

In 1982 Reuben J. Swanson published an interesting volume: *The Horizontal Line Synopsis of the Gospels, Greek Edition, Volume I. The Gospel of Matthew*. He used UBS³ as his base text. In his own words, “this was chosen because it is perhaps the most widely used Greek text today”.¹ He collated the following MSS for Matthew: P⁴⁵, 01, 02, 03, 04², 05, 07, 09, 011, 017, 019, 032, 034, 038, 041, 1, 13, 28, 565, 1582. He also used Clement of Alexandria. Since his base text was UBS³, it is the apparatus that is of interest. For each variant set, the top line is the reading of UBS³, followed by the MSS, of those that he collated, that agree with that reading: sometimes the top line is a word or two, sometimes it is a whole line. Under the top line are variants with their supporting MSS. (He also included parallels from Mark and Luke, but they do not concern us here.)

I went through the whole volume, simply checking the top line in each variant set, to see which of his collated MSS agreed with UBS³ and might have served as its basis. I disregarded correctors (we have no way of knowing anything about a corrector), counting only the first hand. Here is what I found. UBS³ is joined by one of Swanson’s collated MSS **alone** as follows:

B, 03 = 57 times;
Zero MSS = 44 times³;
Aleph, 01 = 21 times;
L, 019 = 7 times;
C, 04 = 5 times;
13 = 3 times;
D, 05 = 2 times;
W, 032 = 2 times;
Theta, 038 = 2 times;
1 = 2 times;
1582 = 2 times;
Pi, 041 = 1 time;
28 = 1 time;
565 = 1 time.

There are at least 98 cases with just two MSS, most being Aleph/B, with a curious mix in the rest. Now then, gentle reader, please take a hard look at the above evidence and reach your own conclusion about the composition of UBS³.⁴

¹ Just by the way, the preface to the third edition states that the committee made over 500 changes in the text, compared to the second. No new manuscripts had been discovered to serve as a basis for those changes. It was the addition of Carlo M. Martini to the committee, a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church.

² He used Tischendorf’s collation.

³ I did not count any line containing the name ‘David’, because of the abbreviation.

⁴ Those who wish to defend the UBS will insist that the committee had their reasons for doing as they did, and indeed, they did have their reasons, but none of that alters the manuscript evidence.