

When a new edition of a printed book is made and the type is reset it may be difficult to make it exactly like the one from which it is copied. Yet the difficulty can be overcome, with very considerable effort and it is worth the effort because it affects not merely one copy but hundreds or even thousands. As long as copies are made by hand no matter how great the care that is taken there is a the probability that everyone will differ slightly from every other copy.

The copies of the Greek New Testament that were known to the world when printing began could be divided into two main classes. The uncials and the cursives. Uncial means large letters. Cursive means running letters. Greek seems to have been written in flowing small letters mostly in ancient times. Large letters were used principally for monuments, for inscriptions much as capital letters are used today. However, the large letters, separate letters like our copies. The small letters would be more like our written script.

x It was customary to publish particularly important books - to copy particularly important books all in capitals with no break at all between words. As instead of writing them in the running script with the letters of one word joined together. The earliest manuscripts that were known when printing began were three or four centuries - all came from a period after the time when Christianity became the principal religion in the Roman empire. These manuscripts were made in the large capital letters and are called uncials. Until ~~the~~ about the ninth century A.D. people continued to copy the Greek New Testament in the uncial characters. However about the sixth century A.D. some began to make copies in the small running letters such as had been previously used for writing unimportant notes and letters etc. This was so much easier than copying the capitals that it gradually displaced the ^{? uncial} cursive and subsequent to the ninth century A.D. all the copies of the Greek New Testament were made in cursives. After that time in the monestaries of the East many copies were made. We have today about four thousand copies of the manuscript copies of the Greek New Testament - of all or part of the Greek New Testament. Out of these less than fifty are what are called uncials while all the rest are cursives.

All the manuscripts that were available to the - as far as the making of the textus of the received text (often called by the Latin name, Textus Receptus) were cursives and most of them were quite late.