One or two cups: the shorter / longer text of Luke 22:17-20 yet again

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Anyone who addresses this question, yet again, should heed the warnings that are clearly displayed on much of the scholarly packaging! In 1993 Bart Ehrman wrote:

> … since the publication of Westcott and Hort's *New Testament in the Original Greek*, no textual problem or Luke's entire two-volume work has generated more critical debate – or, one might add, occasioned more scholarly confusion.[1]

Not only is there a vast array of solutions as to which is the 'original' text, but the fact that despite well over a century of ingenuity no solution has ever been able to claim dominance. This failure to find a compelling solution prompted Henry Chadwick to warn in 1957:

> The Lucan account [of the Last Supper] with its notorious difficulties of text and interpretation, the one being inextricably bound up with the other, has been the Waterloo of many investigators.[2]

When we then consider that there are no less that six variant forms of these verses,[3] surely prudence dictates that we give this problem a wide birth and thus avoid adding to the confusion or meeting one's Waterloo! However, while such a policy might seem prudent we do have a set of facts – the various readings that have come to use within the tradition – whose existence, as

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[1] *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford 1993), 197.

[2] 'The Shorter Text of Luke XXII. 15-20,' *Harvard Theological Review* 50(1957)249-58 at 249.

[3] Conveniently laid out as parallel columns in Greek in B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London 1975), 175 [and repeated verbatim in R.L. Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 2006), 148]; this chart of the variants is taken, 'with a few minor modifications,' from F.G. Kenyon and S.C.E. Legg, 'The Biblical Basis: The Textual Data' in R. Dunkerley ed., *Faith and Order Movement Continuation C: The Ministry and the Sacraments* (London 1937), 272-86 at 284 and 285.

manifestations of the thoughts of past readers/users of our text – merits our attention. Moreover, the honorand of this collection, David Parker, has himself discussed this problem in *The Living Text of the Gospels* as a text that illustrates some important ways in which the tradition was always in flux and so it seems that this is an ideal occasion to revisit it.[4]

The breadth of scholarly interest

A curious feature of this textual problem is the breadth of scholarly interest. Whereas most discussions of variant readings are solely the concern of that subsection of the biblical guild that deals with textual criticism, with an occasional visit from other disciplines when a variant is perceived to be theologically awkward, this variant attracts attentions from across the spectrum of Christian theological scholarship. We should not be surprised that the variants attract some attention from those writing commentaries on Luke – here is a real problem regarding the relationship of Luke to his source (invariably taken as Mark) – and these variants may show differences of emphasis between Luke and the other early writers who mention the Last Supper.[5]

Perhaps more surprising is that these variants play a part in quests for the historical Jesus.[6] It then emerges in a sub-section of that quest: searchers after the historical Last Supper. Does the Longer Text contain an echo of the actual ritual of the Passover as celebrated in Palestine in the period before 70?[7] If so, then it not only points to that Supper being a Passover, but is a detail supporting a variety of historical claims for the gospel of Luke's

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[4] Cambridge 1997, 151-7.
[5] See the bibliography on Lk 22:15-20 – much of it devoted to the textual question – in F. Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53* (Minneapolis, MN 2012), 148-52.
[6] For example J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (Edinburgh 1991), 363-5, 403, and 425; or J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York, NY 1991), 399 and 427.
[7] This begins with B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek* (Cambridge and London 1881), Appendix, pp. 63-5, where Westcott sought the evidence for the originality of the longer text in its apparent reflection of Jewish practice as observed in the Mishnah.

picture of [the historical] Jesus.[8] The search for the historical Last Supper elides with another strand of scholarship – itself abutting doctrinal theology – which is concerned with the origins of a Christian institution: the Eucharist.

For this latter group, these variants – usually simplified to a chose between a 'longer' and a 'shorter' text - is not simply a textual problem in a gospel but point to a variation within an 'Institution Narrative' – a notion itself laden with history - such that the texts' contents are not of merely historical interest, but the result if the question is somehow normative for on-going Christian practice. As a witness to early Christian practice the variants could be seen as either mandating or undermining a particular ritual, or perhaps offering a different image from which liturgical practice (whose integrity is guaranteed *a priori*) needs to be isolated.[9] This range of interests and perspectives should alert us that with this textual problem there is a correspondingly wide range of latent assumptions at work in our discussions.

The quest for 'the original' and its pitfalls

A point that may seem so wide-ranging as to be a truism is, nonetheless, relevant at the outset. We have a very deep sense – not only as scholars or committed users of these texts but as human beings – that we can rely on the notion that diversity is subsequent to unity. It seems not only an historical fact, but a logical necessity, that if there is a disagreement on the question

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[8] A recent form of this debate is the question about whether or not there is evidence in the early Christian documents for there being a *Seder* in pre-70 CE Palestinian Judaism: see, for example, J. Kulp, 'The Origins of Seder and Haggadah,' *Currents in Biblical Research* 4(2005)109-34; or J. Marcus, 'Passover and Last Supper Revisited,' *New Testament Studies* 59(2013)303-34; which, in turn, reflect a theme in Jewish liturgical studies that sometimes invokes evidence from the Jesus movement, such as B.M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (New York, NY 1984).

[9] The liturgical scholars invariably cite the textual scholars; but the New Testament scholars often find themselves relying on liturgical 'certainties' (e.g. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London 1966), p. 157 states that 'a Lord's Supper in the order wine-bread (Luke 22.17-19a) ... has never happened.).

'how many cups were blessed at the Last Supper,' then there must be a single answer, and any variations from that answer must be later in its appearance. This assumption takes several forms. The most familiar form is the quest for the 'original text' of the gospel[10] – the great quest for 'the original Greek' – such that there must be a single autograph reading which is subsequently changed in some way. Even many of those who are sceptical as to the certainty that can be attached to any claim to have obtained 'the original' through a process of editing may still be firmly wedded to the notion that there was such a reality (albeit one now irrecoverably lost). But what of the possibility that the gospel's text was initially support for an oral performance? Or perhaps there were several 'editions' that were adapted by the evangelist to different situations?

But there is also the version of the 'original' argument that is based upon the events of the life of Jesus: if there are two contradictory accounts of one event, one of them must be wrong. This is logically certain – it is no more than a reformulation of the Law of Contradiction – but it is historically vapid. We cannot observe once again that moment, consequently we are thrown back on transmitted accounts and so to the question: is one of them to be trusted as 'original'? Moreover, once we recognise that we access history through memory, we must confront the reality that the whole account of the Last Supper is a community memory picking out its salience in the recounters' now, rather than some sort of primitive video-footage of the event.

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[10] This pursuit has been examined not only by the honorand of this volume in *The Living Text of the Gospels*; but has been studied by E.J. Epp in several articles: 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text" in New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 92(1999) 245-81; 'Issues in New Testament Textual Criticism moving from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century' in D.A. Black ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI 2002), 17-76 [with additional notes in: *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism. Collected Essays, 1962-2004* (Leiden 2005), 641-97]; and 'It's All about Variants: A Variant-Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 100,3(2007)275-308.

But surely we can proceed within memory to an original structure? If we can know what a Passover meal was like at the time and be sure that that supper was such a meal, then we would have an original format; and could judge the originality of the differing accounts. This is the logic of Westcott's argument, but it fails because we cannot have this level of certainty for the pre-70 period. Moreover, if the later Jewish structures for the Seder (now obviously a ritual with instructions) show accommodation to Greco-Roman meal practices, then the same lever of accommodation could be true of Luke or an adapter of Luke. A related argument, this one from within memory, builds on the notion that because ritual is repetitious, then the structures repeated are stable, and that which departs from them is the alternative to the original. This quest for fundamental form of the repetition has almost as long a history as the quest for the original Greek; and for generations two statements have been presented as axioms. The first is that the Eucharist has 'a four-fold structure' of taking / blessing / breaking / sharing: here we have a pattern that allows us to glimpse the original architecture before confusing accretions.[11] The second is that the sequence of blessings at a Eucharist (imagined with the ritual fixity of Renaissance books mandating precise details) was first bread, then cup – surely here is a datum against which variation could be judged.[12] But just as the notion of a pre-70 CE Seder is no

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[11] This approach reached its apogee with Gregory Dix (*The Share of the Liturgy*, London 1945) who expressed it thus:

> The New Testament accounts of that supper as they stand in the received text present us with a 'seven-action scheme' of the rite then inaugurated. Our Lord (1) took bread; (2) 'gave thanks' over it; (3) broke it; (4) distributed it, saying certain words. Later, He (5) took a cup; (6) 'gave thanks' over that; (7) handed it to His disciples, saying certain words (p. 48).

Given this statement, one would expect Dix to have opted for the shorter form of Luke, but this presented him with yet other problems with regard to his certainties about the structure of a *chaburah* meal at the time of Jesus, and so regarding the shorter text he wrote: 'Yet I cannot persuade myself that it represents exactly what the author originally wrote' (p. 62n).

[12] The most explicit form of this reliance can be found in Jeremias (see note above), but such reliance is widespread and can be seen

longer certain, both of these liturgical 'original' forms have become suspect. The second axiom – 'a Lord's Supper in the order wine-bread (Luke 22.17-19a) ... has never happened'[13] – was effectively destroyed on the discovery of the *Didache* – even if there was a fierce rear-guard action to defend 'the Eucharist' from its implications for much of the twentieth century,[14] by the device of assuming a distinction between 'a eucharist' and 'an agape.'[15] Similarly, the notion of a fundamental shape has disappeared from recent studies[16] which have attended to the sheer variety of early Christian evidence for their behaviour at meals,[17] especially since the now standard element of Christian experience of the Eucharist as but a token meal (or a 'ritual meal') is itself later than the earliest evidence we can adduce for the variations in Luke.[18]

Another set of variations on this original liturgy approach is that which sees the Eucharist as such a central element in Christian understanding that its 'institution' (a notion based on another myth of originality) would have loomed so large in the minds of those involved that muddle would be impossible until that later confusion arising from – depending on perspective – either heresy or the establishment of orthodoxy. A common form of this is the notion that what we actually have in the early references to

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by the frequency that terms of sacramental theology appear in textual discussions.

[13] Joachim Jeremias – place already cited.

[14] T. O'Loughlin, 'Reactions to the *Didache* in Early Twentieth-century Britain: A Dispute over the Relationship of History and Doctrine?' in S.J. Brown, F. Knight, and J. Morgan-Guy eds, *Religion, Identity and Conflict in Britain: From the Restoration to the Twentieth Century. Essays in Honour of Keith Robbins* (Farnham 2013), 177-94.

[15] A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford 1999), 21-2.

[16] P.F. Bradshaw and M.E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (London 2012) for a recent statement of this approach.

[17] D.E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis, MN 2003).

[18] C. Leonhard, 'Morning salutations and the Decline of Sympotic Eucharists in the Third Century,' *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 18(2014)420-42.

the meal (be that 1 Cor 11:23-6 or Mk 14:22-5) is an echo of liturgy and that these words – now the language often subtly changes from 'words' to 'institution narrative' or even 'formula of consecration': both terms with fixed significance in later Christian theology but with little value for the early centuries – reflect a precious tradition that maintains the tradition's links with its origin. The longer text of Luke was especially problematic for this position for, on the one hand, the internal logic of the position meant that its actual variety meant that it had to be un-original. On the other hand, its virtual ubiquity in the tradition coupled with its inclusion of 'do this in memory of me' (not found in the Codex Bezae or Vetus Latina variants) – and otherwise not found in a gospel but only in 1 Cor 11:24 – meant that that they wanted to hold the longer form as original. That there is no basis for imagining an actual ritual text underlying Paul or the gospels,[19] nor indeed any basis for holding that 'an institution narrative' was part of the earliest strands of Christian euchology[20] fatally undermined this whole approach to 'the original Eucharist.'

Bart Ehrman and the later diversity

The last variation on the quest for the original is that which underlies Bart Ehrman's suggestion that the longer form is a deliberate changing of the original to counter docetic presentations of Jesus and also to assert that the inclusion of 'which is for you' points to concern over whose body and blood has brought salvation.[21] Ehrman's examination of the question is by far the most comprehensive recent treatment, and I note the words of David Parker:

> I for one have always preferred the shorter text, but more by instinct than from a thoroughly worked out argument and (because of the majority opinion) slightly

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[19] A.B. McGowan, '"Is there a Liturgical Text in this Gospel?": The Institution Narratives and their Early Interpretative Communities,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118(1999)73-87.
[20] The fundamental work is that of L. Ligier, 'The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer,' *Studia Liturgica* 9(1973)161-85 – and this has sparked a revolution among liturgists in terms of their study of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* and, indeed, the *Didache*.
[21] *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford 1993), 197-209.

> shamefacedly. I am delighted that a doughty champion has now sprung to the aid of the shorter text. Its defence by Ehrman in *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* is brilliant. Here is overwhelming evidence for the other side.[22]

At this stage I wish to be explicit that if I am taking issue with Bart Ehrman on these verses in Luke, I do not wish my comments to be seen as an oblique attack on his approach or the larger thesis that the orthodoxy of the patristic period was itself a construct that has left its imprints not only on the scriptural text, but across the expanse of Christian inheritance, but rather that in this case there might be a simpler explanation of how the various practices and, later, attitudes to the text have left us evidence in the variants we possess.

Diversity precedes unity?

One of the recurrent themes in early Christian studies over recent decades has been that far from Jesus' followers constituting a consistent and uniform movement, it was a not only a fractured movement but one, which even when not split between those who might shout for Paul or Apollos (cf. 1 Cor 1:12), incorporating many strands of inheritance. Moreover, we could begin by noting that Christianity was a practice – a manner of living the Law among Jewish-Christians and a way of righteousness for gentile-Christians long before it was a body of texts – as distinct from 'the scriptures' (i.e. what would become 'the Old Testament') – much less a body of doctrine. Part of that practice was gathering for the Christian meal at which certain routines were observed – such as a blessing over a cup and loaf[23] – and certain practices were presented as an ideal to be observed – such as provision for the poor and a transcending of social hierarchy.[24] That the

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[22] *The Living Text*, p. 155.

[23] I will use 'loaf' rather than 'bread' because the interest in the pre-scholastic period was on the object that was broken – a loaf – rather than on the stuff – bread as a *substantia*; cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'Translating *Panis* in a Eucharistic Context: A Problem of Language and Theology,' *Worship* 78(2004)226-35.

[24] Cf. R. Jewett, 'Gospel and Commensality: Social and Theological Implications of Galatians 2.14' in L.A. Jarvis & P. Richardson eds, *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (Sheffield 1994),240-52; and H.W.

community meal was part of the practice is seen in the references to it in virtually every document from late 50s (Paul) to c.150 (Justin).[25] At the same time, concerns that the practice of this meal in actual communities was not reflecting what should be the values of those communities can be seen explicitly in Paul's concerns in 1 Cor, and by implication in several other documents.[26] We also know that there was diversity in this practice. In some places the sequences of blessings was over the loaf followed by that over the cup, in other places the reverse.[27] Some used a cup of wine, others water.[28] In some cases it may have been a very simple meal, in others an elaborate affair; and just as the Seder used some of 'the meal grammar' of the symposium without becoming identified with it,[29] so too the Christian communities found themselves imagining and performing their practices using the meal grammar of their surroundings.[30]

At this point we need to recall two aspects of any repeated community practice because a group's memory of shared doing differ significantly from its memory of shared ideas. Our embodied memories of practice are amongst our most important shared memories.[31] This is illustrated in many ways in the literature on collective memory, but one example of this persistence can stand for all. Paul celebrated Pentecost, it was a

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Hollander, 'The Idea of Fellowship in 1 Corinthians 10.14-22,' *New Testament Studies* 55(2009)456-70.

[25] Cf. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*.

[26] Cf. P.-B. Smit, 'A Symposiastic Background to James?' *New Testament Studies* 58(2011)105-22.

[27] The classic contrast of the *Didache*'s order of blessings with that found in Mark is the clearest evidence: see below.

[28] McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, assembled virtually all the evidence.

[29] Cf. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder*, 50-66: in arguing that the post-70 Seder was not a symposium, he shows how it adapted the then current culture of dining.

[30] Cf. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 279-87 who shows how the culture of the symposium became part of Christian discourse about their meals.

[31] The work of P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge 1989) which emphasises embodied memories underpins the whole of my argument.

remembered shared activity and time, and it was an annual event that was dear to him (1 Cor 16:8). For him and so many others who grew up with this festival it was a practice that continued without interruption when they became followers of Jesus, it then spread through shared activity to others without the shared memory of it being part of a set of annual practices within Jewish time, until eventually it needed a new explanation, and so was re-purposed within this new group's historical myth as we see in Luke's works. Explanations changed, but year in and year out they, as a group, 'did Pentecost' without interruption. Practice endures even when its origins and original purposes are long forgotten. The second aspect of practices and memory relates to explanation: explanation follows from practice rather than it being a case that practical empirical events – a meal, a pilgrimage, a bodily stance while praying – are manifestations of doctrines. Our own theological training and the legacy of church disputes here occlude the evidence for us. Our training, if not our instincts, leads us to think of theological questions as belonging to the world of ideas, components within the edifice of Christian faith, which then can then become manifest in some practical expression. It is because of a certain belief, X, that we have this sensory expression, Y. But the historical evidence points in the opposite direction: people were committed (because that was their custom) to doing Y, and *then* asked 'why do we do this?' The reply now took the form 'because we believe X.' For the systematician doctrine may be manifested in liturgy; but, for the historian, ritual happens, and is then explained / justified / 'made sense of' with story or doctrine. This stability of practice – amid a variety of explanations – can be used to compare the variety of 'theologies' that we find over the range of early documents. Indeed, when we have a range or succession of conflicting theologies, the common link is often not some fundamental premise / doctrinal position, but a shared, settled practice.[32] David Parker has often stated that 'scripture is tradition'[33] and one dimension of this is that 'tradition is doing.' Repeated practices generate doctrine such that teaching,

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[32] This methodology was explored by É. Nodet and J. Taylor, *The Origins of Christianity: An Exploration* (Collegeville, MN 1998).
[33] 'Scripture is Tradition,' *Theology* 94(1991)11-7.

doctrina, is a function of community ritual.[34] How does this perspective affect our reading of the variants of Luke regarding the Christian supper?

If we think of the stories of the Last Supper as neither a direct echo of liturgy, nor as a detail about the final hours of Jesus but part of a myth explaining the churches' practice of eating together,[35] then just as we have a variety of practice, we should expect that that variety to be echoed in the stories.

Living communities, shared customs, living texts

Bart Ehrman began his analysis of the evidence thus:

> The New Testament manuscripts present Luke 22:19-21 in six different forms of text, four of which can be readily dismissed as altogether lacking adequate documentary support and internal claims to authenticity. Of the two remaining forms, one is conveniently labelled the 'shorter text" because it lacks verses 19b-20.[36]

But while this reduction of the evidence to two forms (i.e. the columns headed 'Majority Text' and 'Bezae et al.' in the chart below) makes good sense if we think about this as a matter of texts bearing theological significance, it hardly does justice to the fact that each reading was once used by an actual community and was transmitted as the memory of that community – or else we would not have the manuscript witnesses today.

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[34] It is instructive to note how this sequence of practice – theology is at variance with our predilection for a model of 'practical theology' as an expression of credal positions.

[35] That the stories of the Last Supper (both in Paul and the Synoptics) are explanations of practice rather than echoes of liturgy has been examined by McGowan, '"Is there a Liturgical Text in this Gospel?"; that the Last Supper formed an important interpretative myth – that which Paul delivered (cf. 1 Cor 11:23) – for the churches has been explored by numerous scholars, see, for example, H. Koester, *From Jesus to the Gospels: Interpreting the New Testament in its Context* (Minneapolis, MN 2007), 122-33, 211-24, and 285-91.

[36] *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, 198.

If we begin by looking at the Vetus Latina and Syriac evidence we should *concentrate on the actions* rather than on the words: there is a loaf followed by a cup. This sequence rather than being 'normative' – in the theologians' sense of a *norma normans* – was probably the most widespread sequence across the early communities. The variants' evidence alone reaches from west to east, and it lines up with the sequence we find in 1 Cor 11:23-6, Mk 14:22-5, and Mt 26:26-9. Now if we wanted to argue that this was a case of Luke's more difficult reading being harmonised to other New Testament accounts we should then point out (as has so often been done) that some these variants also have 'which is for you,' 'which is given for you,' and 'do this in remembrance of me.' But what if we were to think of Luke's gospel being used, perhaps we should say performed, in a church where this sequence was the normal practice at their Christian meal? Now it would not be a case of the text being harmonised to another text but of the text being conformed to group experience. The sequence in the text dovetails with their practice in the same way that any other performance of that community's memory (namely hearing the myth of their supper from Mt, Mk, or 1 Cor) would have cohered with their experienced routine. It is the embodied practice that is normative for them, the story explains this; and surviving textual evidence is our witness to it. We might note at this point that the Syriac evidence is as replete with incipient orthodoxy that Bart Ehrman claims for the majority text and that if one were to look to a conscious theological input, it would be at this point and context, in contrast to the Vetus Latina witness, that one should seek it.[37] However, it might be simpler just to assume that as the sequence was being harmonised, via practice, to the familiar; so too it picked up a phrase already familiar from 1 Cor 11:24.

Because the sequence loaf-cup became at some later point normative, in the strong sense, and then universal, we are apt to see the opposite as erratic or, indeed, impossible. However, the *Didache* takes the sequence of cup (9:2) followed by loaf (9:4) for granted. While we can only guess the diffusion among the churches of the practice witnessed in the *Didache*, we should note that Paul seems to know this sequence when he mentions 'the cup of blessing' *before* 'the loaf which we break' (1 Cor 10:16) and

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[37] That Vetus Latina evidence which might then be construed as coming from churches with fewer doctrinal concerns

when he places 'the cup of the Lord' or of demons before 'the table of the Lord' or of demons (10:21).[38] Paul, indeed, while using one sequence in the story explaining practice (1 Cor 11:23-6), actually appears to be more familiar with the other practice in that it was that sequence which he twice echoed when he was referring indirectly to the practice of the churches.

In any church where the routine was that the cup was blessed first, there may have been a sense of dissonance when they heard the recitation of the myth of the Lord's Supper as found in I Cor 11, Mk and Mt, but there would have been a welcome coherence of story with experience when they heard the Lukan form as found in Codex Bezae.

For more than a century this textual conundrum has been tackled – as I have above – through the device of parallel columns to enable to see textual similarities and differences at a glance. But perhaps the key similarity of *all* the shorter texts is that they have only one blessing over solid food and one blessing over liquid to be consumed, while the key difference between them is that we have the two sequences of blessings. We know that both sequences were being used in the churches; the variations of the shorter texts actually reflect those different usages.

What then of the majority text?

A key element in Westcott's defence of the longer text was his suspicion that it might have preserved an historical detail of the actual Last Supper because he viewed it as fitting with the several cups of wine mentioned in the Mishnah. Few today – due equally to our suspicion of such an approach to the historicity of the gospels as to hesitations regarding the extent to which the Mishnah can be used as an historical guide to the period before

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[38] I do not want to examine how this sequence may reflect a Jewish sequence – an idea that has been part of the debate on the longer text since Westcott – nor of the links between the *Didache* and the *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. My hesitation is partly because the evidence tends to run in circles, but, more importantly, because it is not relevant unless one is seeking the 'original form': it suffices to note that there were churches that had this cup followed by loaf sequence.

70 – would defend his argument in detail,[39] but it does represent the instincts of a great scholar. Perhaps in its curious deviation from our liturgical expectations (so well supported by 1 Cor 11, Mk and Mt) the longer text preserves echoes of some real meal experience known to Luke? We do know that until well into the second century – and in some places until well into the third – that the Christian Supper was a real meal and, indeed that it shared a culture with the symposium: so perhaps here we have an image of a banquet with several blessing cups? As such it could be that it reflected the practice of some communities that had a blessing over a cup and loaf at the outset, then the meal, and this was concluded with a second blessing and shared cup. It might be objected that this is illogical: if one wanted to bless a blessing cup, then once it is done, it is done, and repetition is otiose. However, this objection will not stand: there are any number of cases in ritual practices where something is doubled up on one occasion, then it becomes the norm, and then it is justified by pointing out that the first occasion is for one purpose and the second for another. The history of human ritual is littered with duplications, all sanctified by use and justified by explanation.[40] But there are two more telling objections to the notion of an actual practice of have a blessing over a cup twice at a community meal. First, we have no other hint direct or indirect of such a practice in any church, much less as a widespread practice (which this would have to have been the case given that it is the textual form with the widest diffusion among our manuscripts). Second, and to my mind the most telling objection, is that if there had been such a practice, given that the gospels cannot be parcelled out to different churches but circulated

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[39] In research for this paper I have been amazed while checking both commentaries on Luke and studies of the origins of the Eucharist the number of cases I have come across where the longer text is simply taken for granted, and then – without any reference to Westcott – the notion of several cups at a Seder, and so at the Last Supper, has been given as a raw historical fact.

[40] Historians of ritual expect such duplications / repetitions as almost an inevitable consequence of the effluction of time. On this phenomenon, see T. O'Loughlin, 'Liturgical Evolution and the Fallacy of the Continuing Consequence,' *Worship* 83(2009)312-23.

across the *oikoumene*,[41] then we should see a parallel trail of imagining the ideal supper with two cups in the gospels of Matthew and Mark: but we have no such variants.

As simpler solution would run along these lines. The gospel of Luke was a living text with two versions of the Supper story corresponding to the two sequences used in the churches' meals which, in conjunction with the other intentions of what the author wanted to say about the communities' meal,[42] acted as an explanation of what those churches were actually doing when they gathered for the Christian meal. At a later point – probably in the later second or early third century – when there was a greater interest in consistency within Christian practice (i.e. when inconsistency in ritual was seen as a marker of heresy) and a greater interest in the evangelists' texts not merely as authoritative but as 'scripture,'[43] someone concerned with ritual uniformity decided on textual uniformity and combined the form deriving from cup-loaf churches (= the text in Bezae) and that deriving the loaf-cup churches (= the text of the Vetus Latina and Syriac) and, using 22:19a as the lynchpin, formed the longer text. Once again we have a link between the text and practice: the new textual uniformity (the longer text) mirroring the new ritual uniformity (where any non-standard Eucharist, such as those which used water rather than wine or which placed the cup before the loaf, were seen as heretical).

We cannot know when this took place but we do have a *terminus ante quam* in the Eusebian Apparatus which was created in the

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[41] R. Bauckham, 'For Whom Were Gospels Written?' in R. Bauckham ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Cambridge 1998), 9-48.

[42] Cf. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 261-7.

[43] On the desire for consistency between the four texts held as authoritative at a time before those texts were viewed as 'scripture,' see T. O'Loughlin, 'The *Protevangelium Iacobi* and the Status of the Canonical Gospels in the Mid-Second Century,' in G. Guldentops, C. Laes, and G. Partoens eds, *Felici Curiositate: Studies in Latin Literature and Textual Criticism from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century: In Honour of Rita Beyers* (Turnhout 2017), 3-21.

last decades of the third century,[44] and so represents a text which was common before Eusebius's time. In the apparatus there is a separate section devoted to each of the Lukan cups (265 and 267) and these are presented as paralleling the single cup in Matthew and Mark.[45] It might be objected that earlier in my argument I stressed the coherence of the story with the embodied practice, and now here, with the longer text, we have a story which would not act as a commentary on practice. This objection fails to take account of the changes that were taking place in the way the churches were viewing these texts between the later first early second centuries when these texts were specific performances of their memory of 'the gospel' and the later situation where these were canonical texts, 'the gospels,' that were used routinely as a corpus of scripture. Lastly, is this argument not equivalent to arguing that the shorter text is the original? As I see it, there was a time when there were two texts (one represented by Bezae, the other by the Vetus Latina) each of which had as much claim as the other. The text had living fluidity mirroring the variations in practice found in churches – I can see no reason why Luke himself could not have used both forms depending on the church where he was being heard. Then, gradually, we had some harmonisation across this central story, which was itself larger than the gospel texts, of those communities, and this process would account for the Syriac witnesses. Later still, these traditions

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[44] We cannot do better than T.D. Barnes's statement that it 'cannot be dated with any confidence. But it may belong to Eusebius' youth' (*Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, MA 1981, 122); so, if Eusebius was born c.260, then the apparatus would date from roughly 280-90; and see T. O'Loughlin, 'Harmonizing the Truth: Eusebius and the Problem of the Four Gospels,' *Traditio* 65(2010)1-29.

[45] The evidence of the Eusebian Apparatus can be set out thus:

Luke	Matthew	Mark	John
22:16-8	26:27-9	14:23-5	
(= section 265)	(= section 285)	(= section 166)	
22:19	26:26	14:22	6:35, 48, 51, 55
(= section 266)	(= section 284)	(= section 165)	(= sections 55, 63, 65, 67)
22:20	26:27-9	14:23-5	
(= section 267)	(= section 285)	(= section 166)	

came to be combined in the spirit of losing nothing of that which is held to be ancient and precious – and we have an agglutination of two distinct strands of traditions.

The result of this process – the majority text – was a muddled text that owed more to ritual harmonisation and a suspicion of those who act differently 'from us' than fears over theological proprieties: as such my solution relies more on the cock-up model of church evolution than that of conscious theological conspiracy. This combined text now reflected no one's practice, but since practice carried on and was evolving in new ways irrelevant to what was supposed in the early texts anyway,[46] and nothing had been lost, the muddle became just one more problem to be explained – or perhaps more accurately: to be explained away – through formal exegesis. Indeed, the actual treatment of the two cups in Luke being harmonised to the one cup in the other gospels in Eusebius's apparatus constitutes the very first study of the problem of the 'longer text of Luke' that has come down to us. As such, the longer text is also a witness to a new attitude to these texts. By the time the various short versions were glued together the gospels were held as sacred objects for explanation, rather than being themselves explanations of what Christians were doing.

[46] See Leonhard, 'Morning salutations and the Decline of Sympotic Eucharists in the Third Century.'

The Variants[47]

The translation is that of the NRSV so as to preserve the chart's consistency.

	MAJORITY TEXT	BEZAE et al.	VETUS LATINA – two codices	SYRIAC - Curetonian	S S
17	Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves;	Then he took *the* cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this, divide it among yourselves;			
18	for I tell you that I will not drink from now on of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."	for I tell you from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until comes the kingdom of God"			
19 b	Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."	Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body	Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body	Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body **which is** **for you.** Do this in remembrance of me."	
20a					
17			Then he took *the* cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take [this], divide it among yourselves;	Then he took *the* cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take [this], divide it among yourselves;	
20b					

[47] This chart is based on that given by Kenyon and Legg (1937), and further adapted from the tabulated form found in Metzger (1975).

18			for I tell you [that] from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until comes the kingdom of God"	for I tell you [that] from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until comes the kingdom of God"	
20 a b	And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood that is poured out for you.				

Notes:

- []: omitted in some witnesses.
- **bold** – Metzger hold this is an enlargement 'with the wording of 1 Cor 11:24 added to ver. 19a' (*A Textual Commentary*, 174).
- The latter part of 22:20 has been rearranged from the manner it is presented in the NRSV which reads: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
- <u>Underlined</u> : Metzger presents this as 22:20b but it also corresponds to 1 Cor 11:25 – but recall that the Greek text of Kenyon and Legg is a reconstruction.
- Homoeoteleuton: Metzger explains the absence of verses 17 and 18 here as 'perhaps due to homoeoteleuton' (174) which is clearer in the NRSV ('and he took ... and he took') than in Greek (*kai dexamenos .... kai labón*).