At tempted literary solutions to the Synoptic Problem usually involve close observation of parallel texts. Those who try to assist the visual presentation of material common to or dissimilar to two or more parallels often do so by means of colour coding, or by underlining or overlaying the text with different colours to indicate where a gospel agrees with or disagrees with the parallel verse in another gospel. Even those who do not use such a visual aid collect instances of minor agreements (of Matthew and Luke against Mark), of places where all three parallels agree, of places where all three parallels disagree and so on. This exercise is usually undertaken on the basis of one particular text—the old Huck(-Lietzmann) synopsis served as a vade mecum to many earlier scholars. Nowadays several synopsis texts are on the market. The text in the Aland Synopsis (= Syn), from the 9th edition, is based on the text to be found in Nestle-Aland 26th edition (NA²⁶).

The Huck-Greeven synopsis (= HG) has a text of its own. Thus where these two synopses differ there may, therefore, be differences in the statistics and observations on which decisions over the Synoptic Problem as a whole may be dependent or over which nuances that effect the overall judgement detected. The following study attempts to select from the differences between these two texts those variants that affect a parallel or parallels. There are some 10 differences on average per chapter (excluding orthographical or punctuation changes) between these two texts. In all nearly 700 variants may be found, but obviously not all of these involve a text that has a meaningful parallel in another gospel. By grouping these differences in the categories of agreement and disagreement meaningful for a discussion of the Synoptic Problem it may be shown that one’s judgement on the Synoptic Problem can

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be influenced by the Synopsis on which the study is based. Even if the differences shown up by the evidence presented below are not conclusive in relation to the total question of the Synoptic Problem, at least, in dealing with the exegesis of individual pericopae or sayings, the apparent changes or agreements found in the parallels must influence the way in which an interpretation (be it in the case of literary study, theology or historical investigation) may be made.

I have attempted on several occasions to preach that decisions about the Synoptic Problem ought not to be made on the basis of the text in any one Synopsis but that one should make use of the alternative readings to be found in the critical apparatus and that one should not imbue the editor of any one printed text with an omniscience that enabled him to produce a definitive version of the text. In reality I recognise that such preaching generally falls on deaf ears. Most writers on the Synoptic Problem still base their discussions on one printed text and with scarcely an acknowledgement that the apparatus is of help. However, one notable exception among scholars of the Synoptic Problem is Professor Neirynck, and that is why this present study is offered in grateful tribute to an indefatigable contributor to and critic of the international synoptic debate. Neirynck is all too well aware of the differences in printed synopses and the effect these can have on aspects of the Synoptic Problem: he is also alert to the textual variants. The publication of a new text of the Greek New Testament or a new synopsis is usually swiftly followed by a perspicacious analysis of that text in relation to the Synoptic Problem by Professor Neirynck in *ETL*. My own work on the Synoptic Problem constantly draws on (and I hope benefits from) Neirynck’s invaluable lists and comments in this journal. The verifiable scholarship and solid adherence to the text characteristic of his work are beacons of sanity in a discipline where some less determined Biblical theologians are tempted away from such rigorous work by fads and ephemera.

The preparation of this present article owes much to Neirynck’s list of differences between Huck-Greeven (= HG) and Syn found in *ETL*.

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3 E.g., on Greeven’s text or on the Boismard-Lamouille synopsis (for the references see below) or on the NA text (in *ETL* 55, 1979, pp. 331–356, reprinted in *Evangelica*, 1982, pp. 899–924).