

# Variant Readings of Luke 22:15–20 and the Relationship of Codex Bezae to Curetonian Syriac

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## ABSTRACT

The text of Luke 22:15–20 exists in several variant forms. Often these are classified simply as the ‘longer’ and ‘shorter’ form of the text. This paper argues that these designations are misleading as there are several important variations within the shorter form. Some of these variations are in Syriac and have often been ignored, with some scholars dismissing them as not relevant to the question of the original composition of Luke. By examining the probable origin of the additional verses of the longer text, and by analysing the variations that exist within the shorter text, especially including taking the Syriac evidence seriously, this paper suggests that the longer version is the more original. An examination of the Syriac texts leads to the ability to show that Bezae (in both Greek and Latin) and Curetonian (in Syriac) share a closer common ancestor than may be generally assumed, given their different languages. The paper ends by showing how these two MSS are related to one another.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article addresses two questions that may naturally be thought of as separate, but which I argue are in fact deeply interrelated: first, the article explores the relationship between two ancient MSS of the New Testament, Bezae and Curetonian. Second, it tackles the long-standing question of whether the longer or shorter version of the institution of the Eucharist in Luke 22 is the more original. These two questions are examined throughout this article, sometimes focusing on one, sometimes on the other, and sometimes on both simultaneously. By answering them in tandem, a clearer and more definitive answer is reached for each question.

The text of Luke 22:15–20 is a much-disputed topic. The standard text, as presented in most Bibles, gives a different picture of what Jesus did at the Last Supper from that given in the other accounts of this occasion in the New Testament. The standard text of Luke 22:15–20 contains two cups rather than one, with the bread coming between the cups. But textual variants abound in the ancient MSS. In essence, there are several competing traditions. Some MSS include all six

of these verses, others omit verses 19b and 20, and some move verse 19 or use combinations of words from verse 20, but not in the standard position of verse 20. In preparing their critical edition of the New Testament in the 19th century, and after some debate, Westcott and Hort decided that 19b and 20 'were absent from the original text' despite the fact that this reading was achieved by relying on Codex Bezae, a MS they generally viewed as unreliable.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in 1927, F. C. Burkitt took the opposite view, stating that 'St. Luke's first cup cannot have arisen out of a transcriber's blunder; whatever our interpretation of it, the clause that mentions it must be a genuine part of the text.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in 1937, Frederic G. Kenyon also found that the longer reading of Luke was to be preferred, suggesting that it is 'difficult to understand the mind of an editor who would strike out such passages as these.'<sup>3</sup>

The debate continues to this day. In a recent book on the disputed words in the Lukan institution narrative, Bradly Billings suggests that the longer reading of these verses is the more original, with the 'shorter reading,' as it is usually called (that of Codex Bezae), originating in Lyons in a parent document to Bezae around the year 177. Bezae's text stops halfway through verse 19 and then picks up again at verse 21, so it skips some key words about the bread and the wine being the body and blood of Christ. Billings proposes that deleting verses 19b and 20 was a way of disassociating the Eucharist from accusations of cannibalism.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Bart Ehrman argues that the shorter reading is the original. He suggests that it is difficult to see why the shorter text was ever written if the longer one came first. Maybe it was in order to remove one of the two cups, but if that is correct, then it would have made more sense to remove the first one rather than the second so that the order would have been redacted to being bread followed by cup, as in the other gospels. Ehrman suggests it is also difficult to see why the words about the bread being the body of Christ are missed out of the shorter reading.<sup>5</sup>

Billings and Ehrman are simply two representative scholars who have argued recently for one or other of the two generally accepted possibilities of longer or shorter text. Others have argued these positions before, but it is not the intention of this paper to examine these in detail as the argument presented here is somewhat different and draws on some evidence that is generally overlooked by those arguing for either position. In this paper I will suggest that although in essence Billings is correct about a parent document of Bezae being edited, and thus the longer reading being more original, towards the end of my discussion I will suggest that there is evidence from elsewhere in Bezae that tells against alleged cannibalism as a reason for these changes. However, the main thrust of this paper is that the story of these six verses is more complicated than either Billings' or Ehrman's theories account for, even though I side with Billings on the matter of which verses were original. The story of these verses is more complicated because the record in Bezae is only one of several shorter versions. It is not actually a question of 'either Luke 22:15–20 or Luke 22:15–19a'; more options are available.

By looking at Bezae alongside two Syriac copies and a Latin copy of Luke it is possible to suggest a sequence of editing that better describes the relationships between the ancient copies of these verses. Billings mentions these MSS, but does not explore their relationship to Bezae. He comments that 'despite its great value in alerting us to the unmistakable presence of a textual difficulty in the second century, the Syriac evidence does not confirm the nature or form of this difficulty and cannot, therefore, in its own right establish the authenticity of either the longer or

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek with Notes on Selected Readings* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. Burkitt, 'On Luke xii 17–20', *JTS* 28 (1927), pp. 178–81, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible: A Student's Handbook* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1937), p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Bradly S. Billings, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Disputed Words in the Lukan Institution Narrative (Luke 22.19b–20): An Historic-Exegetical, Theological and Sociological Analysis* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), pp. 12–20, 165–74.

<sup>5</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 231–45.

shorter reading.<sup>6</sup> Rather than this, I suggest that by an analysis of the Syriac and (to a lesser extent) the Latin texts discussed in this paper, in terms of content, verse order, and word order and choice, it is possible to make use of these texts to see where they have come from, gaining information about the original text of Luke, and also understanding something more about the relationship between several ancient MSS. Specifically, the analysis of Luke 22:15–20 is used in this paper to understand the apparent relationship between Bezae and Curetonian, although other MSS are also related to these two in the discussions which follow.

I will begin with a brief note of the surprising agreements exhibited between Bezae and Curetonian, against the majority of MSS. It is this agreement that sets the scene for the exploration of Luke 22:15–20, which I will undertake in two main sections. First, I will explore the ‘longer’ or ‘standard’ text, especially focussing on the relationship of verses 19 and 20 with the equivalent texts in Mark and 1 Corinthians, and for the sake of comparison, also with Matthew. Two pairings will emerge here: Luke and 1 Corinthians, on the one hand, and Mark and Matthew, on the other. Second, I will explore the various shorter texts, starting with Bezae. Similarities between Luke and Mark as well as between Luke and 1 Corinthians, when brought together with the results from the comparison of the shorter Lukan texts, lead to the proposal that the longer reading is the original reading since the author has drawn material so clearly from both 1 Corinthians and Mark. The work on the shorter variants leads to the conclusion that Bezae and Curetonian are the closest pairing of the MSS examined, but significant variations in word order and the inclusion of parts of the verses missed out by Bezae but included in other short-text MSS will figure in the discussion. I will end by suggesting lines of transmission for the textual variants, both substantiating the claim for the longer reading being the more original reading, and offering an explanation for the agreements between Bezae and Curetonian. A recently discovered Old Syriac MSS that appears to be of the same text type as Curetonian will be referenced in the last section of this paper, as its existence demonstrates the presence of this text type at St. Catherine’s monastery, which is important for tracing the likely transmission of the shorter reading.

## 2. INITIAL EVIDENCE RELATING BEZAE TO CURETONIAN

Bezae, in both Latin and Greek, and Curetonian, in Syriac, appear at first glance to be only distantly related to one another. Their different languages imply distance. However, there are a significant number of points of similarity between them that in fact imply a close relationship. The table below presents evidence to connect Bezae with Curetonian from outside Luke 22:15–20, to which I will return in detail later in this paper. The table is a collection of verses from the Gospels which exhibit high levels of agreement between Bezae and Curetonian and very few other texts. This list has been compiled largely based on information in the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland, although additional material that fits the criteria of being common to Bezae and Curetonian and at most only a few other MSS has also been discovered by looking at the Greek and Syriac texts. Nevertheless, I do not pretend that this is a complete list, merely one that demonstrates a relationship between Bezae and Curetonian. In the table, I also note some comparisons relating to these verses in the MS Syriac Sinaiticus and in the Latin MS Palatinus. These MSS will feature in discussions later in this paper. Syriac Sinaiticus in particular has many agreements with Curetonian and Bezae, although the table also notes a few places where Curetonian and Bezae agree together against Syriac Sinaiticus.

<sup>6</sup> Billings, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, pp. 7f.

Verse	Comment
Matthew 1:22	Bezae, Curetonian, and Syriac Sinaiticus are three of a small handful of texts to add the name Isaiah to the prophecy quoted in the following verse. The standard text leaves the prophet unnamed.
Matthew 13:13	Bezae adds μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν, ‘they may never return.’ A small handful of other witnesses add this too, including Curetonian and Syriac Sinaiticus in the words ܠܥܘܕܘ ܡܘܕܝܘܢܐ ܠܕܘܢܐ.
Matthew 15:28	Bezae, Curetonian, and Syriac Sinaiticus miss the name of Jesus out of this verse.
Matthew 17:14	Bezae has ἐλθὼν, ‘he came’ (Jesus approaching the crowd), rather than the standard text which has ἐλθόντων, ‘they came’ (Jesus and his disciples approaching the crowd). In agreement with Bezae, Curetonian and Syriac Sinaiticus have ܠܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܐ, ‘he came’, rather than ܘܗܘܐ ܘܗܘܐ, ‘they came’.
Mark 16:17–20 (the only portion of Mark to survive in Curetonian)	This is the ending of the Gospel of Mark recorded in the text of Bezae and, with a few differences, also in the text of Curetonian. It is not shared by Syriac Sinaiticus, although Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Washingtonianus among a few other MSS also share this longer ending of Mark.
Luke 2:49	The pluperfect sense of ἤδειτε, ‘you had known’, is replaced in Bezae by οἴδατε, carrying the sense ‘you know’. This is replicated in the Syriac MSS (including the Peshitta) by ܚܒܘܬܐ.
Luke 3:10	At the end of this verse, Bezae adds ἵνα σωθῶμεν, adding the phrase ‘to be saved’ to the standard text’s existing question ‘what then shall we do?’ Curetonian adds ܠܘܢ in the same place in the verse, giving an identical sense. Both Palatinus and Syriac Sinaiticus omit this, following the standard text. (Nestle-Aland notes this addition for Bezae but not for Curetonian.)
Luke 19:27	Bezae has ἐκείνους, ‘those’, rather than the standard text’s τούτους, ‘these’. The Syriac texts agree with Bezae, having ܠܘܟܘܢ. A number of other Greek MSS agree with Bezae on this point.
Luke 20:23	Τί με πειράζετε, ‘why are you tempting me?’, is added by Bezae to the end of the verse. The Syriac MSS agree with Bezae, having ܠܘܟܘܢ ܠܘܟܘܢ ܠܘܟܘܢ, ‘why are you tempting me?’ A number of other MSS agree with Bezae and the Syriac MSS, although Palatinus omits these words.
Luke 22:22	The standard text’s τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ‘to the man’, is omitted from both Bezae and Curetonian and also from Palatinus and Syriac Sinaiticus, although by no other MSS noted by Nestle-Aland.
Luke 23:5	The conjunction ὅτι, ‘that’, is missing from Bezae and also from Curetonian. Its absence is not noted by Nestle-Aland.
John 5:32	The standard text has οἶδα, ‘I know’, whereas Bezae has οἴδατε, ‘you know’. This is shared with the original (Greek) text of Codex Sinaiticus, although this text has been corrected by a later hand to read οἶδα, as in the standard text. Curetonian also reads ܚܒܘܬܐ, ‘you know’, instead of ܠܘܟܘܢ, ‘I know’. The Peshitta has ܠܘܟܘܢ, ‘I know’. (Syriac Sinaiticus cannot be compared here as it has lost the text of verses 26 to 45.)
John 8:16	Bezae and Curetonian both miss out the word πατήρ, ‘Father’. Syriac Sinaiticus as it was originally written also misses this, although it has been added by a later hand.

In addition to the notes in this table, there are far more places where Bezae and Curetonian are in agreement with one another, along with many other MSS too. There are also places of disagreement between the two texts. For example, in John 6:20, Bezae, in common with other MSS, includes the words μὴ φοβεῖσθε, ‘do not fear’. Curetonian misses

these words; although since missing them out adds nothing theologically, they were probably missed through scribal error rather than by deliberate choice. The disagreements notwithstanding, the unique and almost-unique agreements between Bezae and Curetonian remain striking. They invite exploration of how these two MSS, one in Greek and Latin and one in Syriac, are related. I will turn now to an exploration of Luke 22:15–20, before making a close examination of these verses insofar as they appear in shortened form in Bezae, Curetonian and other MSS.

### 3. THE LONGER READING OF LUKE'S INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

The 'longer' reading of Luke's institution of the Eucharist is simply the entirety of Luke 22:15–20, which is the text that most often appears in Bibles. As noted in the introduction, the text of Bezae is usually designated as the 'shorter' reading, stopping part way through verse 19. In this section of the paper, I will explore just two verses of the longer reading—verses 19 and 20, most of which do not feature in the shorter reading. In looking at these two verses, I will show that the longer reading relies on both 1 Corinthians and Mark. This will be a key insight for the argument which follows later in the paper. The standard text of the longer reading is as follows. This is the representative text as given in Nestle-Aland. For reference, the three stars in the text indicate the position at which the text of Bezae stops.

<sup>15</sup> και εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν.

<sup>16</sup> λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῇ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>17</sup> και δεξάμενος ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας εἶπεν· λάβετε τοῦτο και διαμερίσατε εἰς ἑαυτούς·

<sup>18</sup> λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ.

<sup>19</sup> και λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν και ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου \*\*\* τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

<sup>20</sup> και τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον.

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, 'I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,

<sup>16</sup> For I tell you that I will not eat of it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.'

<sup>17</sup> And, taking the cup, and having given thanks, he said to them, 'take this and divide it among yourselves;

<sup>18</sup> for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.'

<sup>19</sup> And, taking the bread, and having 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.

<sup>20</sup> And, with the cup, likewise after supper, saying, 'this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, which is being poured out for you.'

The table below is a comparison of Luke 22:19–20 with Matthew 26:26–28, Mark 14:22–24, and 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. Luke 22:19–20 and the other texts examined alongside it record Jesus' giving the bread followed by the cup, and in all the texts apart from Luke, this is the only cup in the story. The analysis demonstrates that there are strong connections between the versions of this account of the bread followed by the cup as represented in Luke and in 1 Corinthians. For the analysis below, the standard text of the Greek text has been used as it is presented in Nestle-Aland. The four texts are as follows:

Matthew 26:26–28	Mark 14:22–24	Luke 22:19–20 (For reference: Codex Bezae stops at the three stars before moving to verse 21.)	1 Cor. 11:23–25
<p><sup>26</sup> Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ δούς τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν· λάβετε φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου.</p>	<p><sup>22</sup> Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβῶν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν· λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου.</p>	<p><sup>19</sup> καὶ λαβῶν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου *** τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.</p>	<p><sup>23</sup>... ἔλαβεν ἄρτον <sup>24</sup> καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.</p>
<p><sup>27</sup> καὶ λαβῶν ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες.</p>	<p><sup>23</sup> καὶ λαβῶν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες. <sup>24</sup> καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν.</p>	<p><sup>20</sup> καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινῆ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.</p>	<p><sup>25</sup> ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινῆ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἑμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνετε, εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.</p>
<p><sup>28</sup> τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης, τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.</p>			

The tradition recorded in this pericope seems to have been a very early one since all three Synoptics regard it as important, and it clearly had a place in Christian consciousness as attested by Paul prior to the writing of the Gospel texts. The information that is immediately obvious from this comparative exercise is that 1 Corinthians and Luke share more in common than any other combination of two texts out of the four. The next closest textual relationship is between Mark and Matthew. There are two places in the Lukan text where Mark bears the only resemblance to Luke. With one insignificant (and probably incidental) exception, Matthew never appears in Luke, nor Luke in Matthew, without either Markan or Corinthian support.

The following are the most important points of comparison to make. At the beginning of the texts quoted, 1 Corinthians and Luke use the word εὐχαριστήσας, whereas Mark and Matthew use εὐλογήσας, ‘having spoken a blessing’, in connection with giving thanks for/blessing the bread. Later, where 1 Corinthians and Luke have ὡσαύτως, ‘likewise’, the other two texts have replaced εὐλογήσας by εὐχαριστήσας, ‘having given thanks’. This is possibly a stylistic point in origin, with no great theological difference represented by the different words for ‘giving thanks’ and ‘blessing’; however, here are the beginnings of the evidence for two separate literary traditions within these texts. Immediately following the words about the bread being Christ’s body, in 1 Corinthians and Luke we find τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ‘for you’, whereas in Mark and Matthew the narrative moves straight on to the taking of the cup. In fact, from the word ποιεῖτε, ‘do’, until the word αἷματι, ‘blood’, the texts of 1 Corinthians and Luke agree in every respect, except for the placing of the word ὡσαύτως, ‘likewise’, and the addition in 1 Corinthians of ἐμῷ, ‘my’, before αἵματι, ‘blood’, instead of the use of μου,

'of me', after αἵματι in Luke. Over the 22 words of the (second) Lukan account of the cup (Luke 22:20), the only word in its same form shared by all three gospel accounts is ποτήριον, 'cup', which is essential to the story; anyone writing the story would be hard pressed not to use it. Matthew shares the word λέγων, 'saying', with Luke, but not with Mark, who uses εἶπεν, 'he said'. It is difficult to make much of this small apparent connection between Matthew and Luke as Matthew's version is in better Greek than Mark's, and so it is an understandable change. In addition, it should be noted that Mark and Matthew also use the words διαθήκη, 'covenant', and αἵματι, 'blood', which feature in Luke's version, but they appear in different forms as διαθήκης and αἷμα in Mark and Matthew. In short, an examination of Luke 22:19–20, indicates a strong literary tie with the equivalent part of 1 Corinthians, and only a very weak tie to the other synoptic gospels.

Nevertheless, there are also points at which the account in Luke seems to side with that of the other two synoptics. The best example of this is in the order of the words τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. The three synoptic gospels have τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου, literally, 'this is the body of me', but the Corinthian account renders it τοῦτό μου ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα, literally, 'this of me is the body'. The position of μου is noticeably different. In addition to this, it is only in the synoptic gospels, not 1 Corinthians, that we find the word ἐκχυννόμενον, 'is being poured out'. These two facts suggest a scenario whereby Luke used both 1 Corinthians and Mark (or Matthew, or both) as a source, or that the order and words used in the Synoptics repeat an order found in early liturgy or oral tradition. Further evidence of Luke using Mark alongside 1 Corinthians as a source for these verses is also plain to see. The words ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, 'gave to them', used in connection with the bread, are only found in Luke and Mark, as is the word ὑπέρ, 'for', after talk about the blood of the New Covenant. Neither of these fragments are found in 1 Corinthians or in Matthew, although ὑπέρ is used, as noted above, in both Luke and 1 Corinthians when talking about the bread. This is clearly a far weaker connection than between 1 Corinthians and Luke; however, it is enough to establish a literary tie between Luke and Mark in this passage; it is also unsurprising, given the other well-attested connections between these two texts. In addition, some of the following verse of Mark (14:25) is used in Luke 22:18, underlining the point that Luke used Mark as well as 1 Corinthians.

The pair of texts closest to one another are Luke and 1 Corinthians. The second closest pairing is between Mark and Matthew. As well as sharing the word εὐλογήσας, 'having spoken a blessing', against εὐχαριστήσας, 'having given thanks', as I mentioned to begin this discussion, there are many other parallels. Both Matthew and Mark have the words ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν, 'they were eating', before the word (ἐ)λαβεν, 'he took', which is common to all four texts. They also share the words εἶπεν· λαβέτε, 'he said take', as Christ gives the bread. Matthew and Mark both have καὶ λαβῶν, 'and having taken', before ποτήριον, '(the) cup', and afterwards out of the 22 words of Mark, up to the end of verse 24, 15 words are paralleled in Matthew, only one of these being in a different place in the text.

A statistical analysis of the textual parallels confirms the pairing of Luke with 1 Corinthians and of Mark with Matthew. This analysis makes it clear that there are two distinct traditions within these verses. Since verse numbering is artificial, added only hundreds of years after the texts were composed, it is necessary to delineate the boundaries of such an analysis, which is an inevitably qualitative element of this type of investigation. In this case, it is appropriate to begin at (ἐ)λαβεν, 'he took', in 1 Corinthians and Luke and at ἐσθιόντων, 'were eating', in Mark and Matthew. There is an argument to say that it would be better to begin Luke and Mark at the initial καὶ, 'and'; however, since this is such a common word, it adds no real evidence to any analysis. It would be possible to start further back, but since the lead-in to the 1 Corinthians passage is so very different because of the genre in which it is set, this would be inappropriate. The end boundary of the analysis is harder to define; however, I will simply use the end of the verses as the end point of this analysis as the subject matter for analysis is common up to that point and then diverges. The figures below are therefore based on the words in the table above, excluding just the first word of Mark and Luke.

The following table illustrates the number of words in common between texts as percentages. The text named along the top is the text within which the comparison is made. The rows show the percentage of another text to be found within the text of the column. The percentage in brackets shows the percentage minus those words out of sequence or otherwise different. Figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

	1 Corinthians	Mark	Matthew	Luke
1 Corinthians	N/A	31% (19%)	31% (20%)	74% (68%)
Mark	27% (17%)	N/A	65% (63%)	36% (30%)
Matthew	31% (21%)	76% (74%)	N/A	31% (26%)
Luke	73% (67%)	40% (33%)	31% (24%)	N/A

The four greatest parallels in the texts are very obvious to see, running in a diagonal line through the table. Seventy-three percent of the material in 1 Corinthians is identical to that of Luke, and 74% of Luke is identical to that in 1 Corinthians. Seventy-six percent of Mark is identical to Matthew, and a smaller, but significant, 65% of Matthew is identical to Mark. Since the accounts of events differ in length, a mean average of the above percentages gives a better impression of the extent of similarities. This shows that 1 Corinthians and Luke are slightly more similar to one another than are Mark and Matthew, 74% to 71%.

The only major point at which the Corinthian/ Luke agreement is marred is in the order of the words  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$   $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\upsilon$   $\tau\acute{o}$   $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\acute{\alpha}$   $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ , as mentioned above. Even excluding these words, they still only account for 5 out of 48 words in 1 Corinthians, only 10%. Even so, this would take the amount of Luke in 1 Corinthians down to 63%. The amount of 1 Corinthians in Luke would also drop to 63% (a drop of 11%). This would then put the averages for similarities to 63% for 1 Corinthians/ Luke against 71% for Mark/Matthew. On the other hand, 1 Corinthians/ Luke contains the largest block of continuous identical text out of any two comparisons among the four texts. However one reads the statistics or studies the texts, there is no doubt that the accounts of Mark 14:22–24 and Matthew 26:26–28 possess a close literary relationship with each other, as do the accounts of Luke 22:19–20 and 1 Corinthians 11:22–25. Nevertheless, verse 19 of Luke has striking similarities with Mark as well as with 1 Corinthians. Kobus Petzer provides a detailed study of the words of Luke 22:19b–20 which do not occur elsewhere in Luke-Acts, or only rarely occur.<sup>7</sup> This work points toward a clear non-Lukan origin for at least verses 19b and 20. Indeed, such an observation was made at the start of the 20th century by Benjamin Bacon, who called these verses ‘textually unauthentic material.’<sup>8</sup> From the analysis conducted here, it is probable that the verses are copied from 1 Corinthians (or a common or derivative source), with a little Markan influence, which is hardly surprising. But this observation by itself tells us nothing of their originality to the text of Luke. *Contra* Bacon, that the words did not originally come from the author of the text does not automatically mean that he did not put them there. They may have been copied by the original author just as well as they may have been copied by a later hand. It will be possible to say who copied these words after analysing the shorter readings of Luke’s text.

#### 4. THE SHORTER READINGS OF LUKE 22

Although a single ‘shorter’ reading of Luke 22 is usually spoken of, there are in fact several variant short readings. These can be deduced from the apparatus of a Greek critical edition such

<sup>7</sup> Kobus Petzer, ‘Style and Text in the Lucan Narrative of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22.19b–20),’ *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 113–29.

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Wisner Bacon, ‘The Lukan Tradition of the Lord’s Supper,’ *HTR* 5 (1912), pp. 322–48, p. 336.

as the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, but many MSS, including those I am using, are available in transcribed form, or even in online photographic records of the MSS. In what follows, I will examine the version of this story as given in the Greek and Latin text of Codex Bezae, in two Syriac MSS, Syriac Sinaiticus and Curetonian, and in one Latin MS, Palatinus. Other minor variations exist, but these four have been chosen for this paper as they represent the major variations from the standard text. I will show that they all omit large elements of the standard text and that they all have the effect of reducing the number of cups in the account to just one, although they employ different methods for doing this. It is worth noting that the Peshitta version of the text also has just one cup, but this is a later variant than the two Syriac MSS represented here, and so I have chosen not to include it in this analysis.<sup>9</sup>

Codex Bezae represents what is generally known as the Western Tradition. The order of the Gospels is one of the distinctive features of this tradition, ordering them Matthew, John, Luke, Mark, giving priority to the texts named after two of the 12 apostles. Bezae is in both Greek and Latin, on facing pages. The Greek is arguably more useful for our purposes as it is probably directly copied from another Greek MS, rather than being a translation. Both were transcribed by Frederick Scrivener in the 19th century<sup>10</sup> and the original MS can be viewed in digital copy.<sup>11</sup> Recently, David Parker has provided a few corrections to Scrivener's transcription in appendix I of his book about the codex, although he makes no corrections to Luke 22.<sup>12</sup> As Parker comments, the text is often a reworking or abbreviation of the generally accepted standard text, such that some have even seen it as a deliberately heretical book.<sup>13</sup> The accusation of heresy is far too strong, but certainly in the case of the Last Supper/institution of the Eucharist, Bezae provides an unusual reading, leaving out the second half of verse 19 and omitting 20 altogether. This reduces the number of cups to just one, but places the single cup prior to the bread in the story.

As well as the overall sweep of the story being nonstandard in Bezae, there are a number of other changes to the standard text. Bezae inserts τὸ, 'the', before mention of the cup in verse 17. This makes no difference to the translation, but could be seen as emphasising this particular cup. It may be that with the scribe's removal of the second cup from their source material they deliberately added τὸ to emphasise that there was only one cup. Conversely, it may be that their source only had one cup, so it was always 'the cup'. At the end of verse 17 εἰς ἑαυτοῦς, 'amongst yourselves', is replaced by ἑαυτοῖς, 'yourselves'. The standard text has 'yourselves' in the accusative case, implying that the division of the contents of the cup is for the ones doing the dividing. Bezae has 'yourselves' in the dative case, which implies a wider vision of those for whom the contents of the cup are divided. It implies action on the part of those receiving these instructions to divide it more generally (and metaphorically) than just passing it to one another. This would not be so much a change to the story as a theological outworking of it that readers might be encouraged towards. In addition, the Greek text omits the standard καὶ, 'and', from 'take this and divide it', although *et* is included at this point in the Latin version. There are a number of nonstandard readings present in verse 18. Towards the start of the verse, ὅτι, 'that', is missing and the word order is different from the standard text both at the start and at the end of verse 18. Highlighting this makes for a difficult translation at the end of

<sup>9</sup> Even what is usually referred to as the Peshitta text has variant readings. The oldest MSS of the Peshitta text have only one cup, but a scribe has removed the first cup (verses 17 and 18), so the usual number of cups and the expected order of bread followed by cup is established. However, these verses were reinserted in more recent copies of the Peshitta. See George Anton Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions: Volume Three: Luke* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 442n.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick H. Scrivener, *Bezae codex Cantabrigiensis* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1864). Luke 22:15–19 can be found on pp. 249f.

<sup>11</sup> Codex Bezae, University of Cambridge Digital Library, accessed August 19, 2022 <<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-NN-00002-00041/1>>.

<sup>12</sup> David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–4.

the verse, but in order to mark the difference from the standard text I have translated these words as ‘until comes the Kingdom of God’. Arguably, it reads better in the archaic idiom of ‘until cometh the Kingdom of God’. It is striking that the Latin text uses the word *benedicens* to translate εὐχαριστήσας, which following the Latin text of Bezae I have translated as ‘blessing’ rather than ‘giving thanks for’, which is what the Greek means. It is also noticeable that verse 16 of Bezae’s Latin text has *edatur*, which I translate below as ‘consumed’, but which can also mean ‘established’. It may be that the Bezae scribe was deliberately and poetically echoing the eating of the new bread with the establishment of the Kingdom. Most Greek MSS at this point have πληρωθῆ, ‘it is fulfilled’, making *edatur* a distant translation of the standard Greek, although not one that is completely removed. Bezae’s Greek text at this point reads καινὸν βρωθή, ‘consumed anew’. Bezae’s Latin *nobum edatur* is a good translation of its Greek, albeit a translation with an interesting double meaning that does not completely deny the standard Greek.

The Greek text of Bezae reads as follows:

- <sup>15</sup> καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ’ ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν.  
<sup>16</sup> λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν οὐκέτι μὴ φάγομαι ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἕως ὅτου καινὸν βρωθῆ ἔν τῃ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ  
<sup>17</sup> καὶ δεξάμενος τὸ ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας εἶπεν· λάβετε· τοῦτο διαμερίσατε ἑαυτοῖς.  
<sup>18</sup> λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως ὅτου ἔλθῃ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.  
<sup>19a</sup> καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου  
*(Text continues with v. 21)*

- <sup>15</sup> He said to them, ‘I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,  
<sup>16</sup> for I tell you that I will not eat it again until it is consumed anew in the Kingdom of God.’  
<sup>17</sup> And, taking the cup and having given thanks, he said ‘take this, divide it yourselves;  
<sup>18</sup> for I tell you from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until comes the Kingdom of God.’  
<sup>19a</sup> And, taking the bread, and having given thanks, he broke it saying ‘this is my body.’

The Latin text of Bezae reads as follows:

- <sup>15</sup> *et dixit ad eos concupiscentia concupivi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum priusquam patiar*  
<sup>16</sup> *dico enim vobis iam non manducabo ab eo usque quo nobum edatur in regno dei*  
<sup>17</sup> *et accipiens calicem benedicens dixit accipite hoc et partimini vobis*  
<sup>18</sup> *dico enim vobis amodo non bibam a creatura vineae usque quo ueniat regnum dei*  
<sup>19a</sup> *et accipiens panem benedixit fregit et dedit eis dicens hoc est corpus meum.*  
<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, ‘I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,  
<sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it again until it is consumed anew in the Kingdom of God.’  
<sup>17</sup> And taking the cup and blessing it, he said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves,  
<sup>18</sup> For I tell you that I will not drink of the produce of the vine until comes the Kingdom of God.’  
<sup>19a</sup> And, taking the bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them saying ‘this is my body.’

Several Syriac MSS have readings that are different from both the standard text and from Bezae. Of particular interest for this paper are Syriac Sinaiticus and Curetonian Syriac, the two best known and most complete MSS of the Old Syriac tradition, and until the last few years, the only MSS of this tradition that were known to be extant. Syriac Sinaiticus, a palimpsest, is generally held to have been written no later than the start of the fifth century and is from St. Catherine’s monastery in Sinai. The MS that has become known after the name of its modern editor, Curetonian Syriac, is probably also a fifth century composition, and was



- <sup>15</sup> He said to them ‘I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer  
<sup>16</sup> for I tell you that from now on I will not eat it until the Kingdom of God is fulfilled.’  
<sup>19</sup> And he took the bread and gave thanks over it. And he broke it and gave it to them, and said to them, ‘This is my body, which is given for your sakes. Do this in remembrance of me.’  
 From 20a And after supper  
<sup>17</sup> he took the cup and gave thanks over it. And he said ‘Take this, divide it between you.  
 From 20b This is my blood, the new covenant.  
<sup>18</sup> I tell you I will not drink of this fruit until comes the Kingdom of God.’

Curetonian reads as follows:

<sup>15</sup> אכזו למי שזך וזקנה, דאכזל עמכז פזיטא עד לכ אכז  
<sup>16</sup> אכזו לכ, זך דאכזל לכ אכזמ, דאכז דאכזל כמלכזמ דאכזמ  
<sup>19</sup> אכזל לכזא אכז, אלמ, אכזמ אכזל למי, אכזו מן פז, דכל אכז  
 מ  
 אכזל דכז לכ אכזמ  
<sup>17</sup> אכזל לכזא אכז, אלמ, אכזו עכז מן פזל כזכז  
<sup>18</sup> אכזו לכ, דכז מן לכ אכזמ, אכז מן אכזמ אכז דכז  
 דאכזל אכזל כמלכזמ דאכזל

(Text continues with v. 21)

- <sup>15</sup> He said to them ‘I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer  
<sup>16</sup> for I tell you that from now on I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.’  
<sup>19</sup> And he took the bread and gave thanks over it. And he broke it and gave it to them, and said to them, ‘This is my body, which is given for your sakes. Do this in remembrance of me.’  
<sup>17</sup> And he took the cup and gave thanks over it. And he said ‘Take this, divide it between you.  
<sup>18</sup> I tell you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until comes the Kingdom of God.’

Two of the other MSS of the Western Tradition contain identical verses to Bezae, but in a different order. The Latin codices Veronensis and Palatinus have the verse order 15, 16, 19a, 17, 18, omitting half of verse 19 and all of verse 20. These are not generally thought of as important texts, but it is interesting that they contain Bezae’s verses whilst largely following the Syriac order at this point, rather than the order in Bezae. Palatinus also has the word order of Bezae at the end of verse 18. Both Veronensis and Palatinus are fifth century. Palatinus was transcribed by Johannes Belsheim in 1896, and this is the text that appears below.<sup>17</sup> It is striking that whereas Bezae’s Latin text has *benedicens*, ‘blessing [it]’, Palatinus has *et gratias*, ‘and gave thanks’, more directly mirroring the standard (or indeed Bezae’s) Greek. It is also noticeable that verse 16 of Palatinus has *adimpleatur* ‘it is fulfilled’, whereas Bezae’s Latin text has *edatur*, above translated as ‘consumed’, but with the double meaning of ‘established’. As noted above, most Greek MSS have πληρωθη at this point, ‘it is fulfilled’. Palatinus therefore seems to translate this word from the standard Greek text. There are many other differences from Bezae’s text, which is rather suggestive of a distant relationship between these two MSS.

<sup>17</sup> Johannes Belsheim, *Evangelium Palatinum* (Christiania: Libraria Jacobi Dybwad, 1896), p. 84. For more on the background of the codices, see E. S. Buchanan, ‘The Codex Veronensis’, *JTS* 10 (1908), pp. 12–16; R. Schöll, ‘Zum Codex Palatinus des Lysias’, *Hermes*, 11 (1876), pp. 202–18; E. A. Lowe, ‘On the African Origin of Codex Palatinus of the Gospels (e)’, *JTS* 23 (1922), pp. 401–4. The paper by Lowe proposes a connection in palaeographic terms with Codex Bobbiensis.

Palatinus reads as follows:

<sup>15</sup> *Dixit ad illos concupiscentiam concupi hoc pascha manducarae vobiscum priusquam patiar.*

<sup>16</sup> *Dico enim vobis quia iam non manducabo illud doneque adimplear in regno di.*

<sup>19a</sup> *et accepit panem et gratias egit et fregit et dedit eis dicens. hoc est corpus meum.*

<sup>17</sup> *Et accepit calicem et gratias egit et dixit accipite vivite inter vos.*

<sup>18</sup> *dico enim vobis amodo non vivam amodo de potione vitis quoadusque regnum di veniat.*

(Text continues with v. 21)

<sup>15</sup> He said to them, ‘I greatly desire that I may eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

<sup>16</sup> For I say to you that I will no longer eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’

<sup>19a</sup> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body.’

<sup>17</sup> And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said ‘take, drink from among yourselves.

<sup>18</sup> For I say to you I will not drink from the drink of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’

Putting these different versions together in a table provides a quick overview of the verses supplied by each version and some other points of comparison.

	Standard text (as it appears in Nestle- Aland)	Bezae	Syriac Sinaiticus	Curetonian	Palatinus
<b>Order of verse numbers</b>	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	15, 16, 17, 18, 19a	15, 16, 19, 20a, 17, 20b, 18	15, 16, 19, 17, 18	15, 16, 19a, 17, 18
<b>Order of events</b>	Cup, bread, cup	Cup, bread	Bread, cup	Bread, cup	Bread, cup
<b>Use of ‘in’ in verse 16 before ‘Kingdom of God’?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Use of ‘and’ in verse 17 in ‘take this and divide it’?</b>	Yes	No in Greek Yes in Latin	No	No	No
<b>Word order in verse 18</b>	until the Kingdom of God comes	until comes the kingdom of God	until comes the kingdom of God	until comes the kingdom of God	until the Kingdom of God comes
<b>Verse 18, what Jesus will not drink</b>	‘the fruit of the vine’	‘the fruit of the vine’	‘this fruit’	‘the fruit of the vine’	‘the drink of the vine’

This table shows that there are both similarities and differences between the four MSS. Bezae keeps the standard ordering of the verses, but stops halfway through verse 19. Palatinus has exactly the same verses as Bezae, also stopping halfway through verse 19. But Palatinus reorders the verses, resulting in the generation of the standard ordering of the story, where the bread is

followed by the (single) cup. Curetonian shares the order with Palatinus, but unlike both Palatinus and Bezae, Curetonian includes the second half of verse 19. Syriac Sinaiticus is the same as Curetonian, but adds a few words from 20a and then 20b. Uniquely among these four MSS, Syriac Sinaiticus connects the wine to Jesus blood, which occurs in the words from 20b. The word 'in' from verse 16 is omitted from Syriac Sinaiticus, giving a somewhat different focus to the verse, although this may be a simple matter of scribal error rather than of deliberate theology. In addition, Greek Bezae and the Syriac texts all have 'take this, divide it' in verse 17, a variant of the standard text. Palatinus omits 'and' as well, although it also has a somewhat different phrase at this point. The Latin text of Bezae sometimes disagrees with the Greek text of Bezae, and in this case, the Latin includes 'and,' even though it is not present in the Greek text. It may be included as this is the most natural translation of the Greek into Latin, even though *kai* is not present in the Greek text.

Of the four texts, the two that are closest are Bezae and Curetonian. It is true that the verse order is different, and it is true that Curetonian includes more of verse 19 than Bezae does. Nevertheless, the phrasing of both Syriac versions is closer to Bezae than is the phrasing of Palatinus. Syriac Sinaiticus is close except in its most striking feature—the interpolation of elements of verse 20, not present in any of Bezae, Curetonian, or Palatinus. The next two sections of this paper will dig more deeply into the relationship between the MSS examined here. It will be possible to suggest both the earliest reconstructable version of Luke's institution of the Eucharist, and how the proliferation of textual variants has arisen.

## 5. LONGER OR SHORTER?

The preceding two sections of analysis have looked first at the literary connection between Luke 22:19–20 and the equivalent passage of 1 Corinthians, and second at four major variant readings of the standard text of Luke 22:15–20. If it were the case that the variant readings did not use any of the material that also appears in 1 Corinthians, then it might have been proposed that there were two streams of transmission of the text of Luke, one of which was based on 1 Corinthians and one of which was entirely separate. Then, at some point in the early transmission of the text, both traditions were brought together. But the reality is far more complex than this. Both sections of analysis refer to verse 19 and to parts of verse 20. To complicate matters even further, as noted briefly above, some words from Mark 14 appear in Luke 22:15–18. All or part of verse 19 appears in all four of Bezae, Syriac Sinaiticus, Curetonian and Palatinus, with Syriac Sinaiticus even including select words from verse 20. It is clear that all of these texts have been transmitted and edited, but there is no simple solution to the question of which reading to prefer. In what follows, I will show that the evidence points towards the longer, standard text being at least an approximation for Luke's original text. More precisely, I will show that it is probable that the longer text is the common ancestor of all our current texts, whether or not this was the first version to have been composed.

Ian Marshall provides a summary outline of the arguments in favour of and against the shorter Lukan tradition as represented by Bezae.<sup>18</sup> The shorter text makes more difficult reading than the longer one does and so it is probable that it is more original. This is because, if the longer text were prior, it is hard to see why it has been shortened; it is easier to see it lengthened and assimilated into a textual tradition. Marshall mentions an argument that Luke did not like to see Christ's death in sacrificial terms; however, against this it must be said that elsewhere Luke retains sacrificial ideas, such as in Acts 20:28. Marshall also says that a redactional study shows

<sup>18</sup> Ian H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), pp. 799–807.

how the shorter text could have grown from Mark's version, and therefore could be original to the Gospel. Of course, there are also arguments in favour of the longer text. In this respect, it must be noted that only one Greek MS, Bezae, supports the shorter version. Marshall claims that the longer version does not have enough similarities with Paul's text of 1 Corinthians to be copied from it; I have already demonstrated that although it is not an exact copy it is very close indeed. If Luke were familiar with Paul's letter and using what Paul had written in a free rather than slavish manner, then there is nothing to tell against Paul as the source for these verses of Luke. The strongest argument made by Marshall against Bezae's shorter text is that it is hard to see how verse 19a could stand on its own at the end of the pericope. It is true that the ending is rather abrupt. On the other hand, if the longer text were original then someone has decided to shorten it and not round off the ending. Either way, someone is guilty of a stylistic error, or for some reason, has chosen brevity.

There are several flaws not mentioned by Marshall in the theory that Luke's account is made up of an original shorter version and an additional ending added by a redactor. One major flaw in an argument for the shorter text being the more original is that at the end of Luke 22:20 there are the words *το ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον*, 'which is poured out for you'. These words bear no relation whatsoever to the words in 1 Corinthians. In fact, Paul uses the word *ἐκχυννόμενον* only once in his letters, in Romans 3:15, where in the middle of a long quotation he writes *ὄξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα*, 'their feet are swift to shed blood', but this is in relation to a generic shedding of blood rather than a pouring out of Jesus' blood. In contrast, Mark 14:24 includes both the word *ἐκχυννόμενον* and *ὑπὲρ*. It is evident from the critical appendices of Nestle-Aland, that there are no textual variations to indicate the inclusion of these words in the shorter version of the text. It is highly likely that whoever wrote verse 20 had both Mark and 1 Corinthians in front of them. Given this point and others raised above, one of three assertions must be correct. The first option is that *ἐκχυννόμενον* and *ὑπὲρ* were introduced by a later redactor, having a copy of Mark in front of them as well as 1 Corinthians. The second option is that *ἐκχυννόμενον* and *ὑπὲρ* are original to the text, and by implication that the longer version is the original version of the text. There is also a third possibility, that a shorter version no longer extant was the original, and included the words *ἐκχυννόμενον* and *ὑπὲρ*.

A well-known cliché is that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and this is true. However, I believe the third option can be disregarded. I will dismiss it on the grounds that there is nowhere in verses 15–19a of Luke 22 that 'which is poured out for you' would fit comfortably. Any attempt to insert these words would result in a very clearly disjointed text. The first option is possible. The Lukan redactor could indeed have had a copy of the original Luke (for example, something like Bezae), Mark, and 1 Corinthians in front of him and made a new copy of the Lukan text with variations. Although it is true that Luke 22: 15–19a appears to have grown out of Mark, in order to have added *το ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον* a redactor would have needed to make use of Mark at the end of Luke 22:20 as well as to use 1 Corinthians for the rest of Luke 22:20. The reason for a scribe's additions in this case would evidently be to restore to the text of Luke the custom of taking the cup after the bread, but the whole thing seems an altogether too complex operation. What is more, the fact that Bezae has the definite article before its single cup whereas other versions do not have the definite article in verse 17 is suggestive of an editing process to make this the only cup. The removal of the second cup provides the occasion for adding the definite article as otherwise the removal of the definite article has to be said to have occurred for no particular purpose.

Tim Carter discusses the possibility that the editor(s) of Bezae were influenced by Marcion because Bezae is light on details of Jesus' body in, for example, the resurrection stories, implying spiritual resurrection, but making little of the resurrection of the body. Specifically on Luke 22:15–20, Carter notes that Tertullian knew of one version of Marcion's gospel that included

the cup in the Last Supper; by implication there were other accounts that did not.<sup>19</sup> This is similar to the argument made by Bradly Billings, who cites examples of crowds being whipped into a frenzy against Christians whom they accuse of cannibalism because of a misunderstanding of the Eucharist.<sup>20</sup> If Marcion did have an influence, or if it was a reaction to charges of cannibalism, then the removal of half of verse 19 and all of verse 20 would be understandable in that it would remove explicit mention of the body and blood of Christ. However, there is a major flaw in this argument. If the editors were so careful as to remove 19a and 20, why not also remove mention of the body and blood from, for example, Mark 14? It remains in the Bezae text in Mark and Matthew (1 Corinthians is not part of Bezae).<sup>21</sup> Now, of course, it could be that Marcion's cut-down Gospel of Luke was the source of Bezae's version of Luke, but the Bezae editor(s) clearly had access to good copies of Mark and Matthew, so it is quite a leap to insist that they only had a corrupted Luke. Given that the scribes have not removed mention of body and blood from the other Gospels, I suggest that too much is made of its removal from Luke. A far simpler answer is available: a scribe at some point simply reduced the number of cups to one, aligning Luke's account of the Last Supper with those of Matthew and Mark.

In addition to the textual points above, it is entirely unclear how the shorter version of the text would have come about as the original text, apparently using part but not all of the relevant section from 1 Corinthians. It could be that Luke chose only to use a few words of it, but if he knew the tradition so well that he used it, why not use it all, maintaining the one cup and the order of bread followed by cup that he would have known from at least Mark? The conclusion is surely that he used it all in the first place.

Thus, I submit that option one is possible, however, option two (the longer text of Luke being original) is more convincing for several reasons. The point of adding the material from 1 Corinthians into an already extant Lukan document would seem to be so that the order of bread followed by cup is kept, instead of having the order of cup followed by bread. If this is indeed what a redactor has done, then they have seemingly failed in their task, as now we have the even more confusing cup/bread/cup again, to deal with. It is more consistent with the evidence to say that this is an order of events created by the original author, and that later scribes have altered it. There is evidence for this in the Syriac texts above. In these, the order of the verses has been altered to remove the problem caused by having cup/bread/cup again. In the case of Syriac Sinaiticus, parts of verse 20 have been removed and the remaining two parts have been moved so that the more familiar sequence of bread first and then cup is given in the final text. In this scenario, the Bezae scribes have simply removed verses 19b and 20 giving the order of a (single) cup followed by the bread, whilst the scribe(s) of Palatinus did the same (maybe following Bezae, but probably following a text derived from Bezae's source document) but reordered their material to preserve the order found elsewhere of bread first. So, on balance, I submit that the longer text, or some approximation of it, is the original. But this still does not seem adequately to account for the variation in the Greek, Syriac, and Latin texts examined above. I will turn to that question now.

## 6. VARIANT READINGS AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MSS

At the beginning of this article, I presented a list of similarities between the Bezae and Curetonian MSS, which demonstrated a connection between the two. However, it was unclear

<sup>19</sup> Tim Carter, 'Marcion's Christology and its Possible Influence on the Codex Bezae', *JTS* 61 (2010), pp. 550–82, pp. 574–78, esp. p. 577.

<sup>20</sup> Billings, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, esp. pp. 165–8.

<sup>21</sup> The Bezae text of Mark 14:22–24 and Matthew 26:26–28 can be found in Scrivener, *Bezae codex Cantabrigiensis*, p. 315 and pp. 82f., respectively. In Matthew 26:26,  $\sigma\mu\alpha$  is abbreviated to  $\sigma\omega$ , but it is not unusual for Bezae to abbreviate words.

what their specific relationship might be. Having undertaken a detailed exploration of Luke 22:15–20, I find that it is now possible both to say that there is a common ancestry for Bezae and Curetonian, and, furthermore, to work out the relationship between these two, and the other MSS I have examined.

There is one thing that all of the variants of the shorter reading share in common: this is that they reduce the number of cups to just one. The impetus is obvious. The other occurrences of this story in the New Testament have just one cup. It is odd to have two. However, the texts I have looked at are all fairly early and seem to relate one to another in a variety of ways. The two Syriac texts have similarities to one another that they do not share with the Peshitta, as I noted above. All of the texts omit the same cup, even though three of them locate it after the bread. And even though they are in different languages, there are similarities in word order that may be clues to the texts' relatedness. I propose that they are not direct relatives but more like cousins. The sequence outlined below provides the most plausible explanation of how the texts came to be a plethora of readings. Naturally, there is a degree of speculation in this, but the proposed sequence offers a logical account of the various readings based on the available evidence. In what follows, I present a sequence with the minimum number of possible steps in the transmission of the text in order to give rise to the variations that exist.

All that is required to remove one cup is to delete either verses 17 and 18, or verse 20. Merely deleting in either of these ways and not moving any text is sufficient to make the text speak of only one cup. The fewest words to delete would be verse 20. So it is easy to see that an unknown scribe of a now lost copy of Luke simply did not copy verse 20. This could be because of Marcionite influence or some other sociological reason, but it is more likely that they had simply already copied a verse about a cup, and held that there should only be one cup in this story. I call this lost MS Luke-Beta.<sup>22</sup> We already know from what David Parker notes in his book on Bezae that the text is often abbreviated and truncated.<sup>23</sup> So if Luke-Beta were copied by the Bezae scribes (or was in fact Bezae itself) that would account for the text stopping at 19a. However, the Latin of Palatinus is so different in places from the Latin text of Bezae, that it seems unlikely that either one is the source of the other, and yet both miss out verse 19b. Palatinus appears more literally to translate the probable original Greek and must therefore be derived from a text other than Bezae. Given this there is at least one MS between Palatinus/Bezae and Luke-Beta, which I term Luke-Beta A. The Palatinus scribe also moved 19a to harmonise the order of the bread and the cup with the other New Testament texts.

Given that Luke-Beta would have contained all of verse 19, Curetonian (or Curetonian's parent document) could have been translated directly from Luke-Beta. A scribe would have copied the verse carefully and in its entirety, but deliberately moved it to place the bread before the cup. The scribe(s) of Syriac Sinaiticus would then have copied from a Curetonian text type MS (Curetonian itself, or a copy of it, or a parent of it that comes between Luke-Beta and Curetonian), but also had a wider awareness of the biblical tradition, and so inserted various other words of relevance to the story from verse 20 whilst maintaining a single cup. This is no surprise given that the palimpsest of Syriac Sinaiticus was found in a treasury of other biblical materials. That the scribe produced a somewhat composite version is understandable. They were writing in Syriac, and so their main source is likely to have been a Syriac copy of Luke. If they had awareness of a wider set of material, mostly in Greek, then interpolating translations of that into the

<sup>22</sup> Although Curetonian exhibits influences from the Diatessaron, Luke-Beta is highly unlikely to have derived this version of the text from Tatian's work. The Arabic Diatessaron and the Latin Codex Fuldensis agree quite well at this point in their respective texts, and are quite different from the version in Curetonian. For the Latin text, see Ernestus Ranke, *Codex Fuldensis: Novum Testamentum Latine Interprete Hieronymo* (Marburgi & Lipsiae, 1868), p. 139. For the Arabic text, see A. S. Marmardji, *Diatessaron De Tation: Texte arabe établi, traduit en français, collationné avec les anciennes versions syriaques, suivi d'un évangélaire diatessarique syriaque et accompagné de quatre planches hors texte* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1935), pp. 430f.

<sup>23</sup> Parker, *Codex Bezae*, pp. 1–4.

Curetonian text type material would make more sense than the work of translating entirely anew, from that other material. In the 1920s, George Monks proposed that Syriac Sinaiticus was a source for Curetonian, so he proposed the same thing as I am proposing, but in reverse.<sup>24</sup> *Contra* Monks, given that Curetonian has no trace of verse 20, and given that these verses would not have been delineated to make them easily extractable and deletable from the surrounding text, the relationship is from the Curetonian text type to Syriac Sinaiticus. Similarly, in his attempt to both analyse the text and to think about why Luke may have composed the longer version, in the 1950s Henry Chadwick suggested that the Syriac, Latin, and Greek texts I have examined in this paper must be connected, but Chadwick did not resolve how.<sup>25</sup> The suggestion made here is a resolution of Chadwick's ponderings on the subject of these relationships.

On the other hand, I noted above that those who have examined the MSS generally hold that the Syriac Sinaiticus MS is at least as old as the Curetonian MS, and probably a few years older. If this is correct, then the Curetonian MS that we have is a copy of the parent document of both this MS and of Syriac Sinaiticus. It will be remembered that although Syriac Sinaiticus was originally from St. Catherine's monastery, Curetonian was from another monastic site in Egypt. In recent years, newly discovered Syriac MSS have come to light, one of which proves that the Curetonian text type was present at St. Catherine's. In 2023, Grigory Kessel published his work on a double palimpsest now housed in the Vatican, but originally from St. Catherine's. The Syriac text was recovered using UV light from MS Vat. iber. 4. The text does not include Luke, so direct comparisons cannot be made with the material I have examined. However, Kessel compares the portion of Matthew that he has with other available Syriac texts, and shows it to be of the Curetonian text type.<sup>26</sup> If Kessel is right about the date of the Syriac of MS Vat. iber. 4, it cannot be the actual MS used by the scribe of Syriac Sinaiticus. However, it does place the Curetonian text type at St. Catherine's.

For the MSS I have looked at, it is therefore possible to draw a diagram to show the relationship, at least as far as the text of Luke 22:15–20 goes. [Figure 1](#) shows this diagram. To recap, in the diagram, Luke-Beta and Luke-Beta A are the two copies of Luke, with Luke Beta missing out verse 20 and Luke-Beta A subsequently missing out verse 19b. Curetonian\* is the hypothetical parent document for the present Curetonian MS and Syriac Sinaiticus. It is only required if the Curetonian MS that we know today is not as old as Syriac Sinaiticus; if Curetonian itself could be placed at St. Catherine's slightly before the composition of Syriac Sinaiticus, then Curetonian\* could be Curetonian. However, this seems unlikely. As noted above, the relationship of Bezae with Syriac Sinaiticus and Palatinus appears to be more distant than with Curetonian, pointing towards heavy influence from other textual traditions in the composition of Syriac Sinaiticus. Palatinus contains various differences in wording from Bezae, making it probable that there is at least one intermediate document between Luke-Beta A and Palatinus, with such an intermediate document having other influences upon it besides Luke-Beta A.

Both the description above and the associated diagram are simplifications. This scheme does not attempt to describe all possible influences on all possible textual variants. However, it shows a 'cousin' relationship between Bezae and Curetonian. Naturally, this diagram only speaks to the detail of how these MSS relate to one another vis-à-vis Luke 22:15–20. Luke clearly had other influences besides Mark and 1 Corinthians, and it is possible that the author of Palatinus did not

<sup>24</sup> George Gardner Monks, 'The Lucan Account of the Last Supper', *JBL* 44 (1925), pp. 228–60, esp. pp. 236ff.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Chadwick, 'The Shorter Text of Luke XXII.15–20', *HTR* 50 (1957), pp. 249–58, esp. pp. 250f.

<sup>26</sup> Grigory Kessel, 'A New (Double Palimpsest) Witness to the Old Syriac Gospels (Vat. iber. 4, ff. 1 & 5)', *NTS* 69 (2023), pp. 210–21. In recent years, another palimpsest of the Old Syriac Gospels has also come to light. Professor David Taylor is preparing the full MS for publication; however, Sebastian Brock has published two excerpts of it, as well as a list of what it contains. Brock shows firstly that (unless some new pages come to light) the MS is missing Luke 22, besides many other passages, and also shows that it is closer to Syriac Sinaiticus than it is to Curetonian. It is also from St. Catherine's. See Sebastian Brock, 'Two Hitherto Unattested Passages of the Old Syriac Gospels in Palimpsests from St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai', *Δελτίο Βιβλικών Μελετών* 31 (2016), pp. 7–18.

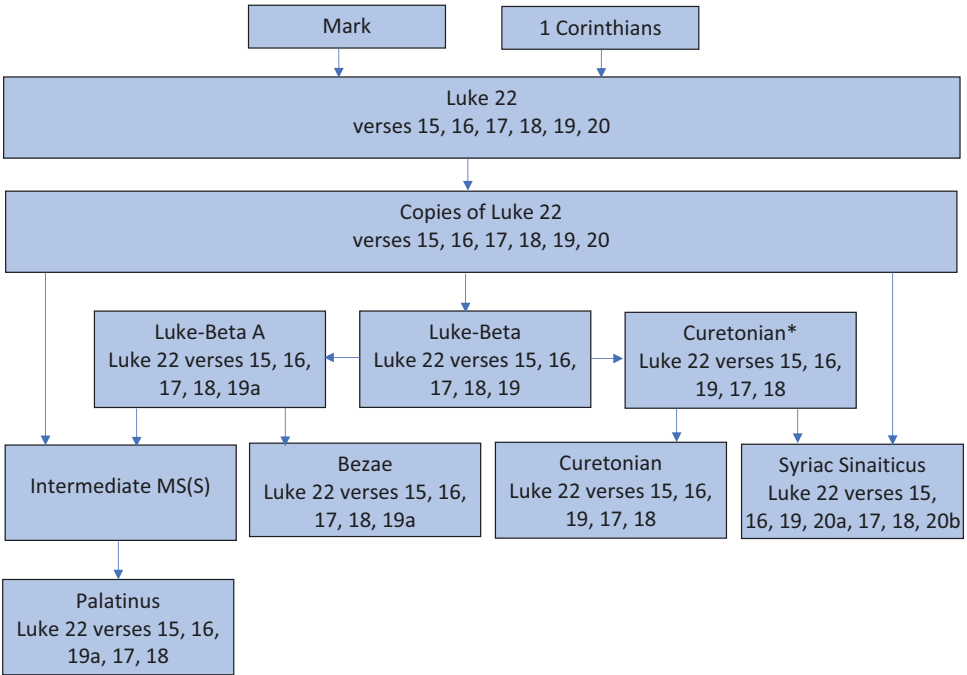


Fig. 1. Relationships between the MSS discussed in this paper

only rely on one MS to create his copy. But these are details beyond the scope of the current research, which has focused on establishing the details of the relationship between Curetonian and Bezae, and has done this by answering the question of whether the longer or shorter version of Luke 22:15–20 is the more original.

## 8. CONCLUSION

I have considered both the question of the original text of Luke 22:15–20 and the question of how the plethora of variants has come about. It seems evident that the longer text of Luke is the best approximation to the original text of Luke that we have. For his sources in this section of the Gospel, Luke has used Mark and 1 Corinthians, or at least a common set of words shared with these texts. When copying the Gospel of Luke, some scribes were unhappy with the record of the Last Supper as given by Luke because it contained two cups and did not harmonise with the story as presented elsewhere. The editor of Luke-Beta removed one cup by not copying verse 20. Various later editors changed the text around so that they present in Luke the same version of the story as is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and 1 Corinthians, a story where there is just one cup, which comes after the bread. My suggestion as far as Bezae goes is that the scribe simply copied what they found in Luke-Beta A, one cup, but an unusual position with respect to the placing of the bread in the story. Lastly, from this, and from further analysis of variants in Curetonian and Bezae, it can be seen that these two MSS share a common ancestor in their recent past. More work needs to be carried out on variants within these MSS, beyond Luke 22:15–20, examining the differences as well as the similarities between these textual traditions, as well as continuing to ask the question of where Syriac Sinaiticus fits into the picture.

At the start of this paper, I noted that some scholars have dismissed the Syriac evidence, believing that it offers no information besides the fact that disagreement on the text exists. I have shown that it can do far more than this. Fundamentally, no copy of the New Testament has arisen *ex nihilo*. All have been copied from an extant text, some more accurately than others. Some scribes accurately copied texts that had themselves been accurately copied. Other scribes also made accurate copies, but were copying from texts that had themselves been produced by less careful scribes, and some scribes, for good or for ill, were either simply imprecise in their copying, or reworked specific points for their own theological or literary reasons. But there is a history of transmission that can potentially be gleaned from any ancient document. The Syriac (and Latin) evidence is a core part of these chains of transmission, and thus part of the overall picture that can help determine questions of the more original text, even where the Syriac versions do not themselves preserve the original text. If attention is given to how these different versions of the text have come about, then this becomes another piece of information in terms of deciding upon alterations to the text.

In the case of Luke 22:15–20, it is probable that all six of these verses are the common ancestor of all versions of this text available today. Some scribes copied the six verses in their entirety; some other scribes made deliberate or accidental changes to restrict the number of cups to one. Then others either accurately copied this variant version or ‘corrected’ it to harmonise with the other accounts of the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Evidence presented here suggests that the original author of these six verses copied two verses of it, mostly word for word, from 1 Corinthians, but also used at least Mark as a source throughout the six verses. As strange as it may seem, I contend that the author of the Gospel according to Luke wanted the reader to be presented with the sequence of cup/bread/cup again.