

Acts in the Writings of Origen: Serendipitous Discoveries

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Introduction

In my dissertation on Origen's text of Acts, I sought to determine the particular form of Acts Origen used. My hypothesis at the outset of my research was that Origen's text of *Acts* should be most akin to the text of *Acts* found in MS 1739 with perhaps some intermittent Western readings and a few Byzantine readings. Previous scholars of Origen's text suggested this hypothesis. The results of my research, to the contrary, showed that Origen's text of *Acts* is most akin to the text of Acts in Codex Vaticanus (B03), followed closely by other Primary Alexandrian MSS, with no distinct Western readings, but, in some cases, readings that would reappear in later secondary Alexandrian and Byzantine MSS of *Acts*. This research will soon be published by Peeters as *The Text of "Acts of the Apostles" in the Writing of Origen*, *Studia Patristica Supplements* 9 (forthcoming, 2020) and this same research provides the background for this current presentation.

With my research as background, I explore Origen's reception of Acts under the following topics: the reception and authorship of Acts, Origen's text critical appropriation of Acts, Origen's text of Acts in Alexandria, and Origen's "Acts" compared to other contemporary Fathers' text of Acts. Ultimately, I model that the careful work of determining a Father's text yields serendipitous insights into Origen reception of Acts, including his work as a philologist, his text critical appropriation of Acts, his use of various textual "streams" of Acts, and lastly, his place among other Fathers whose text of Acts has been analyzed by other textual scholars. This paper is an invitation to other scholars to continue the quest for the New Testament Text in the Greek Church Fathers against the doubts being raised about the validity of such a need.

Authorship and Reception of Acts in Origen

Origen knew the sequel to the third Gospel as the *Acts of the Apostles* (πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων; *Acta apostolorum*),¹ or simply as the *Acts* or *Acts* (αἱ πράξεις; *Actus*),² though occasionally he referred to the book as “the history” (ἡ ἱστορία).³ He accepted without argument that Luke was the author of *Acts* as well as the gospel that bears Luke’s name. Origen considered *Acts* holy or divine Scripture.⁴ As a case in point, in his seventh homily on *Joshua*, Origen compared the trumpets that blared at the fall of Jericho to the various authors of the NT as they “sounded their trumpets.” He wrote, “John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles, and Luke as he transcribes events of the Apostles (*et Lucas Apostolorum gesta describens*).”⁵

Had it survived, the one work that would have added much data to my dissertation would have been Origen’s *Homiliae in Actus Apostolorum*.⁶ In his letter to Paula (33), Jerome listed

¹ As in ORAT 3.4, IER.HOM 14.18, et al. These examples are representational, but one can observe numerous other examples in the data provided in S.N. Helton, *The Text of “Acts of the Apostles” in the Writing of Origen*, *Studia Patristica Supplements* 9 (forthcoming, 2020), 203–335.

² As in IO.COM 1.15 (μετὰ τὰ εὐαγγέλια τὰς πράξεις καὶ τὰς ἐπιστολάς τῶν ἀποστόλων) et al. See Eusebius, *HE* 6.25.14 for a fragment from HEB.HOM (ὅτι Λουκᾶς ὁ γράψας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὰς Πράξεις). In REG.HOM 6, Origen spoke of πράξεσιν αὐτῶν referring to the apostles’ (their) *Acts*.

³ As in IER.HOM 14.12, for instance.

⁴ As in IO.COM 1.150 (ἐν δὲ ταῖς Πράξεσιν ὁ Λουκᾶς γράφει); see also MAT.COM 17.25, CELS 6.11, and IOS.HOM 7. In IO.CAT 37, Origen spoke of *Acts* as divine Scriptures (ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς); see Eusebius, *HE* 6.25.14, quoting Origen, ὅτι Λουκᾶς ὁ γράψας τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὰς Πράξεις.

⁵ IOS.HOM 7.1. On the titles for *Acts*, see J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (1998), 56–8; C.S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (2012), I 645.

⁶ See P.F. Stuehnenberg, ‘The Study of Acts before the Reformation: A Bibliographic Introduction’ (1987), 105. The text of what remains of Origen’s homilies on *Acts* in both Greek and Latin can be found in PG 14, 829–32. See Origen’s comments on *Acts* 4:33, 7:4, 52, and 21:38 in J.A. Cramer, *Catena graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum* III (1838). See also P.

Origen's surviving works – works he probably saw when he visited Origen's library in Caesarea sometime after 386 when Jerome located in Bethlehem. He reported to Paula that Origen had seventeen homilies on the *Acts of the Apostles*. Unfortunately, all that remains are a few fragments from Origen's fourth homily on *Acts* preserved in the *Philocalia*, a collection of Origen's writings brought together by the Cappadocians, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus.⁷

Modern scholars, including Jean Scherer, Pierre Nautin, Joseph W. Trigg, and Marcel Borret, have challenged Eusebius's claim that Origen was over sixty years of age before he allowed his sermons or homilies to be recorded by shorthand secretaries.⁸ If these scholars are correct, then Origen's homilies may have been recorded as early as perhaps 238 CE. Whatever the date of Origen's homilies on *Acts*, the Cappadocian Fathers preserved the following long excerpt: [Handout]

Καὶ πάλιν ὁμιλίας Δ΄ εἰς τὰς Πράξεις.⁹
Ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν, ἣν προεῖπε
τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαυεὶδ¹⁰
περὶ Ἰούδα:

Ἐν ᾧ ψαλμῷ τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰούδα
γέγραπται. εἶποι τις ἂν, ὅτι οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ
ἅγιον λαλεῖ· σαφῶς γὰρ τοῦ σωτῆρός εἰσιν
οἱ λόγοι λέγοντος· Ὁ θεὸς, τὴν αἴνεσίν μου

And again, the fourth homily on the
Acts. *It was necessary for Scripture to be
fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit said
previously through the mouth of David
about Judas.*

In the psalm, this is written about Judas.
Someone might say that it was not the Holy
Spirit who speaks; For clearly the words
are from the Saviour: *‘O God, do not*

Nautin, *Origène* (1977), 254.

⁷ J.A. Robinson (ed.), *The Philocalia of Origen* (1893). On the date of the *Philocalia*, see J. Steenson, ‘The Date of the *Philocalia*’ (1981), 245–52.

⁸ J. Scherer (ed.), *Entretien d’Origènes avec Héraclides*, SC 67 (1969), 13–4, and see n. 3; P. Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (1977), 389–409; J.W. Trigg, ‘Homily 1 on Ezekiel’ (1990), 45; M. Borret, *Homélies sur Ézékiel*, SC 352 (1989), 15. H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers* (1995), 140, noted that the transcribing of Christian sermons became wide spread after the time of Origen.

⁹ PG reads Ἐκ τῆς εἰς τὰς Πράξεις ὁμιλίας δ΄ for the introductory formula.

¹⁰ Δαυίδ in PG.

μὴ παρασιωπήσης· ὅτι στόμα ἀμαρτωλοῦ, καὶ στόμα δολίου, ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ἠνοίχθη· καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς ἕως· Καὶ τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λάβοι ἕτερος. Πῶς οὖν, εἰ ὁ σωτὴρ ἐστὶν ὁ ταῦτα λέγων, φησὶν ὁ Πέτρος· Ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν, ἣν προεῖπε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαυεὶδ; μήποτε οὖν ὁ διδασκόμεθα ἐνταῦθα, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι. προσωποποιεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις· καὶ ἐὰν προσωποποιήσῃ τὸν θεόν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς ὁ λαλῶν, ἀλλὰ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ· καὶ ἐὰν προσωποποιήσῃ τὸν χριστόν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ λαλῶν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ χριστοῦ λαλεῖ. οὕτως οὖν κἄν¹¹ προσωποποιήσῃ τὸν προφήτην, ἢ τὸν λαὸν ἐκεῖνον, ἢ τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον, ἢ ὅ τι δῆποτε προσωποποιεῖ, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ πάντα προσωποποιοῦν.

disregard by praise because sinful and deceitful words speak against me. (Ps 108 [109]:1) and the rest of the text to ‘Let another take his appointment as overseer’ (v. 8). So how then, if the Saviour is the one saying these words, did Peter say, ‘Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit previously said through David’s mouth? Therefore, is this not what we teach here? Yes, this is. The Holy Spirit put words in the prophets’ mouths; and if he might speak of God, it is not God who is speaking but the Holy Spirit speaks as God’s voice. And if he speaks for Christ, it is not Christ who speaks but the Holy Spirit through Christ’s mouth. Therefore, even he puts his words in the prophet, or this or that people, or whenever he speaks [through another], the Holy Spirit is the one who speaks through all.’¹²

Apart from the off chance that scholars might discover a MS with Origen’s homilies on *Acts*, researchers must gather Origen’s text of *Acts* from his extant writings as collected in my larger research project. Origen’s citations, adaptations, allusions, and comments on *Acts* are distributed throughout his corpus.¹³

¹¹ PG reads Οὕτω κἄν.

¹² Text from J.A. Robinson, *The Philocalia of Origen* (1893), 51. Compared to the *Fragmentum ex homiliis in Acta apostolorum* in PG 14, 829–32. English translation SNH, compared to J. Armitage’s translation in *Philocalia of Origen* (1893).

¹³ For lists of Origen’s works in critical editions, see L. Berkowitz, K.A. Squitier, and W.A. Johnson, *Canon of Greek Authors and Works*, Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (1990), 288–91; J.A. McGuckin (ed.), *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (2004), 25–44; P. Nautin, *Origène* (1977), 225–92. S.N. Helton, *The Text of “Acts of the Apostles” in the Writing of Origen*, 33–45. The works that provided data for the reconstruction of Origen’s text of Acts are the following: *Commentary on John*; *De principiis* (Περὶ Ἀρχῶν); *Contra Celsum*; *Commentary on Matthew*; *Homilies on Jeremiah*; *On Prayer*; *On Martyrdom*; *Homilies on Psalms*; *On the Passover*; *Dialogue with Heraclides*; *Commentary on Romans* (3:5–5:7); and the *Homily on 1 Kings*

Origen as Textual Critic of Acts

Peter W. Martens recently explored Origen's scholarship in *Origen and Scripture*.¹⁴ Martens demonstrated that Origen, in describing the 'exegetical life' of the 'mature' Christian in the process of contemplating God, was describing himself. In his project, Martens laid out Origen's self-understanding as a practitioner of philology (as a γραμματικά). Basing his observations on the *Art of Philology* by Dionysius Thrax's (ca. 170–90 BCE), Martens enumerated four basic tasks students learned in the Hellenistic classroom: text-critical analysis (διορθωτικόν), reading a passage aloud (ἀναγνωστικόν), literary and historical analysis (ἐξηγητικόν), and aesthetic and moral evaluation (κρίσις ποιημάτων).¹⁵

According to Martens, Origen was a self-conscious, as well as a well-trained, textual critic.¹⁶ As a case in point, in one letter, commenting on his patron Ambrose's support of his activities, Origen noted he and his patron Ambrose were 'compelled to study and to correct the copies' (φιλολογεῖν καὶ ἀκριβοῦν τὰ ἀντίγραφα) late into the night. Origen may be referring to

(Samuel) 2. These works are those that have come down to us in the Greek.

¹⁴ P.W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture* (2012). Martens's vision of Origen's synthesis of the Greek philosophers and Scripture corrects the sharp distinction made by F.M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (1997), that before Nicea the Bible replaced pagan scriptures, whereas, after Constantine, Christians tended to view the classical writers as precursors to Scripture. Origen certainly would have been an exception to Young's rubric. Martens was correct when he explained 'Origen's conciliatory and liberal educational mandate' was 'appreciative, and insistent upon [classical learning's] usefulness for the Christian exegetical enterprise' (40). See also H.J. Vogt, *Origenes als Exeget* (1999), for a detailed study of Origen's exegetical method; and B. Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe* (1987), which is considered the classic study on this topic.

¹⁵ Origen was heir to a long tradition of textual criticism in Alexandria. See L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars* (1974), 6–38; and esp. in reference to Origen, 42–3. On Origen's training as a *grammateus*, note J.W. Trigg, *Origen* (1998), 5–7.

¹⁶ See similar assessment in B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament* (1882), 114.

Scripture, and perhaps in his own hand (as ἀντίγραφον suggests).¹⁷ Moreover, at many places in Origen’s extant writings, his text-critical activities are demonstrable. As one example, in his *Commentary on Matthew* (15.14), Origen noted that scribal errors have created divergent texts of the Gospels: ‘But it is clear that the differences between the copies have become numerous, either from the shoddy work of copyists, or from the wicked recklessness of some either in neglecting to correct what is written, or even in adding or removing things based on their own opinions when they do correct.’¹⁸

Most of the examples of Origen’s text-critical observations occur in the Gospels, but my research has uncovered one in *Acts*. In commenting on *Acts* 13:33, Origen noted that *Acts* attributes *Ps* 2:7 to the *first* psalm (ὡς γὰρ γέγραπται φήσιν ἐν πρώτῳ ψαλμῷ), oddly in agreement with Codex Bezae (D).¹⁹ Yet, nearly all other extant MSS of *Acts* 13:33 refer to the *second* psalm (καὶ ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται τῷ δευτέρῳ). After pointing out this discrepancy, Origen discussed the various numbering systems used in MSS of the Hebrew OT, in which *Psalms* 1 and 2 are considered separate compositions. *Acts* 13:33, in all other Greek witnesses, also treats *Psalms* 1 and 2 as two psalms (τὰ Ἑλληνικὴ μέντοι ἀντίγραφα δευτέρον εἶναι τοῦτον μνησθεύει. τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἀγνοητέον ὅτι ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ οὐδενὶ τῶν ψαλμῶν ἀριθμὸς παράκειται πρῶτος εἰ τύχοι ἢ δευτέρος ἢ τρίτος).²⁰ This reading is one of the few places where Origen

¹⁷ P.W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture* (2012), 42.

¹⁸ MAT.COM 15.14; R.E. Heine’s translation from Origen, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (2018), I 204.

¹⁹ PS.CAT – 1099/1100, D2 is a catena and will not be used in this project to reconstruct Origen’s text of *Acts*.

²⁰ Latin: ‘verum exemplaria Graeca hunc secundum esse indicant illud autem non ignorandum est in Hebraeis exemplaribus nulli psalmo numerum apponi sive primus sive secundus sive tertius sit’. On the numbering of *Pss* 1 and 2, see P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (1983), 59–60, who misread the case: ‘The evidence from the early Christian tradition is found in

agrees with D (τῷ πρώτῳ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται). Origen’s catena gives evidence that at *Acts* 13:33 ἐν πρώτῳ ψαλμῷ was known to be in some Greek MSS in the early third century.

Origen’s “Acts” in Alexandria

Precious little of Origen’s text of *Acts* survives in his pre-Caesarean works. From his Alexandrian works, Origen’s *Acts of the Apostles* consists of the few isolated readings presented here in a running-text format.²¹

Origen’s Text from Alexandria

(1:8) ... εσεσθε μου μαρτυρες εν τε Ιερουσαλημ και εν παση τη Ιουδαια και Σαμαρεια και εως εσχατου της γης ... (4:11) ουτος εστιν ο λιθος ο εξουδενωθεις υφ’ υμων των οικοδομων ο γενομενος εις κεφαλην γωνιας ... (8:10) δυναμιν θεου την (η) καλουμενη(ν) μεγαλη(ν) ... (8:35) αρξαμενος απο της γραφης [ταυτης] ευαγγελισατο αυτω τον κυριον Ιησουν ... (9:4) Σαουλ Σαουλ τι με διωκεις (5) ... εγω ειμι Ιησους ον συ διωκεις ... (13:46) υμιν ην αναγκαιον πρωτον λαληθηναι τον λογον ... ιδου στρεφομεθα εις τα εθνη ... (20:7) ... παρατειν— μεχρι μεσονυκτιου ... (9) Ευτυχος ... καταφερομενος υπνω βαθει ... (22.22) αιρε απο της γης τον τοιουντον [Handout]

Acts 13:33. The writer, Luke, gives a quotation from Ps 2:7, but introduces it as coming from the first psalm; the corrections, both in the early Greek text and in modern English versions, to read “the second psalm,” are appropriate given the change in the conventional system of numbering the Psalms. Nevertheless, the oldest Greek text of *Acts* provides evidence for the early Christian view [vol. 19, p. 60] that the first two psalms were considered to be a single unit’. Craigie misunderstood the textual evidence, as only Codex Bezae among extant Greek MSS has ἐν πρώτῳ ψαλμῷ (MSS 522 and 1175 has neither ‘first’ nor ‘second’). In the numbering of the *Psalms* by Origen, see C. Bandt, F.X. Risch, and B. Villani (eds), *Die Prologtexte zu den Psalmen von Origenes und Eusebius* (2019), 147, n. 17, and 194–5. See *Editio Critica Maior* (2017), III 1.1 469, for the textual data.

²¹ Origen’s text of *Acts* from Alexandria should not be confused with the Alexandrian text-type though Origen’s text of *Acts* from Alexandria was indeed Alexandrian. The data set for Origen’s Alexandrian *Acts of the Apostles* can be found in the full data set by locating every text from Alexandria identified by [Alex.].²¹

A preliminary overview of the data shows that Origen's *Acts* in Alexandria never agrees with Codex Bezae or the Byzantine tradition apart from Ropes's Old Uncials (Ⲡ01 A02 B03 C04). Also, Origen's *Acts* from Alexandria sometimes preserves readings that appear in later MSS but 'bypassing' these Old Uncials. However, one should be cautious about connecting these readings with each other. They may be mere coincidence or Origen's text has been accommodated to the Byzantine text by later scribal activity.

With few exceptions, Origen's *Acts* from Alexandria agrees with B03 consistently; and when evidence for readings from Caesarea are available for the same text, the *non-Alexandrian readings occur in writings from Caesarea*. For instance, in *Acts* 1:8 Origen attested μου after εσεσθε with Ⲡ01 A02 B03 C04 D05 against Origen's later reading from a source composed in Caesarea, which has μοι (with E08 H014^{sup} Ψ044 049 1739). Later in this same verse, Origen's *Acts* from Alexandria splits the early Uncial witnesses, where Origen reads εν παση with P⁷⁴vid Ⲡ01 B03 E08 H014^{sup} Ψ044 049 1739 MT against παση in A02 C04 D05, but Origen still agrees with B03.

In the first narrative of Paul's calling in *Acts* 9, Origen agrees with the vast majority of MSS (P⁷⁴ Ⲡ01 B03 H014 L020 P025 Ψ044 049 69 1739 MT) against the expansive reading Ιησους ο ναζωραιος found in A02 C04 E08 104 (D05 is lacuna here). This variant illustrates again that when Origen's text disagrees with any of the Old Uncials, his text agrees with B03.²²

²² In a few places Origen's text of *Acts* departs from this general pattern. For example, in *Acts* 4:11 Origen's *Acts* from Alexandria reads εξουδενωθεις agreeing with Ψ044 and a few minuscules. (The preferred reading of P⁷⁴vid A02 B03 D05 H014^{sup} P025 1739 is εξουθενηθεις while Ⲡ01 E08 reads εξουθενηθις.) Similarly, Origen's reading of ευαγγελισατο in *Acts* 8:35 agrees solely with P025 against all other witnesses reading ευηγγελισατο. Both examples demonstrate that minority readings in the MS tradition of the NT sometimes can contain readings that should not be dismissed out of hand because those readings may represent ancient readings.

In *Acts* 4:11 Origen's text again follows its general pattern. Here Origen reads υφ' υμων (Ⲡ01

Origen quoted the following variant from *Acts* 13:46 in a variety of ways, so much so that determining Origen's text was difficult.

1. ην αναγκαιον πρωτον λαληθηναι τον λογον [Alex.] (LAM.CAT – 274, 24) [AD]
2. ην αναγκαιον λαληθηναι τον λογον (MAT.COM 16.26 – 562, 29) [C]
3. εδει καταγγελθηναι τον λογον (IER.HOM 5.1 – 278, 8) [C]
4. ην αναγκαιον αναγγειλαι τον λογον (MAT.COM 17.16 – 630, 18) [AD]
5. ην εξαπεσταλμενος ο λογος (IER.HOM 4.2 – 260, 6) [AD] [Handout]

In LAM.CAT, attributed to Origen's time in Alexandria, the text of *Acts* 13:46 reads ην αναγκαιον πρωτον λαληθηναι with the Old Uncials against a word-order shift in D05 (πρωτον ην λαληθηναι) and in Ψ044 (ην αναγκαιον λαληθηναι πρωτον). Though catenae are notoriously difficult to authenticate, this reading from LAM.CAT is the reading one expects in Origen's text of *Acts* from Alexandria based on the other evidence for his text of *Acts* in Alexandria.²³

In summary, Origen remained close to readings that would be identified later as Alexandrian, though his text shows marked fluidity in places. Not surprisingly, then, Origen's

A02 B03 E08 H014^{sup} P025 Ψ044 049 69 1739) against υφ' ημων (D05 614 1245). The later MSS split a reading later in the same verse: Origen's text reads οικοδομων (N01 A02 B03 D05 1739) instead of οικοδομουντων (E08 H014^{sup} P025 Ψ044 049 69). Again, Origen favoured Ropes's Old Uncials, especially B03.

²³ In the case of one variant in *Acts* 17:28, Origen lines up with P⁷⁴ N01 (as well as E08 H014 L020 P025 Ψ044 049 69 440 1739) against the other Old Uncials (A02 B03) including Bezae (D05), which read κεινουμεθα instead of Origen's reading, κινουμεθα. Since this reading is a matter of orthography, it is inconsequential for establishing Origen's text of *Acts* in Alexandria but might add a detail to the history of transmission of the NT text.

A curious case is when 1739 departs from Origen's Alexandrian *Acts*. In *Acts* 20:7 Origen has μεχρι with all the main witnesses against μεχρις in P025 Ψ044. Oddly 1739 has αχρι with a few other minuscules. This example seems best understood as a scribal slip since 1739, when compared with all other readings coming from Alexandria, always agrees with Origen. Within the same scriptural context, at *Acts* 20:9, Origen agreed with all witnesses in reference to the reading καταφερομενος υπνω βαθει except for A02* (καταφερον υπνω βαθει) and D05 (κατεχομενος υπνω βαρει). Again, Origen is predictable in his readings from Alexandria.

text of *Acts*, as much as can be isolated from his Alexandrian works, reveals an Alexandrian predilection. Origen showed knowledge of readings later identified by modern text critics as Secondary Alexandrian and Byzantine but as far as his *Acts* from Alexandria is concerned, he exhibited no knowledge of any strictly ‘Western’ readings. Again, for the sake for transparency, the paucity of evidence should warrant a tentative assessment of the text of *Acts* used by Origen before he moved to Caesarea. Nonetheless one is on safe ground in declaring Origen’s text of *Acts* from Alexandria is strongly Alexandrian, or even more precisely, Origen’s text of *Acts* from Alexandria is in the same textual stream that produced Codex Vaticanus.

[For the sake of time, reflections on Origen’s entire corpus has been added at the end of this paper as an addendum. I am assuming its information in what follows].

Origen’s “Acts” Among Other Greek Fathers

Based on the conclusion of the larger research project, the location of Origen’s text of *Acts* now can be compared to that of other Fathers where the necessary text-critical work has been completed. For example, Michael Mees found Clement of Alexandria’s text of *Acts* to align, as Origen’s does, with B03 and not at all with the ‘Western’ text.²⁴ After Origen’s time, Athanasius of Alexandria (early fourth century), whose text of the *Apostolos* was analyzed by Gerald Donker, presented a text of *Acts* that is ‘centrally in the Alexandrian cluster’ but with no discernible significant relationship to MS 1739. However, Athanasius’s text is not as strongly Alexandrian as Origen’s text of *Acts* so that Donker’s QA found Athanasius’s text of *Acts* to be Secondary Alexandrian.²⁵

²⁴ M. Mees, *Die Zitate aus dem Neuen Testament bei Clemens von Alexandrien* (1970), 107.

²⁵ G.J. Donker, *The Text of the Apostolos in Athanasius of Alexandria* (2011), 313–4. J.A. Brooks, *The New Testament Text of Gregory of Nyssa* (1991), 263, found too little data from

Mike Arcieri examined the text of *Acts* in the writings of Didymus the Blind in his 2007 dissertation at McGill University.²⁶ He discovered that Didymus's text of *Acts* had its closest affinity with B03 (96%), followed closely behind by Ψ044 (93%) and MS 81 (90%). However, against the rest of his control group (323 1739 L UBS⁴ C04 630 33 A02 1241 801 E 1505 614 MT D), he showed a very high level of agreement ranging from 89% for MS 1739 to 82% for the MT. The only witness to fall outside of this range was Codex Bezae with 71% agreement with Didymus's text of *Acts*. The lack of differentiation between the agreements of his control groups for Didymus's *Acts* challenges the accuracy of his analysis. His Secondary Alexandrian, 'Western', and Byzantine witnesses tend to intermingle without creating the necessary level of agreement and distance between groups ($\pm 65\%$ / 6–8%) as recommended by Ehrman. Perhaps his small sample of 28 variation units from Didymus is the reason for this lack of clarity. Yet, strictly on the basis of agreements between Didymus's text of *Acts* and his witnesses, one need not be as tentative as Arcieri in regarding Didymus's lack of use of the 'Western' text. Didymus certainly did not use a 'Western' text for *Acts*, as we now understand, there was no 'Western' text of *Acts*.

Additionally, Arcieri's observations regarding the agreement of Didymus's *Acts* with his Alexandrian witnesses are in tension. In a table, he listed Didymus's *Acts* to agree with B at 96% of the time, Ψ at 93%, and MS 81 at 90%. Yet, he stated that two MSS with the most agreement to Didymus's text of *Acts* are Ψ and 81, which, as he noted, are primarily of the Alexandrian text-type, followed 'closely' the Byzantine MSS. Though this observation should have raised

Gregory's text of *Acts* for useful analysis.

²⁶ M. Arcieri, 'The Text of Didymus the Blind in the Book of Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and the Apocalypse' (2007), esp. 97–9.

concerns about the validity of his analysis, his QA still points in the direction that Didymus' text of *Acts* was most likely Alexandrian.²⁷ Perhaps future study on Didymus's text of *Acts* will clarify his results.

Carroll D. Osburn in his study of the *Apostolos* in Epiphanius of Salamis (mid-fourth century) found that Epiphanius's text of *Acts* was Late Egyptian or Secondary Alexandrian in *Acts* 1-12 with no significant agreement with 1739. Yet in *Acts* 13-28, Epiphanius's *Acts* had 'particular affinity with Family 1739' and 'somewhat less with the Late Egyptian witnesses'. In sum, Epiphanius's text of *Acts* could be said to be Late Egyptian with some affinity toward 1739 in the latter portion of *Acts*.²⁸

Roderick L. Mullen's examination of the NT text of Cyril of Jerusalem (mid- to late fourth century) found Cyril's text of *Acts* to be Alexandrian but with its closest ally in MS 1739. He observed, based on the current knowledge of Origen and Eusebius's text of *Acts*, that both Fathers had used an Alexandrian form of the text of *Acts*. The present study has shown that to be the case with Origen, and so Mullen proves correct when he concluded, 'the Alexandrian text of Acts was the dominant one in the midst of patristic authors at work in Roman Palestine'.²⁹

Now that Origen can be added to these studies, the textual transmission of the Alexandrian form of the text of *Acts* becomes clearer. The drift from the Alexandrian text of Clement, Didymus, and Origen begins to shift so that by the time of Athanasius the text of *Acts* has become Secondary Alexandrian and then by the time of Epiphanius the text of *Acts* looks more like MS 1739. Though this assessment can be overplayed, the drift from Alexandrian to

²⁷ *Ibid.* 98–9.

²⁸ C.D. Osburn, *The Text of the Apostolos in Epiphanius of Salamis* (2004), 255.

²⁹ R.L. Mullen, *The New Testament Text of Cyril of Jerusalem* (1997), 348–9.

Secondary Alexandrian is discernible as early as Origen. If nothing else, Origen confirms this drift was already well underway and, as one of the earliest witnesses to the text of *Acts*, Origen's text of *Acts* provides some benchmarks for readings in later MSS whose text cannot be dated as precisely as Origen's text of *Acts* can be.

Addendum: Origen's Text in Caesarea

Having looked at Origen's Text of *Acts* as he experienced that text in Alexandria, my observations now turn to the matter of the Origen's text of *Acts* in Alexandria and Caesarea. Since the majority of Origen's surviving works are from Caesarea most of the evidence comes from Origen's time there.

Origen's Singular Readings

Origen's text of *Acts* contains a handful of singular readings, that is, readings shared by no other textual witness. In *Acts* 3:21 Origen's text reads *αγιων εξ αιωνος* instead of *αγιων απ' αιωνος* against all other options. In *Acts* 4:37 Origen read the aorist *ηγαγε* against the perfect *ηνεγκε(v)* in virtually all other witnesses. He introduced the text with the formula *και το εξης εως του*, which expects a citation to follow the article. In all likelihood Origen was citing or adapting the text from memory, as later in the verse he offered the loose paraphrase *παρα τους αποστολους* for the reading *παρα τους ποδας*.

In *Acts* 5:5, Origen, in speaking of Ananias's dying, reads that Ananias *απεψυξεν* instead of *εξεψυξεν*, the reading in all later MSS. In *Acts* 5:8 Origen, in speaking of Peter's response to Sapphira, has *λεγων ει* instead of *ειπε μοι ει/η*, the reading in most of the later NT textual tradition. In *Acts* 5:39 Origen omits *εστιν* against the rest of the MSS. In *Acts* 7:2 Origen reads *οικησαι* against the compound form *κατοικησαι* in the rest of the MS tradition (except for the omission of the word in 614 and 2412).³⁰ Later in *Acts* 8:35 Origen has a singular witness adding Lord (*κυριον*) before Jesus. In *Acts* 17:23, the text reads some form of 'written' (*επεγεγραπτο*, *επεγεγραπτω*, *η γεγραμμενον*, *ην γεγραμμενον*, or *επιγεγραπται*). Origen has the singular reading

³⁰ Though see *οικειτε* in MS 2495 in *Acts* 7:4.

εγγραπτο.

All these singular readings can point toward several possible explanations: Origen either cited the text loosely, Origen's reading is now lost, or the texts of *Acts* available to Origen was still fluid in the early third century. Yet none of his singular readings require that they ever existed in any MS.

Origen and One Other Witness

Sometimes Origen agrees with a single later witness, suggesting in each case that said witness might preserve an ancient reading apart from the larger tradition of transmission. For example, *Acts* 8:35 Origen reads ευαγγελισατο with P025. The remaining NT witnesses have ευηγγελισατο or a variation of it. In *Acts* 10:10, Origen shared the word order εκστασις επ αυτον with C04. In *Acts* 10:15, Origen's text appears (^{vid}) to agree with MS 1270 in the omission of παλιν against all other contenders. In *Acts* 12:14, Origen and 69 (and the original hand in 1837) omit δε. In *Acts* 13:22, Origen's reading appears to agree with Codex Bezae in the wording υιον ιεσσα. If so, *this shared reading is the only place where Origen agrees only with D05*. In *Acts* 16:17, MS 81 shares the reading παρακολουθησασα αυτη with Origen, but MS 81 transposes the words. Also, in this same verse, Vaticanus (B03) shares with Origen the unique reading Παυλω και ημιν (without the article before Paul). The reading τω Παυλω και ημιν (with variations) occurs in all MSS except P127, which is clearly erroneous with πολλα ημων.

Origen and Two Forms of a Text

Origen in a few places knew multiple readings of the same text. One example is in *Acts* 1:8, which has been mentioned already. Here Origen's text of *Acts* reads εσεσθε ~ μου / μοι ~ μαρτυρες εν τε Ιερουσαλημ και ~ εν / OM ~ παση τη Ιουδαια κ.τ.λ. In a text (IO.COM 2.211) from Alexandria, Origen has μου and εν παση, but in another text (MAT.COM 10.18) coming

from Origen's later years in Caesarea, he reads the text with $\mu\omicron\iota$ and $\pi\alpha\sigma\eta$. In the first variant, Origen anticipated the reading $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ in $\aleph 01$ A02 B03 C04 D05. The alternative text with $\mu\omicron\iota$ is supported by P⁵⁶ 08 014^{sup1} 044 049 056 1 33 35 81 1739 *et al.* Again, Ropes's Old Uncials prevail. Yet in the second variation unit, Origen's variant splits between the Old Uncials with P74^{vid} $\aleph 01$ B03 (including 1739) supporting $\epsilon\nu$ $\pi\alpha\sigma\eta$ and P56^{vid} 02 04 05 supporting the omission of $\epsilon\nu$. Noteworthy is the support of B03 for Origen's earlier text. These examples suggest reasonably that Origen gained access to more textual streams of *Acts* after he moved to Caesarea.

In *Acts* 3:21, Origen's text agrees with $\Psi 044$ 1505 1611 2147 in the word order of the phrase $\alpha\gamma\iota\omega\nu$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\nu$ $\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\pi'$ $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$. The multiple options among the MSS demonstrate how confusing scribes found this phrase. Curiously, Origen followed none of the Old Uncials here but rather preserved an ancient reading that resurfaced later in the textual tradition. Additionally, both of the variants come from works composed in Caesarea: IER.HOM 14.18 ($\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\omega\nu$ $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\lambda\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$ \omicron $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ $\delta\iota\alpha$ $\sigma\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\gamma\iota\omega\nu$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\alpha\pi'$ $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$ $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\nu$) and MAT.COM 17.19 ($\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\omega\nu$ $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\lambda\eta\sigma\epsilon$ $\delta\iota\alpha$ $\sigma\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\gamma\iota\omega\nu$ $\epsilon\acute{\xi}$ $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$ $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$). In each case Origen's introductory formulas suggest a citation to follow. Each text varies from the other, e.g., $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\lambda\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$ / $-\nu$ and $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$... $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\nu$ / $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. Whether these differences result from Origen's slip of memory, the corrections of his stenographers, the result of accessing multiple MSS of *Acts*, or the transmission of Origen's text is difficult to determine. Regardless, Origen's multiple readings presage the same readings in the later MS tradition of the NT. Or working backward, the readings that later showed up in the MSS can be seen to be present already in Origen's time.

Origen knew the pair $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ in *Acts* 4:32 both with and without articles. In MAT.COM 15.15 Origen twice cited the text without the articles, but earlier in MAT.COM 14.1

he transposed the pair but added articles. CELS 8.12 also supports Origen's text with the pair transposed with articles. These readings reflect two textual traditions. The absence of the articles finds support in P8 \aleph 01 A02 B03 D05* 1175 while the items with the articles can be found in 08 014^{sup2} 025 044 049 056 1 33 35 69 1739 and MT generally.

In *Acts* 7:3, Origen attested the reading εκ της συγγενειας in most NT MSS and της συγγενειας in B03^c. This variant is a matter of orthography as the other available variants testify. Similar to *Acts* 1:8, Origen knew both εν παση (P74^{vid} 01 02 04 08) and παση (B03 D05^c 025 044 049 056 33 35 69 1739 *et al.*) in *Acts* 7:22. Though here B03 and D05^c agree, the original hand in D05 wrote πασαν. Origen knew *Acts* 7:42 with εστρεψεν both with (IO.COM 13.106) and without the final nu (v; see CELS 5.8). The presence of the nu is the better reading attested by P74^{vid} \aleph 01 A02 B03 C04 D05 08 014 025 044 049 1 33 81 88 1739 MT.

Another dual reading occurring in *Acts* 7:42 is not as straightforward as the previous. Origen reads τη στρατια in CELS 5.8 but τη στρατεια in IO.COM 13.106. The former is supported by P74 \aleph 01 C04 08 014 044 056 1 33 35 69 1739 *et al.* The latter occurs in A02 B03 D05 025. Both of Origen's works come from his time in Caesarea though *Contra Celsum* belonged to the very last period of his life. Since the variant is a matter of orthography, not much can be made of it.

Origen knew the Babylonia god Rapha mentioned by Stephen in *Acts* 7:42 as Ρομφα, agreeing with only B03 and 049. However, given that this name is unknown in Babylonian mythology – the Hebrew of *Amos* 5:26 being cited in the *Acts* context has קייגון (*kiyyun*) – later scribes appear uncertain as to how to spell the name. The NT MSS have at least fifteen options. One option, Ρεφφαν, occurs in one MS of Origen's CELS (P) and agrees with an odd collection

of MSS: 056 35 226 547 927 1241 1854 2492 2495.³¹ Still again Origen's nearness to B03 remains consistent.

One final text where Origen appears to carry two readings is *Acts* 10:11. Here Origen knew the text as καταβαινον σκευος τι ως οθονην μεγαλην τεσσαρσιν αρχαις, but he also cited it without τι and μεγαλην, an option that appears in no extant NT MS. More precisely in CELS 2.1 Origen included both words; in IER.HOM 19.13 he dropped μεγαλην; and ORAT 12.2 omits both. Origen's reading omitting the two words finds possible support in καταβαινον σκευος τω ως οθονην τεσσαρσιν αρχαις found in C04^{vid}. Still Origen's most likely reading has the support of P74^{vid} 801 A02 B03 C04* 08 81 1739. Codex Bezae is lacunose at this place.

Origen and B03

In addition to *Acts* 16:17 mentioned above, Origen shared a reading with B03 in *Acts* 2:44 where Origen and B03 omitted ησαν. Later in the verse Origen and 03 also omitted και. Ropes called attention to these readings to stress the affinity shared between Origen and B03.³² He was aware that the latter reading occurred in a minuscule but did not name it. MS 2495 appears to be that MS. In *Acts* 7:43, already noted above, Origen has the same spelling of the god Rephan (Ρομφα) as does B03 and 049 but no other witnesses.

Origen's Agreement with B03 and D05

In a few places only B03 and D05 preserved a reading known to Origen. One such example is in *Acts* 1:16. Here Origen, B03, and D05 share the spelling of David's name as Δαυειδ against all other witnesses. Again, in *Acts* 7:43 Origen omitted υμων/ημων, as does B03

³¹ See M. Borrett (ed.), *Origène, Contra Celse* (1967–1976), see at CELS 5.8, where is noted: ρομφα A : ρεφφαν P.

³² J.H. Ropes, *The Text of Acts* (1926), clxxxix–cxci.

and D05. Nothing in the evidence, however, suggests that Origen knew any so-called 'Western' text of *Acts*. On the contrary, Origen's text of *Acts* shows time and again that it is a forerunner to the text we find in Codex Vaticanus.