

## The Readings Ἑλληνας and Ἑλλημιστάς, Acts xi. 20.

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THIS is one of the very few passages of importance in the New Testament, in which the reading may be considered with some justice as yet unsettled. The great modern editions from Griesbach to Tregelles — Matthæi alone excepted — are, indeed, unanimous in reading ἔλληνας.<sup>1</sup> With them most commentators and historical students agree.<sup>2</sup> There never was a time, however, when ἑλλημιστάς did not have a respectable following among exegetes.<sup>3</sup> And Westcott and Hort have put an end to the unanimity of even the editions. The Revised English New Testament so far follows as to put “Many ancient authorities read *Grecian Jews*” in their margin; although exactly what is meant by this, it is impossible for an outsider to divine, amid the contradictory reports of what the margin was intended for, and the curious distribution of the terms “many,” “some,” “most,” “ancient authorities.”

At all events, it is clear that a new discussion of the reading, on its merits, cannot be thought a re-opening of a dispute already practically closed.<sup>4</sup> What is proposed, is to briefly consider the evidence, and attempt to reach at least a provisional conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Usher, Grotius, Witsius, and especially Bengel (not in ed. maj., but “*Gnomoni et margo*, ed. 2 . . . et vers. Germ.,” says his son) were their forerunners. Cf. Erasmus and Drusius.

<sup>2</sup> The following rather miscellaneous list of recent names will show how widely spread the opinion is among English writers: Alford, Farrar, Hackett, Hinds, Howson (in *Life of Paul*), Jacobus, J. B. Lightfoot (in “Galatians”), Norris, Plumptre, Purves, Scrivener, Schaeffer (in *Lange*), Tate, Webster, and Wilkinson (in notes).

<sup>3</sup> Among recent English writers there are for this view such as: J. A. Alexander, W. Kay, P. Schaff (*Companion to New Testament*, p. 8, note 2), Shirley, Canon Spence (apparently: in Schaff’s *Popular Commentary*, *in loc.*, “On the whole, the evidence is in favor of Ἑλλημιστάς,” yet very doubtfully), Bishop Wordsworth, etc.

<sup>4</sup> The most elaborate recent discussions of this reading in English are probably the following: KAY, W., “*On the Word Hellenist, with Especial Reference to Acts xi. 19 (20)*,” Calcutta, 1856 [defends Ἑλλημιστάς]; ALFORD, H., *Excursus II. to Prolegomena to Acts in his Greek Testament* [against Kay, defends Ἑλληνας]; SCRIVENER, F. H., in his *Plain Introduct., etc.*, p. 536 of ed. 2, 1874, cf.

*The External Evidence.*

The essential facts of the evidence are included in the following summary :

For ἑλληνιστάς: [? **Σ\***], B, D<sup>2</sup>, E, H, I, P, almost all uncials, all cursives except one (including 13, 61, etc.), [Pst. ?], Eus. [? Chrys.].

For ἑλληνας: **Σ**<sup>o</sup>, A, D\*, c<sup>ser.</sup> [= Hort's 112], [? Chrys.].

In explanation of this summary we need to remark :—

(1) C is here defective ; but in no other case in Acts does it desert the mass of documents when they read either ἄλλῃνες or ἑλληνισταί.

(2) It is exceedingly doubtful whether **Σ\*** should be cited for ἑλληνιστάς. It actually reads εὐαγγελιστάς, which is usually assumed to presuppose ἑλληνιστάς, on account of its like termination. But since it seems certain that εὐαγγελιστάς was suggested by, and results from, the proximity of εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, the inference does not seem secure. No doubt ἑλληνιστάς could be more readily than ἑλληνας mistaken for εὐαγγελιστάς ; but if any substantive were derived from εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, it could not fail to take the form εὐαγγελιστάς. It is only with grave doubt, therefore, that the weight of **Σ\*** can be thrown in favor of ἑλληνιστάς.

(3) The force of A, as a witness for ἑλληνας, is somewhat weakened by the fact that this MS. reads ἑλληνας also at ix. 29, where the true reading is undoubtedly ἑλληνιστάς. D is defective at ix. 29 ; but, as Mr. Purves notes, both A and D insert καί before ἐλλήνων in xvii. 4— as do also the good cursives, 13 and 61. If this be due, as he suggests, to a tendency in A and D to put forward the Gentile work of the Church, the testimony of these MSS. here to ἑλληνας should be somewhat suspected. The existence of such a tendency in A and D needs, however, justification.

(4) The versions fail to distinguish between the terms ἑλληνιστάς and ἑλληνας, and hence are not valid witnesses in this matter. Only the Peshitto may be an exception, inasmuch as it reads, at ix. 29, “those Jews who knew Greek” ; but even it reads “Greeks” at vi. 1.

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ed. 3, 1883 [defends ἑλληνας]; HAMMOND, C. E., in his *Outlines of Textual Critic.*, etc., ed. 2, 1876, p. 113 [defends ἑλληνας]; HORT, F. J. A., in his *Notes on Select Readings*, Gr. Test. vol. II., p. 93, 1881 [defends ἑλληνιστάς]; PURVES, G. T., “The Reading ἑλληνας in Acts xi. 20,” in *The Presbyterian Review*, vol. IV., p. 835 sq., 1883 [defends ἑλληνας against Hort]. See also the elaborate notes in the critical editions; in the commentaries of Alford, Wordsworth, Bloomfield, Plumptre and Howson and Spence, *in loc.*; and in Farrar's *Life of Paul*, I. 285, etc.

(5) Chrysostom (whose words, ἵσως διὰ τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι ἐβραϊστὶ Ἑλληνας αὐτοὺς ἐκάλουν, both Theophylact and Œcumenius repeat) reads "Greeks" in his commentary clearly, although Ἑλλημιστάς stands in the text commented on. This throws his testimony somewhat in doubt. It may be that the quotation from Acts has been conformed by later copyists to the Syrian type of text (which undoubtedly read Ἑλλημιστάς); or it may be that Chrysostom understood Ἑλλημιστάς as equivalent to Ἑλληνας, either in the general import of the word or in this context, and hence, though reading the former, could cry out, ὄρα, Ἑλλησιν εὐαγγελίζονται. The weight of his evidence for Ἑλληνας is weakened in proportion to the probability of his being able to thus interpret Ἑλλημιστάς.

The evidence being thus before us, its estimation is not without its difficulties, although the issue can scarcely remain doubtful.

*The Genealogical Evidence.*—The application of genealogical considerations leads immediately to the conclusions that both readings are pre-Syrian, and that neither is Alexandrian in its origin, — as, indeed, the presence of B in the one group and of D\* in the other sufficiently evinces. Beyond that, progress is more difficult. It is certainly striking that, with the exception of D\*, Ἑλληνας is not supported by any of the typical Western documents. It is not easy to suppose, on the one hand, that Ἑλληνας arose as a Western corruption and yet failed to propagate itself in the later Western texts, or, on the other, that Ἑλλημιστάς was originally Neutral or Neutral-Alexandrian, and thence seeped, by mixture, into all late Western texts. One is almost tempted to suppose the support of Ἑλληνας due to the accidental conformity of independent obvious conjectural emendation. On closer consideration, however, it appears that all the documents which class here with B have Neutral or Neutral-Alexandrian elements; and thus Ἑλλημιστάς is readily accounted for as the Neutral-Alexandrian reading, and Ἑλληνας as the Western. On genealogical considerations, therefore, there is a probability that Ἑλλημιστάς is the more original reading. This probability fails to be decisive only because genealogical evidence only assigns readings to their respective classes, and leaves it to internal evidence to determine the relative purity of the classes; and internal evidence of classes can only determine usual, not invariable, relations. Although, therefore, it is certain that the Neutral-Alexandrian readings are generally better than the Western, the rule is not absolutely without exceptions, and there is a possibility that the present case may be an exception.

*Internal Evidence of Groups.*—We appeal, consequently, to In-

ternal Evidence of Groups for additional evidence and greater surety. Here we find ourselves embarrassed at once by the doubt resting on the testimony of  $\aleph^*$ . If its witness were clearly for *ἐλλημιστάς*, the known high character of the combination B  $\aleph$ , here increased greatly by the adjunction of many other important witnesses, would throw the weight of the external evidence overwhelmingly for that reading. Just in the degree that we judge it probable that the present reading of  $\aleph^*$  is only a stupid blunder for *ἐλλημιστάς*, must the testimony for that reading appear to us to approach the overwhelming point.

Even when we lay aside the testimony of  $\aleph^*$ , however, the internal evidence of groups appears still to support *ἐλλημιστάς*, — B being rarely wrong when in conjunction with such a train as here sides with it.

Still another mode of procedure is open to us, by which we may reach an independent result, and thus test the probabilities already raised. We may try, by internal evidence of groups, the special value of the group which here appears as the evidence for *ἔλληνας*. We have noted something over a hundred cases in which the group  $\aleph^c$ , A, D\* occurs in the Book of Acts. In the great majority of these, however, it has either actually or practically the support of all other MSS. except  $\aleph^{**}$ ; in other words, the rival reading is a mere individualism or slip of the careless scribe of  $\aleph^*$ , which has been corrected into conformity with the universally supported reading by the scholarly hand whom we know as  $\aleph^c$ . These cases are only valuable in helping us estimate the value of  $\aleph^c$ , to whom hardly due credit is usually attached. The remaining instances may be conveniently classified as follows: —

(1) Instances in which  $\aleph^c$ , A, D\* have the support of two or more of the primary documents: <sup>1</sup>—

NO.	ACTS.	READING.	ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.	EDITORS ADOPTING IT.	INTERNAL PROBABILITY.
1	i. 17	<i>ην εν</i>	( $\aleph^*$ ) B C E 13, 61, al. vg. Copp.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
2	v. 36	<i>ως</i>	B C E al. <sup>10</sup> Chrys.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
3	vii. 45	<i>εξωσεν</i>	B C H P al. <sup>plu.</sup> Chrys.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. H. A.	right.
4	xiii. 50	omit <i>και</i>	B C 13, 61, al. Copp. Syrr. etc.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
5	[xvi. 30	<i>προ-[αγαγων]</i>	( $\aleph^*$ ) B C E L P al. 13, 61, al. <sup>plu.</sup>	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.]
6	xvii. 25	<i>και τα παντα</i>	$\aleph^*$ B E al. <sup>10+</sup> vg. Cop. Syr. <sup>p.</sup> etc.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.

<sup>1</sup> The letters in the fifth column explain themselves: L. = Lachmann; T. = Tischendorf's viii. ed.; T.<sup>vii.</sup> = Tischendorf's vii. ed.; H. = Westcott and Hort; and A. = Alford.

(2) Instances in which they are supported by B and secondary authorities only:—

7	iv. 34	insert <i>ὑπὸρχον</i>	B E P al. <sup>plu.</sup> 13, 61, al. Eus. Chrys.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
8	xiii. 1	<i>τετραρχον</i>	B E H L P al. 13, 61, al.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. A.	—
9	xvii. 25	omit <i>ως</i>	B E K L P al. vg. etc. Clem.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
10	xviii. 21	omit <i>και</i> before <i>ἀνηχθ.</i>	B 8 cursives, vg. Theb. etc.	T. Tr. H. A.	right.
11	xix. 16	omit <i>και</i> before <i>καταχ.</i>	B E <sup>gr.</sup> 13, c. <sup>scr.</sup> al. <sup>6</sup> Copp. etc.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.
12	xxii. 28	insert <i>δε και</i>	B E H L P al. <sup>plu.</sup> vg. Syr. Æth. etc.	L. T. Tr. H. A.	right.

(3) Instances in which they are supported by C and secondary authorities only:—

13	i. 11	<i>εμβλεποντες</i>	C al. <sup>plu.</sup> Chrys. Cyr. Thdrt. etc.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> A.	wrong.
14	ii. 26	<i>η καρδ. μου</i> (order)	C E P al. omn. <sup>vid.</sup> ex- cept <b>κ*</b> B	L.	wrong.
15	iii. 16	insert <i>επι</i>	C E P al. <sup>plu.</sup> Copp. vg. etc. Ir.	L. T. Tr. A.	wrong.
16	x. 33	<i>απο</i>	C	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> A.	wrong.
17	xiii. 10	omit <i>του</i> before <i>κυρ.</i>	C E H L P al. omn. <sup>vid.</sup> except <b>κ*</b> B	L. T. Tr. H. <sup>mg.</sup> A.	right?
18	xv. 24	<i>εξελθοντες</i>	C E P al. <sup>plu.</sup> Copp. Syr. vg. Ir. Or.	L. T. Tr. [Tr. <sup>mg.</sup> ] A.	right?
19	xvi. 32	[ <i>του</i> ] <i>κυρ-ου</i>	C E H L P al. omn. <sup>vid.</sup> except B <b>κ*</b>	L. T. Tr. H. <sup>mg.</sup> A.	wrong?
20	xx. 22	<i>μου</i>	C H L P al. omn. <sup>vid.</sup> except B <b>κ*</b> [E <sup>gr.</sup> ]	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. A.	wrong.

(4) Instances in which they are supported by **κ\*** and secondary authorities only:—

21	[xxi. 22]	<i>παντ. δει. συνελ.</i> <i>πληθ.</i>	<b>κ*</b> C <sup>2</sup> E H L P al. <sup>plu.</sup> 13, vg.	L. T. A.	wrong.]
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(5) Instances in which they are supported by secondary authorities only:—

22	iii. 22	<i>υμων</i> after <i>θεος</i>	61, al. vg. Ir. Or. Chrys.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. A.	wrong.
23	[iv. 18]	<i>το</i> before <i>κα-</i> <i>θολον</i>	E P al. <sup>plu.</sup> Chrys.	T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. A.	wrong?
24	v. 31	omit <i>του</i> before <i>δου.</i>	E H P al. <sup>plu.</sup> Chrys.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. [H.] A.	right?
25	[vii. 16]	insert <i>του</i> be- fore <i>εν.</i>	E H P al. vg. Syr. <sup>p.</sup> Æth. Chrys.	L.	wrong.]
26	xi. 20	<i>ελληνας</i>	c. <sup>scr.</sup> Arm. Eus. [Chrys.]	L. T. Tr. A.	conflict.
27	xvii. 30	<i>παραγγελει</i>	E H L P al. <sup>plu.</sup> 13, 61, etc. Cyr.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. A.	wrong.
28	xviii. 3	[ <i>ηργα-</i> ] <i>ζετο</i>	E L P vg. Syr. Arm.	L. T. <sup>vii.</sup> Tr. H. <sup>mg.</sup> A.	right?
29	xx. 24	[see digests]	13, 40, 43, 68. [vg.]	L.	wrong.

This last list, of course, furnishes the truest parallels to our present passage, and it must be confessed that the most of them are clearly wrong, while none of them are clearly right, and (besides xi. 20) only two seem capable of being plausibly defended. The case is little better with the other instances which lack the support of B; out of nine cases, only three apparently can be plausibly defended, and these are all of such character that internal evidence is of somewhat doubtful value in regard to them. The result of this investigation also, thus, is to discredit *ἔλληνας*.

Three, or perhaps four, independent methods of examining the evidence thus elicits from the external testimony a consentient witness for the probable originality of *ἐλλημιστάς*. The exact force of this cumulative probability is not easy to estimate. It is certainly strong enough to give us full confidence in the correctness of *ἐλλημιστάς*, in the absence of strong rebutting considerations drawn from internal evidence. And in the presence of such rebutting considerations, it is strong enough to demand from us very anxious questionings and very strenuous efforts after harmony before we set it aside.

#### *The Internal Evidence.*

*Transcriptional Probability.*—That the transcriptional probability goes with the external in favor of *ἐλλημιστάς* is scarcely open to doubt. Any ordinary reader would naturally expect *ἔλληνας* here; and, therefore, a scribe, finding it here, would be very unlikely to alter it into the difficult reading and rare word, *ἐλλημιστάς*. This is not to assume in scribes a nice appreciation of the true course of the history, but only a slight attention to the immediate context in its most obvious appearances. The contrast with *Ἰουδαίους* that would inevitably suggest itself to the mind of any copyist would be the standing one, — *ἔλληνας*, — which he would almost venture to write without reference to his copy; only if he had just written *Ἑβραίους*, would he think of *ἐλλημιστάς* as its contrast. The strengthening *καί* before the *πρός* would render it all the more inevitable that he should expect to find, and hence should write, *ἔλληνας*. The general progress of the narrative from v. 19 points in the same direction. All combined renders *ἐλλημιστάς* so difficult a reading as to forbid our supposing that any scribe would (consciously or unconsciously) write it here for *ἔλληνας*, — points out *ἔλληνας* as so obvious a correction as to make it very probable that scribes might even independently (consciously or unconsciously) write it here for *ἐλλημιστάς*.

On the assumption that *ἔλληνας* is the original reading, explanations

of its alteration to Ἑλλημιστάς may, no doubt, be suggested by acute minds. Three such, perhaps, deserve consideration: (1) Meyer (whom, among others, Renan follows) very acutely supposes that this reading may have been brought in through a mechanical assimilation of the passage to ix. 29; and he thinks that the fact that codex 40 adds here καὶ συνεζήτουν speaks in favor of this supposition. (2) Others suppose that the Ἑλληνας was corrected to Ἑλλημιστάς in order to bring the passage into formal harmony with the statement that Cornelius was the first Gentile received into the church, — to which Mr. Purves adds the dogmatic consideration that our MSS. were written when ecclesiastical authority was rising high, and the alteration may have been designed to save the supremacy of the Apostles (in the matter of first bringing Gentiles into the Church). (3) The disturbing effect of εὐαγγελιζόμενοι may be appealed to; its immediate proximity may have exercised a mechanical influence on the scribe's mind or hand, and led him to write -ιστας instead of -ας. We see an extreme result of this influence in §\*. And what happened in the case of one scribe cannot be asserted to be impossible. Nay, may not the error of §\* be an inheritance rather than the origination of its scribe? And may we not see here the first step in the origin of the false reading, Ἑλλημιστάς, which would be the obvious correction of εὐαγγελιστάς?

No one of these explanations can be pronounced impossible. But the question before us concerns, not impossibilities, but relative probabilities. And all of them are very improbable in comparison with the likelihood of the immediate context having led to a change in the opposite direction. The intrusion of ix. 29 into the mind of the scribe who wrote codex 40 is apparently due to the great similarity of the passages, an important element of which was the presence here of Ἑλλημιστάς; it is, therefore, more probably a result than the cause of that reading. Both of the two first of these explanations go too far afield for their reasons, and credit the scribes with too great mental activity. So thoughtful a scribe as the second supposes, for instance, would scarcely fail to be thoughtful enough to see that there was no disaccord between Ἑλληνας here and the claims of Cornelius to be the first-fruits of the Gentiles; or, if not, would be stupid enough to be satisfied with the postpositing of this account to that. The influence of dogmatic considerations on the New Testament text can scarcely ever be surely traced, and cannot be assumed to account for such readings as we have before us. And, finally, while it cannot be denied that εὐαγγελιζόμενοι has influenced the mind and hand of the writer

of  $\aleph^*$ , and so may have done so elsewhere, it is not very probable that it has originated the reading *ἔλληνοστᾶς*, a reading that occurs in so many and such widely separated documents. Possible as all these explanations are, therefore, it must be confessed that the probability arising from transcriptional considerations is distinctly in favor of *ἔλληνοστᾶς*, the very difficulty of which is, in this aspect of it, its strongest recommendation.

*Intrinsic Probability.* — On the other hand, it must equally be confessed that the intrinsic evidence yields a strong probability for *ἔλληνας*. The very facts which transcriptionally suggest *ἔλληνοστᾶς* as the original reading throw the intrinsic probability in the other scale. *Ἰουδαίους* of v. 19 demands something other than Jews for its contrast. This demand is intensified by the *καί* before *πρὸς ἔλλ.*, after which we apparently must inevitably expect some word denoting Gentiles. The further context only more and more adds to this expectation. The position of this paragraph (after xi. 1-18) would render such a solemn statement that the Greek-speaking Jews, as well as those who spoke Hebrew, were preached to in Antioch flat in the extreme, if not ridiculous. The contrast introduced by *δέ* (v. 20) lends its support in the same direction. The importance which was accorded in Jerusalem to the tidings of what had occurred at Antioch; the mission of Barnabas; his curious exhortation to the converts *προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ*, as if they specially needed such an encouragement; and the still more curious explanation of how he came to give such a very obvious exhortation (in v. 24), as if, in this special case, it required great goodness and faith in him; Barnabas' call for aid to Saul, who had, as Barnabas knew, been set apart to preach to Gentiles; and, finally, the name of Christians given here first (v. 26) to the followers of Christ, and as a result of these labors, — a name which distinguished them from the Jews, and apparently marks the need of such distinction, — all these are but items of proof that Gentiles must be understood at v. 20. When we add that the next thing we hear of the Antiochian Church is that it is sending missions to the heathen (xiii.), and the next thing (xv.) that Judaisers from Jerusalem find it an uncircumcised body, the proof seems complete.

Nor do the efforts appear to us to have issued satisfactorily, which have been made to show that this apparent intrinsic necessity for a word in v. 20, which should express the notion of "Gentiles," is *prima facie* only. Some of the considerations which have been advanced with that end in view scarcely deserve refutation. Thus, when it is pleaded that the passage so read is inconsistent with the constant



representation of Cornelius as the first-fruits of the Gentiles, it is sufficient to ask why the events here described need be placed before his conversion. And when it is urged that the reception of so many Gentiles would have made more noise, judging by the commotion the case of Cornelius roused, it is sufficient to reply that the precedence of Cornelius' conversion is the sufficient account of this quiet, and to point to the opposition (xv.) which was finally developed. Other considerations, however, possess inherent force and demand respectful hearing. There are especially two of these: (1) Most defenders of Ἑλλημιστάς insist that the term Ἰουδαῖοι does not demand a sharper contrast than is furnished by it. Dr. Hort no doubt speaks extremely, and somewhat unguardedly, when he declares that the intrinsic evidence suggests Ἕλληνες "only if it be assumed that Ἰουδαῖοι is used in a uniformly exclusive sense throughout the book, whereas it excludes proselytes in ii. 10 and . . . xvii. 17 . . . and may, therefore, exclude Hellenists here." It is plain, on the contrary, that the contrasting word here must be something other than Jews in either blood or religion, in both of which particulars Hellenists were Jews. When the contrast is between modes of life only, it is expressed by Ἐβραίουσ and Ἑλλημιστάς. But some plausibility attaches to the statement that no sharp contrast is intended here at all; but what the passage is designed to teach is that, while all those who came to Antioch spoke to Jews only, the men of Cyprus and Cyrene devoted their labors especially to the Greek-speaking Jews, who were, perhaps, living more or less apart from their stricter brethren. Dr. Alexander, as well as Dr. Hort, urges this argument strongly. It cannot be considered, however, other than a *der-nier resort*. The natural sense of the καί before πρὸς ἑλλ. (which, indeed, Dr. Alexander, in company with several others, e.g. Wordsworth, but without doubt wrongly, omits) is against it; as is also the whole implication of the context. Moreover, this theory may be said to be, if we may use the pointed words of Reuss,<sup>1</sup> "d'autant plus absurde, qu'à Antioche et dans les contrées environnantes on n'aura guère trouvé des Juifs parlant l'hebreu." (2) Again, it is frequently urged that Acts xiv. 27 is inconsistent with the assumption that Gentiles are meant in our present passage; for, "that God had *opened* the door of *faith* to the Gentiles," "would not have been news to them if they, who had been converted in large numbers at Antioch (v. 24), had been *Gentiles*." (Wordsworth.) We take it that it is this that Dr. Hort has in mind when he says, again somewhat extremely, that "if

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Apostolique*, p. 133.

Gentiles, in the full sense, are the subjects of vv. 20–24 [of Chap. xi.], the subsequent conduct and language of St. Paul are not easy to explain,” to which we may again oppose Reuss, who, on the other hand, asserts that, if Greek-speaking Jews be alone understood, “la conversion des païens disparaît ainsi du récit et tout ce qui suit n’a plus raison d’être.”<sup>1</sup> The more moderate statement is itself fully met by calling attention to the immediate sequence of xv. 1 *sq.* to the words of Paul, which are thought to prove that the Antiochian Church was purely Jewish.

Accordingly, we feel driven to the conviction that the intrinsic evidence very strongly demands the sense of “Gentiles” in our passage. And this is the judgment of most expositors. Meyer, for example, declares that “it is *necessary*”;<sup>2</sup> Alford, that “nothing to his mind is plainer,” and these are but specimens of a very general judgment.

Thus, the question is of necessity forced upon us whether *ἑλληνιστάς*, which has been commended by external and paradiplomatic evidence alike as the probably original reading, can bear such a sense as will meet and satisfy the intrinsic demands of the passage. The word occurs so rarely that its usage cannot be adequately investigated. It occurs but twice elsewhere in the New Testament (Acts vi. 1 and ix. 29); and in both passages Jerusalem is the scene and Græcizing Jews, as distinguished from those who spoke Hebrew, seem to be denoted. It is, of course, impossible to frame any theory as to the general or even Lucan usage of the word on so narrow a basis. Outside the New Testament it is equally rare; its place being partly supplied by the participle of *ἑλληνίζω* (as, *e.g.*, in Aeschines c. Ctesip. 2<sup>3</sup> and Athen. 6<sup>4</sup>). From what usage we have, however, from its derivation, and from its cognates, it is not impossible to obtain a generally accurate notion of its sense. One thing is clear: the narrowing of its concept to “Græcizing Jews” is entirely unjustified and utterly indefensible. The word naturally means “a Græcizer,” and must obtain any narrower limitation from the context in which it is used. Although it might be possibly applied, as *ἑλληνίζων* is applied, in the passage just cited from Athen. 6, to Greeks who affected classicism,

<sup>1</sup> l. c.

<sup>2</sup> What is meant by the omission of this clause by Wendt, from the latest edition of Meyer’s Acts, we cannot profess to know.

<sup>3</sup> τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς μητρὸς, Σκύθης, βάρβαρος, ἑλληνίζων τῇ φωνῇ.

<sup>4</sup> οἱ δ’ ἑλληνίζοντες λέγειν δεῖν φασὶν ἀργυροῦν κόσμον καὶ χρυσοῦν κόσμον [instead of ἀργυρόματα or χρυσόματα].

its most natural and usual application would be to express the notion of Græcizing foreigners of whatever race. There can be small doubt but that an Athenian Greek would look upon the heathen masses at Antioch, and especially the mixed multitude which constituted the lower and artisan classes of that metropolis, no less than upon the Jews of Alexandria, as in the truest sense Hellenists.

Whether Luke could take the same view of the matter is not so clear. That he was of Gentile origin seems, indeed, certain. He would not, therefore, be expected to speak from the purely Jewish standpoint; when the contrast was a religious one, he might naturally adopt the Jewish speech; but when it was an ethnic one, such an adoption would be less natural. It is not impossible that he was an Antiochian, and it might be thought that this would render it unnatural for him to speak of his compatriots as Hellenists. It is necessary to remember, however, that the term was in no sense an objectionable one: "Hellenisten (Griechlinge) war der, übrigens durchaus nicht spottende, Übername, welcher von Seiten der Nationalgriechen solchen Fremden gegeben wurde, die in Sitten, Lebensverhältnissen, Sprache oder sonstwie dem Griechentume sich enger anschlossen" is probably as good a definition as could be framed for the word.<sup>1</sup> In such a Hellenistic age as that of which our history treats, and to which it belongs, the mere fact that men were designated as not of pure Greek origin had surely lost all sting. If, moreover, we assume that Luke was himself of Greek birth or descent,—either of which may be true,—the term loses all strangeness in his mouth.

More serious difficulties confront us when we leave the *à priori* ground and inquire after the standpoint of the Book of Acts itself. We find no difficulty in the fact that both at vi. 1 and ix. 29 Ἑλλημιστάς means Græcizing-Jews; for, that when speaking of Jerusalem the Hellenists are Græcizing-Jews is natural, and offers no presumption against the use of the same word to express Græcizing-Syrians when Antioch is spoken of. Nor do we find difficulty in the fact that Antioch was in a sense a Greek city, and is spoken of as such, *e.g.*, in II. Macc. iv. 10, 15. The contrast in that passage is between Jew and foreigner, and consequently we find in v. 13 Ἑλλημισμός and ἀλλοφυλισμός used as convertible terms; and the whole passage is conceived and written from an intensely Jewish view-point. It can scarcely be seriously maintained that the mass of the Antiochians were other than Hellenizers, and might be correctly and naturally described under that term by any one writing out of a less strongly Jewish feeling. Even

<sup>1</sup> Reuss in Herzog's R. E. ed. 2, sub.-voc.

in the mouth of a Jew the word "Greek" had two senses, in one of which it was a national term, the opposite of "barbarian" (Rom. i. 14), and in the other a quasi-religious one, the opposite of "Jew" (Rom. i. 16). In the former sense it excluded Hellenists; in the latter, it included all Hellenists of other than Jewish blood and faith. From the strongly Jewish standpoint of II. Macc. it was inevitable that Antioch should be thought of and called Greek or Heathen; from the liberal standpoint of Luke, himself a Gentile, and perhaps even a Greek in the narrower sense, the same city might rather seem Hellenistic. It is, therefore, of much greater importance to note Luke's own use of the term Ἕλλην. It lies on the face of things that he not only speaks of the Corinthians (xviii. 4) and Amphipolitans (xvii. 4) and Asians (xix. 10) as Greeks, but also of the Gentiles that lived in Iconium (xiv. 1), and Timothy's father at Lystra (xvi. 1, 3). It also lies on the face of things that the standing opposite to Ἰουδαίους in Acts is Ἕλληνας, not Ἑλληνιστάς. Luke thus apparently adopts the Jewish standpoint, and speaks from that point of view. Presumptions thus arise against his calling the Antiochian heathen, Hellenists, rather than Greeks or Gentiles; and against his opposing to Ἰουδαίους other than its usual and accurate opposite Ἕλληνας or ἔθνη (xiv. 5). These presumptions are still further increased by the fact that Ἑλληνιστάς and Ἰουδαίους are not in any event mutually exclusive; Ἑλληνιστάς in the sense of "Greek-speaking Jews" is but a part of Ἰουδαίους, and the Ἰουδαῖοι of Antioch were but a part of the Ἑλληνισταί understood in the broad sense of "Græcizers." The weight of these presumptions is certainly very great, but hardly great enough to render it impossible to suppose that Luke has used Ἑλληνιστάς here to express the population of Antioch in general. Paul, a Jew, could desert his usual Jewish standpoint and usual contrast of "Greeks and Jews" just once for the more Greek view-point and expression of "Greeks and barbarians" (Rom. i. 14); and there is no reason why Luke, a Gentile himself, may not similarly have deserted just once the Jewish standpoint, and have written "Jews and Græcizers" rather than "Jews and Greeks." And it needs to be observed, also, that, however true it may be that "Jews and Hellenists" do not constitute an exclusive and clear partition, generally speaking, it is sharply enough drawn for the needs of our present passage, and suffices for the progress of thought there indicated. The advance from the narrower word to the broader, from which the narrower by the very contrast is excluded, secures the progress demanded by the context. "Some preached to the Jews only, but some preached also to the Hellenistic population in general."

This last remark anticipates somewhat the discussion of the fitness of this understanding of the term to the immediate context. It cannot be denied that it has a somewhat strange appearance there. The inexactness of its contrast to Ἰουδαίους is disturbing, especially after force has been thrown upon the contrast by the *καί*. That the demands of the contextual flow of thought are preserved, however, has been already pointed out; and the strangeness of the word here to us may result from the rarity of it in general. If it were an ordinary term in the common speech of the day to describe the population of the Hellenizing cities, it would become very natural in this context. Difficult, then, as it confessedly is to take it here in the sense of the Antiochians in general, it is scarcely impossible; and thus there emerges at least one way in which the conflict between the intrinsic evidence and the other forms of testimony can be voided.

### *The Conclusion.*

In attempting to combine the various elements of this evidence and reach a conclusion, four courses are open to us:—

(1) We may follow the external and transcriptional evidence to the neglect of the intrinsic, and read Ἑλλημιστάς in the sense of “Greek-speaking Jews.”

(2) We may follow the intrinsic evidence to the neglect of the external and transcriptional, and read Ἑλληνας.

(3) We may follow the external evidence as valid for the transmitted text, and then assume, on the basis of the intrinsic evidence, a “primitive error,” arising probably from the proximity of *εὐαγγελιζόμενοι*, and so venture to restore Ἑλληνας by critical conjecture.

(4) We may harmonize the external and transcriptional evidence on the one side with the intrinsic evidence on the other by reading Ἑλλημιστάς, and understanding it in the broad sense of “Græcizers,” meaning thereby the total mixed population of Antioch.

No one of these courses is free from grave difficulty. To the present writer the *first* appears almost, if not quite, impossible; it does absolute violence to every exegetical hint a context could well give. And however true it may be, as Dr. Hort says, that “the difficulty probably arises from the brevity of the record and the slightness of our knowledge,” it remains equally true that, in the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to do such violence to contextual indications. The *third method*, again, can be but the resort of desperation, and cannot be adopted so long as any loophole of escape is open to us. Conjectural emendation is, no doubt, a proper

enough method of castigating the text ; but every resort to it, and every use of it, in cases where intrinsic evidence and transcriptional evidence do not unite to compel the resort and suggest the remedy, is not only precarious but unjustifiable. Drs. Howson and Spence<sup>1</sup> well remark that the remedy offered by the *second method* is very suspiciously easy. It is a dangerous expedient to adopt the easiest reading in such cases as this, especially when it is done in the face of apparently decisive external testimony. It cannot be too strenuously emphasized that divided internal evidence is suspicious.<sup>2</sup> To venture to cast aside, on intrinsic grounds alone, the combined external and transcriptional probabilities, differs in little but the name from the most uncertain kind of conjectural emendation. Nevertheless, if any of the first three methods are to be adopted, it must be this ; although it is essentially the acceptance of an impure conjecture of a tolerably precarious kind. No doubt other cases may be pointed out where an equal array of external witnesses is confessedly overborne by the weight of internal considerations ; the difficulty here lies in the division of the internal evidence itself. If we can persuade ourselves that the transcriptional evidence is also in favor of *ἔλληνες*, our procedure will become easy and certain. Then, it will be plain that the stem of descent became corrupt after the divergence of the Western class, and before the separation of the Neutral and Alexandrian. This occurs actually in other cases, and is theoretically conceivable. But in the present case the transcriptional evidence apparently stubbornly arrays itself on the wrong side to allow this supposition. According as we consider the transcriptional evidence here to be strongly for, faintly for, or possibly against *ἔλλημιστάς*, ought we to judge this second method of procedure to be impossible, improbable, or probable. The difficulties that lie against the *fourth method* have been already sufficiently adverted to and are obvious of themselves. The fact that it alone harmonizes the various kinds of evidence is much in its favor. It is possible that it has the support of the Greek commentators, from Chrysostom to Theophylact, who apparently read *ἔλλημιστάς* in their text, and without any hesitation explain it of the Gentiles. It may account for the carelessness of the versions in not seeking discriminating equivalents for *Ἕλληνες* and *ἔλλημισταί*, in which they may be simply a reflection of the usage of their day. It is still

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff's *Popular Commentary on the New Testament, in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the brief and pertinent remarks in Wescott and Hort's *Greek Testament*, vol. i., p. 542, and the corresponding passage of vol. ii., in §§ 32-37.

further supported by the failure of the fathers to preserve a distinction between the words. Our choice must certainly lie between this method and the second, and beset with difficulty as it is, this fourth method appears to the present writer, on the whole, the easier solution. We propose, therefore, the provisional adoption of the reading [Ἑλλημιστάς] — enclosed in square brackets — with the reading Ἑλληνας on the margin, and the understanding that it stands there as a true gloss as well as less well-authenticated various reading. It may not be impossible that some such process may go on in our minds in this case as that which Dr. Vaughan describes in the preface to the third edition of his *Commentary on Romans*: “It is deeply interesting,” he says, “to take note of the process of thought and feeling which attends in one’s own mind the presentation of some unfamiliar reading. At first sight the suggestion is repelled as unintelligible, startling, almost shocking. By degrees light dawns upon it; it finds its plea and its palliation. At last, in many instances, it is accepted as adding force and beauty to the context, and a conviction gradually forms itself that thus, and not otherwise, was it written.”<sup>1</sup> The same process may attend the consideration of a new understanding of an old reading.

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<sup>1</sup> 5th ed., London, 1880, p. xxi. Cf. also *Authorized or Revised? Sermons*, etc., London, 1882, p. xii.