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## The High Cost of Physicians: The Textual Criticism of Luke 8:43

James A. Borland

*Liberty University*, [jborland@liberty.edu](mailto:jborland@liberty.edu)

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“The High Cost of Physicians: The Textual Criticism of Luke 8:43”

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James A. Borland

I. INTRODUCTION

The well known story of the woman who was healed when she touched Jesus’ garment contains a textual problem. Some manuscripts of Luke 8:43 read “having spent all her living on physicians,” while others do not. Of the other Synoptic Gospels, Mark notices the spending; Matthew does not. Many scholars think some early copyists added the words to Luke to harmonize with Mark. The thesis of this paper is that Luke himself originally penned the phrase. Thus, the Lukan MSS that have the phrase represent the true text, while the omission is found in a few faulty MSS.

II. HOW ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS HANDLE LUKE 8:43

As expected, modern English translations are divided in handling the text of Luke 8:43. Many include “having spent all her living on physicians,” but some well known translations do not.

1. *Translations that include the phrase.* The earliest English translations such as William Tyndale’s NT (1516), *The Coverdale Bible* (1535), *Matthews Bible* (1537), the *Great Bible* (1539), the *Geneva Bible* (1560), the *Bishop’s Bible* (1568), the *Douay-Rheims Bible* (1609), and the KJV (1611) included the spending phrase. More modern versions continued the practice including *Young’s Literal Translation* (1862), Darby’s translation (1890), the ASV (1901), and Weymouth’s *The New Testament in Modern Speech* (1903). The latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed additional testimonies to “having spent all her living on

physicians,” such as the TEV (1966), the NKJV (1979), the NRSV (1989), the CEV (1991), the *Message* (1993), and the HCSB (1999). Since then, the ESV (2001) holds to the phrase as original, as does the CEV (2011).

2. *Translations that omit the phrase.* Some modern translations omit the words “having spent all her living on physicians” from Luke 8:43. Among these are *The Twentieth Century New Testament* (1904), Moffatt’s *The Bible, A New Translation* (1922), Williams’ *A Translation in the Language of the People* (1937), the RSV (1946), Phillips’ *The New Testament in Modern English* (1958), the NASB (1960), the *Jerusalem Bible* (1966), the NIV (1973), the NLT (1996), the NET (1998), the TNIV (2001), and the NCV (2005).

### III. THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE REGARDING LUKE 8:43

1. *Evidence for “having spent all her living on physicians.”* The phrase  $\text{ivatroi} / \text{j prosanalw, sasa o}[\text{lon to.n bi, on}$  is found in nearly all Gk MSS containing Luke 8:43. In this translation the definite article  $\text{to.n}$  is seen as a possessive use of the article, i.e., her living.

a. *Papyrus evidence.* Only one NT Gk papyrus MS, P<sup>75</sup>, of the approximately 120 in existence even contains Luke 8:43. The five Gk words in question are not in P<sup>75</sup>.

b. *Uncial evidence.* Evidence for this reading includes such uncials as  $\aleph^2$  A K L W  $\Delta$   $\Theta$   $\Xi$  and  $\Pi$  which are known as non-Byzantine MSS, plus E G H and P which generally display a Byzantine text.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, C and  $\Psi$  witness this reading with the word  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$  following  $\text{bi, on}$  to show possession. The first hand of  $\aleph$  also includes the phrase with  $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$  instead of  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ . This evidence is early and widespread. Codices  $\aleph$  and W date from the 4<sup>th</sup> and the

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, in *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), lxxi lists The British Museum’s 6<sup>th</sup> century Codex R, Nitriensis, as containing much of Luke, including 8:25-9:1, but strangely it is not found listed on either side of this question.

4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. A and C are from the 5<sup>th</sup>, Ξ from the 6<sup>th</sup>, L from the 8<sup>th</sup>, and the other five are from the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

c. *Minuscule evidence.* Among the cursives are the independent groupings of f<sup>1</sup> and f<sup>13</sup>. Family 1 includes MSS 1, 118, 131, 209, 1582, and others all of which date between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Family 13 includes MSS 13, 69, 124, 174, 230, 346, 543, 788, 826, 828, 983, 1689, 1709 and others which all date from as early as 1013 but mostly in the 1100 and 1200's. Other minuscule MSS supporting this reading are 28, 33, 565, 700, 892, 1006, 1009, 1010, 1195, 1216, 1230, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1253, 1292, 1342, 1344, 1365, 1505, 1546, 1646, 2148, and 2174. Three of these MSS, 33, known as the Queen of the Cursives, 565, and 892, date from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The host of these minuscules are cited in the textual apparatus because they generally follow the Alexandrian MS family rather than the Byzantine grouping. Also witnessing this reading is the great bulk of the Byzantine MSS which number in the hundreds. Not even a single cursive MS supports the omission.

d. *Lectionary evidence.* The great bulk of the nearly 2,500 lectionary MSS used in churches as their Bibles for many centuries support the reading "having spent all her living on physicians." Not even one lectionary favors the omission.

e. *Versions.* Supporting the traditional reading are several OL MSS including MS a (Vercelli, 4<sup>th</sup> C), b (5<sup>th</sup> C), f (6<sup>th</sup> C), and r<sup>1</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> C). Some Vg MSS read this way also as do some Slavonic MSS. However, the bulk of the Vg supports the reading of ⲥ with its addition of εαυτης. This is also the case with such OL MSS as aur, b, c, ff<sup>2</sup> (5<sup>th</sup> C), l (8<sup>th</sup> C) and q (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C). Attesting this same reading are the Syriac versions of the Curetonian (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> C.), the Peshitta, and the Harclean, plus some MSS of the Palestinian. The Coptic Bohairic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> C. and the Ethiopic also read this way.

f. *Fathers*. The Latin church fathers Ambrose, Jerome, and Chromatius, all dating near AD 400, witness the traditional reading, and Origen, Jerome again, and Augustine signal the reading with the addition of ἀτύχῃς.

2. *Evidence for omitting “having spent all her living on physicians.”* The manuscript evidence for omitting “having spent all her living on physicians” is scant, but early.

a. *Papyrus evidence*. Of the approximately 120 NT papyri MSS, the portion containing Luke 8:43 is found in only one, P<sup>75</sup>. This MS dates from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> C., and omits the phrase. P<sup>75</sup> is housed in the Vatican Library.

b. *Uncial evidence*. Only one uncial MS B, Vaticanus, part of the Vatican collection, dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> C. omits the phrase, though D, Bezae, essentially agrees with B. MS D has been part of the Cambridge University collection since 1581. It is available to the public online. Strangely, D converts ἦτις, which immediately precedes the phrase in question, to ἦν. This results in an alteration of the relative clause to make the relative the indirect object instead of the subject. Then again, mysteriously, D picks up the text after its omission with two inverted words, the absence of the negative οὐκ, and ἀπ’ replaced by ἐν. It reads HN ΟΥΔΕΕΙΣ ἸΣΧΥΕΝ ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΣΑΙ, “by no one was she able to be healed.” Why would D omit the ἦτις found in B and all other known MSS, and then rework its next phrase?

Immediately before the D’s omission, the scribe uses an abbreviation, ΒΙ, to indicate the number twelve, as he did in Luke 2:42 to signify Jesus’ age when he first visited the Temple, as well as the age of Jairus’ daughter in 8:42. The text of D then omits 31 letters before resuming as described above. The sixth line of D’s text is where the omission occurs. That line contains 35 letters. From the top of the leaf the first twelve lines contain the following number of letters respectively: 32, 27, 25, 31, 29, 35, 31, 32, 29, 32, 30, and 36. One

plausible explanation for D's strange omission is that D's exemplar, possibly a papyrus had lost a line at that point. P<sup>75</sup>, for example, averages 25-29 letters per line. Or perhaps after D's scribe finished his abbreviation sign, his eye skipped an entire line of his exemplar, to where he picked up his copying once more. Another plausible reason for D's omission might be the *parablepsis* error, where his eye skipped from ἰητις to ἰ ; scusen (IS . . . IS).

c. *Minuscule evidence.* It is a telling indictment of this reading that not a single cursive MS follows the omission of P<sup>75</sup>, B and possibly D. The woman's expenditures on physicians must have been so entwined in the early textual tradition of Luke's Gospel that even the copyists who might have used P<sup>75</sup>, B and D, if there were any, saw the omission as a plunder. The only way for every minuscule MS containing Luke 8:43 to have the expenditure on physicians must have been the almost universal presence of those five Gk words in the large and most early papyrus and uncial traditions. And that is precisely what the evidence indicates.

d. *Lectionary evidence.* There is no lectionary support for the omission.

e. *Versions.* Four different versions attest the omission in Luke. Only one OL MS, d, omits the words. This 5<sup>th</sup> C. MS lies on the right hand folio facing the Gk text of Bezae which lies on the left leaf. However, earlier OL MSS, including Vercelli (a) of the 4<sup>th</sup> C. do not indicate D and d's omission. Significantly, when Jerome revised the OL to produce the Vg the words of the expenditure were included.

However, the Sinaitic Syriac, dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> C. is cited favoring the omission, and some MSS of the Palestinian Syriac of the 6<sup>th</sup> C. also omit the words in question. The Coptic versions date from the 3<sup>rd</sup> C. Of these, the Sahidic omits the phrase, but its weight diminished by the fact that the Bohairic contains the words.

The Armenian and Georgian versions also favor the omission. Though these versions were initially translated in the 5<sup>th</sup> C. the actual Georgian MS evidence dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> C.

f. *Fathers*. No Church Fathers have been cited for the omission.

#### IV. INTERNAL EVIDENCE REGARDING LUKE 8:43

1. *The vocabulary and style of Luke's Gospel*. Luke's Gospel bears certain characteristics of vocabulary and style that are distinct from other NT writings.

a.  $\text{prosanalw, sasa}$ . The word that Luke uses to describe the woman's spending on physicians is  $\text{prosanalw, sasa}$ , an aorist participle from  $\text{prosanaliskw}$ , what A. T. Robertson calls "an old verb."<sup>2</sup> The word for spending in Mark 5:26 is  $\text{δαπανήσασα}$ , also an aorist participle, but from  $\text{δαπανάω}$ . Both mean to spend freely, but the term in Luke is found only here in the NT. Henry Alford comments, "The omission of this clause . . . in some of the best MSS., is curious. I have not ventured to exclude it, on account of the characteristic ἄπαξ λεγόμενον  $\text{prosanalw, sasa}$ , which seems to betray St. Luke's hand."<sup>3</sup>

This word is used numerous times in Classical Greek.<sup>4</sup> Alfred Plummer sees the richness of Luke's vocabulary as a characteristic of his command of Greek and his style. Plummer notes that there are 312 words peculiar to Luke in his Gospel.<sup>5</sup> Plummer also points out that Luke "is very fond of compound verbs, especially with  $\text{διά}$  or  $\text{ἐπί}$ , or with two prepositions. The participle in Luke 8:43 has two prepositions  $\text{πρός}$  and  $\text{ἀνα}$ . Another compound verb used only by Luke in the third Gospel and nowhere else in the NT is  $\text{προσαναβηθί}$  found in

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<sup>2</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, II "The Gospel According to Luke," (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 122.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, rev. by Everett Harrison (Chicago: Moody; reprinted 1958), I, 521.

<sup>4</sup> For such classical references, see MM, 545; BAG, 718.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, in *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925) lii.

Luke 14:10. This verb, the second singular imperative of προσαναβαίνω, translated “go up higher,” combines the same two prepositions, πρὸς and ἀνα.

b. τὸν βίον. Similarly, Luke’s word preferences are shown by his use of τὸν βίον for the woman’s living or livelihood. Mark instead has the more general τὰ παρ’ αὐτῆς πάντα, “all that belonged to her.” Mark uses βίος only once in 12:44 about the widow casting in her entire living, but by contrast, Luke uses the term five times in his Gospel.<sup>6</sup>

Yet Robert Stein (and others) assert that the presence of “having spent all her living on physicians” “fits well the tendency of scribes to harmonize the various accounts. Here it is most likely that a scribe added this statement to make Luke more like Mark 5:26.”<sup>7</sup> Actually, studies have shown that scribes tend to omit material rather than add to the text.<sup>8</sup> How strange that a common scribe would dare to change Mark’s simple language to an ancient double compound verb like προσαναβαίνω. Or, why would a scribe seeking to harmonize Luke to Mark change τὰ παρ’ αὐτῆς πάντα to τὸν βίον?

Even more offensive are those like Hitzig and Holtzmann who “maintain that Luke, being a physician himself intentionally tones down the details from the proto-Mark”<sup>9</sup> by leaving out the idea that she “rather grew worse” (Mark 5:26). The fact that Luke does not include those words does not negate Mark’s report. Lenski defends Luke against such criticism. “The idea that a physician would himself not write such a statement casts a reflection on

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 8:14, 43; 15:12, 30; 21:4.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Stein, “Luke” in *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 24, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 261.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice A. Robinson, “The Case for Byzantine Priority” in *New Testament in the Original Greek, Byzantine Textform*, comp. by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont (Southborough, MA: Chilton Book Publishing, 2005), 539.

<sup>9</sup> Frederick Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*, trans. By E. W. Shalders and M. D. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), 249.



Luke's honesty. Moreover, this participial clause makes the relative sentence complete: after having spent all her living on doctors she was able to get healing from no one."<sup>10</sup>

2. *Popular themes in Luke's Gospel.* Two popular themes in Luke's Gospel should be mentioned. Christ's care for women and the poor are prominently featured in the Gospel of the Son of Man. As I have written elsewhere, Luke

mentions women 43 times compared to Matthew's 30 and Mark and John's 19. Jesus lifts women up socially and spiritually. Mary sat at Jesus' feet, having "made the right choice" (10:42). Women supported Jesus and His disciples "from their possessions" (8:3). Women lingered at the cross and arrived first at Christ's tomb. What matchless pictures we have of Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Joanna, Susanna, Mary and Martha, the sinful woman in Simon's house, the widow of Nain, and Mary Magdalene. Who can forget Jesus' parables of the woman sweeping to find her coin (15:8-10) and the persistent widow before the unjust judge (18:2-8)? Women were disrespected among the Gentiles, but ennobled by Jesus. Luke portrays this for all time, for all to see.<sup>11</sup>

Luke also mentions the poor nearly twice as often as the other Gospels. Only Luke cites Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue quoting Isaiah 61:1, "to preach the gospel to the poor" (4:18). With Matthew, Luke records Jesus' response to John the Baptist from Isaiah 35:5 that "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (7:22). Only Luke quotes Jesus as saying "Blessed are you poor" (6:20).<sup>12</sup> Unique to Luke is Jesus' exhortation to a ruler of the Pharisees "when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" 14:13, and Jesus' parable of the great supper. In the latter, the master told his servants to "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind" (14:21). The rich young ruler was told to sell all and "distribute to the poor" (18:22).<sup>13</sup> Additionally, only Luke records Jesus' visit with Zacchaeus who with Jesus' apparent approval said "half my goods I give to the poor" (19:8). Finally, Luke tells

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<sup>10</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Luke's Gospel*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1946), 483-84

<sup>11</sup> James A. Borland, "Luke, the Son of Man," in *The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey*, ed. Elmer Towns and Ben Gutierrez (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 86.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew has "poor in spirit" (Matt 5:3).

<sup>13</sup> Luke uses a compound verb διαδίδωμι, to distribute; Matthew has δίδωμι to give.

of the poor widow who selflessly offered God her entire living, though just two mites. But for added emphasis in the text, she is called poor twice, and Jesus mentions her “poverty” (21:2-4).

What could be more natural than for Luke not only to include this woman in his narrative, but also to describe her desperately poor condition? “She spent all she had on physicians.” A. B. Bruce concisely notes, “to loss of health was added loss of means in the effort to gain it back.”<sup>14</sup> Luke has every reason to report that this woman had spent all on physicians. It was part of his theme to show Jesus’ care for women and the poor. Without this phrase, we would have no idea that she was poor and destitute.

## V. APPLYING CANONS OF TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR LUKE 8:43

1. *Which reading best explains the rise of the others?* The primary canon of textual criticism is to find the reading which best explains the origin of the other variants.<sup>15</sup> Just two trains of thought come to mind for the variants of Luke 8:43.

a. *The text of Luke 8:43 suffered an addition at the hand of some copyist.* Bruce Metzger, on behalf of the Editorial Committee for the *UBSGNT* said, “The clause *ivatroi / j prosanalw, sasa o[lon ton bi, on* looks like a digest of Mark 5:26.”<sup>16</sup> This is an extremely weak argument. The same accusation could be made of the hundreds of times there is even a remote similarity between a phrase in Mark and its corresponding parallel in Luke. Metzger even admits as much when he concedes, “The question is whether

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<sup>14</sup> A. B. Bruce, “The Synoptic Gospels” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; reprinted 1961), 525.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford, 1968) 207 introduces this canon first, as does B. B. Warfield who says to find the reading which will “account most easily for the origin of the others,” *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1889) 83.

<sup>16</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *TCGNT*, 145.

anyone except Luke himself would rewrite Mark in this way—with skillful condensation and the substitution of

$\pi\rho\sigma\alpha\nu\lambda\omega, \sigma\alpha\sigma\alpha$  (a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament for  $\delta\alpha\pi\alpha\nu\eta\sigma\alpha\sigma\alpha$ ).”<sup>17</sup> This is actually an admission that the phrase in Luke in fact does not look like a digest of Mark 5:26, or if it were such it was skillfully done by Dr. Luke himself. If the latter were the case, then the text is genuine. Metzger’s Committee was at a loss to explain the unique presence of “having spent all her living on physicians” in Luke 8:43. Metzger concludes, “a majority of the Committee decided to retain the words in the text but to enclose them within square brackets, indicating doubt whether they have a right to stand there.”<sup>18</sup> When the *Greek New Testament* was published by the United Bible Societies in 1966, the variant in question was given a “D” mark, indicating “that there is a very high degree of doubt concerning the reading selected for the text.”<sup>19</sup> When the 4<sup>th</sup> revised edition appeared in 1993, the reading was upgraded to “C” even though the square brackets remained. The Committee moved its readers from a “high degree of doubt” to just a “considerable degree of doubt.”<sup>20</sup>

b. *The text of Luke 8:43 suffered an omission by an early copyist.* The intriguing mystery of textual criticism is that the original MSS, the autographs, no longer exist. The MS evidence we do have shows that at least by the third century several lines of transmission for Luke 8:43 do not contain the phrase under consideration. This includes P<sup>75</sup> and the Coptic Sahidic translation. It is possible that these handwritten copies reflect the original reading,

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<sup>17</sup> Metzger, *TCGNT*, 145.

<sup>18</sup> Metzger, *TCGNT*, 145.

<sup>19</sup> *Greek New Testament*, ed. by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1966), xi.

<sup>20</sup> *The Greek New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed., ed. Barbara Aland, et. al. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 233.

but two reasons suggest it is even more probable that they represent an early and erroneous omission.

First, copying is strenuous work that requires care and precision. In the regular copying process it is more natural to omit words and phrases than to add something new.<sup>21</sup> An omission would be classified as an unintentional copyist error. This happens more frequently than one might care to admit, both for ancient scribes and for us moderns as well.

Second, if this was an early unintentional omission, sooner or later as more MSS were compared it would become obvious that the MS or translation with the omission was defective. This is exactly what the copying process tells us. The MSS with this omission were very few and essentially were ignored when good exemplars were sought. In the Gk textual transmission, B and D, usually considered to be early MSS, actually become the latest to attest to the omission. Not even one additional later uncial has the omission, and the minuscules are unanimous in condemning it. The omission passed into oblivion while the surviving text bore witness to the original reading.

2. *Consider the external evidence of MS dates, geographical distribution, and MS text types.*

a. *Dates of MSS.* It is an oft repeated maxim that the date of a MS does not reflect the true age of its text. Thus, an 8<sup>th</sup> C. uncial might copy a 3<sup>rd</sup> C. papyrus, and thus exhibit an early text. MS 33 and 1739 illustrate this precise point: later MS, ancient text. However, when certain MSS are elevated to pontifical status, this truism may be ignored or downplayed. In the case at hand, the omission can be attested early as witnessed in P<sup>75</sup> and the Coptic Sahidic, both from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the Sinaitic Syriac from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century. On

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<sup>21</sup> Robinson, "The Case for Byzantine Priority" in Robinson and Pierpont, *New Testament, Byzantine Textform*, 539. See also James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) who demonstrates this feature throughout his massive volume.

the other hand, the presence of the disputed phrases is also found in 3<sup>rd</sup> century witness of the Coptic Bohairic, the Curetonian Syriac, and in Vercelli, the oldest OL MS which dates from the 4<sup>th</sup> C.

b. *Geographical distribution of MSS.* The geographical distribution of MSS shows how widely diffused the copying process was. If a reading bears little distribution it could betray more or less local variation. The wider the distribution, the more commonly accepted the reading was. The omission was seen in Egypt in the Sahidic Coptic translation, in the east in the Sinaitic Syriac translation, in the west in D and d, and later to the north in the Armenian and Georgian versions. Witnesses to the inclusion of “having spent all her living on physicians” were also widespread. This is seen in the Egyptian Coptic Bohairic, the Syriac Curetonian in the east, the OL and the Vg in the west, the Ethiopic in the far south, and the great multitude of MSS used throughout the entire church for centuries in the cursives and the lectionary readings.

c. *Determination of MS text types.* Comparison of MSS has shown differences that allow MSS to be grouped into text types or families. Such terms as Alexandrian, Western, Byzantine, and Caesarean have been used to describe these groupings. The Alexandrian text type has almost *a priori* been dubbed the most reliable by most textual critics. The omission in Luke 8:43 is almost exclusively seen as Alexandrian in P<sup>75</sup>, B, and the Sahidic. Codex D adds Western support. However, the primary support for the inclusion in Luke 8:43 is Byzantine as seen in A E G H K P and Ψ. Alexandrian support may be seen in C (mixed), and Ψ (partially in Luke), and the Bohairic. Western backing is found in the earliest OL. Caesarean type MSS with the inclusion are Ξ f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>13</sup> and 565. Thus wider reaching text types surround the validity of “having spent all her living on physicians” than the omission.

3. *Consider what mistakes scribes were prone to make?* Scribes can unintentionally or intentionally change a text in the copying process. An unintentional error would be confusing different letters that look similar, like a sigma (C) and an epsilon (Ε), or a theta (Θ) and an omicron (O). Are scribes more apt to omit or to add material as they copy? It is easy to jump over several words that have the same ending, such as *-ovτες*, or to omit one of a string of words that all began with the same letter, as in Romans 1:30-31 where six words in a row begin with alpha. The Luke 8:43 textual problem can be viewed as a common unintentional copyist omission. Perhaps that is the easiest evaluation.

On the other hand, any additions to the text would most likely be intentional. If Luke did not include “having spent all her living on physicians” the average scribe would copy the text as he found it, realizing that the Synoptic Gospels differ from one another all the time. However, if an early copyist decided to supplement his rendition of Luke with the phrase in question, would he be more likely to conform the text to what he found in Mark 5:26, or would he be inclined to cook up his own version by using a word never before or since found in the NT? Logic should rule out the latter. That is why Metzger’s Committee felt that only Luke could have written those words. Their problem lay with the evidence of P<sup>75</sup>, and two early translations.

Should that be enough to overturn good reasoning? I think not. Some essentially use the syllogism, “The best readings are in these few MSS.” But how do we know these few are the best MSS? “These few are the best MSS because they contain the best readings.” That is like saying, “The Theory of Evolution is true; the geologic column proves it.” But how do we know that is what the geologic column means? “The geologic column is explained by the Theory of Evolution.” Both thoughts are circular reasoning.

4. *Which reading is most characteristic of the author's vocabulary, style and theme?*

Luke's vocabulary is loaded with *hapax legomena*,<sup>22</sup> and he is fond of using compound verbs with one or even two prepositions attached. Plummer comments that "Luke's command of Greek is seen also in the *richness of his vocabulary*."<sup>23</sup> Who but Luke would use *προσαναλισκω* and *προσαναβαίνω*? Luke uses *βίος* five times to express one's "living," whereas Mark uses the term but once. Mark does not use this term to express the woman's loss, but Luke does so in typical fashion.

Luke's interest in women and the poor is a common and distinct theme of his. To include "having spent all her living on physicians" fits this pattern. An omission of this sort would be uncharacteristic of Luke. He paints graphic pictures of women and the poor and this description weaves itself nicely into that feature motif.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The textual problem of Luke 8:43 is a difficult one. The external evidence of MSS is divided. Both the inclusion and the omission have early support. However, the inclusion has broader and more lasting support. It is hard to explain why only three Gk sources witness the omission. The overarching support of the Gk uncials and all cursive and lectionary sources that have the section of Luke shout for the genuineness of "having spent all her living on physicians."

The overwhelming internal evidence of Luke's characteristic vocabulary, style, and theme patterns also attest the inclusion. The KJV, ASV, NKJV, NRSV, HCSB, and ESV translators demonstrated thoughtful discretion in recognizing the traditional text as original.

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<sup>22</sup> Plummer, *Gospel According to St. Luke*, liii, notes that there are "(over 200 in number) which occur *once* in the Third Gospel and nowhere else in the N.T."

<sup>23</sup> Plummer, *Gospel According to St. Luke*, lii.