Early Uncial Support for f^{35} in the General Epistles

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I take it that Klaus Wachtel, in his *Der Byzantinische Text der Katholischen Briefe*, recognizes that the Byzantine **text** is early (though often deciding against it on internal grounds), thereby bidding adieu to the prevailing canard. I believe that the evidence presented below demonstrates the same for the **text** of f^{35}.

I proceed to tabulate the performance of the early uncials (5th century and earlier) as they appear in the apparatus of my Greek text of the seven General Epistles. I do not include any variant set where *rell* appears. I use f^{35} as the point of reference, but only tabulate variant sets where at least one of the extant early uncials (extant at that point) goes against f^{35} (since most words have unanimous attestation).

Thirteen early uncials appear in my apparatus: $P^{20,23,72,78,81,100}$, ℵ,A,B,C,048,0173,0232. Only P^{72},ℵ,A,B,C are not fragments (048 is a variety of pieces, here and there). Codex C is missing basically chapters 4 and 5 of James, 1 Peter and 1 John [curiously, the same two chapters for all three books], as well as all of 2 John. Of course, P^{72} has only 1 & 2 Peter and Jude. Four of them never side with f^{35}: P^{78} appears once, P^{23} twice, 0173 thrice and 0232 five times. Of the other fragments, P^{20} shows 1 for, 3 against [25%]; P^{81} shows 3 for, 11 against [21.4%]; P^{100} shows 7 for, 10 against [41%]; 048 shows 10 for, 25 against [28.6%]. Not allowing for lacunae, P^{72} would come in with 23.9%, ℵ with 28.7%, A with 27.7%, B with 21.1%. If we divide C's 117 by 473 (the total of variant sets involved) we get 24.7%, but of course C is missing seven chapters (out of 21), so if we divide 117 by, say, 320, we get 36%—of the four main codices, C is clearly the closest to f^{35}. Out of the total of 473 variant sets, f^{35} receives overt early attestation 60% of the time (284 ÷ 473).

Before drawing conclusions I present the evidence (only combinations with at least one instance are tabulated).[1]

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	**TOTAL**
f^{35} alone	56	49	18	32	19	15	**189**
f^{35} P^{72}		7				1	**8**
f^{35} P^{100}	2						**2**
f^{35} ℵ	7	9	7	9	5		**37**
f^{35} A	9	8	3	9	2	1	**32**
f^{35} B	1	2	1	4	2		**10**
f^{35} C	5	8	3	4	1	2	**23**
f^{35} 048	1						**1**
f^{35} P^{20}ℵ	1						**1**
f^{35} P^{72}A		2					**2**
f^{35} P^{72}B		2	1				**3**
f^{35} P^{72}C		3	1				**4**
f^{35} P^{100}A	1						**1**
f^{35} ℵA	7	2	7	5			**21**
f^{35} ℵB	2	3		8		1	**14**
f^{35} ℵC		1	2	5		2	**10**
f^{35} ℵ048			1				**1**
f^{35} AB	2	1	1	6	2	1	**13**

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[1] Having neither secretary nor proof-reader, I do not guarantee complete accuracy, but a slip here or there will not alter the big picture, nor invalidate our conclusions.

f³⁵ AC	6	4	2	1			**13**
f³⁵ BC			2				**2**
f³⁵ P⁷²אA		4					**4**
f³⁵ P⁷²אB		3					**3**
f³⁵ P⁷²אC		2					**2**
f³⁵ P⁷²AB		3					**3**
f³⁵ P⁷²AC		3				1	**4**
f³⁵ P⁷²BC		1	9			1	**11**
f³⁵ P⁸¹BC		1					**1**
f³⁵ P¹⁰⁰אA	1						**1**
f³⁵ P¹⁰⁰AB	1						**1**
f³⁵ P¹⁰⁰AC	1						**1**
f³⁵ אAB			1	2			**3**
f³⁵ אAC	2	4	1	2		1	**10**
f³⁵ אA048			1				**1**
f³⁵ אBC	2		1	6			**9**
f³⁵ ABC	2	1		2		1	**6**
f³⁵ AB048	1						**1**
f³⁵ AC048			2				**2**
f³⁵ BC048			1				**1**
f³⁵ P⁷²אAB		1	1				**2**
f³⁵ P⁷²אAC		2	1				**3**
f³⁵ P⁷²אBC		1	3				**4**
f³⁵ P⁷²ABC		1					**1**
f³⁵ P⁸¹אAB		1					**1**
f³⁵ P¹⁰⁰אBC	1						**1**
f³⁵ אABC		4	1			1	**6**
f³⁵ P⁷²אAB048			1				**1**
f³⁵ P⁷²ABC048			1				**1**
f³⁵ P⁸¹אABC		1					**1**
f³⁵ אABC048			1				**1**
Total w/ uncial	55	85	54	65	12	13	**284**
% of variants with uncial support	49.5%	63.7%	75%	67%	38.7%	46.4%	**60%**[2]

involving P²⁰ -- **1**
involving P⁷² -- **56**
involving P⁸¹ -- **3**
involving P¹⁰⁰ -- **7**
involving א -- **136**
involving A -- **131**
involving B -- **100**
involving C -- **117**
involving 048 -- **10**

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[2] 2 & 3 John have the lowest percentage (if C had 2 John it would likely come up a bit) and 2 Peter the highest—a whopping 75%! Given all the 'bad press' 2 Peter has received, I find this datum to be interesting.

Each of these nine uncials is plainly independent of all the others. The total lack of pattern in the attestation that these early uncials give to f^{35} shows just as plainly that f^{35} is independent of them all as well, quite apart from the 40% without them. But that 60% of the units receive early uncial support, without pattern or dependency, shows that the f^{35} **text** is early.

I invite special attention to the first block, where a single uncial sides with f^{35}; each of the seven uncials is independent of the rest (and of f^{35}) at this point, of necessity, yet together they attest 23.9% of the total (113 ÷ 473). Since there is no pattern or dependency for this 24%, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in f^{35}?[3] Will anyone argue that whoever concocted the first f^{35} MS had all these uncials in front of him, arbitrarily taking 8 readings from P^{72}, 2 from P^{100}, 37 from א, etc., etc., etc.? Really now, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in f^{35}?

Going on to the next block, we have another 85 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 113 + 85 = 198 = 41.9%. Really now, how shall we account for these 198 early readings in f^{35}? Going on to the next block, we have another 63 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 198 + 63 = 261 = 55.2%. Really now, how shall we account for these 261 early readings in f^{35}? And so on.

To allege a dependency in the face of this EVIDENCE I consider to be dishonest. f^{35} is clearly independent of all these lines of transmission, themselves independent. If f^{35} is independent then it is early, of necessity. f^{35} has all those early readings for the sufficient reason that its **text** is early, dating to the 3rd century, at least. But if f^{35} is independent of all other lines of transmission (it is demonstrably independent of K^x, etc.) then it must hark back to the Autographs. What other reasonable explanation is there?[4]

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[3] Should anyone demure that the 5th century MSS included really aren't all that early, I inquire: are they copies, or original creations? If they are copies their exemplars were obviously earlier—all of these 113 readings doubtless existed in the 3rd century.

[4] Should anyone wish to claim that f^{35} is a recension, I request (and insist) that he specify who did it, when and where, and furnish evidence in support of the claim. Without evidence any such claim is frivolous and irresponsible.