George D. Kilpatrick and the Textual Criticism of the New Testament: Three Variants from his *Nachlass* Discussed

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As literary executor for the late George Kilpatrick (1910-1989), formerly the Dean Ireland Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford, I recently rediscovered three "Notes" by him on textual variants of the Greek of the New Testament. Those "Notes" were never published, despite their having been circulated for comment by students and colleagues in the 1950s. This was the time when he was preparing the ill-fated third edition of his text for the British and Foreign Bible Societies' *Η Καινη Διαθηκη* (= *The Greek New Testament)*. His original plan for such "Notes" was that they were written for only limited circulation; the recipients could then contact him personally and/or attend his seminars in Oxford to discuss their contents. The ones here concern variants in three books of the New Testament: Mark, Hebrews and Revelation.

Before we look at these variants, let us quickly see who influenced Kilpatrick's scholarship in this area. I assume that the scholars admired most by Kilpatrick (hereafter = GDK) were *inter alia* A.C. Clark, A.E. Housman, C.H. Turner, V. Taylor and H.-J. Vogels; he generally followed

their methodologies and conclusions whenever they tended towards a reading based on the likeliest text, dependent upon linguistic and stylistic usage rather than on the manuscripts supporting all current readings.[1]

We should feel the need neither to write a full biography such as I prepared when editing GDK's *Festschrift* in 1976 nor the introduction to and bibliography of his writings as written out fully in the collected essays, as given in footnote 3 here. Suffice it to say that in recent years all those names have, in general, slipped from common usage and therefore are absent from most listings of modern scholars in a volume's indexes. Nevertheless, I note that several academic colleagues today who write commentaries do reach text-critical decisions using thoroughgoing methodologies such as GDK himself advocated. James Voelz of Concordia Seminary in St Louis, Missouri, for instance, is one such, as too are David Aune in his three-volume *Word Bible Commentary* on the Book of Revelation and the late François Bovon in his three-volume commentary on Luke's Gospel; those are not alone[2]. These writers typically accept a variant that agrees with the author's language, style and usage rather than automatically print a reading as their text whatever happens to be supported by their "favourite" manuscripts. They may indeed be text-critics inadvertently without their having necessarily read GDK's books and articles or those who preceded and followed him as writers on text-criticism.

These three are very short papers similar to many others by him and are numbered here as i, ii and iii. Mark and John's Apocalypse were often branded (correctly) by GDK as belonging to the lowest stratum of Greek writings in the New Testament; the writer of Hebrews seemed to him to have a more confident ability in Greek. Each study here could be seen as belonging to the minutiae of textual criticism, derided by outsiders as being the typically small matters beloved by us, text-critics. But if one reads and examines these "minutiae"[3] on which much of GDK's work was based, it will readily be seen that his results and methods are easily applicable to *all* comparable variants. The discussions to follow are indeed desirable outcomes not only to the issues raised and debated by GDK but they are also windows onto his methodology.

(i)   Mark 2:21, none of the variants here happens to be in the *apparatus* of our usual hand-editions i.e. Nestle in its 28th edition nor the parallel text in UBS[5 revised].

(ii) Hebrews 12:24

(iii) Revelation 2:14

1.   *Mark 2:21*

GDK begins his essay by quoting the text found in Vincent Taylor's commentary on Mark: Ει δε μη, αιρει το πληρωμα απ'αυτου (το καινον του παλαιου) και χειρον σχισμα γινεται. GDK cites Taylor's own words which say that the text originally included το καινον του παλαιου, albeit printed by Taylor *in brackets*. GDK asks whether the words "old" and "new" are the

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[1] CLARK 1933 ; CLARK 1918 ; TAYLOR 1952 ; VOGELS 1955 ; VOGELS 1929 ; TURNER 1924-1928 (see the reproductions of those plus other articles in ELLIOTT 1993 ; A.E. Housman's scurrilous introductions to his editions of, say, Lucan and of Manilius as well as "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism" reproduced in CARTER 1961, pp. 171-200.

[2] COLLINS 2007 is a case in point ; see BOVON 2002-2012 ; GUELICH 1989 completed by EVANS 2001 ; AUNE 1997-1998 ; VOELZ 2013 ; VOELZ 2019 (James Voelz's commentary on Mark is in two parts: volume I contains 1:1- 8:26; part 2 has Voelz's commentary on 8:27-16:8 and Christopher Mitchell's subjoined noted on the Longer Ending to this Gospel [Mark 16: 9-20]).

[3] See ELLIOTT 1990.

better ones to read at vv. 21-22. The answer seems to be that the *new* covenant is indeed the better (as in Gal. 3:10-12).[4]

GDK writes that in verse 21 the phrase stands in apposition to το πληρωμα and appears to mean "the new part of the old garment". But, although implied in Luke 5:36, το απο του καινου is probably an early explanatory gloss. GDK approved of the thinking here that the text in our usual printed editions of Mark is wrong. Here it has been included as an afterthought by a writer different from the author. According to GDK, Taylor's correction is "impossible" and offends against its idiom. The order is wrong and this evangelist never dispenses with prepositions where they are desirable. Yet, there is no evidence, bar a couple of minuscule manuscripts, for the omission of the words placed in brackets by Taylor. (Not that that point should ever have itself been an issue for GDK and textual critics like him.) Metzger disapproved of GDK's text whenever GDK accepted a reading as its text that today is found in only a few witnesses.[5] I note that GDK took great satisfaction when he observed that critics like Metzger printed as the *txt* a reading that is allegedly "poorly represented" in the manuscripts!

According to GDK, all extant manuscripts vary among themselves but amid the variations here is one reading alone that makes sense *and* explains the others. It is: Ει δε μη, αιρει απ' αυτου το πληρωμα το καινον απο του παλαιου. Here απ' αυτου is correct. Phrases consisting of pronouns and prepositions in Mark usually come immediately after the verb(s) or other words on which they depend. This improvement brings το πληρωμα and το καινον together and at once we see that they then form a phrase of noun + adjective, in which the adjective follows the noun and both have the article — this grammatical feature corresponds to Semitic usage. Finally, απο του παλαιου unlike του παλαιου, without the preposition, is now able to stand on its own.

GDK asks how such a reading could be interpreted and he then raises another question: "How come that both απ' αυτου *and* απο του παλαιου in the same sentence need explanation?" It is questions such as these which have caused much of the variation in the manuscripts. Many seem to reflect Semitic usage[6] and may be compared with other New Testament examples. A good instance of this is at John 9:13 αγουσιν αυτον προς τους Φαρισαιους, τον ποτε τυφλον. The idiom probably occurs in Mark at 6:17, 18, 22; 12:30,37 and perhaps also at Mark 1:16. Samaritan Aramaic has several examples of this usage.[7] In Mark 2:21 the construct seems therefore to mean: "…the new patch takes from it, (namely) from the old (garment)."

In Mark objects, especially pronoun objects, were often supplied where Greek would normally do without them. Here απ' αυτου and απο του παλαιου may therefore best be treated as partitive phrases and mean "some of it" and "some of the old". In GDK's recommended text the whole sentence would therefore end as follows: "But, if not, the new patch takes away some of it, (namely) some of the old (garment)".

If that text is accepted and acceptable we can see how the other readings arose. They attempted to get rid of the tautology of απ' αυτου and απο του παλαιου, as well as the removing of a Semitism by grammarians and Atticists[8] who often disliked all allegedly unGreek idioms

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[4] See Voelz 2013, pp. 214-215, which devotes much space to the variants in this verse, with its five readings.

[5] Metzger, Ehrman 2005, especially p. 225.

[6] See e. g. Nigel Turner in Moulton 1920, p. 41.

[7] See Black 1967, e. g. pp. 261 and 270.

[8] See my own work and that of Chrys Caragounis' on the Atticists, especially on Phrynichus or Moeris, as good examples of the genre. In my studies the original studies were combined into one article in Elliott 1992.

in the earliest Christian centuries. One set of changes avulsed απ αυτου after πληρωμα and suppressed απο before του, thus creating a very unnatural and difficult text. Another change was simpler in that the alleged difficulty was the removal of απ' αυτου entirely. With that reading, the essential meaning was preserved but the Aramaic idiom was suppressed.

[Some scholars have also seen a problem with the Latin version of the verse, i. e. where *αιρειν* seems to be used absolutely and intransitively. Thus we read: *tollit* with the Old Latin manuscripts *a b c e ff²*; *aufert* with *aur q* (vg); *auferet d I* plus Beuron 19A (vg); *auferat f*. These variants show that αιρει from an early date was understood much as it is today.]

2.   *Heb. 12:24*

In this passage most witnesses read τον Αβελ although το Αβελ is to be found in P⁴⁶ L (supplement), 1960 and in at least six other cursives, Cyril of Alexandria, Basil (*v. l.*), Proclus, as well as the Syriac Peshitta and the Bohairic Coptic. The neuter article, το, will refer to the neuter noun, "blood", in this context, as implied in the AV (= KJV) in English. At first sight this variation may seem to be an insignificant triviality. But on examination, it may prove instructive.

According to GDK, the rule for the use of the article plus a noun in Hebrews is that normally proper names do not have the article. Moses, e. g., is anarthrous at 3:2, 3, 5, 16; 7:14; 8:5; 9:19; 10:28; 11:23*bis*, 24; 12:21. There are very few exceptions to this rule. At 7:1 ουτος γαρ ο Μελχιδεσεδεκ grammar requires the article. The following variants are determined by a common principle. At 11:17 in ...προσενηκοιχεν αβρααμ τον Ισαακ... the articles resolve an ambiguity; both are indeclinable nouns — Isaac is the object with a definite article and Abraham is the subject — and, as such, therefore, is anarthrous. Compare 11:20 where one noun (here Isaac) is anarthrous — but Jacob and Esau both have the article (τον) and, again, ambiguity is avoided. See also Heb. 6:13: τω γαρ Αβρααμ επαγγειλαμενος ο Θεος. According to GDK's notes, this is to him the most difficult example of the article to explain. It may be that, if the sentence began with Αβρααμ γαρ κτλ., we might start with the awkward impression that Αβρααμ were the subject, corrected only once the noun Θεος is met.

The principle is: Proper names never have an article, except in those places where the grammatical feature requires it or where indeclinable nouns otherwise may create ambiguity. In these circumstances, there seems to be little justification for the article with Αβελ at 12:24. But an article *is* there in Hebrews, which seems to be the practice of the LXX when allowance is made for variant readings. In this matter, therefore, Hebrews stands in contrast to the four canonical Gospels, and to a large extent in Acts, thereby showing even in detail Hebrews' dependence on the LXX.

[In the genitive there are examples in Hebrews of indeclinable nouns e.g. 2:16 σπερματνμ Αβρααμ: 11:30 τα τειχη Ιεριχω. For the pronominal use of the article see Mark 15:46 μαρια η Ιωσητος; 16:1 Μαρια η Ιακωβου.]

GDK ends this note by writing: "We may feel that το Αβελ is an awkward expression calling for improvement, and such a feeling may lie behind the reading τον Αβελ, but in such matters we cannot always trust our feelings about Greek style." Let us now take the hint and print το, and not τον.

3.   *Rev. 2:14*

Here the text is normally printed as: Βαλααμ ος εδιδασκεν τω Βαλακ βαλειν σκανδαλον ενωπιον των υιων Ισραηλ — a reading which calls for comment and correction. GDK says that

διδασκειν + dative is unlikely to be a Hebraism and is to be seen in the only other occurrence of διδασκειν in Revelation (2:20). The verb here in 2:14 is construed with the accusative.[9] Further, the dative with διδασκειν is not found elsewhere in the whole of the Greek New Testament or in the so-called Apostolic Fathers, except occasionally in lectionaries (according to Blass-Debrunner-Funk para. 155. 1[10]). It may be the case that (literary) ancient Greek could also give us examples.

This difficulty prompts our looking at the following variant: ος εδιδασκεν εν τω Βαλααμ τον Βαλακ in 025 *al..* "Hom" (a term that GDK regularly borrowed from Clark in his book on the Acts of the Apostles to denote a parablepsis in *scriptio continua* where the writing of homoioteleuton and of homoioarkton would be inappropriate terms to use) could lead us to an omission. ΒΑΛΑΑμτονΒΑΛΑκ gives a shortened text in the printed editions. We may also observe that εν could easily drop out as the word following is εδιδασκEN.

One needs to note with GDK and even to admit that the longer text (= Βαλααμ ος εδιδασκεν εν τω Βαλααμ τον Βαλακ) is awkward. (And that would, of course, ignore the other repetitiveness where the verb follows its related or cognate noun!) The awkwardness which repeats one of the proper names may be avoided if αλλ᾽ εχω κατα σου ολιγα οτι εχεις εκει κρατουντας την διδαχην Βαλααμ is read as a parenthesis which connects ος following with ο Σατανας at the end of verse 13. Then αλλα would mean something like "even though", introducing a parenthesis that may be compared with 2:9 αλλα πλουσιος ει and cf. 17:12.

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[9] See CHARLES 1920, I, p. 63.

[10] BLASS, DEBRUNNER, 1961.

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ABSTRACT

Among the unpublished papers by G.D. Kilpatrick written in the 1950s are the three notes printed here. They were prepared for *BABELAO* by J. Keith Elliott, who served as his literary executor. The notes concern textual variants at Mark 2:21; Hebrews 12:24 and Revelation 2:14. They contain Kilpatrick's suggested corrections of our printed editions there. It is to be hoped that these apparent minutiae will serve more widely as useful guides to all editors.

KEYWORDS

1. New Testament Greek textual criticism

2. George Dunbar Kilpatrick

3. Mark 2:21

4. Heb. 12:24

5. Rev. 2:14