

GA 789 in John

I have finished collating cursive 789 (Athens: National Library) for John, having already done so for Luke. Although the copyist made an occasional mistake, I judge that his exemplar was a very nearly perfect representative of Family 35. However, GA 789 is presently lacking John 19:12 to the end. A later hand, 789^s, has 19:26 to the end, but that copyist was a terrible speller, averaging nearly one mistake per verse—reminiscent of P⁶⁶ (although P⁶⁶ is worse, averaging around two mistakes per verse).

It is my emotional response that gives rise to this note: I found myself becoming angry with the copyist—I was prepared to call down curses on his head! Assuming that the cause of the mistakes was ignorance, rather than perversity, the copyist should not have undertaken a task for which he was so pitifully unqualified. It would be psychologically impossible for me to use 789^s for devotion or study. I would become too angry to continue.

Years ago I argued that P⁶⁶ was so bad that no one could stand to use it, so it was buried in desert sand and thus survived. My present experience with 789^s confirms that judgment—to me, at least. (I continue to insist that most of the early MSS survived because they were intolerably bad; it was psychologically impossible to use them, besides being a criminal waste of good parchment to copy them [is not uncial 06 the only one with an extant copy?].)