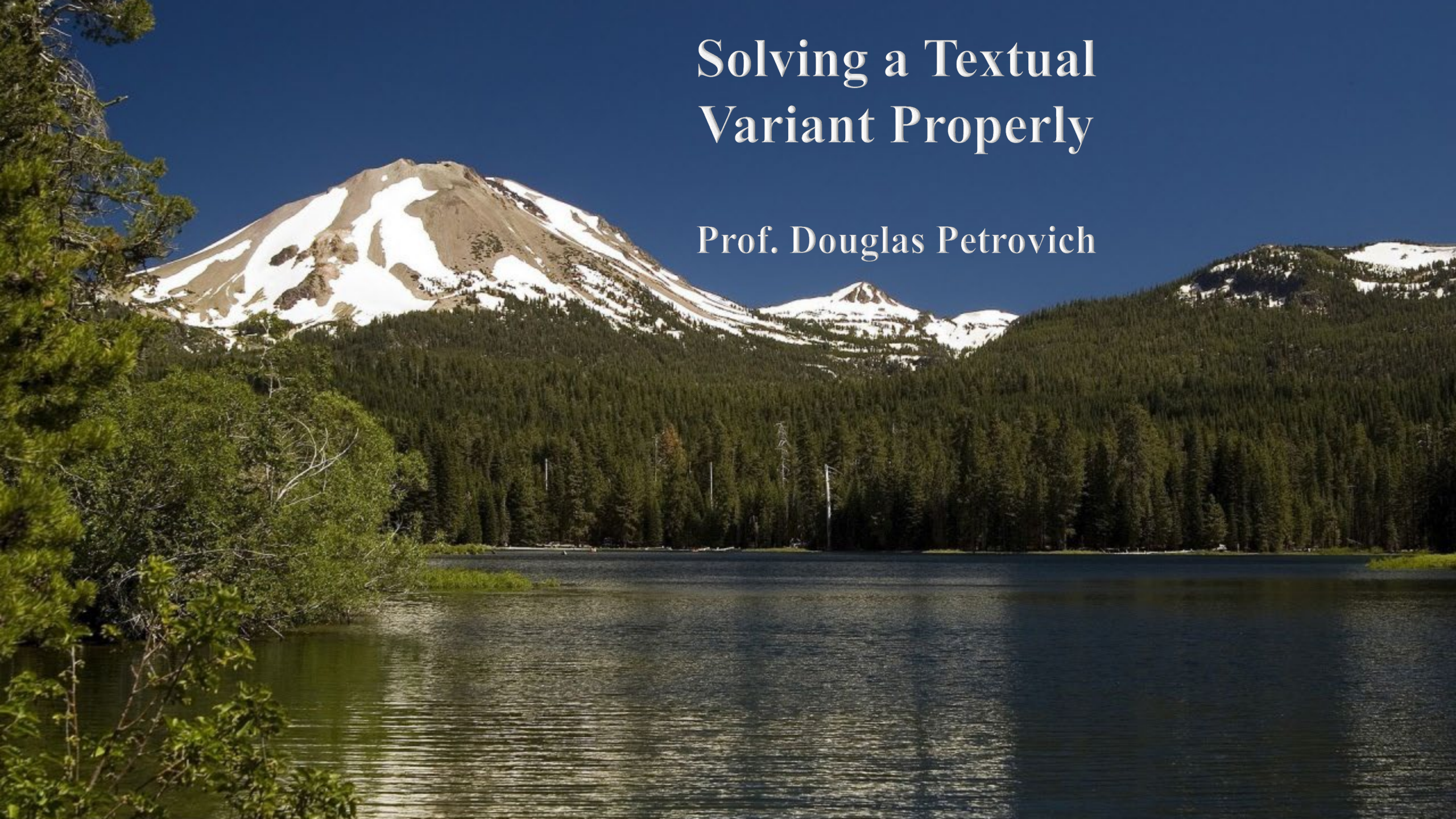


Solving a Textual Variant Properly

Prof. Douglas Petrovich



Solving a Textual Variant Properly

Topic: Introductory Matters

(The 'what' and 'why' of lower textual criticism)

Identifying What Textual Variants Are

- Disagreement among ancient witnesses (2 or ↑) as to exactly how the biblical text is worded at a given place in the Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek Bible

Sources Attesting to Textual Variants

- Types of witnesses: (1) manuscripts in the biblical languages, (2) early translations, (3) historical/patristic writings, (4) lectionaries (GNT)

Importance of Solving Textual Variants

Incentive from Scripture (Bibliology):

Extent of inerrancy: “Every word of God is refined” (Prov 30:5). Every word in the Bible has gone through the refining process and has proven to be pure. Given this, the expositor should seek to establish every word of Scripture as originally written by God.

Incentive from an Experienced Expositor (William Barrick, 1998):

“Expositors must involve themselves in at least 3 activities: (1) examining the biblical text in the original languages, (2) identifying the original text, and (3) expounding the original text. . . . The expositor must be active in identifying the text’s original statement.”

Solving a Textual Variant Properly

**Topic: Types of Evidence for
Resolving Textual Variants**

(External Evidence and Internal Evidence)

Types of Evidence for Resolving Variants

All evidence that can be compiled and weighed in the process of resolving a textual variant can be divided into two categories: **external evidence** and **internal evidence**.

(1) **External evidence** takes into account the physical witnesses to how a given text reads at the point of variation. It consists of the manuscripts in the original languages of the Bible, early translational versions, historical and patristic writings, and lectionaries (GNT), all in an effort to determine which of the possible variant readings is most faithful to the original text.

External Evidence: Primary Hebrew Witnesses

- ❑ Massoretic Hebrew Text: exists essentially in the Leningrad Codex (AD 1008/9) in St. Petersburg (Russia)
 - Originally contained no vowel letters or pointings
 - Vowel letters (*matres lectiones*) invented (850 BC)
 - Masoretes invented vowel pointings (750–650 BC)
- ❑ Samaritan Pentateuch: Oldest manuscript probably dates to no earlier than AD 1000, most to after AD 1200
 - Probably created shortly before John Hyrcanus destroyed Mt. Gerizim in 112/111 BC
 - Text written in archaized script of pre-587 BC

Leningrad Codex (a.k.a., Cairo Bible)

The oldest complete, dated manuscript of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) is the Leningrad Codex. The date of its writing is 1008–1010, and the Jewish scribe who composed it on parchment is named Samuel ben Jacob.

The codex contains Tiberian vowels and cantillation signs, as well as Masoretic notes in the margins. Having been composed in Cairo, for which reason it has been called the Cairo Bible, the Leningrad Codex was bought in 1863 as part of the Firkovich Collection.



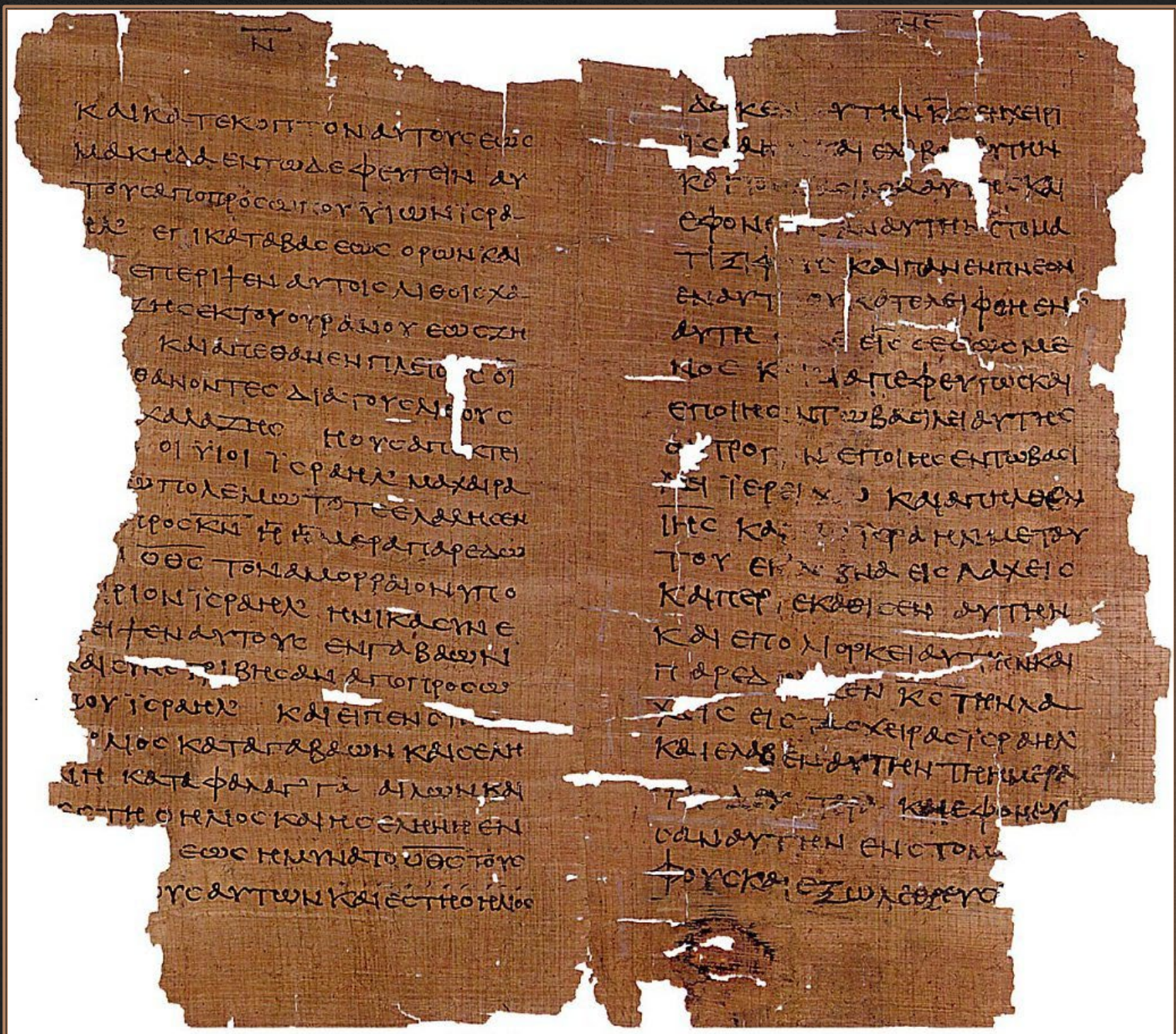
Credit: https://expositions.nlr.ru/eng/ex_manus/firkovich/sobr_prim.php

Handwritten Samaritan script on a parchment page, showing dense text in a cursive style. The script is arranged in approximately 15 horizontal lines. The parchment is aged and shows some staining and wear, particularly a large tear or hole in the lower-left quadrant. The text is written in a dark ink, likely iron gall, and consists of numerous characters and symbols characteristic of the Samaritan alphabet.

Samaritan Pentateuch

External Evidence: Secondary Witnesses

- ❑ Septuagint (LXX): Greek translation of the Heb. Bible
 - Pentateuch dates to Ptolemy II (after 275 BC)
 - Writings and prophets took time (by 116 BC)
 - Collection of 'versions' made by various writers who differed greatly in their translational methods
- ❑ Aramaic Targums and ancient translations:
 - Translation into Aramaic was needed since Jews no longer spoke/wrote in Hebrew
 - Various other translations: Syriac, Old Latin, Vulgate, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Arabic



Septuagint (LXX)

The Septuagint is the text that was preferred by the early church and the majority of the writers of the Greek Bible. Only fragments of the LXX exist that date to the 1st and 2nd century BC. The earliest nearly-complete manuscripts of the LXX are Codex Vaticanus (4th c. AD) and Codex Alexandrinus (5th c. AD).

This fragment of the Septuagint from Joshua, known as MS 2648, dates to the end of the 2nd century AD and represents the oldest attested text for this part of the Bible. MS 2648 derives from Egypt and was preserved in large part due to the arid climate of Upper Egypt.

Types of Evidence for Resolving Variants

(2) **Internal evidence** consists of transcriptional probability (i.e., the likelihood of various readings based on scribal alteration that may be responsible for the variation in the text), and intrinsic probability (the likelihood of various readings based on the author's typical style and characteristic tendencies).

Transcriptional Probability: Textual Errors

Essentially, all errors that led to textual variants in the Bible can be divided into two categories:

(1) Errors due to **unintentional changes** to the text

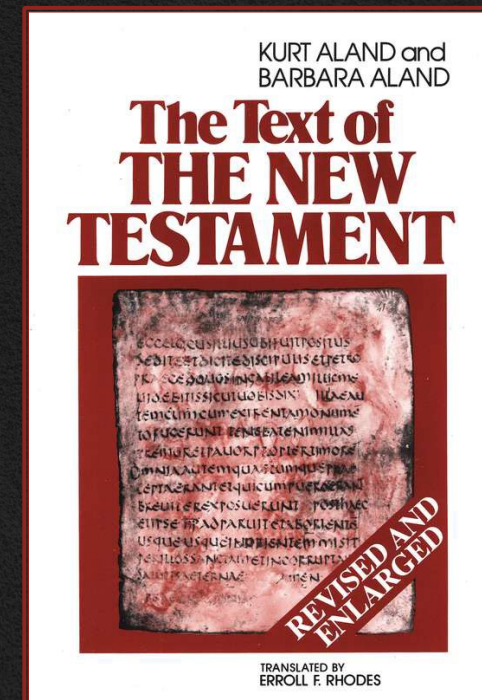
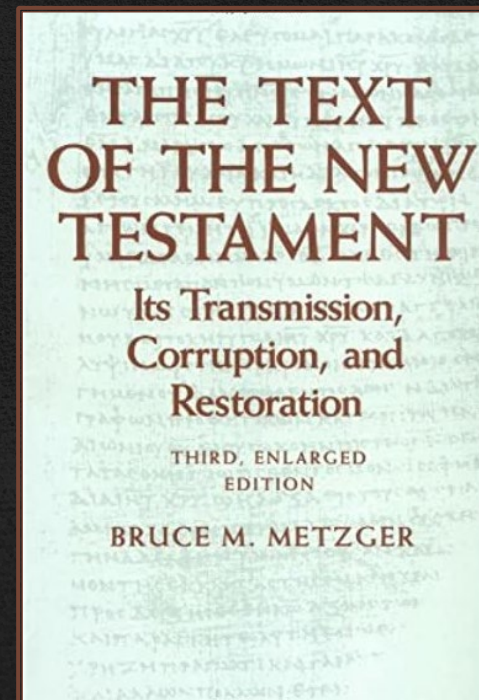
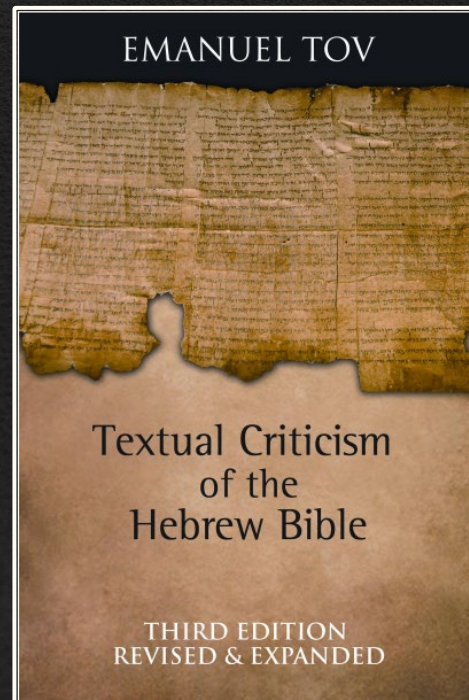
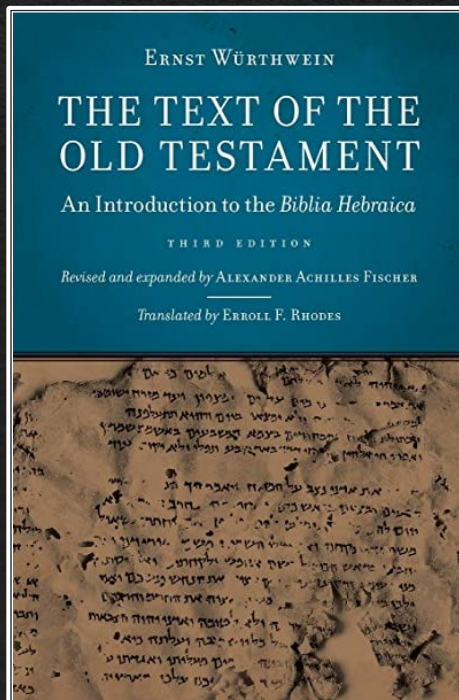
- Errors arising from an issue with scribe's sight
- Errors arising from an issue with scribe's hearing
- Errors arising from an issue with scribe's thoughts
- Errors arising from a mistake in judgment

(2) Errors due to **intentional changes** to the text

- Changes involving spelling and grammar
- Corruptions due to harmonizing with another text

Transcriptional Probability: Textual Errors

- Changes trying to resolve historical difficulties
- Conflation due to different reading in another ms.
- Alterations to protect doctrinal convictions
- Additions of miscellaneous details to the text



Unintentional Change: Omission by Homoioteleuton

Homoeoteleuton: omitting intervening text because the eye skips from one word to the same word found later.

Isaiah 4:5–6

- MT: Writes the entire text.
- DSS 1QIs^a: Omits the intervening, bracketed words.

because night by flaming fire a of brightness and smoke even by day cloud its regions over and

וְעַל-מִקְרָאָהּ עֲנַן יוֹמָם] וְעֵשֶׁן וְנֹגֵה אֵשׁ לְהַבֵּה לַיְלָה כִּי

עַל-כָּל-כְּבוֹד חֲפָה: וְסִכָּה תִהְיֶה לְצֵל יוֹמָם] מִחֶרֶב

heat the from by day shade for will be shelter and ,a covering glory the of all over

- Correct Reading: MT, as the omission is an error of sight.

Unintentional Change: Omission by Error in Thought

Error in Thought: variations that arose as a copyist held a letter(s), word(s), or clause in his memory before writing it down.

Judges 20:13

- LXX: Writes οἱ υἱοὶ Βενιαμιν (“[the] sons of Benjamin”).
- MT: Writes בְּנֵי־מִן (“Benjamin”), without בְּנֵי (“sons of”) before it.

Israel sons of their of brothers voice to listen to Benjamin were willing not but
וְלֹא אָבוּ בְּנֵי־מִן לְשָׁמַעַ בְּקוֹל אֶחְיָהֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל

- Correct Reading: LXX, as the MT wrote בְּנֵי once when it should have written it twice (בְּנֵי בְּנֵי). The plural verb אָבוּ agrees only with the plural subject “sons of Benjamin” (not sing. “Benjamin”).

Intentional Change: Alteration for Doctrinal Protection

An alleged variant

(?) A scribe intentionally changed the word in his exemplar in order to eliminate a doctrinally offensive phrase from the text.

Job 1:5

- LXX: Writes ἐνενοήσαν (“[they] reflected upon”).
- MT: Writes וּבֵרְכוּ (“[they] blessed”).
their hearts in God blessed and my sons (they) sinned Perhaps Job (he) said
אָמַר אִיּוֹב אֱלֹהֵי חַטָּאוֹ בְּנֵי וּבֵרְכוּ אֱלֹהִים בְּלִבָּם
- Correct Reading: קָלְלוּ (“they cursed”), a reading not found in any extant text [? 11QtgJob]. A scribe replaced the offensive expression, “[they] cursed God” with a euphemism to smoothen the reading.

Intentional Change: Alteration for Doctrinal Protection

An alleged variant

An alternative answer to Job 1:5's alleged textual variant:

MT correct as is: "Job said, 'Perhaps my sons sinned, **then** they **blessed** God in their hearts.'" This avoids using textual emendation.

Thus, Job presented burnt offerings on behalf of his sons, partly because he realized that his sons may have committed some type of sin, then afterward—with unatoned sin on their ledger—spoke words of blessing to God in their hearts while in that state. Their actions thus are consecutive, just as with the *waw*-conjunction in Gen 1:1.

1.1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

1.1 In *the* beginning, God created **the cosmos**, **then** **the earth**.

Intentional Change: Alteration for Doctrinal Protection

An alleged variant

An alternative answer to Job 1:5's alleged textual variant:

MT correct as is: "Job said, 'Perhaps my sons sinned, **then** they blessed God in their hearts.'" This avoids using textual emendation.

The idea is that Job's understanding reflects the truth recorded in Isaiah 59:1–2: "You see, the hand of He-who-is is not shortened that it cannot save, **nor is his ear heavy that it cannot hear**. Yet **your iniquities have created a separation between you and your God**, and **your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he does not hear**."

Perhaps Job similarly feared that his children's sins that went unatoned for actually prevented God from hearing their blessings.

Intentional Change: Alteration to Resolve a Historical Difficulty

A scribe intentionally changed the numbers in his exemplar in order to resolve a historical difficulty created by their implication.

Genesis 11

- MT: Writes “Now _____ lived X years, then he sired _____”).
- LXX/SP: Writes “. . . lived X [+ 100] years, then he sired . . .”).
- Correct Reading: “. . . lived X [+ 100] years”), because while the reading in the LXX/SP easily explains the rise of the reading in the MT, the MT definitely cannot explain the rise of the other reading. No scribe in his right mind would see 35 and change it to 135.

Siring Ages for Patriarchs in Genesis 11

	Shem	Arpachshad	(?)Kainan	Shelah	Heber	Peleg	Reu	Serug	Nahor	Terah
MT	100	35		30	34	30	32	30	29	70
LXX	100	135	130	130	134	130	132	130	79	70
SP	100	135		130	134	130	132	130	79	70

Option #1: The patriarch Arpachshad was 35 years old when he bore his son who was in the line from Noah to Abram.

Option #2: The patriarch Arpachshad was 135 years old when he bore his son who was in the line from Noah to Abram.

Question: What is the best method for choosing between options?

Solving a Textual Variant Properly

Topic: Praxes of Textual Criticism

(Considering the Options)

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

Those who resolve textual variants rely on a praxis, or fixed method, for selecting the variant of their choice. The five praxes for solving variants include the following: (1) Choose a reading based on numerical superiority of witnesses. (2) Choose a reading based on the earliness of manuscripts. (3) Choose the reading attested by the most textual traditions. (4) Apply radical eclecticism. (5) Apply reasoned eclecticism.

For much greater detail, see “Chapter 3: A Praxis for Textual Criticism,” in Douglas Petrovich, “*Ἐν Ἐφέσω* and the Destination of the Ephesian Letter,” unpublished Th.M. Thesis (1998).

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

The first three praxes listed above rely exclusively on external evidence, which consists of manuscripts in the original languages, early translational versions, and ancient historical writings. The fourth praxis relies solely on internal evidence, which subjectively considers the likelihood of a scribal error or determines the rendering most indicative of the author's style and language. The fifth praxis combines and weighs external and internal evidence with appropriate value.

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

(1) Choose a reading based on numerical superiority of witnesses. With this praxis, the textual critic deems the variant that has the largest number of manuscripts supporting it to be original.

A reading supported by 10 manuscripts of the LXX automatically outweighs a reading supported by 1 ms. of the MT, SP, and Targums, as $10 > 3$. With NT TC, the Byzantine text-type's reading virtually always is accepted: its reading has far more manuscript support.

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

(2) Choose a reading based on the earliness of manuscripts. With this praxis, the reading with the oldest supporting manuscripts is deemed to be correct. The oldest manuscripts are taken as the best witnesses.

If the oldest Hebrew witness from the MT tradition dates only to *ca.* AD 900, then a reading in the LXX that is supported by a manuscript from 100 BC must be correct, since the LXX manuscript is 1000 years closer to the autographa. Greater age = greater reliability.

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

(3) Choose the reading attested by the most textual traditions. The MT, SP, Targums, and early translations all represent an individual textual tradition.

With OT TC, a reading supported by the MT, SP, and Targums automatically outweighs a reading that is restricted to the LXX. With New Testament textual criticism, the Byzantine text-type's reading virtually always is accepted, as the number of manuscripts with its reading far exceeds that of the other text-types.

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

(4) Apply radical eclecticism. This praxis ends up with a purely eclectic text, because its adherents prefer a reading based solely on internal evidence.

The view came along *ca.* 10 years after the term “eclectic” first was used in the field of TC. This decidedly one-sided approach that emphasizes stylistic (internal) over documentary (external) considerations argues that since the history of textual transmission is untraceable, no 1 textual tradition carries any weight.

Choosing a Praxis for Solving Textual Variants

(5) Apply reasoned eclecticism. This praxis evaluates the character of variants both in light of the manuscript evidence and in light of internal evidence.

Since no surviving manuscript or textual tradition is without error, the correct reading for each variant must be determined on a case-by-case basis. This view allows for both external and internal evidence to be given full consideration in making textual choices, avoiding either extreme (i.e., internal or external only).

Solving a Textual Variant Properly

**Topic: Canons of Intrinsic
and Transcriptional Probability**

(Guidelines for Methodology)

Canons of Intrinsic and Transcriptional Probability

(1) Prefer the reading that best accounts for the rise (i.e., origin) of the other readings.

(2) Prefer the more difficult reading, as scribes tended to clarify the text rather than complicate it.

(3) Prefer the shorter reading, as scribes tended to add text rather than omit text.

(4) Prefer the reading that is most characteristic of the author's typical vocabulary, language, and style.

(5) Prefer the reading that best fits the context.

Solving a Textual Variant Properly

**Topic: Example of a
Textual Variant Resolved**

(Exodus 12:40)

Variant Resolution: Exodus 12:40

Text: Exodus 12:40–42. ⁴⁰“Now the residing of the sons of Israel during which they resided **in Egypt** is 430 years. ⁴¹So it happened at the end of the 430 years—and it was on that very day—that all the armies of He-who-is went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴²It was a night of vigil belonging to He-who-is, in order to bring them out from the land of Egypt. This was the night belonging to He-who-is, a vigil for all of the sons of Israel for all of their generations.”

Variant Resolution: Exodus 12:40

Dispute: The standard view on Exodus 12:40 is that the Israelite people remained in Egypt for 430 years, counting from Jacob's move there with his family to the exodus, which represents the *long sojourn view*.

The alternative *short sojourn view* claims that the Egyptian sojourn lasted only about 215 years, with the other roughly 215 years being devoted to the time from Abram's arrival in Canaan, or some other event that occurred in Canaan, until Jacob's move to Egypt.

Variant Resolution: Exodus 12:40

Stakes: If the long sojourn view is correct, Jacob's entry into Egypt took place in 1876 BC, given that the exodus took place in 1446 BC. If the short sojourn view is correct, Jacob's family entered Egypt in *ca.* 1661 BC, given that the exodus took place in *ca.* 1446 BC.

The difference of 215 years for the timing of Jacob's arrival in Egypt is enormous. Whatever view is chosen must conform smoothly with Egyptian history and fit with the evidence that synchronizes these two cultures.

Variant Resolution: Exodus 12:40

Variant 1: The 430 years in Exodus 12:40–41 is comprised of the Israelite residence **in Canaan** (before Jacob moved) and **in Egypt** (after Jacob moved), with about 215 years in each of the two locations. [Note the chronological order of the two.]

Reading of Variant 1a (LXX, Syriac mss., Josephus (*Ant.* 2.15.2): “And the residing of the sons of Israel during which they resided **in the land of Egypt** and **in the land of Canaan** is 430 years.” [out of chronological order]

Reading of Variant 1b (SP): “Now the residing of the sons of Israel **and their fathers** during which they resided **in the land of Canaan** and **in the land of Egypt** is 430 years.”

Variant Resolution: Exodus 12:40

Variant 2: The 430 years in Exodus 12:40–41 is comprised of the Israelite residence **in Egypt** (after Jacob moved).

Reading of View 2 (MT, a DSS [4Q14Exod], *Tg. Onq.*, *Sam. Tg.*, mss. of the Syriac version, rabbinical sources of the LXX, the Armenian version, the Boheric version, the Latin Vulgate, the Peshitta, and Josephus [*Ant.* 2.9.1]): “Now the residing of the sons of Israel during which they resided in Egypt is 430 years.” [no issues with chronological order]

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

PRO 1: The LXX and the SP form a double tradition that not infrequently preserves the original wording of the HB, including the variants in the genealogies of Genesis 11.

PRO 2: The reading of the LXX is quite ancient, with the translation of the Pentateuch extending into the first half of the 3rd century BC. According to David Rohl (2015: 78), the LXX presumably was translated from an original Hebrew text of the Torah during the 3rd century BC.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 1: Cf. Variant 1, PRO 2. While the LXX and the SP are known to preserve the original wording of the Hebrew text, their often-matching preservation of both correct and spurious readings suggests that they possess fairly common ancestry, which may not be the purest transmissional line.

CON 2: There is no way to demonstrate that the LXX's underlying Hebrew text reflects *the* original text of the Torah, or that its text is inherently superior to the MT, qualitatively.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 3: As Carpenter (2016: 474) keenly observed, the LXX and the SP *reverse the order of Egypt and Canaan* in their texts, which reveals no insignificant difference. The former reads, “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan,” while the latter reads, “in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt.” This reversal in order strongly implies the likelihood of the spurious nature of the variant in either form, given the flippancy with which the order was preserved.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 4: The “215 years” in Josephus’s text does provide an ancient source with this number, but a historical reference is quite different from a direct reference in the biblical text to an Egyptian sojourn of 215 years. Josephus is not a reliable source for anyone desiring to use his work to support the short sojourn view. After all, in *Antiquities of the Jews* 2.9.1, he expressly stated that the Israelites spent 400 years under the afflictions in Egypt, contradicting his “215 years” claim.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

PRO 1: The MT's reading here dates back at least to AD 1009, with an underlying Hebrew text that traces back to the *Sopherim* scribes (specifically the *Tannaim* of the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD). Moreover, “[The MT] has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the text. Any deviation from it therefore requires justification” (Würthwein 1995: 116).

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

PRO 2: Cave 4 at Qumran produced a witness called 4Q14 Exodus, which affirms the reading in the MT. Yet the text of 4Q14 Exodus reads, “in the land of Egypt,” rather than, “in Egypt.” The addition of, “in the land,” in this DSS probably represents a compromise between the reading of the prevailing Hebrew text and that of the LXX. The absence of “in the land of Canaan” in the DSS's text strengthens the reading of Variant 2 significantly.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: External Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

CON 1: Since the LXX and the SP form a double tradition that can preserve the original wording of the Hebrew Bible, including the textual variants in the genealogies of Genesis 11, the reading of the double tradition of the MT and the DSS in Exodus 12:40 may be correct, in similar fashion.

CON 2: The ancient translations that favor Variant 2 are not early enough to be considered as important witnesses.

Tentative Conclusion from External Evidence

The antiquity of the LXX and the SP renders their texts as important for determining the originality of any variation in the HB, so their addition of Canaan as another intended location for the time of the sojourn may be correct.

However, the MT's text is both plausible and strong here, preserving the shorter reading, so it should be overturned only with great care. Its reading is supported by DSS 4Q14Exod, which was composed when the LXX's text was the prevailing authority among many scribes and authors of the time.

The importance of Variant 1, CON 3 cannot be overstated:

Tentative Conclusion from External Evidence

the reversing of the order of Egypt and Canaan in the texts of the LXX and the SP greatly weakens Variant 1's support from external evidence. Due to the strength of the double tradition of the MT and the Dead Sea Scrolls, external evidence favors the reading without "and in the land of Canaan."

TENTATIVE CONCLUSION: Although the textual witnesses are split almost evenly, the external evidence favors Variant 2 slightly. Tentatively choose Variant 2, but reserve final judgment until the internal evidence is studied.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

PRO 1: The 215-year sojourn better accommodates the “fourth generation” of Gen 15:16. The 430 years cannot account easily for the mere four generations that define the time that God predicted to Abram (Gen 15:13) for the Egyptian sojourn from its beginning until the time of the exodus. A 215-year sojourn easily accommodates these four generations, but a 430-year sojourn cannot accommodate the four generations nearly as efficiently.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

PRO 2: The reading of the LXX and the SP aids the proponents of Rohl's so-called "New Chronology," who need a short sojourn in Egypt in order to fit their chronological scheme. Rohl (2015: 79) concluded that by adding the 215 years to an exodus-date of 1447 BC (his date) one arrives at the start of the Israelite sojourn in *ca.* 1662 BC, which he tied to the reign of Amenemhat III of Dynasty 12.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

PRO 3: The reference to 430 years in Galatians 3:17 points to a shorter sojourn (Anderson and Giles 2012: 81), as Paul wrote of God's promises to Abraham as having been fulfilled with the writing of the law at Mt. Sinai, some 430 years after the patriarch's time (Rohl 2015: 79). Therefore, the 430 years should not be counted from Jacob's arrival in Egypt until the law was given at Sinai.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 1: Cf. Variant 1, PRO 1. The Hebrew word *dor* (usually rendered four “generations”) and its Semitic cognates more accurately mean “a cycle of time, a lifetime/lifespan,” so four *dor* is not at all incompatible with 400 years. This *dor* can be viewed as a span of time (Deut 32:7; Ps 145:13; Isa 58:12) rather than biological generations, as both etymology and context suggest. Thus, Gen 15:16 can be rendered, “Then in the fourth span of time they will return” (i.e., from Egypt).

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 1: Cf. Variant 1, PRO 2. While Rohl is correct that Dynasty 12 is the time of Joseph's generation, and that of his sons (Ephraim and Manasseh), his date of *ca.* 1662 BC is the result of radical reconstruction of Egyptian chronology. This redating is not merely a 25-year difference, the standard maximum deviation used by virtually all Egyptologists for the differentiating of dates according to the three chronological positions (i.e. high, medium, and low chronology), but a

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

deviation of nearly two centuries. While Rohl (2015: 79) has dated Amenemhat III's reign from *ca.* 1680–1633 BC, the correct date for his reign is *ca.* 1859–1813 BC (Petrovich 2016: 234), a difference of a startling 180 years. While this venue is not the proper one for explaining or critiquing the radical revisionism of Rohl's Egyptian chronological scheme, it must be noted that he stands apart from the entire field of Egyptology on this matter, except for a few of his followers.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

CON 1: Cf. Variant 1, PRO 3. Contra Rohl, the 430 years in Gal 3:17 instead measures from the final promise God gave to Jacob before he departed from Canaan (Gen 46:1–4), which occurred in the same year that he entered Egypt (1876 BC), to the year of the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai (1446 BC), which occurred in the same year as the exodus from Egypt (Petrovich 2019: 36). As Merrill (1987: 76) stated, Paul was not speaking of Abraham, per se, but of

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 1: The sojourn of 430 years includes 215 years **in Canaan** and 215 years **in Egypt** [1661–1446 BC].

the Abrahamic promise to his *singular* “seed(!),” the last expression of which was to Jacob, exactly 430 years before the exodus. MacArthur (1987: 85) advocated that the repetition of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob occurred exactly 430 years prior to the giving of the Mosaic covenant at Sinai, while Gromacki (2002: 100) agreed that this probably refers to the reaffirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob when he descended to Egypt.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

PRO 1: Within the context surrounding Exod 12:40, it is more natural to reckon the time of the departure from Egypt in terms of the entire length of the Israelites' stay in Egypt, rather than adding the previous period in Canaan to the sojourn (Riggs 1971: 24). After all, the entire story from the beginning of Exodus focuses on Israel's stay in the foreign land of Egypt, not their earlier residence in Canaan under the patriarchs who predated Jacob.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

Moreover, Canaan is the land of promise, thus their home. The outstanding event for the Israelites is the anticipated and promised return to their homeland, making the purpose of this counting of their foreign sojourn to distinguish it from life lived in their native habitation. Adding the dwelling of their forefathers in Canaan to this timespan only deemphasizes the force of the point being made by the author, an oddity that interferes with the flow of the text.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

PRO 2: Regarding ancient history's voice on whether the Israelite sojourn in Egypt lasted 215 or 430 years, the evidence is completely one-sided. The only legitimate candidate for the exodus pharaoh in Egypt's Dynasty 13, 18, or 19—the only dynasties representing choices offered by scholars, at present—is Amenhotep II, who alone fits all of the measurable requirements of the exodus pharaoh's biography (Petrovich 2006: 81–110). Hebrew inscriptions in

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

Egypt and Sinai date from 1840–1446 BC and name 3 biblical figures: Asenath, Ahisamach, and Moses (Petrovich 2016). Apiru (= Hebrew) slaves appear as vintners in Egypt during Thutmose III's reign (the exodus pharaoh's father), but not soon after. Plus, 3,600 Apiru appear in a conquest list on Berlin Pedestal 21687, which dates to Amenhotep II's reign (van der Veen et al. 2010: 15; Görg 2012: 60), his final Asiatic conquest in November of Year 7 (= 1446 BC).

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Internal Evidence

Variant 2: The sojourn of 430 years is restricted to the time that Jacob's family spent **in Egypt** only [1876–1446 BC].

CON 1: The words “and in the land of Canaan” seemingly dropped out of the MT and the DSS at some stage during the process of textual transmission (Rohl 2015: 78).

CON 2: This view conflicts with the view of some scholars about the 430 years in Gal 3:17, which seems to measure from the promise given to Abraham to the reception of the law at Mt. Sinai (Hoffmeier 2007: 226; Rohl 2015: 79).

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Applying Canon #1

Canon #1: Prefer the reading that best accounts for the rise (i.e., origin) of the other readings.

Scholars have yet to explain why a scribe purposefully would have omitted “the land of” (before “ Egypt ”) and “and the land of Canaan” from his text, if the LXX’s reading is original. Since there is no logical explanation for an accidental error of omission, the burden of proof falls on Variant 1’s proponents to offer a compelling reason for an intentional error (actually two intentional errors) of omission. The MT’s reading accounts for the rise of the LXX’s reading,

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Applying Canon #1

Canon #1: Prefer the reading that best accounts for the rise (i.e., origin) of the other readings.

since the variant resolves the perceived problem with fitting the “four generations” of Gen 15:16 into the entire 430 years.

The LXX’s reading easily leads to the SP’s reading, because it places Egypt before Canaan, which is out of chronological order. Yet the reading in the SP, which places Canaan before Egypt, cannot explain the rise of the LXX’s variant. After all, the location where the Hebrew patriarchs resided first is Canaan, followed by Jacob’s relocation to Egypt.

Exodus 12:40 Variant: Applying Canon #1

Canon #1: Prefer the reading that best accounts for the rise (i.e., origin) of the other readings.

A scribe who saw in his exemplar that his forefathers resided in Canaan first and then in Egypt would not 'fix' the text by altering the wording to state that they resided in Egypt first and then in Canaan. However, if a scribe saw in his exemplar that they resided in Egypt first and then in Canaan, which is the opposite of chronological order, he definitely would be prone to fix the perceived chronological error in his exemplar. Variant 2 accounts for the rise of both forms of Variant 1.

Evaluation of Internal Evidence

Regarding internal evidence, the MT's reading is amply supported by numerous arguments:

(1) No accidental error of omission can account for its rise.

(2) The MT offers the shortest reading, and one canon of transcriptional probability is to prefer the shorter reading, since intentional changes are more likely to have been additions rather than omissions (Greenlee 1995, 72).

(3) The context of Exod 12:40 is woven into a narrative that focuses directly on the Israelite sojourn in Egypt, not the previous patriarchal sojourn in Canaan.

Evaluation of Internal Evidence

Regarding internal evidence, the MT's reading is amply supported by numerous arguments:

(4) The rise of the other readings can be explained easily by the MT's reading, but its rise cannot be explained whatsoever by the originality of any other reading.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: These four arguments act as strands to form a strong cord, making the MT's reading the overwhelming choice based on internal evidence. A final conclusion now can be drawn for the resolution of the variant.

Final Conclusion on Exodus 12:40 Variant

Both external and internal evidence convincingly point to Variant 2, the reading of “in Egypt,” as the original text found in Exod 12:40. The reading in the LXX, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Josephus—although he offers conflicting positions on the issue—cannot supplant the reading of the MT and the DSS. The evidence for Variant 1 is forced, leading to a non-contextual interpretation and an indefensible position.

The textual and historical data related to the internal evidence clearly makes a reading of “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan” (Variant 1) impossible to sustain with

Final Conclusion on Exodus 12:40 Variant

credibility. Variant 2 also suits the context of Exod 12:40 far more naturally, as the entire story—from the book’s outset—deals solely with the nation’s stay in Egypt, not with the patriarchs’ sojourn in Canaan before Jacob departed for Egypt.

FINAL CONCLUSION: Choose Variant 2 with great confidence, giving preference to the reading found in the MT (“in Egypt”) and supported by DSS 4Q14Exod (whose added words, “the land of”) can be rejected as a harmonization.

THE END