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On Citing the Sahidic Version of Hebrews: Theoretical Reflections and Examples from Textual Practice

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Abstract

The Sahidic Coptic is one of the earliest and most important versions of the New Testament. Thus, it is essential that its witness be related to the Greek tradition with adequate methodological precision. This article attempts to pave the way for such an undertaking in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a New Testament book which, currently, lacks a major critical edition of its Greek text or an edition of its Sahidic version. Firstly, the present study offers methodological reflections on citing the Sahidic version, with a particular focus on transmissional, editorial, linguistic and translation-technical issues. And secondly, a selection of the most significant variant units in Hebrews is examined with a view to relating the Sahidic evidence to the Greek variant spectrum at each point.

Keywords: Sahidic; Coptic; Hebrews; versions; critical apparatus

In earlier Greek New Testament editions such as those of Constantin Tischendorf[1] or Samuel P. Tregelles,[2] the place occupied by ancient versions was rather prominent, given the comparatively sparser knowledge of, and a more limited access to, the Greek manuscript tradition. The rationale behind this prominence would seem clear enough: seeing that the manuscripts could take the critic no further than the fourth century, it was patristic quotations and versions that provided additional (and at times only) early evidence for many a Greek variant in the apparatus. With the discoveries of early papyri as well as improved access to manuscripts due to further editing, cataloguing and digitisation, this situation has changed substantially. That is to say, the Greek manuscript evidence currently at our disposal is considerably broader in both age and number than it was in Tischendorf's days.

Importantly as well, more refined approaches to the citation of versions have been developed. For one thing, most versions cited in the aforementioned editions had not been critically edited, so that the versional citations therein were often based on sources of uncertain text-historical value. Moreover, a dearth of specialised studies on translation technique and linguistic equivalence at that time meant that, as Peter J. Williams

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[1] C. Tischendorf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, vols. I–II (Leipzig: Giesecke and Devrient, 1869–72[8]), vol. III: *Prolegomena* (scripsit C. R. Gregory; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1894).

[2] S. P. Tregelles, ed., *The Greek New Testament, Edited from the Ancient Authorities, with their Various Readings in Full, and the Latin Version of Jerome* (7 vols.; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1857–79).

observes, the editors' use of versions was 'probably based on intuition'.[3] However, owing to the more sophisticated methods and resources that have appeared recently, the versional evidence has retained its value, albeit in a more methodologically controlled form.[4] And, as various portions of the New Testament begin to be published in the *Editio Critica Maior*,[5] versions can now be set in a text-historical context conceived in a far more extensive and clearer manner than has been possible hitherto.

One of the New Testament books that has yet to receive a major text-critical treatment is the Epistle to the Hebrews. Given that versional evidence constitutes an important piece in the mosaic of this book's textual history and that the Sahidic Coptic is one of the earliest and most important versions, it seems important to consider the manner in which this particular version can be cited in support of respective Greek variants. As the first step in this direction, this study will outline theoretical problems involved in such an enterprise and then scrutinise a selection of most significant variation units from Hebrews so as to establish the Sahidic support (or lack thereof) for a given reading in the variant spectrum.

1. Utilising Sahidic Evidence: Theoretical Considerations

In order to align Sahidic renderings with Greek variants, there are four main factors that require careful consideration: intraversional transmission (i.e. textual variation within the versional manuscripts), availability of editions, linguistic equivalence and translation technique.[6]

Beginning with intraversional transmission, the Sahidic version was, like any other ancient text, transmitted via manuscripts, and as such was subject to textual corruption. Hence, Sahidic witnesses not infrequently disagree, in which case one must distinguish between the initial versional text and subsequent variation. Obviously, such internal matters are assessed easier when dealing with obvious errors than where each versional reading could potentially support several different Greek variants. And in some cases, it may even be impossible to determine the initial Sahidic reading with confidence. Thus one

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[3] P. J. Williams, '"Where Two or Three Are Gathered Together": The Witness of the Early Versions', *The Early Text of the New Testament* (ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 239–58, at 240. He further observes: 'Tischendorf and Tregelles, as we are aware, spent most of their time locating and editing Greek manuscripts. Von Soden had a team of workers collecting evidence from the various Greek witnesses. However, we do not have evidence that these editors undertook major studies of the translation method employed by the creators of the early versions.'

[4] A major step forward in the rigorous study of New Testament versions was the publication of K. Aland, ed., *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare: Der gegenwärtige Stand ihrer Erforschung und ihre Bedeutung für die griechische Textgeschichte* (ANTF 5; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972). In the English-speaking world, the classic handbook is still B. M. Metzger's *Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).

[5] The ECM volumes that have been published so far are: B. Aland, K. Aland, G. Mink, H. Strutwolf and K. Wachtel, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior*, vol. IV: *Catholic Letters / Die katholischen Briefe*, Part 1: *Text*, Part 2: *Supplementary Material / Begleitende Materialen* (2nd rev. edn; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013); H. Strutwolf, Georg Gäbel, Annette Hüffmeier, Gerd Mink, and Klaus Wachtel, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graecum. Editio Critica Maior*, III: *Die Apostelgeschichte / The Acts of the Apostles*, Part 1: *Text*, Part 2: *Supplementary Material / Begleitende Materialen*, Part 3: *Studien / Studies*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2018); H. Strutwolf, G. Gäbel, A. Hüffmeier, G. Mink and K. Wachtel, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior*, vol. I.2: *Die synoptische Evangelien: Das Markusevangelium / The Synoptic Gospels: The Gospel according to Mark*, Part 1: *Text*, Part 2: *Supplementary Material / Begleitende Materialen*, Part 3: *Studien / Studies* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2021).

[6] See further C. Askeland, *John's Gospel: The Coptic Translations of its Greek Text* (ANTF 44; Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2012) 61–4. For a more general overview, see Williams, 'Early Versions'; J. Barr, review of *The Early Versions of the New Testament* by B. M. Metzger, *JTS* n.s. 30 (1979) 290–303.

must treat the Sahidic as a textual *tradition* rather than a monolith, in much the same way as one approaches the Greek New Testament itself.

In order to study the intraversional transmission, of course, one needs some sort of access to the Sahidic manuscripts. This is most conveniently done by using a critical edition. Currently, there are two standard editions containing the Sahidic Hebrews. On the one hand, the most widely used (and hitherto the only complete) edition of the Sahidic New Testament is still George Horner's multi-volume work.[7] However, his text of Hebrews is constructed primarily on the basis of fragmentary witnesses, the most extensive being sa 35 (LDAB 108002).[8] Due to a lack of substantial manuscripts available to Horner, several portions of Hebrews are replete with lacunae.[9] On the other hand, Herbert Thompson's edition[10] presents a fuller text, based largely on the excellently preserved sa 4 (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library Copt. MS 813 + 2003; LDAB 107868),[11] collated against sa 37 (Morgan Library MS M.570). As one might expect, further material has come to light since the publication of these editions,[12] though an up-to-date critical edition still remains a desideratum.[13] At the moment, therefore, anyone who wishes to study the Sahidic version of Hebrews must rely on the works of Horner and Turner, while being cognisant of their limitations.

Once the Sahidic wording has been established, one needs to take into account the linguistic equivalence between the source and target languages. In this vein, we need to bear in mind that, from a linguistic standpoint, Greek and Coptic are fundamentally different, and as such often convey meaning by fundamentally different grammatical, syntactical and lexical means. Thus, the linguistic constraints of the target language are bound to have influenced the manner in which the translator rendered the syntax, lexis and

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[7] G. Horner, ed., *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, Otherwise Called Sahidic and Thebaic* (7 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1911–24).

[8] The manuscript is currently housed in seven institutions, catalogued as a number of separate fragments: Cambridge, University Library Ms. Or. 1699 P x + London, British Library Or 3579 B.56 (fol. 88) + Or 3579 B.57 (fol. 89) + Or 3579 B.59 (fol. 92) + Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts II.1.B 299 + Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Ms. I. B. 14 fasc. 459 (fol. 25–6) + Oxford, Clarendon Press b 2 fr. 11 (fols. 35–8) + Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Copte 129 (11) (fols. 52, 53, 69, 70, 85–7, 89–93, 95) + Copte 132 (2) (fol. 5) + Copte 133 (1) (fols. 9, 9a, 10, 11, 18, 18a, 18b) + Vienna, Nationalbibliothek K 1111 a–b + K 16 + K 17 + K 2711 + K 9078–81.

[9] For a full index of fragments used in the Paul volumes, see G. Horner, ed., *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, Otherwise Called Sahidic and Thebaic*, vol. V: *The Epistles of St Paul (continued), Index of Fragments, Etc.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920) 580–7.

[10] H. Thompson, ed., *The Coptic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles in the Sahidic Dialect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

[11] The manuscript is accessible online at https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/object/Cpt_813/147/ (accessed 4 June 2021).

[12] The Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF) currently catalogues the following Sahidic manuscripts of Hebrews: sa 4, sa 35, sa 37, sa 38, sa 45, sa 79, sa 368, sa 371, sa 400. Besides the continuous-text manuscripts, the INTF database currently lists twenty-four Sahidic lectionaries that contain portions of Hebrews: sa 15L, sa 16L, sa 291L, sa 293L, sa 293L, sa 295L, sa 296L, sa 300L, sa 302L, sa 303L, sa 304L, sa 305L, sa 306L, sa 308L, sa 322L, sa 331L, sa 332L, sa 357L, sa 404L, sa 406L, sa 410L, sa 420L, sa 440L, sa 638L; one Fayyūmic lectionary containing Hebrews is catalogued as fa 5L. And finally, the database contains one fragmentary manuscript in the Middle Egyptian, namely mae 4. In addition to these, several further Coptic manuscripts are still being processed for cataloguing in the INTF database. I owe my thanks to Katharina Schröder for this information (personal correspondence, 8 June 2021).

[13] This is not to say that individual New Testament books have not been critically edited. For most recent works, see C. Askeland, 'An Eclectic Edition of the Sahidic Apocalypse of John', *Studien zum Text der Apokalypse II* (ed. M. Sigismund and D. Müller; ANTF 50; Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2017) 33–79; H. Förster, K. Sänger-Böhm and M. H. O. Schulz, eds., *Kritische Edition der sahidischen Version des Johannesevangeliums: Text und Dokumentation* (ANTF 56; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2021).

semantics of the *Vorlage*.[14] There are several features of the Coptic that make any attempt at retroversion particularly problematic; in this respect, some of the most difficult variants involve prepositional changes,[15] alterations in word order that coincide with inherent features of the Coptic syntax[16] and various declensional changes.[17] In other words, there are aspects of the Greek that the Coptic could not possibly render, let alone replicate, and hence the version cannot be cited in variation units where such linguistic features occur.

Besides inherent transmission and linguistic aspects of versional citation, it is important to examine the manner in which the translator rendered the wording of the source text. Different versions – even within the same language tradition – might (and often do) take noticeably different approaches to translation, so that understanding the given version's translation technique is as essential as understanding its language.[18] In general, the Sahidic translator of Hebrews seems to have employed what may anachronistically be called a formal-literal method, though by no means slavishly.[19] Thus, when the translation does depart from formal equivalence, one must not assume that the diversion of this kind *eo ipso* signals a textual shift in the *Vorlage*.[20] Indeed, especially when dealing with minor changes, specific tendencies of the version must be established first, otherwise one's appraisal of the variant's genetic support will rest solely on impressions. From the translation-technical perspective, particularly suspect are variants which involve minor inflectional shifts, conjunctions and particles.[21] Failure to consider these matters adequately could lead to false assumptions concerning the nature of a given versional rendering, which, in turn, might result in a misleading citation or inaccurate depiction of the version's textual affinities.

2. Significant Variants in Hebrews and the Citation of Sahidic Evidence

With the aforementioned caveats in view, we may now turn to a discussion of twenty-six variation units in Hebrews where one can meaningfully illustrate the use of the Sahidic witness.[22] It must be noted at the outset that this is not an exhaustive treatment of all

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[14] The classic study of the Greek–Coptic linguistic equivalence is still G. Mink, 'Die koptischen Versionen des Neuen Testaments: Die sprachlichen Probleme bei ihrer Bewertung für die griechische Textgeschichte', *Die Alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments*, 188–273. For briefer treatment, see J. Plumley, 'Limitations of Coptic (Sahidic) in Representing Greek', *Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations* (ed. B. M. Metzger; Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 141–52.

[15] Mink, 'Die koptischen Versionen', 272–3; Plumley, 'Limitations', 148–9.

[16] Mink, 'Die koptischen Versionen', 252–72; Askeland, *John's Gospel*, 54–5.

[17] Coptic does not have a case system and lacks the neuter and a gender-specific plural determinator.

[18] For a compelling discussion and examples, see Williams, 'Early Versions', 243–5.

[19] With regard to the Coptic versions of John, Askeland, *John's Gospel*, 43 observes: 'Although the translators probably operated with a formal translation technique as a default, intending to reflect the structures of the source text as closely possible, they did not ruthlessly parallel the smaller elements of their source texts.' On the whole, such translational behaviour may also be observed throughout the Sahidic Hebrews.

[20] This is best observed at places where no variation takes place in the Greek tradition. See e.g. J. Moffatt, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924) lxxi, who mentions a handful of 'curious renderings' like 10.20, where the Sahidic translator rendered ἐνεκαίνισεν with ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲕⲉⲣⲕⲱⲣ̄ⲥ̄ ('carved out'); 12.4, where μέχρις αἵματος is rendered as ⲡⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲥⲛⲟϥ ('place of blood'); and 6.12, where ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε is translated as ϫⲉⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲉⲛⲛⲉⲧⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟϣϥ̄ ('so that you may not become worn down'). Whereas the first two are examples of paraphrastic/more idiomatic translation, the third one exhibits a clear shift in lexis.

[21] So Askeland, *John's Gospel*, 44.

[22] For an *Ausgangspunkt* for the study of exegetically significant variation units in Hebrews, see e.g. M. Karrer, 'Der Hebräerbrief', *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (ed. M. Ebner and S. Schreiber; Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 6; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008) 474–95, at 487. Given the absence of a major critical edition, I have

the passages where our version may be adduced in support of a given variant. Rather, what follows is a collection of Sahidic renderings that exhibit a comparatively higher degree of semantic distinction and/or exegetical relevance, as it is typically easier to assign versional support to starker shifts in meaning. In particular, text-historically relevant variant units were of special importance in the selection process. In order to illustrate some of the difficulties involved in handling the versional evidence, I have also included a few cases where the Sahidic has been cited in a dubious manner.[23]

1.1 Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς <u>πατράσιν</u> ἐν τοῖς προφήταις

At this point, the mainstream text, which also happens to agree with NA[28]'s critical text, reads τοῖς πατράσιν. Still, a handful of not insignificant witnesses add ἡμῶν, reinforcing the familial connection of the writer and his addressees with the forefathers of the faith: $\mathfrak{P}^{12\text{vid}.46\text{c}}$ ar t v vg$^{\text{mss}}$ sy$^{\text{p}}$ Cl$^{\text{lat}}$. Remarkably, the Sahidic is not cited, despite the fact that it clearly includes the first-person plural possessive (ⲛⲉⲛⲉⲓⲟⲧⲉ),[24] thus reflecting a text form attested in the two early Greek papyri (*inter alia*).[25] Hence, the already early, though quantitatively sparse, support for the longer text is corroborated further still by another (possibly) late third-century witness.[26]

1.3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως <u>αὐτοῦ, καθαρισμὸν</u> τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς

Here NA[28] has a shorter text found in ℵ A B D^1 H* P Ψ 33 81 629 1175 2464 *l*249 lat, resulting in the sense 'having brought about purification for sins'. There are two (very similar) forms of longer text which make Jesus' personal agency in the act of purification more explicit. The NA[28] apparatus cites the following witnesses in their support:

δι' ἑαυτοῦ D^2 H^c K L 0243 104 630 1241 1739 1881 $\mathfrak{M}$ ar b vg$^{\text{ms}}$ sy sa bo
δι' αὐτοῦ $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ D* 0278 365 1505

Here the Sahidic, too, clearly renders a longer source text, but it would seem impossible, on linguistic grounds, to align it with either ἑαυτοῦ or αὐτοῦ with confidence, as the

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confined the citation of witnesses to those listed in B. Aland, K. Aland, E. Nestle, E. Nestle, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini and B. M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th rev. edn, edited by the Institute for New Testament Research Münster Westphalia under the direction of H. Strutwolf; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012) (henceforth: NA[28]), occasionally with comment and/or corrections.

[23] As regards the manner of presentation, in each case the entire verse is cited, with the variant in question underlined.

[24] The first-person possessive is also found in the Bohairic (likewise not cited in NA[28]).

[25] *Pace* J. R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008) 237, who posits that '[t]he addition of ημων [in $\mathfrak{P}^{46\text{c}}$] is perhaps natural enough that coincidental agreement is likely, so that we may again have simply a result of the corrector's initiative'. The versional support, now further corroborated by the Sahidic, makes this scenario unlikely. And even Royse observes that several of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$'s corrections by the second hand reflect another *Vorlage*. If the corrector used that particular *Vorlage* throughout, it seems simpler to assume that here, too, the reading was inherited rather than introduced arbitrarily.

[26] A more precise date of the version's origin has yet to be determined. For a critical overview, see Mink, 'Die koptischen Versionen', 181–6. See also C. Askeland, 'The Coptic Versions 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/Boston: Brill, 2013) 201–29, at 209; W.-P. Funk, 'The Translation of the Bible into Coptic', *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. I: *From the Beginnings to 600* (ed. J. Carleton Paget and J. Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 536–46, at 538–9.

Coptic construction used (ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄) could not possibly distinguish between a third-person pronoun and a reflexive pronoun in the Greek. Hence, the citation of Sahidic and Bohairic in NA[28] seems misleading, as both versions could agree with the reading of 𝔓[46] *et al.* just as easily.

1.8a πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα <u>τοῦ αἰῶνος</u>

The mainstream text agrees with the Septuagint's rendering of Ps 44.7 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος,[27] whereas a tiny minority of witnesses omit τοῦ αἰῶνος.[28] Likewise, the Sahidic agrees with the mainstream text, with its rendering ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲓⲉⲛⲉϩ (lit. 'unto the age of the age'). Although stock phrases like this tend to be idiomatic and thus become fixed expressions, in this case the Sahidic has sufficient lexical and syntactical means to express both variants.[29] Hence, at this point, our version can be cited with a good measure of confidence.[30]

1.8b καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας <u>σου</u>

As in the previous instance, most manuscripts agree with the standard Septuagint reading βασιλείας σου. By contrast, a small cohort of important witnesses (𝔓[46] ℵ B) replace σου with αὐτοῦ. In contrast to some of the previous cases where the Sahidic agreed with 𝔓[46], here our version clearly has a second-person possessive determinator (ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟ), in harmony with the mainstream text.

2.9 τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως <u>χάριτι θεοῦ</u> ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου

Exegetically, this is doubtless one of the most significant variant units in Hebrews. On the one hand, the external evidence leans heavily towards χάριτι θεοῦ, which is read by the vast majority of the witnesses. For the competing variant χωρὶς θεοῦ, NA[28] cites only 0243 1739* vg^ms Or^mss Ambr Hier^mss Fulg. Yet, the overall picture of both readings' transmission history is considerably more complex, as reflected in their patristic reception.[31] Thus, the critics have relied mostly on internal criteria in deciding on the earliest attainable text, often reaching, needless to say, rather divergent conclusions.[32] Unlike the debate concerning the initial reading, the citation of the Sahidic version here is rather

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[27] The only variation recorded in the Göttingen Septuagint volume of Psalms at this point is an omission of τόν attested in Codex Vaticanus.

[28] NA[28] only lists B 33 t vg^ms. B. Weiss, *Textkritik der paulinischen Briefe* (TU 14.3; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1896) 89, rightly notes that τοῦ αἰῶνος was simply dropped 'durch Schreibversehen'.

[29] Cf. Heb 5.6, where the Sahidic renders εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα in a formal-literal manner with ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ.

[30] The same holds for the Bohairic, which, too, attests a longer reading here.

[31] For an illuminating analysis of the reception of both variants, see G. Gäbel, 'Separated by Grace?! Heb 2:9 and the Mutual Interdependence of Christological Debates and Textual Transmission' (forthcoming). I am grateful to Georg Gäbel for sending me a pre-publication version of this work.

[32] For instance, G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (The Schweich Lectures 1946; London: The British Academy, 1953) 34 asserts that χάριτι θεοῦ 'yields what can only be called a preposterous sense in stating that Jesus suffered "through the grace of God"'. Even more forceful argument against this reading is advanced by Weiss, *Textkritik*, 54, who regards χάριτι θεοῦ as 'exegetisch ganz unmöglich'. Contrast this with H. W. Attridge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia 72; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 77, in whose view χωρὶς θεοῦ 'does not fit well in the context of the psalm that had spoken of God's concern for humanity'. As one can see, intrinsic probabilities are – at least occasionally – in the eyes of a critic.

straightforward: ϩⲙ ⲡⲉϩⲙⲟⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ renders χάριτι θεοῦ, thus furnishing the majority reading with another early witness.[33]

3.6 Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ· οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς, ἐάνπερ τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος κατάσχωμεν

Though attested in most Greek witnesses, the addition of μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν after ἐλπίδος is an obvious instance of harmonisation to the context (cf. 3.14),[34] and as such is likely to be secondary. The Coptic versions are split at this point: while the Bohairic reads with the majority, the Sahidic clearly contains the shorter rendering in agreement with 𝔓[13.46] B Lcf. Considering that the shorter reading is only attested in a handful of manuscripts, the support of another early witness furnished by our version seems significant.

4.2 καὶ γάρ ἐσμεν εὐηγγελισμένοι καθάπερ κἀκεῖνοι· ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ὠφέλησεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους μὴ συγκεκερασμένους τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν

The sole difference between the Greek readings in this variation unit lies in an omission/ addition of a single letter (υ), and could well have arisen coincidentally.[35] On the one hand, we have the majority reading συγκεκερασμένους (also favoured by our modern critical editions), found in 𝔓[13vid.46] A B C D K L P Ψ 0243 0278 33 81 365 630 1241 1505 1739 1881 2464 𝔐 ar t v vg[st.ww] sy[h]. On the other hand, the nominative singular form συγκεκερασμένος is attested in ℵ (104) b d vg[cl] sy[p] Lcf. Although a mechanical origin of the latter is very likely, the consequent change in meaning is rather stark. With the accusative plural reading, the message is not to have benefited 'those who were not united in faith with those who listened'. By contrast, the nominative singular would imply that the message did not benefit them 'because it was not united by faith with the hearers'.[36] Interestingly, the Sahidic tradition is split here. Since the respective Sahidic readings are unlikely to have arisen by visual or phonetic confusion,[37] we probably have traces of a genuine revision against an alternative Greek reading in the intraversional transmission. Without a thorough reinvestigation of the Sahidic manuscript tradition, however, it seems difficult to determine in which direction this revision proceeded.

4.3a Εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καθὼς εἴρηκεν· ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων

The NA[28] text here follows the majority of witnesses in reading the indicative form εἰσερχόμεθα. According to the apparatus, Codices Alexandrinus and Ephraemi

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[33] The Bohairic version follows suit at this point.

[34] Often it is the ensuing context that gives rise to harmonisations. Cf. D. Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (TS 3.5; Piscataway: Gorgias, 2007) 245–6; P. Malik, *P.Beatty III (P[47]): The Codex, its Scribe, and its Text* (NTTSD 52; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017) 143. Harmonisation to the immediate context was one of the major factors in the rise of textual variation. For a general discussion, see 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* (ed. E. C. Colwell; NTTS 9; Leiden: Brill, 1969) 106–24, at 113. Important corroborating evidence from the six early Christian extensive papyri is furnished in Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 189–94, 343–53, 396–7, 537–41, 605–8, 692–6, 902–6.

[35] By contrast, Weiss, *Textkritik*, 52 posits that the accusative plural arose by a grammatical attraction to ἐκείνους.

[36] So BDAG, s.v. συγκεράννυμι 2.

[37] The entire Sahidic clause reads as follows: ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ ⲡϣⲁϫⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ϯϩⲏⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲏ ⟨ⲛ̄ϥⲕⲩⲣⲁ ⲁⲛ / ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲕⲉⲣⲁ ⲁⲛ⟩ ϩⲙ̄ ⲧⲡⲓⲥⲧⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄.

Rescriptus have a hortatory subjunctive εἰσερχώμεθα, which is probably a phonetic error.[38] To complicate matters further still, the Sahidic (like the Bohairic) contains the future construction ⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ('we will come'). Rather than postulating the existence of a now-lost Greek variant, it seems more likely that the Coptic translators followed a source text with the present indicative, interpreting it as a 'futuristic present'.[39] Even so, given the lack of formal correspondence, it might be most prudent to refrain from citing the Coptic versions in this variant unit.

4.3b Εἰσερχόμεθα <u>γὰρ</u> εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καθὼς εἴρηκεν· ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων

In this particular instance, we are dealing with a substitution of discourse particles. NA[28] reports the following variants:

οὖν ℵ A C 0243 0278 81 104 365 1739 1881 2464 vg^ms
δὲ sy^p
γὰρ 𝔓^{13.46} B D K L P Ψ 33 630 1241 1505 𝔐 lat sy^h

The apparatus lacks any reference to the Coptic versions, which seems peculiar given that one of the aforementioned readings appears to be supported by the Peshitta alone. Although Coptic translators occasionally did take some licence in rendering Greek loanwords, several discourse particles such as γάρ and οὖν are rendered with solid consistency.[40] And, indeed, the Sahidic contains the loanword ⲅⲁⲣ, thus most likely reflecting the text of the earliest witnesses as well as the Byzantine majority.[41]

4.6 ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι' <u>ἀπείθειαν</u>
4.11 Σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς <u>ἀπειθείας</u>

At 4.6 and 4.11, there is an interchange of the terms ἀπείθεια and ἀπιστία,[42] the latter of which seems to be the earlier reading.[43] In v. 6, ἀπιστίαν is read by 𝔓^46 ℵ* lat, and in v. 11 the support is limited to 𝔓^46 104 lat sy^h. Now, the Sahidic renders the Greek with ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ, whose lexical meaning is, in fact, 'unbelief'. And, indeed, this is how Horner renders this word in his English translation.[44] It would be a mistake, however, to presume that the Sahidic *ipso facto* supports ἀπιστία. As it turns out, our version

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[38] See F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. I: *Phonology*, vol. II: *Morphology* (Testi e Documenti per lo Studio dell'Antichità 55; Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino – La Goliardica, 1976–81) I.275–7. The same cause may be attributed to the origin of 12.28/10 and 12.28/18, both discussed below.

[39] The same shift takes place in several strands of the Vetus Latina, including the Vulgate. On this interpretation, see further Attridge, *Hebrews*, 126 and references there (esp. n. 46). Note, however, that Attridge – rightly, in my mind – rejects the futuristic interpretation of εἰσερχόμεθα, arguing that the present indicative refers to 'the complex process on which "believers" … are even now engaged, although this process will have an eschatological consummation'.

[40] Cf. Malik, *P.Beatty III*, 204.

[41] By contrast, the Bohairic reads ⲟⲩⲛ, reflecting the text of Alexandrinus, Ephraemi Rescriptus and a handful of other not insignificant manuscripts.

[42] At 4.11, there is also a variant ἀληθείας, attested (as it seems) only in D*.

[43] See further Attridge, *Hebrews*, 123.

[44] Incidentally, this led Moffatt, *Hebrews*, lxx to cite the Coptic versions for the reading ἀπιστίαν.

renders every single occurrence of ἀπείθεια in this way;[45] we are thus dealing with a linguistic feature of the version rather than a genetic agreement.[46] Therefore, since we cannot determine the source text behind the Sahidic rendering, the version cannot be cited at this point.[47]

> 7.21 ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὁρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν· ὤμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται· σὺ ἱερεὺς <u>εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα</u>

Here we have a variation between a shorter form and a longer reading that fully conforms to the Septuagint wording of Ps 109.4 by inserting κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ at the end of the verse. The former is currently the standard critical text, being attested by 𝔓⁴⁶ (ℵ*) B C 0278 33 81 629 2464 lat. By contrast, the latter appears in ℵ² A D K L P Ψ 104 365 630 1175 1241 1505 1739 1881 𝔐 vg^mss sy Eus. Since, as usual, versional citations are easiest to establish in the case of longer additions or omissions, the Sahidic support may be cited unproblematically for the shorter reading.[48] This being the case, the Sahidic bolsters the early support for this variant, whose external evidence is otherwise quantitatively weaker.

> 7.28 ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν <u>ἀρχιερεῖς</u> ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὁρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον

Most of the Greek manuscripts read ἀρχιερεῖς, which also happens to be the initial text in NA²⁸. Conversely, a small group of witnesses (D* I^vid sy^p) offer an alternative reading ἱερεῖς.[49] Now, the NA²⁸ apparatus also cites the Sahidic at this point, which might seem warranted on the surface, given that the version clearly includes the term 'priest' (ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ) here and that, normally, the Sahidic translator of Hebrews renders ἀρχιερεύς with the loanword ⲁⲣⲭⲓⲉⲣⲉⲩⲥ (2.17; 3.1; 4.14, 15; 5.1, 5, 10; 7.26, 27; 8.1, 3; 9.7, 11, 25; 13.11). Nevertheless, there is one notable exception: at 6.20, despite the lack of variation in the Greek, we have the same Coptic word ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ as in 7.28. Although the predominant pattern is, admittedly, to render the term with formal equivalence, the fact that the Sahidic translator was willing to depart from this practice does not inspire confidence. At least, the citation should be furnished with a question mark to highlight the potential problem.

> 9.2a σκηνὴ γὰρ κατεσκευάσθη ἡ πρώτη ἐν ᾗ ἥ τε λυχνία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις <u>τῶν ἄρτων,</u> ἥτις λέγεται Ἅγια
> 9.4 <u>χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον</u> καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης περικεκαλυμμένην πάντοθεν χρυσίῳ, ἐν ᾗ στάμνος χρυσῆ ἔχουσα τὸ μάννα καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος Ἀαρὼν ἡ βλαστήσασα καὶ αἱ πλάκες τῆς διαθήκης

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[45] Cf. Rom 11.30, 11.32; Eph 2.2, 5.6. At Col 3.6, the Sahidic drops the entire segment ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας with 𝔓⁴⁶ B b.

[46] That ⲁⲧⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ was sometimes used to render ἀπειθεῖν is also noted in W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939) s.v. ⲛⲁϩⲧⲉ II.

[47] The same applies to the Bohairic.

[48] Interestingly, however, the Bohairic version is (roughly) equally split, thus supporting both competing variants.

[49] Note that NA²⁸ cites 𝔓⁴⁶vid for this reading, but this seems dubious. Most of the line where this word once stood is defective, hence only a few letters are genuinely legible. As it is, there do appear to be traces of a letter similar to chi, so that the papyrus may have read ἀρχιερεῖς just as likely.

Inherent difficulties regarding the contents of the sanctuary occasioned the addition of καὶ τὸ χρυσοῦν θυμιατήριον in v. 2, followed by an omission of the golden incense altar in 4.[50] Currently, the only early Greek witness attesting shift is the fourth-century Codex Vaticanus. Interestingly, however, two Sahidic manuscripts cited by Horner agree with 03's singular reading, while two further manuscripts render the majority reading.[51] Moreover, Thompson's edition also reads against the majority, with no variation noted – hence two further early Sahidic witnesses supporting Vaticanus. How are we to assess the split Sahidic witness? On internal grounds, it would seem that a secondary revision based on a more prevalent text form is more likely than vice versa, so that the initial Sahidic reading may well have agreed with Vaticanus. And secondly, although our version is split at this point, the fact that the agreement with Vaticanus' singular reading is genetic seems beyond dispute.[52] Here we see the usefulness of a versional testimony in cancelling the reading's singular status, that is, the status of being unique to the manuscript in question. In other words, one should not ascribe the origin of these two variants to the scribe of 03, but rather to a tradition that led to his text – be it his *Vorlage* or, more probably, a more remote ancestor. If the Sahidic translation of Hebrews predates the production of 03, then the age of these variants increases by almost a century (at least).

9.2b σκηνὴ γὰρ κατεσκευάσθη ἡ πρώτη ἐν ᾗ ἥ τε λυχνία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων, ἥτις λέγεται Ἅγια

The difficulties involved in the description of the tabernacle continue to loom in the identification of the sanctuary and the concomitant textual variation. According to NA[28], we have four main variants, three of which are more sparsely attested:

ἁγία 365 629 b vg[mss]
τὰ ἄγια B
ἄγια ἁγίων 𝔓[46] A D* vg[mss]
ἄγια D[2] K L 0278 33 81 104 630 1241 1505 1739 1881 2464 𝔐 (*sine acc.* ℵ D[1] I P)

The citation of the Sahidic version is absent from the apparatus and, in this case, rightly so. The Sahidic reads ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ('those that are holy'), thus rendering one of the shorter variants involving neuter plural. Nevertheless, it is impossible to be any more specific: the Coptic cannot possibly reflect the distinction between an anarthrous and definite noun in this case, as it does not use an indefinite or zero article in relative constructions such as this one.[53] For this reason, the Sahidic cannot be cited in the related variation unit at 9.3, where the main distinction lies in an inclusion/exclusion of the article.[54]

9.11 Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν <u>γενομένων</u> ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειοτέρας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως

Most Greek manuscripts read μελλόντων, which probably arose as a harmonisation to 10.1. Hence, the majority of modern critics have tended towards the variant γενομένων, attested in 𝔓⁴⁶ B D* 1739 sy⁽ᵖ⁾·ʰ.[55] Given the stark shift in sense, aligning the evidence of our version proves rather straightforward: the Sahidic text reads ⲛⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ('the good things that will be'), clearly rendering the majority reading.[56] At a text-historical level, the value of the Sahidic support is significant, considering that, along with the Latin, it provides further early witness for the reading that caught on in the mainstream tradition.

10.1a Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, <u>οὐκ αὐτὴν</u> τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἃς προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι

The only variant which the NA²⁸ records here is καί, found (apparently) in 𝔓⁴⁶ alone.[57] Notwithstanding a few other minor variations,[58] the vast majority of witnesses read οὐκ αὐτήν. Although the Sahidic does not render the intensive pronoun, the wording ⲛ̄ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛ clearly follows the contrastive sense of the majority reading.[59]

10.1b Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἃς προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς οὐδέποτε <u>δύναται</u> τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι

In this particular instance, the variant reading preferred in our modern critical editions is the singular δύναται, found in 𝔓⁴⁶ D*.² H K Lˢ 0285 326 365 629 630 1739 1881 *pm* f r vg. From a quantitative standpoint, the support for the plural δύνανται is no less substantive: ℵ A C D¹ P 0278 33 81 104 614 1241 1505 *pm* ar b z* vgᵐˢ sy. While both readings are backed by weighty external evidence, the plural clearly strains the syntax here: it links the inability to perfect those who draw near to the sacrifices rather than to the law, resulting in an anacoluthon.[60] Curiously, the witness of the Coptic versions is lacking in the NA²⁸ apparatus for this variation unit, even though the plural is clearly present in both (ⲉⲙⲛ̄ ϭⲟⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ / ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲛ ϣϫⲟⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ). Needless to say, the citation of the Sahidic (as well as Bohairic) would seem warranted in the critical apparatus at this point.

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[55] See e.g. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 119, who considers μελλόντων to be the more difficult reading, while Attridge, *Hebrews*, 244 notes that it might be ascribed to a 'misunderstanding of the relationship between the "present time" and the "time of correction" in vss 9–10'. A similar line of argument had already been pursued by Weiss, *Textkritik*, 31. On the other hand, Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 244 argues that it is μελλόντων that was altered 'either owing to a scribe being misled by παραγένομενος or owing to a pious feeling that μελλόντων here (though not in 10.1) was too eschatological'.

[56] A similar rendering (ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲉⲑⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲓ) is found in the Bohairic.

[57] Cf. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 23, who includes this among instances of 'ingenious conjectures, witnessing to attentive study of the text and perfect command of the Greek language'. He adds: 'Our scribe found them in his copy and it is most unlikely that he should have been alone in propagating them.' In support of the latter remarks he adduces Merk's citations of Ephrem and Clement.

[58] See further Attridge, *Hebrews*, 267.

[59] The Bohairic's use of deixis (ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲓϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛ) may be a translational attempt at rendering αὐτήν with a more formal precision.

[60] So Attridge, *Hebrews*, 267. Cf. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 131, who regards the plural as a simple 'scribal slip'. See also Weiss, *Textkritik*, 37, who suggests the influence of δύνανται in v. 11 as a possible cause of the reading's origin.

10.17 <u>καὶ</u> τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι

In vv. 16–17, we have two Septuagint quotations from Jer 38.33 and 34, respectively. Since, as Harold Attridge observes, the introductory formula at the end of v. 15 lacks any resumptive clause before the second quotation, textual variants arose attempting to ameliorate this awkward transition.[61] Now, the shorter reading, which is rightly preferred by modern editors, appears in most witnesses. As for the two secondary variants, NA[28] cites 104 323 945 1739 1881 vg^{ms} sy^{hmg} sa in support of ὕστερον λέγει, while τότε εἴρηκεν is only attested in 1505 sy^{h}. The Sahidic wording ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ϣⲁϥϫⲟⲟⲥ ('afterwards he says') may be confidently aligned with the variant ὕστερον λέγει. Indeed, the Sahidic translators rendered τότε with the loanword ⲧⲟⲧⲉ in an impressively consistent manner,[62] with the result that ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ is more likely to reflect ὕστερον than τότε. Furthermore, the translator's choice of the aorist conjugation is probably meant to convey the timeless, gnomic sense of the present λέγει rather than the perfect εἴρηκεν, which partly encodes the saying in the past.[63] If this analysis holds, the Sahidic version provides the earliest support for this variant, and that by a considerable margin.

11.4a Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρὰ Κάϊν προσήνεγκεν <u>τῷ θεῷ</u>, δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ

This interesting, though poorly attested, omission of τῷ θεῷ seems like an ideal place for the citation of versional evidence. The only two witnesses that NA[28] cites for this variant are 𝔓[13] and Clement of Alexandria. Besides, an indirect line of evidence may come from 𝔓[46], which, though defective at this point, is likely to have omitted the two words considering the extent of the missing text.[64] As regards the Sahidic, it is particularly at places such as this that one would welcome an updated edition, since Horner's text here is based only on a single manuscript, which is partly defective at this point. Fortunately, Thompson's edition comes in useful, as it clearly contains ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ at the end of the clause – reflecting the majority reading.[65] A broader manuscript base would increase our confidence that this, in fact, is the initial Sahidic reading, but for now no other sensible alternative appears to be at our disposal.

11.4b Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρὰ Κάϊν προσήνεγκεν τῷ θεῷ, δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις <u>αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ</u>, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ

An interchange of cases in this variation unit results in marked shifts in meaning. The majority variant, which is also the initial text of NA[28], consists of two genitives: αὐτοῦ τοῦ

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[61] Atridge, *Hebrews*, 278.

[62] Of 139 occurrences in the Sahidic, τότε was probably rendered literally in 138 instances, the one exception being Heb 12.27, where ⲧⲟⲧⲉ results from a phonetic confusion of τὸ δέ. For further details, see Malik, *P.Beatty III*, 162–5.

[63] Cf. Layton, *Grammar*, §337, who notes that the Coptic aorist 'often co-occurs with the discourse perspective of timeless truth … so as to express generalizations and gnomic assertions about habitual actions or propensities; and about what does or does not, will or will not, can or cannot, did or did not, happen by nature'.

[64] So F. G. Kenyon, ed., *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, vol. III: *Pauline Epistles, Plates* (London: Emery Walker, 1937), who notes in the Preface: 'Fortasse omittendum τω θ̄ω̄, ut 𝔓[13], propter spatium.' See Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 33, who, in fact, regards the omission as original, noting that, in Hebrews, the otherwise frequently occurring verb προσφέρειν is never accompanied by a direct reference to God – save for this instance.

[65] The Bohairic, too, supports the longer reading.

θεοῦ. On this reading, αὐτοῦ is either an intensive or a possessive marker. Two further variants appear, and each shifts one of the genitives to the dative: αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, attested in ℵ* A D* 33 326; and αὐτῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, attested in 𝔓¹³ᶜ zᶜ Cl. Though Horner's text is partly lacunose, it is clear that αὐτοῦ was in the source text, since the possessive determinator ⲛⲉϥ is still intact. It appears, then, that the translator understood αὐτοῦ to be in a possessive relationship with the preceding δώροις ('his gifts') rather than an intensive linked with τοῦ θεοῦ ('God himself').[66] Furthermore, the relative converter comes right before a lacuna that would accommodate the entire word ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ and part of ⲣ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲉ, the latter half of which is still partly legible. Thus, the Sahidic wording ⲉⲣⲉ [ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲣ̄ⲙⲛ̄]ⲧⲣⲉ renders the genitive absolute μαρτυροῦντος … τοῦ θεοῦ,[67] and should be cited for the reading αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ along with the Bohairic.

11.37 ἐλιθάσθησαν, <u>ἐπρίσθησαν</u>, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρης ἀπέθανον, περιῆλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι

At this particular point, the Greek manuscript tradition is starkly split. According to NA²⁸, there are four main variants that merit attention:

ἐπειρασθησαν ἐπρίσθησαν ℵ L P 048 33 81 326 1505 syʰ boᵐˢ
ἐπρίσθησαν ἐπειράσθησαν 𝔓¹³ᵛⁱᵈ A D⁽*⁾·¹ K Ψ 104 365 630 1739 1881 *l*249 𝔐 lat bo Orᵖᵗ
ἐπειράσθησαν 0150 vgᵐˢˢ Cl
ἐπρίσθησαν 𝔓⁴⁶ 1241 syᵖ sa Orᵖᵗ Eus

As seen above, the apparatus cites the Sahidic for ἐπρίσθησαν, the current critical text. Granted, on the surface the Sahidic text does render this word, as no reference to temptation is made therein. What is noteworthy, however, is that our version shifts the word order, so that ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲁⲥⲧⲟⲩ ('they were sawn') actually precedes ⲁⲩϩⲓⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ('they were stoned'). The transposition may be plausibly explained as a scribal leap (ⲁⲩ … ⲟⲩ ⲁⲩ … ⲟⲩ) corrected *in scribendo*.[68] If this is the case, it is even conceivable that the source text of the Sahidic, in fact, contained a longer reading, so that the translator unwittingly omitted the reference to temptation due to parablepsis. Naturally, it is impossible to substantiate this hypothesis, but such a change in word order should, at least, make us aware that the Sahidic witness here is not as straightforward as we might assume on perusing the critical apparatus.

12.11 πᾶσα <u>δὲ</u> παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρὸν οὐ δοκεῖ χαρᾶς εἶναι ἀλλὰ λύπης, ὕστερον δὲ καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν τοῖς δι' αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις ἀποδίδωσιν δικαιοσύνης

In our foregoing discussion, we have already encountered variation involving discourse particles. This is another noteworthy instance. At 12.11, most witnesses read πᾶσα δὲ παιδεία κτλ., δέ being the expected particle, given its main discourse function as a development marker.[69] The contrastive μέν … δέ construction follows immediately after: πρὸς

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[66] As noted earlier, this is a legitimate translation and it appears in several widely used modern English versions including NIV, ESV and NET. Interestingly, NRSV includes both 'God himself' and 'his gifts', probably ascribing possessive force to the article before δώροις. Incidentally, an intensive rendering 'himself' is also favoured by Attridge, *Hebrews*, 305.

[67] This reconstruction agrees fully with the text of Thompson's edition. Thus, unless new evidence brings a more radical rewording, we may be confident regarding the Sahidic support for the majority reading.

[68] On this common scribal tendency, see Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 755–6; Colwell, 'Scribal Habits', 116.

[69] S. E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010) 28–36.

μὲν τὸ παρὸν … ὕστερον δὲ κτλ. And in a small number of witnesses, the initial δέ is substituted or dropped altogether. The NA²⁸ apparatus lists the following support for each reading:

μέν ℵ* P 33 1739 1881 (d z)
τέ 630
om. D* 048. 104
δέ 𝔓¹³·⁴⁶ ℵ² A D² H K L Ψ 81 365 1175 1241 1505 𝔐 lat sy Aug

Now, δέ is clearly the initial text: μέν most likely originated as a harmonisation to the immediate context (there are two occurrences in vv. 10–11, the latter being just three words after the present variation unit),[70] and one would be hard pressed to construe it meaningfully at the level of discourse. How does the Sahidic witness fit in? As already noted, the citation of versions for discourse particles may be precarious, as reflected in their sparse inclusion in the NA²⁸ apparatus at this point. Even so, it seems clear that the Sahidic, though not cited in NA²⁸, follows the distribution of particles in the mainstream text (ⲥⲃⲱ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ … ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲛ … ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ⲇⲉ …). While the possibility of translational freedom cannot be dismissed entirely, in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, the presence of ⲇⲉ in the Sahidic ought to be regarded as genetic.[71]

12.28a Διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες <u>ἔχωμεν</u> χάριν, δι᾽ ἧς λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους

We have already encountered the interchange between indicative and subjunctive forms at 4.3a above. Here we have another occurrence of such variation, although, in this particular case, each of the readings is supported somewhat more evenly:

ἔχωμεν 𝔓⁴⁶ᶜ A C D L Ψ 0243 81 630 1175 1241 1739 𝔐 ar b vg^mss
ἔχομεν 𝔓⁴⁶* ℵ K P 6 33 104 326 365 629 1505 1881 lat

Both Sahidic and Bohairic versions reflect the Greek subjunctive, rendering it by means of the jussive conjugation base. Since the target language has sufficient grammatical means to render both the indicative and the hortatory subjunctive,[72] we can cite the Sahidic here with a good measure of confidence.

12.28b Διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες <u>ἔχωμεν</u> χάριν, δι᾽ ἧς λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους

 A shift similar to that in the previous variation unit occurs just a few words later. The evidence recorded in the NA²⁸ apparatus is as follows:

λατρεύσωμεν 𝔓⁴⁶ bo
λατρεύομεν ℵ (Ψ) 0243 0285^vid 1739 1881 𝔐
λατρεύωμεν A D L 048 33 326 latt sa bo^ms

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[70] So already Weiss, *Textkritik*, 66.

[71] In a similar vein, the same sequence of particles appears in the Bohairic, which is also not cited in the NA²⁸ apparatus. Incidentally, this exclusion of Coptic is particularly odd here, given the citation of Latin as well as Syriac.

[72] On the Sahidic jussive, see Layton, *Grammar*, §340, who defines it as expressing 'a command to one or more 1st or 3d person entities (jussive command)'. This usage fits squarely with the semantics of the Greek hortatory subjunctive.

The Sahidic renders the Greek verb with the conjunctive ⲛ̄ⲧⲛ̄ϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ, a grammatical feature that inherently does not encode temporal or modal information but rather expresses a close connection of the clause to that which precedes it.[73] Although, in theory, the translator may have used the conjunctive to convey the continuation of the subjunctive modality in the Greek *Vorlage* (ἔχωμεν … λατρεύωμεν), this cannot be ascertained by any means. What the Coptic certainly cannot do is to distinguish between the Greek present and aorist subjunctives. It is remarkable, therefore, that the NA[28] apparatus should cite the Sahidic for λατρεύωμεν, given that another subjunctive option appears in the variant spectrum.[74] All in all, in cases like this the citation of the Coptic versions is best avoided.

3. Conclusion

In the course of our discussion, we have observed numerous ways in which the Sahidic evidence comes into play when studying the textual variation in Hebrews. On occasions, our analysis has yielded positive results in uncovering new, or substantiating the already cited, support for respective Greek readings in some cases, whereas in other cases the previously posited agreements did not hold up to a closer scrutiny. Further, in several variant units, the Sahidic has been shown to bolster the already compelling external evidence for given variants, while at other times it provides early, or even the earliest, support for otherwise sparsely attested readings. The latter is particularly significant, as it highlights the enduring importance of versional evidence for the task of New Testament textual criticism. Indeed, it was most likely in the earliest centuries of transmission that most of our textual variants originated, but it was also in this period that the manuscript tradition suffered greatest material losses. Hence, further windows into the early transmission provided by versions are unlikely to lose their relevance – even if more substantive early Greek evidence should come to light. It is all the more important, therefore, to study versional evidence with proper methodological rigour, giving particular heed to transmissional and linguistic factors. It is hoped that this study will contribute to that ongoing task.

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[73] See Layton, *Grammar*, §352. Particularly instructive is his observation that 'the closeness between conjunctive and preceding verb varies from relatively looser sequential, consequential, cumulative, or synonymous relationships … to a much closer kind, with nuances of purpose and result' (p. 278).

[74] In a similar vein, the NA[28] apparatus cites bo for λατρεύσωμεν, where the Greek is rendered with a future tense ('we shall minister'), clearly exercising some degree of interpretive freedom. Likewise, the citation of bo[ms] for λατρεύωμεν seems untenable. In fact, the Bohairic construction ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁϣⲉⲙϣⲓ, which includes the future auxiliary, is more likely to reflect the indicative λατρεύομεν found in the majority of witnesses. This possibility seems especially appealing in view of the nature of the Coptic future; cf. Layton, *Grammar*, §311: 'the future auxiliary expresses an imminent future envisaged from the speaker's present, enduring situation'.