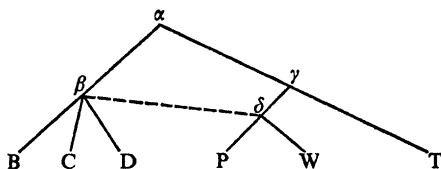


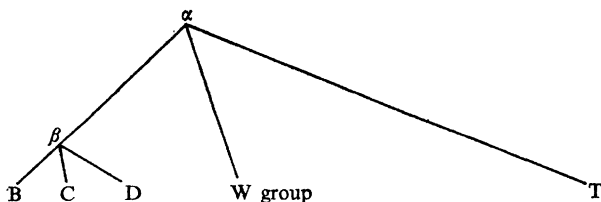
A PROBLEM IN THE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF PLATO'S *POLITICUS*¹

SINCE the appearance of Dodds's edition of *Gorgias*² a number of the dialogues in tetr. I–VII have benefited from a re-examination of the evidence for the Platonic text—most notably *Meno*, tetr. IV, *Parmenides*, and *Phaedrus*. Recently the textual tradition of *Phaedo* has been studied by A. Carlini in a useful book which traces the fortunes of the text from antiquity until the time of the major manuscripts.³ The evidence thus accumulated goes some way to lessening a problem which has long been obvious—the difficulty of studying the tradition of any single dialogue in isolation from the rest of the Platonic corpus. I propose to argue, however, that the bulk of evidence now available for several dialogues should not blind us to another hazard—that of attempting to fit dialogues showing different textual features into what is basically a single stemmatic pattern.

In his edition of tetr. IV⁴ Carlini constructed the following stemma showing the inter-relationships between the main manuscripts:



This stemma is 2-branched—the first group consisting of BCD, the second of TWP. However, in his book on the tradition of *Phaedo* Carlini writes⁵ ‘Se per altri dialoghi la tradizione di W si salda strettamente a quella di T (al punto che si è chiamato in causa un comune prossimo ascendente) per il *Fedone* essa mostra una assoluta autonomia, garantita dalle molteplici coincidenze con testimoni antichi, dalla presenza di errori d’unciale. Intorno a W si raccoglie una vera e propria famiglia, la terza; per spiegare la convergenza con T, innegabile nell’*Alcibiade I*, nell’*Ipparco*, negli *Anterastae*, nel *Gorgia*, nel *Menone* si dovrà ancora supporre che ci sia stato un processo di contaminazione.’ Thus Carlini apparently now sees the dialogues mentioned as fitting into a 3-branched stemma in which TW convergence is to be explained as being the result of contamination.⁶ The basic structure of this new stemma is therefore, according to Carlini, of the form:⁷



¹ I am indebted to my colleagues Mr. D. B. Robinson and Mr. J. R. G. Wright for their helpful criticism.

² Plato, *Gorgias*, ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford, 1959).

³ A. Carlini, *Studi sulla tradizione antica e medievale del Fedone* (Rome, 1972).

⁴ Platone *Alcibiade, Alcibiade secondo, Ipparco, Rivali* ed. A. Carlini (Turin, 1964), 24.

⁵ *Studi*, 170–1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 138: ‘Questa convergenza per contaminazione può essere responsabile, secondo me, in alcuni casi addirittura dell’oscuramento dei reali rapporti fra i tre rami tradizionali . . .’

⁷ This scheme, of course, omits lines of contamination.

To account for the apparent closeness of T to W in dialogues such as *Gorg.*, *Meno*, *Alc. I* etc., it is necessary only to add a line (or lines) of contamination between T and the W group. Thus the *Phaedo* evidence has led Carlini to abandon the stemma which he had previously suggested in his edition of tetr. IV.¹

In the present article I do not question the validity of the stemma proposed by Carlini for *Phaedo* but rather the principle on which he abandons the stemma previously suggested for *Alc. I*. That contamination plays an important part in the Platonic textual tradition is undeniable. Carlini is also right to note that there is no difficulty in supposing a greater degree of contamination in some dialogues than in others. However, another obvious explanation for changes in the character of the Platonic textual tradition from one dialogue to another should not be overlooked—viz. an actual change of source from time to time by one or more of our manuscripts. A glance at Post's *The Vatican Plato and its Relations* will show several examples of source switches among minor manuscripts.² It seems reasonable to allow the possibility that primary manuscripts (or their ancestors) may have done the same. It is possible, in fact, that differences between, for example, the interrelationships of TW for *Phaedo* and for *Alc. I* should be explained not by supposing a greater degree of horizontal transmission in *Alc. I* than in *Phaedo* but rather by assuming a change affecting the vertical transmission. In support of this contention I propose to examine the evidence offered by the tradition of *Politicus*, a dialogue which presents interesting textual features relevant to this problem.

R. Hensel³ studied the evidence of W in *Politicus* long ago. He did not, however, examine W's relationship to B and T. A re-examination of W based on a fresh collation shows that the manuscript relationships in *Politicus* present some peculiarities.⁴

Perhaps the most striking feature to emerge from this re-examination concerns a possible change in the manuscript relationships in mid-dialogue. From the beginning of *Politicus* (Steph. p. 257) until the end of Steph. p. 287 (31 pages), there are about 165 discrepancies on points of substance between B and T.⁵ T is supported by W in 67 of these. Thereafter (Steph. p. 288—end) (24

¹ *Studi*, 198 n. 35: 'L'analisi fatta allora [i.e. in his edition of tetr. IV] va rivista alla luce delle nuove acquisizioni.'

² e.g. Laur. 85. 12, Laur. 89. 78, Ambros. 238 (in which the change occurs in the middle of a dialogue). Obviously such a 'source-change' could occur for a number of different reasons. A 'composite' manuscript in which dialogues are copied by different hands from different exemplars will produce offspring which are indistinguishable from manuscripts in which a single scribe has deliberately changed sources in the course of his work.

³ R. Hensel, *Vindiciae Platonicae* (Berlin, 1906).

⁴ I have collated W from photographs. In addition I have collated T and D from the original manuscripts. Since B and D are very closely related I regard their consensus as representing the reading of the first family. In lists of B discrepancies as against T

(or W) it can be assumed that D either agrees with B or does not offer a reading which may lead one to suspect that B has distorted a first family reading which is actually the same as that of T (or W). Usually when B and D disagree it is plain that D has bungled. I ignore P. Its scanty *Politicus* excerpts are of little interest. C is not extant for *Politicus*.

⁵ Exact figures are not possible. In what follows I ignore orthographical variants, differences over breathings, accentuation, punctuation, speaker division, presence or absence of ν *ephekkustikon*. Errors of word division are also normally ignored. When the vertical reading of a tradition is doubtful through the presence in a manuscript of alternative readings or corrections which may be the work of the first hand, the evidence of the manuscript is normally ignored at that point. Such instances are, in any case, not sufficiently numerous to weaken the force of the calculations to any significant extent.

pages) there are some 200 discrepancies between B and T. In 172 of these T is supported by W. These figures by themselves, although they do not distinguish between agreement in good readings and agreement in inferior readings, strongly suggest a disturbance in the *Politicus* tradition, perhaps involving some kind of realignment of manuscripts at p. 287. That the change indeed comes at about that point may be seen from the following tables showing the number of T-W agreements occurring at points of B-T discrepancy on Steph. pp. 277-97:

Steph. p.	B T Discrepancies	T W Agreements
277	9	4
278	10	4
279	6	3
280	5	0
281	2	1
282	6	1
283	4	2
284	6	1
285	2	0
286	7	3
287	5	2
<hr/>		
288	8	8
289	4	4
290	4	4
291	8	8
292	6	6
293	13	11
294	10	8
295	13	8
296	9	9
297	3	3

It will be obvious from these tables that, whereas in the first section of *Politicus* W shows no particular tendency to side with T when B and T disagree, after p. 287 T is regularly supported by W in its disagreements with B. Hereafter I refer to the first section of the dialogue as section I, the latter section as section II.

It may be added that in section I T-W agreements against B are almost always in good or at least possible readings. There is scarcely any evidence to support a T-W link.¹ In section II, however, there are many T-W errors. Examples are:

- 289 c 1 πάντ'] πάντας TW
- 293 c 1 σώζωσιν] σώζουσιν TW
- 293 d 1 και] ἤ TW

¹ 270 e 4 δέ] τε TW is a shared error. However, τ reads δέ and it is a variant in W (perhaps by m. 1). At 268 a 6 editors reject ἀμφισβητέι of TW for ἀμφισβητήσει BD. TW are not, however, manifestly wrong. At 284 b 1 μέτριον TW, if it is wrong, would be

an easy coincidence. At 287 c 8 δῆπου which is not in any primary manuscript is probably right and this would explain B's δέ που. However, που could easily be a 'correction' of archetypal δέ που by T and W independently.

293 e 2	γνησί[ας] γνησίως TW
296 e 1	δεῖ] δῆ TW
300 a 5	ἐπιχειροῦ] ἐπιχειρεῖ TW
301 c 2	τό γε] τόδε TW
301 d 3	ἀποκτείνου[ναι] ἀποκτίνυσθαι TW
303 b 1	νικᾶ] νικαῖη BD: νικᾶν TW
305 c 10	γε] τις TW
309 d 6	γε] τε TW
309 e 6	φρόνιμον] κόσμιον TW

We must at once rule out at least one possible explanation of the over-all increase in T-W agreements against B in section II—a source switch by B resulting in an apparent convergence of the other two witnesses. Such an explanation would not account for the greatly reduced number of discrepancies between T and W in section II as against section I. In section I there are on average 9.4 such discrepancies on every Steph. page. In section II this is reduced to an average of 3.5 discrepancies on every page.

It is therefore plain that some change occurs within the T-W relationship itself at or about Steph. p. 287. Is it possible to probe further into the nature of this change? Three possible explanations seem to exist:

1. Source switch by T.
2. Source switch by W.
3. Apparent change in basic relationship as a result of increase (or decrease) in contamination.

Of these I believe (3) should be regarded as being at least improbable. There may be no difficulty in supposing that some dialogues are more highly contaminated than others. A tendency for manuscripts to converge in certain dialogues may in some cases be a reflection of the popularity of the dialogues concerned. However, it is perhaps a little harder to explain why one *part* of a dialogue should be subjected to greater contamination than the other part.¹ To account for this one would have to assume that the contaminator for some reason left his task incomplete or began at an arbitrary point. Since it would, of course, be hard to decide which section of *Politicus* had been contaminated we must examine the likelihood of contamination in each of the two sections separately.

We may first consider the possibility that section II has been contaminated, since this is perhaps suggested by Carlini's more recent view that T-W convergence in dialogues such as *Alc. I* is apparent rather than real. To explain why this contamination only occurs after p. 287 we may perhaps imagine that the scribe (or, of course, a reader) only obtained access to a new source when he had reached this point in the dialogue.² If this happened then he could either switch completely to the new source or contaminate one of the two sources from the other.³ If in section II W had been contaminated from a T source we

¹ I exclude special cases such as myths which might be read independently of the dialogues which contain them.

² Another possibility would be to suppose access to a defective manuscript which only contained *Pol.* 287–end.

³ A contaminator obtaining a new manu-

script under such circumstances would of course theoretically be able to revise what he had already copied (or read) by adding lections in the margin for the earlier part of the dialogue also. Only by supposing access to a defective manuscript can this possibility be excluded.

would expect to find that the relationship between B and W had been affected i.e. we would expect the B–W relationship in section II to be different from that existing in section I; and, indeed, given that a heavy contamination would be necessary to explain the dramatic convergence of T–W, we would expect the B–W relationship in section II to be somewhat similar to the B–T relationship in section I. This, however, is not the case. In section I there are, on average, 5.4 discrepancies between B and T per Steph. page. In section II the figure for discrepancies between B and W is 9.8 per page as against 9.5 in section I. There is therefore nothing to suggest that W has moved towards T as a result of contamination in section II.¹ There remains the possibility that T contaminates from W in section II. This can hardly be formally disproved but it is, I believe, improbable. We would have to postulate serious contamination in order to explain the reduction in the number of discrepancies between T and W from 9.4 per page in section I to 3.5 per page in section II. If a scribe proposed to contaminate on such a scale one might wonder why he did not simply switch sources completely. No doubt a reader might systematically add in the margins or between the lines readings culled from a W manuscript. In that case, however, it is surely remarkable that the W readings have gained such a firm foothold in the alien tradition during subsequent copyings. Contamination on such a scale might be expected to leave clear traces in the form of interlinear and marginal variants, conflated readings etc. in manuscripts representing the tradition which had been contaminated. No such obvious traces exist in T in section II. There are indeed very few interlinear or marginal variants of any consequence in T in that section. Among the more significant may be noted:

- 290 d 5 γέ τως W : γέ τως^τ T : γείτονος BD et in mg. γρ. TW
 294 d 4 ἀθρόον BD : ἀθρόον^ω T : ἀθρόων^ο W
 307 c 8 ποῦ δὴ W (σπουδῆ s.v. ut vid. W ipse) : που δὴ T (σ^τ s.v. T ipse) :
 σπουδῆ BD
 308 e 6 ἐπιτρέψειν BD : ἐπιτρέπειν W (γρ. καὶ τρέψειν s.v. fort. m. 1) :
 ἐπιτρεπειν^ψ T

Since, however, in the above examples both T and W offer *variae lectiones* it seems probable that here we are dealing with the contamination of a joint T–W tradition from an outside source. Certainly contamination of T from W (or of W from T) could not account for these instances. There are, furthermore, no obvious examples of conflated readings in T. It would thus seem that section II lacks any signs which might suggest serious contamination in T or W.

If, on the other hand, section I is contaminated problems again arise. Either T or W might have been contaminated—whether from a B manuscript or from a lost tradition. Since there are both B–W and B–T errors in section I contamination from a B source would seem likely. If W had been contaminated from B in section I B–W errors in this section would, of course, be explained. Other phenomena, however, would remain unexplained. It is, for example, curious that there are a great many more *lectiones singulares* of W in section I than in section II (roughly 200 in section I against 60 in section II). This

¹ The same argument is of course valid against the view that W changes completely to a T-related source.

itself demands an explanation and certainly does not suggest that W has been brought into conformity with another manuscript in section I while being left uncontaminated (or less contaminated) in section II. Moreover, as I have already observed, if we consider discrepancies between B and W there is no indication of any shift in relationship between the two manuscripts at any point. They differ just as often in section I as in section II. There remains the possibility that T, though basically related to W, has been contaminated from a B source in section I. To account for the virtually complete obliteration of signs of T's relationship with W we would, however, have to suppose a very thorough contamination. In fact the indications are against this since T avoids characteristic uncial errors of B-D as against W.¹ Examples in section I are:

- 263 d 3 δέ γε] λέγε BD
 275 e 1 δέον τῶν W: δὲ ὄντων T (corr. nesc.): λέόντων BD
 276 c 3 δέ γε] λέγε BD
 278 e 4 ταῦτα εἰ ταύτη T: ταῦτα ἐπ' αὐτῆ BD: εἰ ταῦτα ταύτη W
 278 e 4 οὐδὲν δὴ] οὐδένα ἦ BD
 281 c 9 τῆν] γῆν BD

It seems to be altogether more probable that either T or W has changed its basic source about Steph. p. 287 and that this accounts for the major change in manuscript relationships at that point. In attempting to determine which manuscript has, in fact, changed source we may consider the incidence of discrepancies between the witnesses. An analysis of these gives the following table:

	<i>Section I</i>	<i>Section II</i>
Average no. of B against T per page	5·4	8·5
Average no. of B against W per page	9·5	9·8
Average no. of T against W per page	9·4	3·5

It will be seen from this that variations between the two sections of the dialogue occur in the cases of B-T and T-W. B-W maintain a constant relationship throughout. Since T is the manuscript common to both pairs showing variations between the two sections it may be that T changes source moving from a position reasonably near B but further removed from W in section I to a position closer to W but further from B in section II.

It is clear that the change in the relationship between B and T is not so striking as the change in the T-W relationship. This need not be regarded as surprising since T is evidently much closer to W in section II than it was to B in section I. Moreover although there is no obvious break at p. 287 the increase in the average number of B-T discrepancies per page after that point is undeniable. Only three pages in section I show ten or more such discrepancies (p. 270 (10), p. 275 (14), p. 278 (10)). In the shorter section II there are nine such pages (p. 293 (13), p. 294 (10), p. 295 (13), p. 299 (11), p. 300 (15), p. 302 (10), p. 305 (14), p. 307 (11), p. 310 (11)). One may also note that in section I W is sometimes right against the united testimony of B-T, e.g.:

- 258 a 2 γε W: τε BDT
 261 c 1 τὰς W: om. BDT

¹ 258 a 2 γε W: τε BDT is a solitary—and by no means certain—possible uncial error shared by BDT against W in section I.

- 266 e 5 τὸ W: om. BDT
 267 a 9 αὐτεπιτακτικὸν W: αὐτεπίτακτον BDT
 275 b 5 ἐπιμέλειαν W: ἐπιμελείας BDT
 275 c 6 ζητηγέοι W: ζητηγέον BDT
 279 e 4 ἑαυτοῖς ξυνδουμένων W: αὐτῶν συνδουμένοις BDT
 280 d 2 κλοπᾶς W: πλοκάς BDT et s.v. W
 287 e 5 αἰτία πήγνυται W: αἰτίαι πήγνυνται BDT

In section II, however, although W is very occasionally alone in offering the correct text, it never does so against B–T agreement in manifest error.¹ This too may perhaps point to a movement by T away from B. The principle of conjunctive errors cannot of course be applied mechanically, at least in the textual tradition of Plato. There are, for example, in section I B–W errors as well as B–T errors. However, it may be significant that whereas B–W errors occur sporadically throughout the dialogue (perhaps as a result of contamination) the B–T agreements in manifest error seem to occur only in section I.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that in *Politicus* there is a source-switch occurring at about p. 287. It seems possible to suggest further that T is the manuscript which changes source. Can any general conclusions be drawn?

One point emerges from the possibility that T changes source. It is that we ought to beware of regarding the B–T traditions as in some way more ‘fixed’ than that of W. When Bluck, following Dodds, remarks of the *Meno* tradition ‘It is clear . . . that if W and P represent a tradition separate from that of T, at any rate that tradition was very much hybridized with it’,² one ought not to overlook the possibility that it may be T which has been ‘hybridized’ (possibly vertically rather than horizontally) with the ‘separate’ W tradition.

A further point arises from a consideration of the general character of section II of the dialogue. The close T–W relationship in this section is reminiscent of the T–W relationship in dialogues such as *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Alc. I*, *Symp.* etc. If it is accepted that contamination, though no doubt present, may perhaps not be responsible for the striking change in manuscript relationships at Steph. p. 287 in *Politicus*, then we ought to be hesitant in assuming that a greater or lesser degree of contamination is the major factor behind the differing manuscript relationships observable in various dialogues. If T’s closeness to W in *Politicus* section II is not the result of contamination between the two manuscripts then there is less reason to bring in contamination to explain T’s closeness to W in dialogues such as *Gorgias*, *Meno*, and *Alc. I*.

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¹ At 292 c 3 W offers ἦτις, though apparently *post corr.* B has ἦν τις, while T offers ἦντις. In T, however, the ν is marked for deletion. At 307 d 2 W *post corr.* is alone in offering σφέτερα against BDTW *ante corr.*

However, the author of the correction does not seem to have been the original scribe.

² *Meno*, ed. R. S. Bluck (Cambridge, 1961), 135.