

PROFILE-BASED CLASSIFICATION OF COMPOSITE TEXT FORMS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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Profile-based classification — in which manuscripts are related by common profiles of agreement at non-mainstream readings — supplies a practical approach to grouping manuscripts that avoids the most obvious pitfalls of classification by text types. Profile-based classification is particularly effective at identifying closely-related groups, such as Families 1 and 13, in which the core members consistently attest the same readings. But how do we classify a manuscript such as Codex Bezae, which, when we consider its text of Mark, has no closely-related witnesses across its total profile of non-mainstream readings? Are we to conclude from this that Bezae has no significant relationships with any other witnesses in Mark? Intuition tells us that this could not be so. After all, Bezae does agree with other manuscripts and with some manuscripts more than others. For example, one group of Bezan readings in Mark agrees with 03 and its relatives, while another agrees with 038 and 565, while yet another with 032.¹ Of course, we also find various combinations of agreements. Surely, there must be a way to describe these relationships with other witnesses.

In this paper, I discuss a more granular approach to profile-based classification that allows us to address complex mixed text forms by splitting the total profile into a composite of smaller sub-profiles, each with specific alignments within the tradition and hence reflecting different relationships, focusing on Codex Bezae's text of Mark as a case study — though the method I outline could equally apply to any other manuscript with a mixed text form. After discussing existing approaches to manuscript profiling as well as the limitations of test passages in defining profiles, I then turn to Bezae's own composite text form in Mark, examining the more significant components of Bezae's larger profile. Bezae attests a composite text form in Mark as it does in other previously studied books, such as Matthew, as studied by Michael W. Holmes in his essay, "Codex Bezae as a Recension of the Gospels" (1996), and Acts, as studied by Barbara Aland in her essay, "Entstehung, Charakter und Herkunft des sog. westlichen Textes" (1986) and Georg Gäbel, in his essay "'Western Text', 'D-Text Cluster', 'Bezan Trajectory' or What Else? — A Preliminary Study" (2017). I conclude

¹ TuT 4.1.2, 438-41; TuT 4.1.1, §2.6.

with an interpretation of these sub-profiles in light of a proposed reconstruction of Bezae's textual history.

Of course, Bezae is not the only manuscript with a mixed text form and hence a composite profile. In Mark, we can also point to GA 191, with a nearly equal mixture of Family 1 and Family 13 readings; 1241, with a mixture of readings related to the so-called "Alexandrian" witnesses and Family 1424; and 2542, with a mixture of apparent relationships to P45, 032, 038, 28, and 565 among others. In fact, due to the complexities of transmission, nearly all manuscript profiles are to a certain extent mixed, though in some manuscripts the composite character is more obvious than in others, particularly when the readings are almost evenly divided among two or more known profiles. Highly-mixed texts present unique challenges when we compare them to other text forms. Unless they belong to a larger tradition, their total profile is likely to be substantially unique. Yet more narrow components of their profiles are likely to intersect with the profiles of other manuscripts. Thus, we require a more granular approach to relating such mixed text forms to known traditions, an approach that can detect points of intersection with these traditions, relating manuscripts at the specific set of readings that they share in common, rather than necessarily across their total profile.

MANUSCRIPT PROFILING

We define a manuscript's profile as the sequence of non-mainstream non-singular readings in its text form that encapsulate its points of distinctiveness with respect to the larger tradition. We exclude readings in which the manuscript agrees with the mainstream, as these readings do little to distinguish the manuscript in question from the great mass of witnesses, as Aland and Aland observe: "an agreement in a Koine reading between any two manuscripts tells very little about their mutual relationships."² On the other hand, agreements with non-mainstream readings offer particular insight about what distinguishes a given manuscript from others. The introduction to the *Text und Textwert (TuT)* volumes on Mark explains: "the main list gives a comparison of profiles or sequences of readings. This list is restricted to the test passages where the primary manuscript differs from the majority

² 1989, 325.

text and does not have a singular reading.”³ Agreements against the Koine reading are typically among a small number or, at least, a minority of witnesses. Except in cases of coincidental emergence, we can assume that manuscripts that agree at non-mainstream readings are likely related at these readings. Singular readings are excluded for the obvious reason that, since they are the readings of a single manuscript, they can tell us nothing about relationships with other surviving witnesses. To the extent that each manuscript attests a unique set of agreements with the mainstream, profiles are inherently manuscript-specific. Profiles are also of different sizes for different manuscripts. Naturally, a more divergent manuscript has a larger profile.

Currently available manuscript profiles typically depend on a selection of test passages. The reason is pragmatic: every compared manuscript must be collated at each test passage. Increasing the number of test passages increases the effort of collation. Thus, the manuscript profiles in the *TuT* main list rely on a selection of test passages, 196 in Mark. While it is true that a sample should give us a good sense of the overall character of a text, the quality of the result depends a great deal on the quality of the sample. To avoid bias, the sample is best chosen randomly. In *TuT*, the sampling is not random, but selected by experts based on the text-historical interest of the chosen passages. Thus, the selection tends to be biased in favor of more spectacular variation units, in many of which Bezae diverges from all known manuscripts or attests versional parallels. Not surprisingly, Bezae comes off appearing more divergent than it actually is.

An alternative approach to the selection of test passages performs full collations on a range or ranges of text, an approach taken by the IGNTP in constructing profiles for their edition of Luke. This approach has the advantage of avoiding selection bias in favor of more textually remarkable variation units. The result is a more representative selection of test passages, at least within the examined range of text. To construct the IGNTP profiles for Luke, full collations were performed on three chapters: 1, 10, and 20. Chapters were selected at intervals to detect large-scale block mixture in witnesses whose text changes dramatically in the course of the gospel. Yet we are still required to assume that patterns of variation are somewhat uniform throughout the text, that the profiles in chapters 1, 10, and 20 are consistent with those in chapters 2 through 9, 11 through 19, and 21 through 24. But

³ *TuT* 4.1.1, 22-23*.

the main list profiles in *TuT* and my own profiling in Mark suggest that this assumption is problematic. Patterns of agreement are seldom distributed uniformly across the entire text of a given witness, even in witnesses that are not affected by large-scale block mixture. Not infrequently, we find short sections of the text with patterns of variation that are not found elsewhere throughout the text.

Of course, if we have a complete data set, we can dispense with sampling altogether and the problems of representative selection and bias. For books where there is now ECM data, it has become practical to construct a total profile that considers every non-mainstream reading for each manuscript under consideration.

SUB-PROFILES IN BEZAE'S TEXT OF MARK

According to my collation of ECM transcripts in Mark, Codex Bezae attests roughly 1300 non-mainstream non-singular or subsingular readings in the Greek text of Mark, which represent the maximum possible profile of variation units where Bezae diverges from the mainstream tradition with some Greek support. Of course, no other witness comes close to agreeing with Bezae's total profile. What we find rather is that different manuscripts and manuscript groups share different parts of Bezae's profile. These sub-profiles are visible in Bezae's Hauptliste in *TuT*, despite the sampling limitations noted above.

One small but distinctive sub-profile in Bezae's larger profile consists of distinctive agreements with Codex Washingtonianus (032), what I will refer to as Bezae's 'W' profile. This profile is found in Bezae's Hauptliste at Teststellen 17, 19, 39, 44, 159, and 173. In a full collation of Mark, we find roughly 34 such cases, concentrated mainly in the first four chapters of Mark as well as in chapters 7 and 10 and portions of chapters 14 and 15. We find typical cases in Mark 1:20, where Bezae and W have ηκολουθησαν ("followed") for απηλθον ("went after"), in Mark 1:25, where Bezae and W are the only witnesses that omit Jesus's name as the subject, in Mark 2:4, where Bezae and W are the only witnesses with απο του οχλου ("from the crowd") instead of δια τον οχλον ("on account of the crowd"), and, finally, in Mark 15:46, where Bezae and W have the prepositional phrase εις την σινδωνα for the simple dative τη σινδωνι.

Another slightly larger sub-profile consists of distinctive agreements with Codex Vaticanus (03) and/or Codex Sinaiticus (01), what I will call the 'B' profile, found in Bezae's

Hauptliste at Teststellen 9, 10, 38, 53, 57, 64, 120, 142, 155, 170, and 184. In a full collation of Mark, we find roughly 58 cases with both 03 and 01, twelve cases with just 01, and 23 cases with just 03 — in sum 93 cases. We find typical cases in Mark 1:14, where 05 and 03 are the only witnesses that have the conjunction και for δε, in Mark 1:29, where 05 and 03 are the only witnesses that spell John’s name with a single nu, and in Mark 15:34, where 05 and 03 are the only Greek witnesses with a form of σαβαχθανι with zeta for sigma and phi for chi, ζαβαφθανει or ζαφθανει. In two better known cases, in Mark 9:31 and 10:34, 05 with 03 and its relatives are the only witnesses having μετα τρεις ημερας (“after three days”) instead of τη τριτη ημερα (“on the third day”).

Then we have a significant sub-profile consisting of distinctive agreements with the Koridethi Codex (038) and GA 565, two closely-related manuscripts in Mark, according to *TuT*, what I will call the ‘Θ’ profile, found in Bezae’s Hauptliste at Teststellen 4, 15, 29, 65, 69, 79, 88, 89, 115, 127, and 147. In a full collation, we find roughly 96 cases with both 038 and 565, 28 cases with just 038, and 74 cases with just 565 — in sum, 197 cases involving 038, 565, or both. Typical cases are found in Mark 5:12, where 05, 038, and 565 have Jesus επεμψεν (“send”) rather than επιτρεψεν (“permit”) the demons to enter the herd of pigs, in Mark 12:33, where 05, 038, and 565 are the only witnesses that have δυναμewς (“power”) for συνεσεως (“understanding”) — a reading not found at any synoptic parallel, and in Mark 14:4, where 05, 038, and 565 assert that οι μαθηται αυτου (“his disciples”) rather than τινες (“certain ones”) were irritated at the woman who anointed Jesus.

These three sub-profiles — W, B, and Θ — represent the key points of intersection with known Greek traditions in Bezae’s total profile in Mark.

INTERPRETATION

How are we to understand Bezae’s complex profile in Mark? We cannot say that Bezae is closely related to any of its individual sub-profiles, because then we are left to explain its relation to the others. Thus, if we try to say that Bezae is closely-related to 038 and 565, with which it shares nearly 200 distinctive agreements, we still must explain the nearly 100 distinctive agreements with 03 and 01. But Bezae is not an “Alexandrian” witness, because these witnesses do not share its 200 distinctive agreements with 038 and/or 565 nor its nearly three dozen distinctive agreements with 032. In short, it is clear that Bezae’s Greek

text form is highly mixed in a manner that we do not find replicated elsewhere in the tradition. Yet while Bezae's mixture is unique among surviving witnesses, we cannot say that it is not related to other witnesses at all. Unless the agreements came about by chance, we must assume that there is a relationship behind each of its sub-profiles. Of course, these are not necessarily equal relationships.

So our job is not done with merely enumerating these agreements, for example, that Bezae's profile agrees distinctively at 15% of its readings with 038 and/or 565 or that 7% of its readings agree distinctively with 03 and/or 01. In fact, a sub-profile is more than the sum of its agreements. An important aspect of a sub-profile is how it is distributed throughout the text. The distribution of readings within a specific sub-profile can give us historical insight into the mechanisms of change by which its readings were introduced into the larger text form as well as the sequence by which they were introduced. If readings are not evenly distributed, but concentrated in particular places, this might suggest that they reflect the activity of correctors, who focused on particular areas of interest within the larger text. In a 2015 essay, "The Corrected New Testament Text of Codex Sinaiticus," Klaus Wachtel has shown that the C correctors of Codex Sinaiticus were apparently engaged in a project to shape and prepare the underlying text for further copying. Such a phenomenon is evident in our so-called 'B' profile. While Bezae has some striking agreements with 01 and 03, they are not evenly distributed throughout its text. Thus, we find peaks of agreement with 03 and 01 at the end of chapter 1, the beginning of chapter 7, the middle of chapter 9, and the first half of chapter 14, while at the same time we find significant gaps in chapters 5, 6, 8, and 15, suggesting that an exemplar in Bezae's tradition has been partially corrected to a so-called "Alexandrian" manuscript. To introduce the readings of our so-called 'B' profile would have required 93 corrections, certainly not an exorbitant number across the sixteen chapters of Mark, enhancing this possibility. If so, Bezae's remarkable agreements with 03 and 01, that Hort took as evidence of Bezae's great antiquity, in fact, fit the pattern of later corrections applied to an earlier base text. In a similar way, Bezae's distinctive agreements with 032 occur mainly in eight chapters, suggesting that a revision was only partially completed — either in 05 or 032. The revisers were more active in the first four chapters as well as in chapters 7 and 10, before apparently losing interest. They then hurried quickly to chapters 14 and 15 near the end of the gospel.

If the B and W profiles are understood in terms of the activity of correctors or revisers, we are left to explain the Θ profile, consisting of roughly 200 distinctive agreements with 038, 565, or both. The significance of this profile becomes more apparent when we move beyond distinctive agreements to consider total agreements, where Bezae agrees with 038 and 565 alone or in combination with other witnesses at 61% of its non-mainstream non-singular readings in Mark. The logical inference is that Bezae's Greek text form derives at some point from a common tradition with these witnesses, before more singular elements entered its tradition. This inference is supported by the consistently high distribution of the Θ profile across Mark. To summarize, we might suggest that Bezae's most remarkable features rest in Mark upon a free base text in the tradition of 038 and 565, with sporadic agreements with 03, 01, and 032, apparently introduced as corrections or revisions. Bezae's most distinctive elements lie beyond the scope of the present paper, though these also appear to reflect later developments within its tradition.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that Bezae's apparent isolation within the larger Greek tradition has less to do with a real lack of relationships than it does with how we approach its distinctive text form. If we approach Bezae's text form as a monolithic unit, we find that its total profile is clearly unique among surviving witnesses and, hence, unrelated as a whole to that of any known witness. But if we approach Bezae's text form as a composite text form, we discover that parts of its total profile, considered individually, agree with known traditions, supplying evidence of relationships that are otherwise obscured when all readings are considered together. These sub-profiles represent apparent sources of mixture that impacted earlier exemplars in Bezae's history, though not necessarily its immediate history, related to witnesses such as 01, 03, 032, 038, and 565, allowing us to reconstruct Bezae's complex text form from its parts. This granular approach to manuscript profiling can be applied to other highly-mixed text forms both within and beyond the gospel of Mark.