

Early Uncial Support for **f³⁵** in the General Epistles

I take it that Klaus Wachtel, in his *Der Byzantinische Text der Katholischen Briefe* [*The Byzantine Text of the Catholic Letters*], recognizes that the Byzantine **text** is early (though often deciding against it on internal grounds), thereby bidding adieu to the prevailing canard that the Byzantine text is late. I believe that the evidence presented below demonstrates the same for the **text** of **f³⁵**.

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, but supplemented from the *Editio Critica Maior* series. I use **f³⁵** 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 **f³⁵** (this is necessary, 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 P⁷², **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, P⁷² has only 1 & 2 Peter and Jude. 0173 is the only one of them that never sides with **f³⁵**: Out of the total of 795 variant sets, **f³⁵** receives overt early attestation 77.9% of the time (619 ÷ 795).

Before drawing conclusions, I present the evidence (only combinations with at least one instance are tabulated). In passing, let me say that 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 my conclusions.

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	TOTAL
f³⁵ alone	53	45	17	31	17	13	176
f³⁵ P ⁷²		7	1			1	9
f³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰	2						2
f³⁵ ℵ	9	9	7	11	3	1	40
f³⁵ A	10	8	2	6		1	27
f³⁵ B	2	3	1	7	3		16
f³⁵ C	5	8	3	4	1	1	22
f³⁵ 048	1		1	1			3
f³⁵ P ²⁰ ℵ	1						1
f³⁵ P ⁷² A		3					3
f³⁵ P ⁷² B		3	1				4
f³⁵ P ⁷² C		3					3

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	TOTAL
f ³⁵ p ⁷² 048		1					1
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ A	2						2
f ³⁵ ∞A	12	3	6	10		1	32
f ³⁵ ∞B	10	5		22	2		39
f ³⁵ ∞C		1	1	5		2	9
f ³⁵ ∞048			1		1		2
f ³⁵ AB	4	2	1	12		2	21
f ³⁵ AC	7	4	4	2		1	18
f ³⁵ A048			1	1	2		4
f ³⁵ BC	3			3			6
f ³⁵ B048	1			1	1		3
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞A		8					8
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞B		4				1	5
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞C		2	1				3
f ³⁵ p ⁷² AB		12	3			3	18
f ³⁵ p ⁷² AC		2	1			1	4
f ³⁵ p ⁷² BC		1	13				14
f ³⁵ p ⁷² C048			1				1
f ³⁵ p ⁸¹ BC		1					1
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ ∞A	1						1
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ ∞B	1						1
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ AB	2						2
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ AC	1						1
f ³⁵ ∞AB	13	13	1	10	1	3	41
f ³⁵ ∞AC	8	4	1	11		2	26
f ³⁵ ∞A048			2	3	1		6
f ³⁵ ∞BC	17	1	2	17	2	2	41
f ³⁵ ∞B048				2			2
f ³⁵ ∞B0232					1		1
f ³⁵ ∞C048			1				1
f ³⁵ ABC	8	5	2	15	3	2	35
f ³⁵ AB048	2			4	1		7
f ³⁵ AB0232					1		1
f ³⁵ AC048			2				2
f ³⁵ BC048			1		1		2
f ³⁵ p ²³ ABC	1						1
f ³⁵ p ^{72,78} AB						1	1
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞AB		9	4			4	17
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞AC		4	1			1	6
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∞BC		6	10			3	19
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ABC		8	4			5	17
f ³⁵ p ⁷² AB048			1				1
f ³⁵ p ⁷² BC048			1				1
f ³⁵ p ⁸¹ ∞AB		1					1
f ³⁵ p ⁸¹ ∞AC		1					1

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	TOTAL
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ ∓BC	2						2
f ³⁵ p ¹⁰⁰ ABC	1						1
f ³⁵ ∓ABC	1	11	4		2	7	25
f ³⁵ ∓AC048					1		1
f ³⁵ ∓BC048		1			1		2
f ³⁵ ABC048					2		2
f ³⁵ AB048,0232					2		2
f ³⁵ p ^{72,78} ∓AB						1	1
f ³⁵ p ^{72,81} ∓BC		1					1
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∓ABC						1	1
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∓AB048			3		6		9
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∓AC048		2					2
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ∓BC048			1				1
f ³⁵ p ⁷² ABC048		1	2				3
f ³⁵ p ⁷⁸ ∓ABC						1	1
f ³⁵ p ⁸¹ ∓ABC		3					3
f ³⁵ ∓ABC048		3	3				6
Total w/uncial	127	155	95	147	38	48	619

- involving p²⁰ -- 1
- involving p²³ -- 1
- involving p⁷² -- 153
- involving p⁷⁸ -- 3
- involving p⁸¹ -- 4
- involving p¹⁰⁰ -- 12
- involving ∓ -- 356
- involving A -- 356 (this number is correct; it just happens to be the same as the other)
- involving B -- 378
- involving C -- 285
- involving 048 -- 62
- involving 0232-- 4

I will now list the singular readings for each of these uncials:

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	TOTAL
p ⁷²		33	12			17	62
p ⁷⁸						2	2
∓	11	25	13	18	5	4	76
A	8		5	10	2	2	27
B	7	10	3	8	4	5	37
C	3	7	7	5	2		24
048	1		1	4	3		9

Each of these twelve uncials is plainly independent of all the others. The total lack of pattern in the attestation that these early uncials give to f³⁵ shows just as

plainly that **f³⁵** is independent of them all as well, quite apart from the 22.1% without them. But that 77.9% of the units receive early uncial support, without pattern or dependency, shows that the **f³⁵ text** is early.

I invite special attention to the first block, where a single uncial sides with **f³⁵**; each of the seven uncials is independent of the rest (and of **f³⁵**) at this point, of necessity, yet together they attest 15% of the total ($119 \div 795$). Since there is no pattern or dependency for this 15%, how shall we account for these 119 early readings in **f³⁵**? Will anyone argue that whoever 'concocted' the first **f³⁵** MS had all these uncials in front of him, arbitrarily taking 9 readings from P⁷², 2 from P¹⁰⁰, 40 from **ℵ**, etc., etc., etc.? Really now, how shall we account for these 119 early readings in **f³⁵**? (Should anyone demure that the 5th century MSS included really are not all that early, I inquire: are they copies, or original creations? If they are copies their exemplars were obviously earlier—all of these 119 readings doubtless existed in the 3rd century.)

Going on to the next block, we have another 148 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; $119 + 148 = 267 = 34\%$. Really now, how shall we account for these 267 early readings in **f³⁵**? Going on to the next block, we have another 224 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; $267 + 224 = 491 = 61.8\%$. Really now, how shall we account for these 491 early readings in **f³⁵**? Going on to the next block, we have another 100 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; $491 + 100 = 591 = 74.3\%$. The final block brings the total to 77.9%.

To allege a dependency in the face of this EVIDENCE I consider to be dishonest. **f³⁵** is clearly independent of all these lines of transmission, themselves independent. If **f³⁵** is independent then it is early, of necessity. **f³⁵** has all those early readings for the sufficient reason that its **text** is early, dating to the 3rd century, at least. But if **f³⁵** 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? Should anyone wish to claim that **f³⁵** 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.