

**THE PLURIFORMITY OF THE ALEXANDRIAN
TEXT-TYPE IN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES**

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Date completed: July 2009

The Alexandrian text-type is traditionally known by textual critics to exist in two groups. In the mid-1970s, W. Larry Richards discovered a third Alexandrian group in his study of the Johannine Epistles. Kenneth Keumsang Yoo's study of 1 Peter in 2001 confirmed the existence of the third group.

This study attempted to determine whether the so-called third Alexandrian group exists in all of the books of the Catholic Epistles, and what the characteristics are of the readings in this group. Using factor analysis to form tentative groups for thirty manuscripts previously classified as Alexandrian in all three groups in the Catholic Epistles, I proceeded to profile the manuscripts and then analyzed the readings.

The first objective, determining whether or not a third group existed in *all* of the Catholic Epistles, confirmed its existence. The second objective, determining the characteristics of the readings, made up the major portion of my research. The procedure used involved an application of the basic canons of textual criticism to multiple comparisons between the readings of the third group with various combinations of the Alexandrian groups and the Textus Receptus.

The significance of the study is twofold. First, not only is it an established fact that this third group of manuscripts is Alexandrian, it actually differs from the Byzantine text-type, as represented by the Textus Receptus, much more than do the traditionally named Alexandrian groups. Separation from the Byzantine text has been a cardinal identifying mark of the Alexandrian text-type.

Second, the manuscripts within this Alexandrian group reflect skillful editorial activity similar to the so-called "less pure" Alexandrian text, and in some respects to the editorial work done by scribes who "smoothed" the readings found in the Textus Receptus. This is evidenced largely by the increased number of additions found among units of variation where the third group differs from the other two Alexandrian groups.

The group of manuscripts identified by Richards, therefore, differs from the Textus Receptus more than any other group of manuscripts. Paradoxically, this group of manuscripts demonstrates editorial activity similar to that of the Textus Receptus even more dramatically than do the traditional Alexandrian groups.