A SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT SINCE UBS³

J H PETZER

ABSTRACT

This article surveys the developments in New Testament Textual Criticism since the appearance of the third edition of the Greek New Testament by the United Bible Societies. After discussing (a) pocket editions; (b) major editions and critical apparatuses; (c) research on the history of the text; (d) methodological developments; and (e) the return of the Textus Receptus, the article concludes by summarising the most important trends and discussing the ongoing problems in the discipline. The discussion is limited to the Greek New Testament and does not include developments in the research of the Versions.

The year 1975 marked the conclusion of the United Bible Societies’ project with the appearance of the third edition of its text (UBS³ - Aland et al 1975). Therewith a project came to an end to which much energy has been devoted and which has received more than a fair amount of attention during the almost quarter century of its existence. A decade and a half has now passed since the appearance of UBS³ and it seems appropriate to look back at what has been happening in this discipline during this period of time.

The purpose of this article is to take a critical look at the developments, progresses, problems, etcetera, of New Testament Textual Criticism during the past fifteen years. The discussion of the subject follows, in broad terms, the outline of the discussion in an article by Eldon Epp in 1974 (Epp 1974). In this epoch-making article Epp asked important questions as to the state of the discipline in the twentieth century. The article drew criticism from Kurt Aland (Aland 1979), who could not agree with many of Epp’s statements. Epp’s answer to Aland’s criticism appeared six years after the initial article (Epp 1980). Many of the questions raised in the first article were reiterated in the second. The subject will be discussed in this article within the broad framework of the discussion in Epp’s first article. The reader will appreciate that it is impossible to be exhaustive in such a short article. With the danger of being one-sided and biased in mind, only the most important developments and most important literature are thus being attended to.

1 POCKET EDITIONS

Three pocket editions of the Greek New Testament were published subsequent to UBS³ - only one of them, though, independent of UBS³. The first one to appear, was NA²⁶ (Aland et al 1979). It was followed in 1983 by a corrected version of UBS³, referred to as UBS³a (Aland et al 1983). Both these texts are related to UBS³ in the sense that they both have the same text as UBS³. Apart from these texts the world has also witnessed the appearance of the Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text...
(GNTMT - Hodges & Farstad 1982), which is, as its name suggests, based upon a totally different methodology than the previously mentioned texts.

1.1 Eclectic texts: UBS³, NA²⁶ and UBS³a

To say that UBS³ has received a fair amount of attention, seems almost like an understatement. Since 1975 alone only the most important discussions of the text in major articles run into double figures (cf e.g. Aland 1977; Black 1977; Edwards 1977; Elliott 1975a, 1975b, 1978a, 1979a, 1979b, 1981a; Kilpatrick 1979; Ross 1976b, 1983; Royse 1983). Amongst other things the editors of this text have been criticised for initially basing their text on Westcott and Hort's text; for allowing the papyri to play too great a role in their textual decisions; for not selecting the apparatus accurately enough; for using brackets and double brackets in the text; for citing too many meaningless manuscripts in the apparatus; and for not being eclectic in the true sense of the word.

Following UBS³ there appeared in 1979 the long awaited twenty-sixth edition of the Nestle-Aland series of texts. It appeared with exactly the same text as UBS³. The difference between the two texts lies in the apparatus: whereas the apparatus of UBS³ was designed for the purpose of translation and thus contains a limited number of variation-units, NA²⁶ was designed for scholarly purposes and contains much more variation-units in the apparatus (more or less ten thousand over against one thousand four hundred in UBS³). Also this text has received a lot of attention (cf Aland 1977, 1981, 1982a; Baarda 1980; Bartsch 1980, 1981; Collins 1984; Delobel 1980; Elliott 1981a, 1981b; Larson 1981; Neirynck 1979; Van Belle 1980). Because of the similarity in text much of the criticism raised against UBS³, is also brought in against this text and need therefore not be repeated here. An important aspect of the methodology behind this text is, however, that Aland, in the preface to the text, calls it a 'local-genealogical' instead of an eclectic method, even though the text was edited by the same principles and people as UBS³. It was only three years later, when it was explained in more detail (cf Aland & Aland 1982:282-283), that the impact and importance of this subtle difference in terminology was understood and that it became clear that the underlying differences between the reasoned eclectic method and the Alands' method are in fact much greater than meets the eye. This text has also been criticised sharply for being presented as the 'new standard text' and scholars have expressed their annoyance with this 'creation of a new Textus Receptus' in many reviews and articles.

In 1983 the updated version of UBS³ appeared. Again there is no change to the text, the only difference being the fact that it has a totally new and updated critical apparatus, in which a higher level of accuracy is attained than in UBS³.

One aspect of the criticism against this text deserves more attention, that is the critique of the methodology upon which it is based. The editors of the text attached themselves and this text explicitly to the eclectic method (cf e.g. Black 1957/58:344; Epp 1980:141; Junack 1978:136; Metzger 1971:xv). Critics, however, complained that this is not the case, but that it in fact keeps as close to the most important manuscripts (P75, Ξ and B) as its predecessors did (the Westcott and Hort text, which formed the starting point for this edition). It is stated that the text is only
eclectic in those instances where the manuscripts cited above part in their evidence. Various examples are brought forward to substantiate the case: (1) The editors are criticised for choosing readings containing linguistic and stylistic features not typical of the author's style. (2) They are criticised for choosing the more harmonious reading against the non-harmonious reading. (3) They are criticised for choosing the shorter reading instead of the longer reading in passages such as Matthew 14:30; Mark 1:1 and Luke 24:42, especially where homoioteleuton could have played a part in the origin of the short reading. (4) Readings containing neo-Attic Greek are sometimes printed while rivals containing Hellenistic Greek are left in the apparatus.

Much of this criticism comes from supporters of the so-called rigorous or thoroughgoing eclectic method, that is to say critics basing their text-critical decisions only on internal aspects. Judging a different methodology by the margins of one's own method must of necessity lead to this kind of criticism. However, within the different definitions and applications of eclecticism it is the editors' choice to take other factors also into consideration and it must necessarily lead to aspects of internal criticism playing a minor role in some instances. Because of this the critique is not at all valid.

However, what is important of this criticism, is that it exposes the problems of the so-called reasoned eclectic method (and the eclectic method in general) quite well and illustrates quite well what Eldon Epp describes in theory in a thorough investigation of the eclectic method (cf Epp 1976). Epp argued that the main problem of this method is the inability to reach a satisfactory synergism between its two main branches, that is to say internal and external evidence and because of this either of these two will always dominate the other when they are combined in a method such as reasoned eclecticism. The criticism above illustrates exactly this point and shows how in this text internal evidence is constantly subdued to the results of external evidence (cf also Petzer 1988). Instead of being a mere critique of this text, this point thus exposes and illustrates a very basic problem of the method as a whole, and illustrates the need for attention to this aspect of the method by those who believe that this kind of approach to the text can solve its problems.

As regards the text itself, it must be concluded that it is probably the closest to the originals that one currently can get with the kind of evidence that is available. The positive element of this text is exactly that about which the critics above complain, that is to say its attachment to the early manuscripts, for the text can be identified and associated very closely to the earliest manuscripts, which is, in the end the only measure by means of which its antiquity can be proven. New Testament Textual Criticism is an historical discipline and ever since the time of Carl Lachmann its results are always tested against the available historical evidence (i.e. earliest manuscripts). By relating the text so closely to the Egyptian manuscripts of the second and third centuries, one can be certain that in working with this text he is at least using a (type of) text that did actually exist in the second century. We are thus working with a fairly early text. What the relation of this text is to the 'autographs', is, however, quite another matter and can, as far as I am concerned, not be determined with the evidence available to us today.
1.2 The Majority Text: GNTMT

The appearance of GNTMT in 1982 was not totally unexpected, given the renewed interest in the Majority Text since particularly the late sixties (cf discussion in 5 below). It is also not coincidental that it appeared almost a century after the final dethronement of the Textus Receptus by Westcott and Hort's text in 1881. In the introduction to this text the methodology used to edit it is explained quite in detail. As its name suggests, the text rests upon the assumption that the majority of manuscripts cannot be mistaken (cf e.g Hodges & Hodges 1980). In an attempt to devise a scholarly method for editing a text on this basis two parts of the text, John 7:53-8:12 and Revelation, have been edited by means of a new genealogical method, that is to say a method by means of which a 'best manuscript' is chosen upon its position in a stemma of manuscripts (i.e. a genealogy based upon a detailed analysis of the manuscripts of the majority text particularly). In the rest of the text the reading appearing in the numerical majority of manuscripts are printed. This 'update of the Textus Receptus' has understandably already been rejected by critics, because of the biased presuppositions upon which it is based.

However, there has arisen one possible use of this text, that is to say as a collating base. For many years now the Textus Receptus has been (and still is) used as the most appropriate base of collation. The main reason deals with the fact that by far the majority of manuscripts agrees in broad terms with the Textus Receptus. By using it as a base of collation, the number of variants to be noted in an apparatus will be much smaller than when using a modern critical text as collating base. This is one of the reasons why the Textus Receptus is used as base text in the Luke volumes of the International Greek New Testament Project. Because GNTMT represents the readings of the majority of currently available manuscripts much more accurately than the Textus Receptus, there were suggestions that it, rather than the Textus Receptus be used for this purpose (cf Wallace 1989).

In addition it ought also to be said that it is from the point of view of the development of the discipline in general probably a good thing that the text has appeared. Not only has it given a fairly accurate overview of what the readings of the majority of manuscripts look like (even though it was based upon Von Soden), but also the mere fact that there is now diversification in the nature of available texts is a good thing, for it allows users of the text to determine just how far different theories and methodologies differ in practice. It, finally, also gives a good overview of the state of this methodological approach and exactly what it can achieve. For the first time since the seventeenth century critics of this method now have a practical tool by means of which it and its claims can practically be evaluated (though in the end nothing more than what was known before, is reached by such an evaluation of this text).

1.3 Forthcoming editions

In addition to the editions discussed above there is also talk of a fourth edition of the UBS-series and a text to be based upon thoroughgoing eclectic principles. The UBS project is currently in the hands of Barbara
Aland, the new director of the Institute at Münster, with J Karawidopoulos co-operating. The main purpose of the revision is to build a new apparatus. How much progress has been made and when it will appear, is not known.

The latter edition was supposed to be a sequel to the *Greek-English Diglot*, edited by George Kilpatrick in the early sixties (Kilpatrick 1961-64) and it has been attended to by Kilpatrick prior to his death early in 1989. The material is currently in the hands of Keith Elliott. If and when the completed text will appear, is not known. Notwithstanding the criticism to which the *Diglot* was subjected in the sixties, it is important that this text appear, even though it will most probably display similar features and characteristics as the *Diglot*, since there is up to this point no practical illustration of the value of this text-critical method apart from individual articles and one or two monographs. It is therefore important for the development of the methodology of New Testament Textual Criticism that the results of this text-critical method be published in this way, so as to enable textual critics not only to evaluate the claims of this method by the results it produces, but also to have a better and more clear picture of what internal evidence can produce when assessed without the guidance of the history of the text. In this sense, this text will have the same value as GNTMT, even for those critics who do not agree with the methodology upon which it is based.

2 MAJOR EDITIONS AND CRITICAL APPARATUSES

2.1 The International Greek New Testament Project

In 1984 appeared the long awaited and long overdue first volume of *The New Testament in Greek: The Gospel according to St. Luke*, edited by the International Greek New Testament Project (American and British Committees 1984-87). The first volume contains Luke 1-12 and the second volume, which appeared three years later, Luke 13-24. With this a project, started in the forties, came to a conclusion under the final editorship of Keith Elliott. The purpose of these volumes was to be a sequel to the editions of Matthew and Mark by Legg (cf Legg 1935, 1940) and was carried out by a group of British and American textual critics. The purpose was not to establish a new text for Luke, but rather to compile a full textual apparatus for this Gospel.

Having been such a long project, stretching over a number of decades, many aspects of this edition have been discussed in detail (cf e.g Elliott 1983, 1986; Parker 1990 for more details). Among the more important points of critique against this text is the fact that the Textus Receptus is used as base text as well as the method of choosing which minuscules to include in the apparatus. Although the information in the apparatus attains a high degree of accuracy, there has been some criticism of the accuracy as well.

Three aspects of this text and apparatus, however, stand out and need some closer attention and in this respect I want to compare this edition with the Vetus Latina editions, published on the continent by the Vetus Latina Institute in Beuron. The first aspect concerns the base text. Without re-opening the debate on the base text as such, there is one aspect of choosing the Textus Receptus as base text, which needs to be commented upon. I can understand that, given the involvement of such a
great number of scholars from different methodological orientations in the project, it would probably have been impossible to agree upon the readings of a critically edited base text and it would have postponed the end result much longer, if not indefinitely. But critics are also correct when they stress that this edition brings no progress whatsoever to our knowledge of either the identity of the original text or the history of the text and one may very well ask what the point is of merely reproducing (selective if representative) information without any kind of interpretation of that information. It is true that all the 'great' editions of the New Testament of the past are 'great' because of their apparatuses (cf Wallace 1989:618) and that their texts would long have been forgotten if it weren't for the wealth of information in their apparatuses. However, this is so because of the fact that they all attempt to represent the original text in their critical text (e.g. Tischendorf ). The Vetus Latina editions have shown that there are other options and it could have been very helpful to all kinds of New Testament scholars to have had the information of the Greek text presented to them in a similar fashion as the Vetus Latina texts are being represented, that is to say by printing the readings of the different text-types in the base text. In this way the available information is being interpreted for the user, without necessarily making judgments as to the possibility or probability of them having stood in the original text.

Secondly this volume shows that the assessment of Greek patristic material is in many respects still problematic. This is a problem not so much of this book as of the discipline as a whole. In the introduction to the Luke volumes it is merely said that the best available critical editions of the fathers have been used. What these editions are and why they are considered to be the best, are not made known. Also questions regarding matters such as the date, locality and authorship of disputed patristic texts are not discussed here. The Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament does still not have any kind of source or compilation of information regarding the patristic writers available which could be compared to the Sigelliste of the Vetus Latina Institute (cf Frede 1981, 1984, 1988).

Finally, compared to the Vetus Latina editions, the Luke volumes leave something to be desired in the amount of the information presented. This again considers in particular the patristic material. It only contains patristic information up to the fifth century. In addition it only lists citations (together with adaptations, but no allusions). It furthermore only lists a selection of minuscule manuscripts (selected by means of the Claremont Profile Method), without stating in the introduction how or why the manuscripts listed were selected and what they actually represent. This limits the use of these books, since it is, for example, not possible to study in any thorough way the history and sub-text-types in the Byzantine text, since there is no patristic information of this period available and the manuscript evidence is selective (albeit representative).

Having said all this, it needs, on the other hand, also to be said that these two volumes are great tributes to the efforts of the scholars involved in them. Compared to what is available to the student of the Greek New Testament, nothing that has appeared until now, can in any way
be compared to what these two volumes offer.

After the completion of the Luke volumes, the editorial committees on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean started with the preparation of the edition of the Fourth Gospel (cf Parker 1990). It seems as if this Gospel will basically follow the same pattern as that followed in the production of the Luke volumes.

2.2 Editio Maior Critica
There has for a long time now been talk about the 'New Tischendorf', the Editio Maior Critica, prepared at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textkritik in Münster. This project differs from IGNTP in that its purpose is to edit a critical Greek text supplemented by a full apparatus of variant readings. Very little has appeared up to now and the Institute was sharply criticised for not having produced results. However, a series of books, containing initial results, were made available during the last couple of years, which shows that the project is well under way (cf Aland 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1987d; B Aland 1986a; Junack & Grunewald 1986).

2.3 Boismard & Lamouille
The year 1984 saw the appearance of another 'major edition'. That is the text of Acts edited by the two French scholars M-E Boismard and A Lamouille (1984). Based upon a detailed analysis of the language and style of the two texts of Acts the editors came to the conclusion that the problem of the relation between the two texts of Acts might be a literary rather than textual problem (cf Boismard 1981). With this notion they touched on a problem which needs attention in New Testament Textual Criticism, namely the relation between the 'literary' and 'textual' phases in the transmission of the New Testament (if there is in fact a difference at all).

In reviving Blass's theory of the relation of the two texts of Acts Boismard and Lamouille think that both texts had their origin in the same author/redactor. This is proved by linguistic and stylistic similarities between the longer readings (Western text) and the shorter readings (Alexandrian text). For this reason they print both texts in their edition as 'original' texts of Acts. More important than the theory upon which this text is based, which has been rejected with some confidence (cf e g B Aland 1986b; Geer 1988; Hull 1988; Mackenzie 1985), is the text itself. For the first time ever two text-types have been printed in any printed edition of the New Testament next to each other (not considering Ropes's edition of Acts in the Beginnings of Christianity-series). Though many aspects of these texts and the way in which they were edited may still be problematic, the evidence is presented for the first time in the history of this discipline in such a way that different text-types can as a whole be viewed on the same relative level with each other.

3 TEXTUAL THEORY AND HISTORY
Looking at the position of the reconstruction of the history of the text, there seems to have been little progress during the past decade and a half. Apart from a few articles (e g Fee 1980a, 1982a) and one or two monographs (e g Hurtado 1981; Ehrman 1986), none of which came with stunning new insights, little attention has been given to the history of
the text in the Anglo-American world. In the end there seems less attention to the sources of the New Testament than previously and many aspects of the sources and history of the New Testament are still unattended to. Less attention is being given to the fathers (which might gain some new interest after the establishing of a new series related to the fathers by Scholars Press – cf Ehrman 1986). In addition the lectionaries are currently everything but totally neglected and for information about the history of the later minuscules and Byzantine text we are still largely dependent on Von Soden and a number of earlier studies, although there are some new classifications of Byzantine manuscripts available (though no new histories of the text in the Middle Ages – cf e.g Richards 1977a; Wisse 1982).

The exception to what has been said above, is the new textual theory coming from Münster. After half a century or so of inactivity as regards the development of new theories on the earliest history of the transmission of the text (the last real activity being the theories of Von Soden and Streeter), a new theory of the history of the text has finally been put forward by Kurt Aland. Being the culminating point of his long criticism of the traditional fondness of Westcott and Hort's theory, the new theory was explained in some detail in the Alands' handbook on Textual Criticism (Aland & Aland 1982:57-81; cf also Aland 1981, 1982b). Together with this new theory there emerged a new system of classification of the New Testament documents according to their value (Aland & Aland 1982:82-190).

According to this theory the text-types are being dated later than in the traditional model. Aland contends that the state of the text of the early papyri demands that a period of an uncontrolled transmission existed prior to the third and fourth centuries. During this period of the Early Text (Fruhtext) there are no discernible local text-types. One can, however, classify manuscripts belonging to this period in text-types according to their textual quality. Three such 'qualitative text-types' are being acknowledged, that is to say a Normal text, a Free text and a Strict text. The latter, to which manuscripts such as P5 and B testifies, is a tradition in which the original text was transmitted fairly accurately and which has escaped the editing and recensional work of later periods. It is therefore a homogeneous text-type. The Normal text is also a fairly homogeneous text, and it is characterised by controlled errors of the kind that characterised the text up to the final stages of transmission (making room in this way for amongst other things the 'typically' Byzantine readings found in the early papyri – cf discussion below). The Free tradition is no homogeneous tradition, but rather a common nomenclature used to designate all those manuscripts that do not belong to the other text-types. Out of this situation emerged in the third and fourth centuries the so-called local text-types, that is to say the Alexandrian (which later developed into the Egyptian) and the Western (which is called the D-text, since its origin is not seen to be in the West). Out of these two, but still with some influence from the early text, the Byzantine text finally emerged.

Based upon this reconstructed history, the manuscripts are classified in five categories: Category 1 includes manuscripts which are of great significance for the reconstruction of the original text (such as those of
the Alexandrian text). Category 2 includes manuscripts significant for the reconstruction of the original text, but which have been influenced by the Byzantine text. Category 3 includes manuscripts not important for the reconstruction of the original text, but important for the reconstruction of the general history of the text. Category 4 includes manuscripts of the D-text (Western text). Category 5 includes manuscripts of the Byzantine text, which do not have any significance for the reconstruction of the original text.

Analysing this textual theory or history closer brings some interesting phenomena to light. At first sight it seems as if there is in fact little difference between the traditional (Westcott and Hort's) theory and that of this model, for distinguishing three text-types prior to the fourth century coincides with the three text-types (Neutral, Alexandrian and Western) in Westcott and Hort's model. The textual qualities of the three types in both models are also more or less similar to each other. However, the important difference between the two models lies in the fact that Aland does not in this early stage work with local text-types, that is to say text-types attached to a single place during a given time. He redefines text-types and moves away from a local definition to a qualitative definition of text-types. He stresses that the three types are identified merely because of the textual quality of the manuscripts and that they occurred throughout the area where the text was transmitted. An illustration of this is, for example, the so-called Free tradition, wherein he includes manuscripts of a fairly diversified nature, such as are not to be included within the same tradition in the traditional model.

A second very important difference regards the position of the Western text (or D-text). Not only is it dated later than in the traditional model, but it is stripped of its local connotation by a change of name. Again the change of name emphasises that the direction of development is away from a local towards a qualitative definition of text-types. However, where it is still possible and necessary to maintain a local definition, there is room for it in the model (e.g. the Alexandrian and Egyptian texts). Regarding the Western or D-text Aland furthermore rejects Westcott and Hort's qualitative judgments upon its short readings (western non-interpolations) as being probably original.

To pass any kind of final judgments upon this textual theory at this stage, would be premature. The model, as described in the literature referred to, is still described in vague and general terms and lacks detail. One hopes and suspects that more detail will emerge as the results of the Editio Maior Critica-project unfold themselves. However, even at this early stage it must be said that many aspects of this model are appealing indeed. For one thing, the point of view from which the history is reconstructed, is a vantage point above the traditional model. This model is constructed from the point of view of the earliest available manuscripts and not the fourth century manuscripts. From this follows that the classification of the papyri is somewhat more convincing than in other models. Because of his departing from the fourth century local text model of Westcott and Hort, Metzger is, for example, forced to classify many early papyri as 'mixed' because they do not fit into the text-types in that model (cf e.g. Metzger 1968:247-255). This is a problem to which supporters of the traditional model has not yet formulated a satisfactory
answer. The position of the papyri in Aland's new model makes much more sense than in these traditional models.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation of variant readings

If there is one area of this discipline which did get the attention of textual critics during the past decade and a half, it is the evaluation of variant readings. Literally scores of articles have appeared since the mid-seventies dealing with some aspect or other of the evaluation of variant readings, which shows that aspects of methodology have had ample attention during this period. However, reading through the material makes it clear that little (if indeed any at all) progress in the methodology, with the view of increasing the level of certainty in the decisions, has been made by these investigations. What has happened is that methods, developed earlier in the century, have either been defended against attacks from supporters of other methods, or aspects thereof have been applied and discussed in a practical way. To the theoretical development of text-critical methodology, as little attention has been paid as in previous periods of time, with the result that there are still many aspects and problems that need urgent attention. Let us first, however, look at what has been happening.

The mid- and late-seventies were characterised by methodological debates between proponents of opposing methodological orientations. Reference has already been made to the debate between Epp (1974, 1980) and Aland (1979) on the state of the discipline in the twentieth century. A similar debate between Keith Elliott (1978b) on the one hand, and Gordon Fee (1976) and Dowell Flatt (1975) on the other hand took place on the question of thoroughgoing eclecticism. The most fierce debates, however, concerned the new claims for the originality of the Majority Text. Richard Taylor (1977, 1978) and Wilbur Pickering (1978) were involved in one such debate on Pickering's ideas about the identity of the text of the New Testament (Pickering 1980). Gordon Fee (1978a, 1978b) and Zane Hodges (1978a, 1978b) were involved in a debate on Hodges's editing of GNTMT. Fee also wrote a brilliant article on Pickering's views (1978/79) of the original text - an article which, as far as I am concerned, said the last word on Pickering's book and exposed the most basic problems and shortcomings of this book in quite a brilliant fashion. Pickering never ventured to answer this thorough criticism by Fee (cf also Aland 1987e; Fee 1980b; Holmes 1983.) Whereas these debates centered around methodological matters as such, a similar debate between Van Bruggen (1982) and Bandstra (1981, 1982) centered around the practice of Textual Criticism in their discussion of the Lord's Prayer. Very little new emerged from these debates and in general one can say that their main function was to demarcate and distinguish the different methodologies followed in this discipline sharper from one another and to formulate the methods in more detail.

In addition to these discussions of methodology, there has also been quite a lot of discussion on the practical side of the methods. An unpublished doctoral thesis by Royse (1981) on the scribal habits in the early papyri leads the way. This is an important work and needs to be made
available to a wider circle of readers. In following an earlier article by Colwell (1969) Royse studies the readings of a number of early papyri (P45, P46, P47, P66, P72 and P75) and shows why a more detailed study of the (earliest) manuscripts is needed to hypothesise in any meaningful way about the origin of variants. With the origin of variants and the hypotheses about it being the basis of the whole eclectic method today, this study shows one of the most important shortcomings of the eclectic method (cf also Royse 1983). In this country the published doctoral thesis by Jordaan (1980) on variation in word-order attempted to refine the methodology regarding internal aspects of determining the original reading in variation-units involving the order of words. The refined method proposed in this book has in the end a much wider application than merely to word-order variation (cf also Jordaan 1982). Both these books were thus aimed at refining the practical use of aspects of the eclectic method.

In similar fashion one can refer to a number of articles which have had the same purpose: Michael Holmes read a paper at the 1988 meeting of the SBL on harmonisation (Holmes 1988); Carroll Osburn (1983) attempted to determine whether and how the historic present can be used as text-critical criterion; Keith Elliott (1976, also 1972) attempted to refine the evaluation of Atticism in the transmission of the Greek New Testament; Eugene Nida (1981a) and Ross (1982) paid attention to the 'harder reading' (lectio difficilior) among the variants in a given unit; Bart Ehrman (1988a) is currently attending to the question of dogmatic variation with his attention to the ways and means of the corruption of the New Testament by orthodox scribes and scholars. In addition attempts have been made to involve new aspects in the evaluation of readings. Aspects of structuralism have, for example, been employed by, amongst others, Hansie Wolmarans (1983) and Mark Plunkett (cf Ehrman & Plunkett 1983) in an attempt to solve textual problems (cf also Petzer 1984, 1989). Norman Petersen (1981) and Boomershine and Bartholomew (1981) employed narrative principles to solve the riddle of the ending of Mark's Gospel. All these (and similar) studies will serve to refine text-critical methodology. In addition to these studies a large number of studies involving discussions of individual textual problems in the New Testament have also been published. Many of them either deal with the eclectic method, as formulated by Metzger (e.g. Fee 1982b), or deal with aspects of the internal criticism of variants (e.g. Elliott 1981c), or take an historical view on textual problems (e.g. B Aland 1986b; Ehrman 1988b; Gamble 1977) (the latter, however, being in the minority).

The trend coming from all these publications is basically the same and these publications make it clear that there has been little methodological progress in the past decade or two. The basic trend is to develop the practical application of the eclectic method, particularly as it was formulated by Metzger late in the sixties (Metzger 1968:207-211, 1971:xxiv-xxviii). There is no systematic survey of the problems of this method and important criticism of the method, such as that by Epp (1976), is still unattended to. There is also no attention to the theoretical basis of the discipline and questions regarding the status of the text we are working with (i.e. redacted text versus author's text, cf Petzer 1990), or the developments in disciplines upon which particularly the consideration of internal evidence is based (cf Petzer 1987a). The result
of all this is that there still is no more certainty with regard to our choices of readings than a century ago.

4.2 The relationship among manuscripts
Since Colwell and Tune published their method to determine quantitatively the relationship between manuscripts (Colwell & Tune 1969), there has been a surge of interest in this aspect of Textual Criticism, particularly in the United States. Within this area the so-called Claremont Profile Method was later developed with the purpose of determining which minuscules ought to be included in the IGNTP-volumes of Luke (cf e.g Richards 1977a, 1977b, 1979, 1981; Wisse 1982). Following some criticism which exposed important problems of this method, Bart Ehrman developed what he calls the Comprehensive Profile Method in his study of the Gospel text of Didymus the Blind (Ehrman 1986, 1987).

5 THE RETURN OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS
The world has also in the past decade witnessed the return of the Textus Receptus and a new vigour among its proponents characterises the new quest for the return of the Textus Receptus. Following a series of articles by Zane Hodges late in the sixties, it was not until the last part of the seventies that the impact of the new onslaught on the critical text was realised. In addition to the work of Hodges (1978a, 1978b, 1979a, 1979b; Hodges & Hodges 1980) the most important scholarly book on the subject came from the pen of Wilbur Pickering (1980, 1978). This book was an instant seller and had a second edition within three years after its original publication in 1977. Far from being a merely American movement, it has also had support from the Continent. In more or less the same time as Pickering, Jakob van Bruggen published his views on the history of the text, wherein he came out strongly in favour of the originality of the 'Ecclesiastical text' (Van Bruggen 1976). The movement found its early culmination in GNTMT (and the New King James Version), which represents the first practical results of research from this movement in four centuries. In addition to these scholarly work, the case for the Majority Text was also put forward in a number of popular and semi-scholarly books and articles. According to Nida (1981b) this movement is popular in particularly Latin America, where the United Bible Societies have less influence. After the publication of GNTMT it seemed as if the attention to and interest in this approach has lost momentum. However, three years ago a Majority Text Society was founded with the sole intention of promoting the case for the Majority Text.

Coming from this approach there are two publications that need somewhat more attention. The first is a book by Harry Sturz (1984), containing a detailed analysis of the readings of the papyri, with the intention to prove that there are so many typically Byzantine readings in the papyri, that the Byzantine text cannot be dated as late as the fourth century. Although the theory as such fails to convince - mainly because the existence of individual early readings does not prove the early existence of a whole text-type - it does emphasise one problem for the supporters of the traditional historical model, and that is the total rejection of the Byzantine text by Westcott and Hort. Today it is generally agreed that not all typically Byzantine readings come from the recensional process through
which the Byzantine Text originated, and that there might be Byzantine readings which originated in the first century.

The second important work is an article by Zane Hodges who, in co-operation with Hodges, attempted to prove statistically that the majority of manuscripts, which agree to such a large extent as the majority of manuscripts of the New Testament agree, can by means of statistical probability not be late and inferior and must therefore represent the original. Apart from the fact that historical problems cannot be solved by means of statistical analysis, the whole analysis is questionable because of the premises upon which it is based. In the end Hodges himself seems to be in conflict with this view, for in the parts of GNTMT where he used his new genealogical method to restore the text, he contradicts the results of this study by choosing a minority group of manuscripts as the best representative of the original text.

Apart from the development of a new genealogical methodology (cf discussion above) in the editing of GNTMT, little fresh has so far come from these efforts. Pickering's proposed method (1980:139-148) is nothing more than a mere reiteration of John Burgon's 'seven notes of truth' and is nothing new. In addition very few new arguments for 'proving' the antiquity of the Majority Text are brought forward, the only real new ones being the questionable statistical argument by Hodges and Hodges (1980) and possibly the argument on the papyri and the Byzantine text by Sturz (1984).

6 CONCLUSION
In conclusion the current trends and basic problems of this discipline, as have become clear from the discussion above, can now be summarised.

6.1 Current trends
Three aspects of the current state of New Testament Textual Criticism stand out when the developments of the past fifteen years are assessed. They are: (a) The building of apparatuses. (b) The use and development of the eclectic method. (c) The widening gap between Münster and the rest of the world.

(a) Different from the developments in the quarter century or so prior to 1975, it seems that the main attention as regards the editing of texts lies with major editions with extensive apparatuses rather than pocket editions with limited apparatuses. Only one independant pocket edition appeared during the past fifteen years (GNTMT). In contrast two new apparatuses in pocket editions (NA26 and UBS3a) and one in a major edition (IGNTP) appeared. In addition attention is currently focused on (i) a thorough revision, if not total rebuilding, of the apparatus of the UBS-series, (ii) the compilation of an extensive apparatus to the Fourth Gospel by the International Project, (iii) the revival of the activities surrounding the Editio Maior Critica in Münster, aiming at, amongst other things, building an extensive apparatus for the Catholic Epistles, and (iv) the compilation of an extensive apparatus for Acts (executed by Carrol Osburn at the Abilene Christian University in Texas). These activities all involve a lot of time, trouble and people. They will most probably provide new opportunities for new scholars, and thus serve to create new interest in the discipline. One just hopes that they will not
take so much time and trouble that the methodological turmoil wherein this discipline finds itself to be (Epp 1974, 1976; cf Petzer 1987b), will not be attended to in any thorough manner in the near future.

(b) Regarding the method for the editing of the text, the past decade and a half has made it clear that eclecticism is even more popular (particularly in the Anglo-American world) than might previously have been believed. Almost all publications coming from these circles use this method or attempt to refine the practical application of individual aspects thereof. What is remarkable, is that there seems to be a very subtle shift from the historical aspects to the internal aspects of this method, for little attention is being paid to the thorough reconstruction of the history of variants and variation-units based upon documentary evidence. More tolerance (though not acceptance) for thoroughgoing eclecticism also becomes apparent. However, having said this, it is also clear that little attention is given to the theoretical aspects of this method, with the consequence that the way in which the method is being used together with the results obtained from its application is questionable.

(c) In opposition to the methodological developments in the Anglo-American world, there seems to be in Europe, and in particular in Münster, an ongoing emphasis on the importance of the history of the text. Consequently a widening gap between the direction of development of Textual Criticism in the Anglo-American world and Germany (Münster) can be identified. This gap not only affects the historical model of the two worlds, but also the method used to edit the text, in particular the position of historical evidence in the method. Whereas historical evidence plays an equal role to internal evidence in the eclectic method (at least in theory and some applications thereof), it is still very much a dominating force in Aland's method and his demand that the text ought historically be attached to certain manuscripts before its claims to originality can be taken seriously. With this he takes the nature of the discipline, that is to say that it is basically an historical discipline, seriously. This method reflects much more of the old classical method, with its aim to identify a best manuscript as basis of the text, than the eclectic method. Aland is therefore in a certain sense correct when he refuses to call his method eclectic and demands that it be characterised as a local-genealogical method. Although the differences between these two approaches are in practice currently small and subtle, it will be interesting to see whether the development of the method in Münster will emphasise the differences or whether it will be forced by circumstances to grow closer to eclecticism.

6.2 Ongoing problems and future tasks
In relation to the current trends in the discipline, summarised above, at least three areas stand out to which urgent attention ought to be given. They are: (a) The refinement of the representation of information in apparatuses. (b) The history of the text and its reconstruction. (c) The methodology.

(a) The publication of the Luke volumes of the IGNTP has revealed that there are in particular two areas to which attention ought to be given in the building of such an apparatus: the base text and the patristic
information. It has already been said that the pudding may not be worth eating if the purpose of such an enterprise is merely to list information without any kind of interpretation of it. It is, on the other hand, also true that the editing of a new critical text to accompany such an apparatus may also not be the ideal. The solution might be found in following a path between these two possibilities, that is to say by attaching the apparatus to a text which reflects the history of the text, such as is done in, for example, the Vetus Latina editions in Beuron (or, to a lesser extent, the edition of Acts by Boismard and Lamouille). Such an edition will not only increase the value of the apparatus, in that the information can be assessed within a definitive historical framework, but it will also serve the understanding of the textual history.

Turning to the patristic information, it is urgent that a document similar to the Sigelliste (Frede 1981) be drawn up to accompany extensive apparatuses so that the users of the text know exactly what they are working with.

(b) It is of paramount importance today to reach a new understanding of the history of the text, particularly the earliest history of the text. For decades and centuries now there has been talk of text-types: four text-types (with two sub-text-types) are distinguished in the traditional model and no less than seven in Aland’s model. Especially the first has a history of centuries behind it. Except for one or two earlier attempts, there is not a single text which shows what these text-types look like, how they differ from each other, or what the variation among their extant witnesses looks like. In addition, New Testament Textual Criticism still lacks a comprehensive description of the characteristics and features of those text-types. Furthermore, the available information has shown that the old model of Westcott and Hort needs some serious revision. Except for the theory coming from Münster, there seems little interest in attending to this problem. Textual criticism is an historical discipline and it is dubious whether its problems can be solved with confidence by any other method than historical methods. For this reason it is vital that detailed historical descriptions characterise this discipline. It is true that the evidence prior to the fourth century is scanty and that it is difficult to base final conclusions upon them. The lights of warning coming from these sources ought, however, not be ignored and what evidence there is must be used to make as detailed reconstructions as are possible.

(c) Relating to the aforementioned is the problem of the method of editing the text. The trend has been to work more and more eclectically and to place more and more emphasis on internal evidence. There are two problems relating to this trend which need attention. The first deals with the nature of internal evidence, the second with the nature of the text that is to be reconstructed.

The first problem is that internal evidence as it is formulated and functions today, is highly underdeveloped. The criteria are ancient and outdated. None of them has kept in touch with developments in the disciplines upon which they were based. Many of them lack refinement and detail in their definition and formulation. Also the relation of internal and external evidence needs to be re-assessed, since they at present functions in opposition to each other, rather than co-operating with each other.
The second problem deals with the nature of the text to be reconstructed, and it needs to be determined whether internal evidence in the way it functions today can in fact yield trustworthy results. In this regard the whole basis of the eclectic method in general and internal evidence in particular needs to be re-examined, in the light of the status of the text to be reconstructed. It is questionable whether the eclectic method, as it is formulated and as it functions currently, is suited to reconstruct a redacted text, such as the New Testament. Many of the criteria is formulated in such a way that its goal is to reconstruct an author's text. The method, for example, assumes that there was a text before there was variation. For this reason its purpose can be to 'determine the reading which explains the origin of all the others' and view it as the original. What if the variation originated in the transmission process of an earlier document upon which the final redacted version (displayed in the manuscripts) is based? How does one define 'originality' in this sense? Many of its criteria furthermore depend upon consistency in language and theological ideas and motifs, which assume that the text was written by a single author. Redaction history implies the involvement of different authors in the process of the growth of the text. Can one really rely on this kind of patterns in a text when different authors have participated in the origin of that text? These questions need urgent attention.

New Testament Textual Criticism needs to take account of the status of the object it is working with and then determine what 'originality' means in relation to that status. It needs then to answer the question what the relation of the text it presents to the world, is to that 'original', and it needs finally to determine whether that text is reconstructable by means of eclectic methods, and whether New Testament Textual Criticism can in any way and with any kind of certainty go beyond the evidence and types of text in the manuscripts in reconstructing the text, and then claim that that reconstruction represents anything at all.

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Dr J H Petzer, Department of Greek, University of Potchefstroom, Potchefstroom, 2520, Republic of South Africa.