuscripts (as in P^{45} and P^{75}) the numeral was written with letters of the alphabet (either ο̄β̄ or ο̄). It was easy, therefore, for either number to be accidentally altered to the other.[3]

Yet is the matter really so simple? Were copyists equally as likely to mistake ο̄ for ο̄β̄ as they were to mistake ο̄β̄ for ο̄? The purpose of the present essay is to address this particular question and explore the transcriptional dynamics in greater detail. As we will see, a survey of related numeral corruptions in New Testament manuscripts reveals a clear tendency among scribes (or possibly readers) that favours one of these options over against the other. Accordingly, in what follows we will (1) point out the correct wording of P^{45} at Luke 10.17, (2) review previous attempts to solve the textual problem, and then (3) draw attention to a valuable body of transcriptional evidence that points in favour of ἑβδομήκοντα δύο as the earlier wording.

2 Throughout this paper, I refer to 'scribes' and 'copyists' as the primary agents who transmit and alter texts, but I am aware that readers, users and owners of texts were just as likely to introduce changes.

3 B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005[4]) 341. Earlier editions contain the same wording (e.g. the first edition (1964[1]) 244).

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2. The Witness of P45 at Luke 10.17

P45, or *P.Beatty* I, is an invaluable manuscript of the Gospels and Acts that is dated to the third century CE. Its precise wording at Luke 10.17, however, has been the epicentre of disagreement and substantial confusion. Two factors have undoubtedly contributed to, if not totally created, this problem: (1) the number is written as an alphabetic numeral (ο̄ or ο̄β̄) rather than a longhand word (ἑβδομήκοντα or ἑβδομήκοντα δύο),[4] and (2) it occurs at the very end of its line of text, right on the fragmentary edge of the papyrus leaf.

Frederic G. Kenyon's 1934 publication of P45 recorded the wording in question as ο̄β̄, Greek shorthand for ἑβδομήκοντα δύο (= 72),[5] and critical editions naturally followed suit.[6] In 1953, however, papyrologist Colin H. Roberts saw a different value and proposed that the actual wording was ο̄ϛ̄ (= 76), the latter character being a stigma or digamma – an obsolete letter still used in Koine Greek as the number 'six'.[7] (I know of no critical editions that cite P45 to this effect.) Yet a third value was seen in 1959 by Bruce M. Metzger, who corrected both previous proposals in an essay on the textual problem as a whole. In his own words,

> [t]he present writer has examined this passage in P45 under natural and artificial light, and has assured himself that the Greek character which follows the letter omicron (standing for '70') is neither β, as Kenyon supposed, nor ϛ, as Roberts thinks, but merely the *diplé*, or space-filler (>), which scribes would use occasionally in order to bring an otherwise short line even with the right-hand margin of the column. In fact, by consulting Kenyon's volume of Plates of P45 anyone can see the similarity between the disputed character and the *diplé* which appears on the same folio near the top of the column.[8]

Indeed, Kenyon's edition of plates is sufficiently clear for one to observe the similarity between the character in question (fol. 11v, l. 20) and the line-fillers that occur on the same page (10.8, fol. 11v, l. 5; see Figures 1 and 2) and the one prior (9.56 and 58, fol. 10v, ll. 19 and 23).[9] Further, the nearby word καταβιβασθηση contains two betas that can be used for comparison, and there

4 For more on Greek numerical shorthand, see E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, rev. edn 1987) 15–16.

5 F. G. Kenyon, ed., *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, vol. II: *The Gospels and Acts: Text* (London: Emery Walker, 1933); and for plates, F. G. Kenyon, ed., *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, vol. II: *The Gospels and Acts: Plates* (London: Emery Walker, 1934).

6 For example, the apparatuses of Nestle[22] (1956) and Souter[2] (1947).

7 C. H. Roberts, 'An Early Papyrus of the First Gospel', *HTR* 46 (1953) 233–7, at 236 n. 14. It is worth noting that, in antiquity, this character was referred to as a γαβέξ/γαμέχ.

8 B. M. Metzger, 'Seventy or Seventy-two?', *NTS* 5 (1959) 299–306, at 299, reprinted in *idem, Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (NTTS 8; Leiden: Brill, 1968) 67–76, at 67–8.

9 The designations of recto and verso follow those given in Kenyon's publications.

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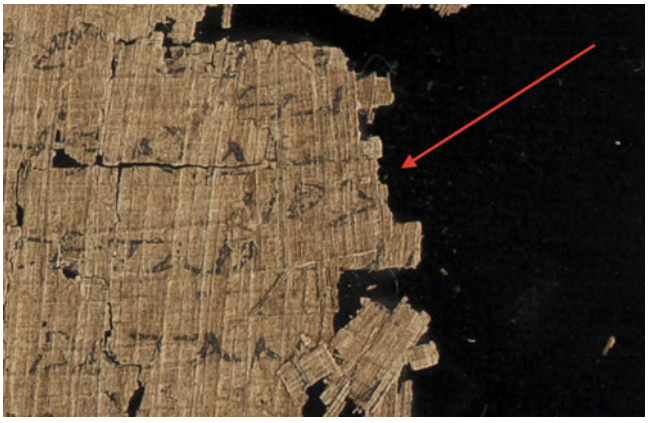

Figure 1. Luke 10.17 in P^{45} (fol. 11v, l. 20). © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Photographed by CSNTM.

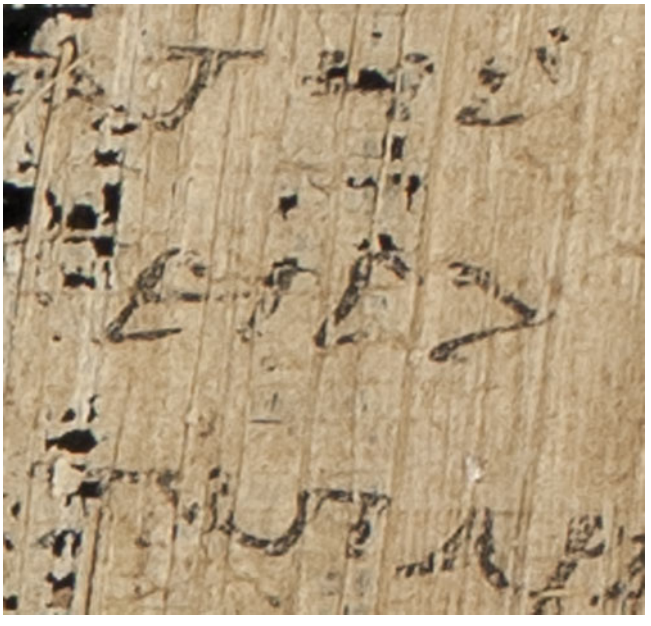

Figure 2. Comparative line-filler (fol. 11v, l. 5). © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Photographed by CSNTM.

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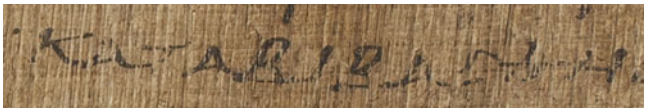

Figure 3. Comparative betas (fol. 11v, l. 18). © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Photographed by CSNTM.

is very little likeness between these betas and the second character (10.16; see Figure 3).[10] Roberts' suggestion of stigma/digamma is equally untenable; this reading is otherwise unattested among other witnesses, and the character itself bears no real resemblance to a stigma/digamma (ϛ or c versus >).[11] Other scholars have since affirmed Metzger's solution of ο̄ followed by a diple.[12] After personally inspecting the folio with all three options in mind, I too am persuaded that Metzger's proposal is by far the most likely. (In addition to the figures included here, digital images of the papyrus are now available online and may also be consulted.)[13]

Metzger's proposal of ο̄/70 appeared to win the day. Beginning with the Nestle[24] (1960), P45 was moved to support the shorter reading, ἑβδομήκοντα, and Metzger in fact took personal credit for this change.[14] Yet this victory was short lived. For reasons not entirely obvious, in NA[26] (1979) and UBS[3] (1975) P45 found its way back in support of the longer reading, ἑβδομήκοντα δύο. And so it has remained up to the present in the NA[28] (2012) and UBS[5] (2012), albeit with the added note of caution 'vid' (= *ut videtur*, 'seemingly').[15] Other

10 One question that remains is why the line-filler has a supralinear stroke above, the signature indicator of an abbreviation. However, it is not uncommon for the scribe to extend the supralinear stroke far beyond *nomina sacra* contractions and over the following letters. See e.g. θῡτ (Mark 7.9, fol. 5v), θῡ ῑ̈ (John 11.4, fol. 16v), π̄νι ε̄ (Acts 16.18, fol. 29v), etc.

11 The stigma/digamma was not differentiated from the lunate sigma (c) in manuscripts such as P47 and P115.

12 See J. Verheyden, 'How Many Were Sent according to Lk 10,1?', *Luke and his Readers: Festschrift A. Denaux* (ed. R. Bieringer *et al.*; BETL 182; Leuven: Leuven University, 2005) 193–238, at 201–2. Also, this is upheld in the most recent edition of Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 340–1 n. 65.

13 See the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts website (http://csntm.org/) and that of the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/).

14 Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 340–1 n. 65. No changes were made in NA[25] (1963), UBS[1] (1966) or UBS[2] (1968).

15 Intervening editions show no difference here: NA[27] (1993), UBS[3 Corr] (1983) and UBS[4] (1993). However, this change was not made in the IGNTP volume of Luke, published a few years later; American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project, eds., *The New Testament in Greek: The Gospel according to St. Luke* (2 parts; Oxford: Clarendon, 1984–7) Part I, 227.

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modern editions such as Hodges–Farstad (1982) reflect this curious revision. It is not clear why the witness of P^{45} was (again) reversed, but we have reason to believe that its presence there is problematic and misleading – the 'vid' notwithstanding.

3. The External Evidence

Identifying the erroneous citation of one of the two earliest witnesses leads naturally to a reconsideration of the textual problem of the seventy(-two). To date, no consensus has been reached about the preferred wording, and when scholars do opt for one over the other rarely is it asserted with confidence. This is largely due to the fact that the external testimony for this variation unit is balanced. After revising the wording of P^{45}, the Greek and versional evidence is presented in the NA^{28} at Luke 10.17 in the following way:

> ἑβδομήκοντα δύο: P^{75} B D lat $sy^{s.h}$ sa bo^{ms}
> ἑβδομήκοντα: P^{45} א A C K L N W Γ Δ Θ Ξ Ψ 0115 $f^{1.\ 13}$ 33 565 579 700 892 1241 1424 2542 𝔐 f i q $sy^{c.p}$ bo

Although the shorter reading is backed by several early manuscripts and the majority of witnesses, any reading supported simultaneously by P^{75}, B and D (plus some versions) is typically given special consideration by most text critics. On the other hand, however, the support for the shorter reading is also early and widespread (e.g. א, A, C). This arrangement of witnesses led the editorial committee of the *Greek New Testament* to conclude that 'the external evidence is almost evenly divided'.[16]

Evidence from the Church Fathers provides valuable context for the present discussion, and, at the same time, introduces many of the difficulties specific to this variation unit.[17] One important caveat is that most of these Fathers attest to an awareness of a tradition involving 'seventy' or 'seventy-two' followers of Jesus, but few of the citations that follow are direct quotations of or comments on Luke 10.1/17 itself (which perhaps explains the relatively modest list given in NA^{28}: Ir^{lat}, Cl, Or, Ad). Further, no patristic writers seem to acknowledge the existence of the textual problem at this point. That said, both 'seventy' and 'seventy-two' appear in patristic sources as early as the second century (the following examines Fathers cited in editions at both 10.1 and 10.17).

To begin with, both IGNTP and UBS^5 list Marcion as a witness to 'seventy', an inference made from Tertullian's statement in *Adversus Marcionem*, in which he

16 B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1994²) 126.

17 For more discussion on patristic sources, see Metzger, 'Seventy or Seventy-two?', 300–2.

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suggests the following: *adlegit et alios septuaginta apostolos super duodecim. quo enim duodecim secundum totidem fontes in Elim, si non et septuaginta secundum totidem arbusta palmarum?*[18] Tertullian here draws an interesting parallel between the Old and New Testaments: just as Jesus chose twelve disciples and seventy others, the nation of Israel was led out to Elim – where they found twelve fountains and seventy palm trees (Exod 15.27; Num 33.9). While this passage does make clear that Tertullian is a witness to 'seventy', it is nonetheless difficult to ascertain the degree to which this represents the text of Marcion, and so caution ought to be exercised here.[19]

Irenaeus is also cited as a witness to 'seventy', since on two occasions he makes reference to 'the seventy others' in addition to the twelve disciples.[20] These references have, however, come down to us in Latin translation (hence Ir^{lat}). Finally, UBS^5 lists the Diatessaron as a witness to 'seventy-two'. Evidence for this comes from the commentary by Ephrem, which twice makes reference to the 'seventy-two' others (*Comm.* 5.18; 14.14), though both references appear in contexts other than the pericope in question. In his comment on Luke 10 itself, Ephrem simply states that the followers were sent 'two-by-two' without further specification.[21]

Turning to third-century witnesses, Clement at one point quotes a passage from the Epistle of Barnabas and parenthetically refers to that author as ὃ δὲ τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα, or 'one of the seventy'.[22] Tertullian also, as mentioned above, makes a reference to 'the seventy' in addition to the twelve apostles, and suggests the connection to the seventy palms at Elim. In the writings of Origen, we find evidence of both 'seventy' and 'seventy-two'. In two separate passages (extant only in Latin), Origen draws the very same parallel cited by Tertullian:

18 *Marc.* 4.24.1. E. Evans, ed., *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) II.390: 'He chooses other seventy apostles also, over above the twelve: for to what purpose twelve, after that number of wells in Elim, without adding seventy, after that number of palm-trees?'

19 For the text of Marcion, see D. T. Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel* (NTTSD 49; Leiden: Brill, 2015) 215–17, who gives the following reconstruction: ἀνέδειξεν … ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα … ἀπέστειλεν … εἰς … πόλιν.

20 *Haer.* 2.21.1; 3.13.2.

21 *Comm.* 8.1a. For the text, see L. Leloir, ed., *Saint Éphrem: commentaire de l'évangile concordant texte syriaque (manuscrit Chester Beatty 709)* (Chester Beatty Monographs 8; Leuven: Peeters, 1963; repr. 1990). Additional confirmation is found in Codex Fuldensis (sixth century), the earliest Latin witness to a text thought to be related to the Diatessaron, which reads *LXX duos* (Luke 10.1) and *septuaginta duo* (10.17). For the text, see E. Ranke, ed., *Codex Fuldensis* (Marburg etc.: Elwert, 1868) 66, and for images, see http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325289808/1/ (at fol. 64r).

22 *Strom.* 2.20.116; GCS 15.176.

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the seventy palms at Elim are mirrored by the seventy in Luke.[23] Elsewhere, however, Origen is a witness to 'seventy-two'. In his commentary on Romans (also dependent on Latin translation), he proposes that Paul's description of Adronicus and Junia – *nobiles in apostolic* – probably meant that they were *ex illis septuaginta duobus*.[24]

UBS[5] also lists Hippolytus[arab] as support for 'seventy', though this must be qualified sufficiently. 'Hippolytus[arab]' here refers to a collection of fragments of an Arabic commentary on the Pentateuch, mediated through a Syriac translation of an original Greek, and not certainly from the hand of Hippolytus himself. One of these fragments mentions that the 'seventy evangelists' spent forty days preaching in the same way in which the Israelite spies sent into Canaan spent forty days scouting out the land (Num 13.25).[25]

Regarding patristic sources from the fourth and fifth centuries, those witnessing to 'seventy-two' are Adamantius,[26] Apostolic Constitutions,[27] Ambrosiaster[28] and Augustine.[29] Somewhat more numerous are witnesses to 'seventy': Eusebius,[30] Basil of Caesarea,[31] Cyril of Alexandria[32] (who makes a connection with the seventy elders chosen by Moses in Exod 24.1), Theodoret,[33] Ambrose[34] and Jerome.[35] Finally, we should note John Chrysostom, who, though listed by UBS[5] as a witness to 'seventy', actually attests both readings.[36]

23 *Hom. Exod.* 7.3; *Hom. Num.* 27.11.1. Actually, Rufinus' Latin translation of *Hom. Num.* 27.11.1 is inconsistent on this point: *ubi sunt duodecim fontes aquarum et septuaginta duae arbores palmarum … sed et alios septuaginta … sed et alio septuaginta*. Due to (a) the fact that the LXX text of Numbers here is consistent with the value 'seventy' (as far as we can ascertain), and (b) the near-verbatim similarity to the text in *Hom. Exod.* 7.3, it seems most likely that the first value is corrupt, and, here at least, Origen originally had *septuaginta*. For the text and further discussion, see SC 461.316 n. 2.

24 *Comm. Rom.* 10.21; PG 14.1280 (on Rom 16.7).

25 GCS 1/2.104–5.

26 *Adam. Dial.* 1.5; 2.12. For the text of books 1–2, see K. Tsutsui, ed., *Die Auseinandersetzung mit den Markioniten im Adamantios-Dialog: Ein Kommentar zu den Büchern I–II* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

27 *Const. ap.* 2.55.2.

28 *Comm. Rom.* 8.30; 9.13; *Comm. 1 Cor.* 12.31.

29 *Cons.* 2.23.54.

30 *Hist. eccl.* 1.10.5, 12.1, 13.4; 2.1.1; 3.24.5; *Dem. ev.* 3.2.24; 3.4.37.

31 *Mor.* 70.1.

32 *Hom. Luc.* on Luke 10.1–17 (TU 34/1.99–104).

33 *Quaest. in oct.* 49.110; *Quaest. in Psal.* 2.8.

34 *Exp. Luc.* 7.44 (at Luke 10.3).

35 *Epist.* 78.6.

36 An example of 'seventy': ἦσαν γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοι ἀπόστολοι, ὡς οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 38.4; PG 61.326 (on 1 Cor 15.7); see also *Hom. Matt.* 38.1; *Hom. Jo.* 85.3; *Hom. Act.* 3.2). And of 'seventy-two': τί γὰρ ὄφελος ἐκ τοῦ μαθεῖν ἐκείνου τὴν προσηγορίαν, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα δύο λέγει τὰ ὀνόματα; (*Hom. Jo.* 18.3; PG 59.117 (on John 1.40)).

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In all, this survey of the patristic and manuscript evidence has shown that while both values have early and widespread support, 'seventy' seems to have 'enjoyed a somewhat wider currency than seventy-two'.[37] One further observation is also important: as early as Tertullian, the number of those sent by Jesus was frequently bound together with Old Testament traditions of the number 'seventy'. The number of Jesus' followers was not simply random; it was prefigured in the palm trees at Elim or in the elders chosen by Moses. As we will see, the perceived symbolic import of the numeral continues to loom large in most modern discussions of the textual problem.

4. Problematic Appeals to Numerical Symbolism

In attempts to decide between the two readings with such tightly balanced external support, scholars have relied almost completely upon considerations of the symbolic meanings of the two numbers. That is, it is presumed that the evangelist intended some figurative meaning in the sending of the seventy(-two), and one simply needs to identify the value that best expresses that symbolism to find the earlier wording.[38] This has, however, proven extremely difficult. Below I list some of the major occurrences of the numbers in Jewish tradition (though this is not exhaustive), first of 'seventy':[39]

- 70 nations descended from Noah (Genesis 10, Masoretic Text)
- 70 offspring of Jacob (Exod 1.5; Deut 10.22)
- 70 palms at Elim (Exod 15.27; Num 33.9)
- 70 elders chosen by Moses (Exod 24.1, 9–10; Num. 11.16, 24–5),
- 70 sons of Jerubbaal (Judg 9.2)
- 70 sons of King Ahab (2 Kings 10.1)
- 70 years of exile prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 25.11–12; 29.10)
- 70 priests of Bel (Bel and the Dragon 10),

and then of 'seventy-two':

- 72 nations descended from Noah (Genesis 10, LXX)
- 72 princes and nations of the world in *3 Enoch* (*3 Enoch* 17.8; 18.2–3; 30.2)
- 72 translators of the LXX (*Letter of Aristeas* 35–51)

37 Metzger, 'Seventy or Seventy-two?', 302.

38 Some doubt that Luke intended any symbolism in the numeral, but they nonetheless rely on considerations of symbolism to explain the rise of the variation; e.g. A. Prieur, *Die Verkündigung der Gottesherrschaft: Exegetische Studien zum lukanischen Verständnis von βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* (WUNT II/89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 212–20.

39 For many of the following examples (and more), see Metzger, 'Seventy or Seventy-two?', 302–4.

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This abundance of possibilities has led to several contrasting proposals. For example, Sidney Jellicoe argued that Luke's fondness for the Septuagint in scriptural quotation indicates that 'seventy-two' is the more likely original reading: 'Just as the seventy-two emissaries of *Aristeas* had, by their translation [of the Greek Pentateuch], brought the knowledge of the Law to the Greek-speaking world, so the Seventy(-two) are divinely commissioned to proclaim its fulfilment in the Gospel message.'[40]

On the other hand, Kurt Aland argued that, given the 'overwhelming' examples of 'seventy' in the Old Testament, 'it is astonishing that the reading ἑβδομήκοντα δύο occurs at all', which would mean that the latter is to be preferred because of its relative scarcity. Scribes and readers would be more likely to 'normalise' the comparatively unfamiliar number (72) to the one with plentiful examples in Jewish tradition (70), not the reverse.[41] Still others prefer to see 'seventy' as a recapitulation of Moses' appointing of the seventy elders (Num 11.16), especially given other Mosaic themes in the narratives of Luke-Acts.[42] This view, however, would be complicated if Eldad and Medad were added to the 'seventy' (11.29).[43]

Another common view is that Luke's aim was to anticipate the future mission to all the nations of earth (i.e. the Gentiles), suggesting that the seventy nations named in Genesis 10 (MT) form the most likely background.[44] However, that the same passage in the LXX lists not seventy but seventy-two names makes it possible that the evangelist used 'seventy-two' for the same reason.[45] In fact, this numerical variation in the Old Testament tradition (much like that of Num 11.16 noted above) seems to be the very reason why the same bifurcation exists in witnesses of Luke's Gospel: scribes (or readers) dependent upon the MT tradition tended towards 'seventy', while those dependent upon the LXX tended towards 'seventy-two'. The coincidence is indeed striking. In any case, this would still not assist us in identifying the prior wording in Luke.

40 S. Jellicoe, 'St. Luke and the "Seventy(-Two)"', *NTS* 6 (1960) 319–21, and *idem*, 'St. Luke and the Letter of Aristeas', *JBL* 80 (1961) 149–55. Similar is F. Bovon, *Luke* (3 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) II.26.

41 See the editorial note by Aland in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 127. Similar is J. K. Elliott and I. Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament: An Introduction for English Readers* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995) 52.

42 Cf. S. G. Wilson, *The Gentile and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 45–7. For more on Moses in Luke-Acts, see J. Mánek, 'The New Exodus in the Books of Luke', *NovT* 2 (1957) 8–23.

43 Cf. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel according to Luke* (London: A & C Black, 1966^2) 176.

44 Cf. J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (WBC 35B; Dallas: Word, 1993) 549.

45 Would, therefore, seventy-two – which is divisible by twelve – call to mind the twelve tribes of Israel and in effect suggest an *Israel*-oriented Gospel mission? Cf. M. Wolter, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 377.

More recently, at least one scholar has appealed to Greco-Roman backgrounds in order to identify relevant numerical symbolism. Drawing primarily from the work of Livy, it has been suggested that ἑβδομήκοντα is the better reading because of its symbolic value of 'people who have been designated or have committed themselves to a common cause and have begun acting towards it'.[46]

Many of these suggestions seem plausible, but which is the most probable? As it stands now, the NA[28] text simply reads οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο] – the square brackets indicating that 'textual critics today are not completely convinced of the authenticity of the enclosed words'.[47] This uncertainty does not imply that discussions of possible symbolism are without merit, but it is clear that no single explanation has garnered widespread confidence.[48] It is in fact doubtful that scholars will be able to identify securely just one of these symbolic meanings as the 'most Lukan' in nature. Furthermore, the Achilles' heel of this reliance upon numerical symbolism is that one can never be sure which party intended to exploit the symbolism in question: the evangelist, a pre-Lukan tradition, a scribe, a reader, or Jesus himself? That is, if it is decided by a modern reader that 'seventy' (or 'seventy-two') seems more consistent with Lukan themes (and is therefore earlier), one can never escape the possibility that an early copyist or reader – according to the same perception – altered the prior wording to fit that theme.[49]

In short, two major text-critical criteria are at a gridlock: the external evidence is evenly split, and intrinsic probability – with respect to the author's use of numerical symbolism – is frustratingly inconclusive. Regarding transcriptional probability, one basic observation has been made: immediately after the variation unit in question (in Luke 10.1), the text reads καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο δύο (some manuscripts omit one δύο). It has been suggested that the presence of δύο (or $\overline{\beta}$) in such close proximity, perhaps on the following line, could have caused a scribe to add it accidentally to ἑβδομήκοντα. While this does seem possible, the opposite error also presents itself: the original δύο/$\overline{\beta}$ could have been *omitted* accidentally from 'seventy-two' because δύο δύο (or just δύο) follows in the immediate context. Metzger himself regarded both as possibilities, but more information would be needed to choose one as the more likely option.[50]

46 Verheyden, 'How Many Were Sent?', 233.

47 NA[28], 54*.

48 I should credit Timothy J. Cole for pointing out a possible echo of this passage in Acts 23.23: while Jesus sends out seventy/seventy-two disciples 'two by two' (ἀνὰ δύο δύο), Paul is escorted to Caesarea by 70 horsemen, 200 soldiers and 200 bowmen.

49 For example, in criticism of Verheyden's suggestion above, Wolter remarks: 'Ob dieser Sprachgebrauch jedoch geeignet ist, das textkritische Problem zu entscheiden und den Ausschlag zugunsten der Ursprünglichkeit der Zahl 70 zu geben (so Verheyden 234ff), ist alles andere als sicher, denn man kann mit seiner Hilfe auch begründen, warum 72 in 70 geändert wurde' (Wolter, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 377).

50 Metzger, 'Seventy or Seventy-two?', 305.

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Thus, aside from this basic observation, there has been no in-depth investigation of the transcriptional nature of this textual problem. In particular, the study of scribal behaviour specifically related to the writing of numerals has not been explored. For instance, in what ways were numerals corrupted in textual transmission? Can it be demonstrated that scribes were prone to adding extraneous digits to round numbers? Were compound numbers equally subject to alteration and/or omission? Answers to such questions could reveal actual patterns of scribal tendencies that might inform the textual problem in Luke 10.1 and 17. And to this we now turn.

5. Numeral Corruptions and Transcriptional Probabilities

The textual problem in question is most naturally viewed as either (1) the omission of a digit from a two-digit compound numeral, or (2) the addition of a digit to a single-digit round number. An examination can be made, therefore, of both types of errors among Greek New Testament manuscripts. So, for instance, where single-digit, round numbers occur in New Testament witnesses, how often are they corrupted through the erroneous addition of a second digit? Alternatively, how often are two-digit numerals corrupted through the omission of one digit? The basic question we seek to answer is this: were New Testament copyists more prone to *omit* a digit from a compound number (72 → 70) or to *add* a digit to a round number (70 → 72)? Fortunately, this question can be answered with some confidence.[51]

In what follows, the term 'round number' refers to single-word numbers composed of either tens, hundreds or thousands (e.g. εἴκοσι, τετρακόσιοι etc.), and 'compound' and 'two-digit' refer to a number composed of two numerical elements, either of ones, tens, hundreds or thousands (e.g. δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ, ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα). Although some two-digit numbers such as δώδεκα can be single words, these are nonetheless included as compounds; this is necessary because such words still contain two basic elements (δω- + -δεκα), and because their alphabetic equivalents were likewise composed of two-digits (τβ̄). It is not our aim to discern precisely how these corruptions occurred; I do not intend to argue that copyists were especially prone to mistakes when numbers were written as alphabetic numerals in their exemplars.[52] We will content ourselves, therefore, with simply observing the nature and relative frequency of these two kinds of corruptions.

51 Not in view are orthographical variation, bare omission of numerals or the substitution of values.

52 It would seem reasonable to assume that numerical shorthand was more easily corrupted than full number-words by copyists, but this is not apparently the case. See R. Develin, 'Numeral Corruption in Greek Historical Texts', *Phoenix* 44 (1990) 31–45. In addition, my own investigation of singular readings involving numerals in the papyri revealed no significant results that would suggest this.

5.1 *Omissions from Two-digit Numbers*

We first examine the frequency of scribal omission from two-digit numerals. In ninety-eight instances of a compound numeral in the text of the New Testament, an examination of numerous critical apparatuses resulted in the following thirteen variation units:[53]

Ref.	*NA28 Text*	*Corrupt reading + Witness(es)*[54]
Matt. 18.12	ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα	εννεα 565
Mark 8.19	δώδεκα	δεκα 64
Luke 8.1	δώδεκα	δεκα 1319
Luke 8.42	δώδεκα	δεκα *l*859
Luke 13.4	δεκαοκτώ	δεκα 047
Luke 15.7	ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα	ενενηκοντα 047, 472, 475, 579, *l*859
John 11.9	δώδεκα	δυο 472
John 20.24	δώδεκα	δεκα L
Acts 2.14	ἕνδεκα	δεκα D, 1243
Acts 7.14	ἑβδομήκοντα πέντε	εβδομηκοντα 2344
Gal 2.1	δεκατεσσάρων	τεσσαρων 1241
Rev 4.4	εἴκοσι τέσσαρες	τεσσαρες 2057
Rev 5.8	εἴκοσι τέσσαρες	εικοσι 181*

53 In addition to that of the NA28, the following apparatuses were used (where relevant): C. Tischendorf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1869–72[8]); H. von Soden, ed., *Die Schriften des neuen Testaments*, Part II: *Text mit Apparat* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913); H. Hoskier, ed., *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1929); S. C. E. Legg, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece secundum Textum Westcotto-Hortianum: Evangelium secundum Marcum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935); S. C. E. Legg, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece secundum Textum Westcotto-Hortianum: Evangelium secundum Mattaeum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940); American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project, eds., *The Gospel according to St. Luke*; W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, eds., *The New Testament in Greek IV: The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. I: *The Papyri* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1995); and U. B. Schmid with W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, eds., *The New Testament in Greek IV: The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. II: *The Majuscules* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007).

54 Witnesses are given in Gregory–Aland identifications; conversions for Tischendorf and von Soden can be found in K. Aland, ed., *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des neuen Testaments* (ANTF 1; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1994[2]) 377–427, and for Hoskier, see J. K. Elliott, 'Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation collated by H. C. Hoskier', *JTS* n. s. 40 (1989) 100–11 (reprinted in *idem, New Testament Textual Criticism: The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles. Essays on Manuscripts and Textual Variation* (NovTSup 137; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010) 133–44).

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These examples illustrate that the omission of a digit from two-digit numerals is a common type of error within New Testament manuscripts. It is worth pointing out that most of these changes are pure nonsense in context. For example, in Matt. 18.12 and Luke 15.7, the departures from ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα (99) are clearly mindless blunders; one hundred sheep minus one sheep must equal ninety-nine, not 'nine' as in minuscule 565 or 'ninety' as in majuscule 047, etc. And similarly, the omission of οκτώ from δεκαοκτώ in 047 in Luke 13.4 is equally as senseless because the numeral was written correctly in 13.11 and 13.16. This confirms that there need not be a motivation of symbolism in the alteration of the number; as the above examples show, two-digit numerals were simply prone to accidental omission.

Especially relevant to our variation unit in Luke 10 are the omissions of ἐννέα from ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα (Luke 15.7), πέντε from ἑβδομήκοντα πέντε (Acts 7.14) and τέσσαρες from εἴκοσι τέσσαρες (Rev 5.8). In these instances, a second digit *following* a round number is omitted. This exactly parallels the difference between ἑβδομήκοντα and ἑβδομήκοντα δύο in Luke 10.1 and 17, where the second digit is in question.

5.2 *Additions to Single-digit Round Numbers*

Now we inquire whether the opposite error – the addition of a digit to a round number – was a similarly common occurrence. A survey of 104 single-word, round numerals results in the following seven variants:

Ref.	*NA²⁸ Text*	*Corrupt reading + Witness(es)*
Mark 10.41	δέκα	δωδεκα 1675
Luke 13.4	δεκαοκτώ	δωδεκα και οκτω 28[55]
Luke 13.16	δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ	δωδεκα και οκτω 1200*
Luke 19.13a	δέκα	δωδεκα 1071*
Luke 19.13b	δέκα	δωδεκα 1071*
Luke 24.13	ἑξήκοντα	εκατον εξηκοντα ℵ, K*, N, Θ, 079[vid], *l*844, *l*2211
Rev 17.7	δέκα	δωδεκα 664, 1094[56]

There is, therefore, a corresponding principle of adding a figure to a single-digit round number, although there are fewer examples. Unsurprisingly, many of these are also nonsense in context, clearly attributable to involuntary alteration

55 The IGNTP Luke volume also lists minuscule 349 here, but images of the manuscript indicate that this must be an error.

56 Minuscules 664 and 1094 part of the same family; see Hoskier, *Text of the Apocalypse*, I.330–7.

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(e.g. δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ → δωδεκα και οκτω). It is important to observe, however, that six of the seven additions listed above are the same change from δέκα (10) to δώδεκα (12), a somewhat predictable alteration given the relative predominance of the more familiar number 'twelve'. In fact, given the overwhelming frequency of δώδεκα in the New Testament, one might prefer to see this as a case of harmonisation to familiar wording rather than addition to a numeral. Furthermore, if this were truly a case of addition, one would expect to see δέκα → δεκαδύο rather than δώδεκα.[57] Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness we cannot rightly discount this as an example of addition to a round number.

The change from of ἑξήκοντα to ἑκατόν ἑξήκοντα (Luke 24.13) is thought to be an intentional correction rather than an accidental one. The evangelist states that the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus is σταδίους ἑξήκοντα (= 60 stadia), and it seems that early patristic writers (incorrectly) identified Emmaus with 'Amwâs/Imwas (modern Nicopolis), roughly 176 stadia from Jerusalem – hence the addition of ἑκατόν.[58] This is also the only case of addition that occurs in majuscule manuscripts. However, while this corruption is similar to our variant ἑβδομήκοντα (+ δύο), it is not a precise parallel because the added digit *precedes* the correct one. Therefore, what is missing from these examples is a change parallel to that of ἑβδομήκοντα to ἑβδομήκοντα δύο; that is, the erroneous addition of a second digit immediately *following* a round number. One might imagine that this has occurred in the change from δέκα to δώδεκα since their alphabetic equivalents would be τ → τβ. Nevertheless, this does not apply because, in all of the above cases, the longhand form δώδεκα is used by the copyists rather than the numerical shorthand; the additions occur *prior* to the round number (δώδεκα).

We can see, therefore, that both classes of error were common within New Testament manuscripts, but omission applies much more readily to the problem at hand. Importantly, the error of omission occurs (1) more frequently, (2) in twice as many witnesses, and (3) with a greater range of values; that is, 11, 12, 14, 18, 24, 75 and 99 are affected by omission, but only 10 and 60 are affected by addition.

Confirmation of this scribal tendency towards omission comes from texts outside the New Testament.[59] Although a wider study could be conducted, a

57 This form does in fact occur in many manuscripts; for examples, see BDF §63(8).2.

58 A. DeGuglielmo, 'Emmaus', *CBQ* 3 (1941) 293–301; see also Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 158; R. Reisner, 'Wo lag das neutestamentliche Emmaus (Lukas 24, 13)?', *ZAC* 11 (2007) 201–20; S. Reece, 'Seven Stades to Emmaus', *NTS* 47 (2001) 262–6; and especially the discussion of M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1927[3]) 602–3, 617–22, which, though dated, is still worthwhile.

59 See also Develin, 'Numeral Corruption'. In a similar study of classical manuscripts, he lists δέκα for ἔνδεκα (Herodotus 6.14.2), δέκα for δώδεκα (Xenophon, *Hell.* 5.1.6 and again at 7.5.10), μύρια for τρισμύρια (Xenophon, *Hell.* 7.8.26), δέκα for πεντεκαίδεκα ([Aristotle],

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similar investigation of Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament shows that the same inclination towards omission of digits is found. In the Greek text of Genesis, for example, a survey of forty-nine occurrences of double-digit numerals yielded thirteen examples of omission, while a survey of fifty occurrences of single-digit round numbers yielded only four examples of addition (two of which, incidentally, were the familiar change from δέκα to δώδεκα).[60] Just as in the text of the New Testament, omission prevails.

5.3 *'The Shorter Text with a Vengeance': Numerals in P^{45}*

That copyists more frequently omitted from numbers than added to them coheres with other recent analyses of scribal habits. Numerous studies of scribal behaviour in early Greek manuscripts have confirmed the fact that copyists in general were usually more prone to omit text than to add, an observation that has essentially qualified a hitherto fundamental axiom of textual criticism which is to prefer the shorter reading, or *lectio brevior potior*.[61]

This raises an important issue that has not yet been mentioned. Studies of the scribal habits of P^{45} have shown that the copyist was not only prone to the omission of text in general but especially numerals in particular.[62] On several occasions, the scribe of P^{45} conspicuously omitted numerals from the text, creating through omission what have been recognised as singular readings. A singular reading is usually defined as wording that is found in no other known Greek witness, strongly suggesting that none other than the scribe in question created it. Within P^{45} specifically, the scribe omitted both πέντε (Mark 6.41a) and δύο

Ath. Pol. 36.1); Develin cites no examples of a second digit being erroneously added to a single-digit round number.

60 J. W. Wevers, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, vol. I: *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974). For omissions, see Gen 5.9, 12, 16; 9.29; 11.14, 18, 24, 32; 17.24, 25; 18.28; 50.22, 26. And for additions, see Gen 21.5; 24.10; 25.20; 31.7.

61 E. C. Colwell, 'Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P^{45}, P^{66}, P^{75}', *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS 9; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 106–24; P. M. Head, 'Observations on Early Papyri of the Synoptic Gospels, especially on the "Scribal Habits"', *Bib* 71 (1990) 240–7; J. Hernández Jr, *Scribal Habits and Theological Influences in the Apocalypse: The Singular Readings of Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi* (WUNT II/218; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); D. Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (TS 3/5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007); J. R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2008); and for a summary of this development, see J. R. Royse, 'Scribal Tendencies in the Text of the New Testament', *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (ed. B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes; NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013^{2}) 461–78.

62 Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 197 (also 134, 377, 368–9).

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(6.41b) from the narrative of the feeding of the 5,000.[63] Further, the scribe omits a four-word phrase containing two more numbers, creating yet another singular reading: κατὰ ἑκατὸν καὶ πεντήκοντα (6.40). Whether these (and other) omissions were intentional or accidental is a matter of ongoing debate.[64]

Regardless, this inclination in P45 to omit numerals is relevant to the textual problem in Luke 10.1 and 17, especially as this papyrus is the earliest extant witness to the shorter reading of ἑβδομήκοντα. Might the lack of δύο in P45 simply be another instance of the scribe overlooking a numeral, just as we saw in Mark 6.40 and 6.41? By way of contrast, the same tendency of numerical omission is not evident in P75, the earliest witness to ἑβδομήκοντα δύο; the scribe consistently wrote numerals correctly. Nevertheless, Joseph Verheyden has suggested that it was the scribe of P75 who, because of 'the ample use of abbreviations', probably confused ἑβδομήκοντα for ἑβδομήκοντα δύο (ο̄ → ο̄β̄).[65] Yet this proposal runs directly counter to two separate lines of evidence. First, the scribe of P75 – who regularly used numerical shorthand in the body text – consistently employed them without error. In other words, their abundance in P75 simply illustrates that the copyist was indeed comfortable with them and capable of using them effectively. And second, it was the scribe of P45 who employed only a handful number-abbreviations in the text of the papyrus (usually preferring longhand forms) and committed several glaring numerical omissions.[66] On these grounds, the opposite of Verheyden's suggestion is undoubtedly more likely: of the two scribes, it is far easier to envision that of P45 as the culprit.

Given the tendency of P45 to mishandle numerals and its early date of origin, it is tempting to suggest that the initial loss of δύο occurred in this papyrus. The strength of this proposal is that it would locate the source of the shorter reading in an early papyrus *already* known for its faulty numerals. This solution,

63 Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 134. Hoskier called these omissions '"the shorter text" with a vengeance'; H. Hoskier, 'Some Study of P45 with Special Reference to the Bezan Text', *Bulletin of the Bezan Club* 12 (1937) 51–7, at 53.

64 Colwell seemed to view such omissions as intentional (Colwell, 'Scribal Habits', 118–19), an opinion echoed by Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 141, 197. See also C. C. Tarelli, 'Omissions, Additions, and Conflations in the Chester Beatty Papyrus', *JTS* 40 (1939) 382–7, at 384; M.-J. Lagrange, 'Les papyrus Chester Beatty pour les Évangiles', *RB* 43 (1934) 5–41, at 12. Others prefer to see them as accidental: e.g. P.-L. Couchoud, 'Notes sur le texte de St Marc dans le Codex Chester Beatty', *JTS* 35 (1934) 3–22, at 8; B. Aland, 'The Significance of the Chester Beatty Papyri', *The Earliest Gospels: The Origins and Transmission of the Earliest Christian Gospels – The Contribution of the Chester Beatty Gospel Codex P45* (ed. Charles Horton; JSNTSup 258; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004) 108–21, at 113; K. S. Min, *Die früheste Überlieferung des Matthäusevangeliums (bis zum 3./4. Jh.): Edition und Untersuchung* (ANTF 34; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2005) 130–5.

65 Verheyden, 'How Many Were Sent?', 211.

66 The only alphabetic numerals present in P45, aside from that in Luke 10.17, are ιβ̄ (Mark 8.19), ιη̄ (Luke 13.11, 16) and μ (Acts 7.36).

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however, is not without its problems. Since the shorter reading is also found in א, A and C (etc.) – none of which are thought to have a direct genealogical relationship to P^{45} – one would have to say that the same omission occurred in at least two separate instances, which is not impossible, but does not seem entirely likely. But two further points should be noted: first, patristic testimony shows that the tradition of 'seventy' dates well into the second century (and P^{45} dates to the third); and second, it is highly unlikely that the scribe simultaneously omitted the beta (= δύο) and took the effort to add a line-filler immediately after the omicron.[67] It seems, then, that P^{45} is not the culprit. None of this, of course, invalidates the observation that the longer reading appears to be the prior wording, it simply means that the ἑβδομήκοντα probably predates the witness of P^{45}.

Let us now return to Metzger's argument cited at the beginning of this study. He remarked that the transcriptional probabilities of Luke 10.1/17 were 'singularly elusive' given that it was easy 'for either number to be accidentally altered to the other'.[68] After a closer look at the nature and frequency of numerical corruptions in early manuscripts, however, we are now in a position to refine this idea. New Testament copyists were far more likely to omit a digit from a compound number than they were to add a digit to a round number, and when it concerns the *second* of two digits in a compound number, the tendency is always towards omission rather than addition.

6. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, two conclusions are possible. First, as Metzger observed over fifty years ago, P^{45} should not be considered as support for ἑβδομήκοντα δύο in Luke 10.17. Maximally, it could be added in support of ἑβδομήκοντα (perhaps with 'vid'?), but in the least it should no longer be regarded as a witness to the longer reading.

Second, the revised testimony of P^{45} led to an illuminating study of scribal habits with respect to numerals. While appeals to perceived numerical symbolism for the recovery of the earlier wording seem to be at a stalemate, the actual patterns of numeral corruption within New Testament manuscripts add valuable data to the equation. Generally speaking, compound numerals were frequently corrupted through the omission of digits, whereas erroneous addition occurred far less often by comparison (thirteen variation units compared to seven) and affected fewer numerical values. Finally, it is striking that there are several occurrences of a compound numeral being corrupted through the omission of the second digit, but there are no clear examples of an addition of a second digit *following* a round number. This means that, on transcriptional grounds, it is

67 I should credit the anonymous reviewer for this helpful suggestion.

68 Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 341.

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easier to explain the change from ἑβδομήκοντα δύο to ἑβδομήκοντα than it is the reverse.[69]

Nevertheless, we must admit that transcriptional probability is not the only relevant criterion to be utilised in such textual problems, and it must be balanced by other considerations. To be sure, even if the omission of numerical digits is the more common transcriptional error, this does not require that such a principle *must* apply to the variation unit in Luke 10.1/17. To conclude, however, in light of the fact that both the external evidence and intrinsic probability are inconclusive, the scribal tendency towards omission in the transcription of numerals is an important observation that should be considered in future discussions of this textual problem, and it is one that might just tip the scales.

69 This tendency towards omission might shed light on the similar textual problem that follows almost immediately in Luke 10.1: ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο °[δύο] ('he sent them two by two'). The evidence here is similar: δύο δύο is read by B, K, Θ, f^{13}, 565, *l*2211 etc., while δύο is read by ℵ, A, C, D, L, W, Ξ, Ψ, 0181, f^{1}, 33, 𝔐 (P45 and P75 are lacunose). Though not properly a two-digit numeral, the effect would have been similar with the repetition of δύο, inviting the possibility that the tendency for scribes to omit from two-digit numbers also contributed to the initial loss of the second (or first?) δύο.

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