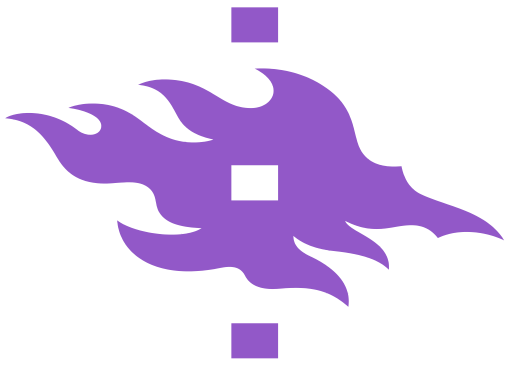


# The Spread of the Byzantine Text and Biased Cultural Selection

Pasi Hyytiäinen

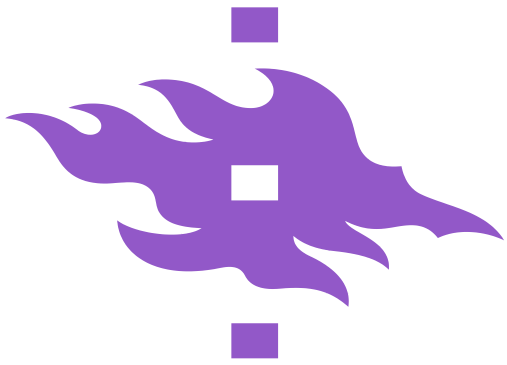
University of Helsinki



# In this presentation

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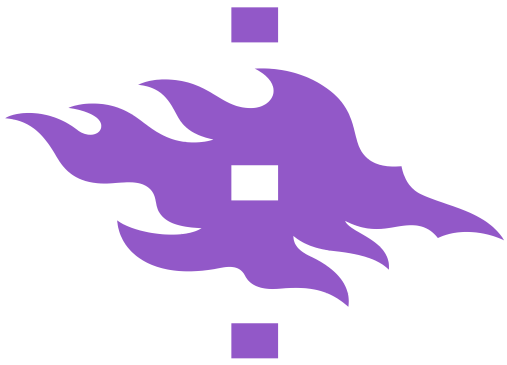
- The three textual streams of the New Testament
  - Alexandrian
  - Western
  - Byzantine
- Byzantine text as the original text of the New Testament
- Byzantine text as an innovation
  - Biased Cultural selection
  - Diffusion of Innovations



# The three textual streams

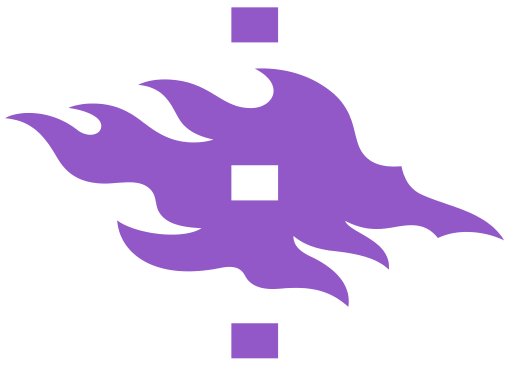
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- **Alexandrian**
  - Very early
  - Controlled
    - Shorter
    - Coherent
- **Western**
  - Very early
  - Uncontrolled
    - Longer
    - Eccentric
- **Byzantine**
  - Later
  - Smooth
  - Tendency to harmonize
  - Combines readings
  - Extremely coherent



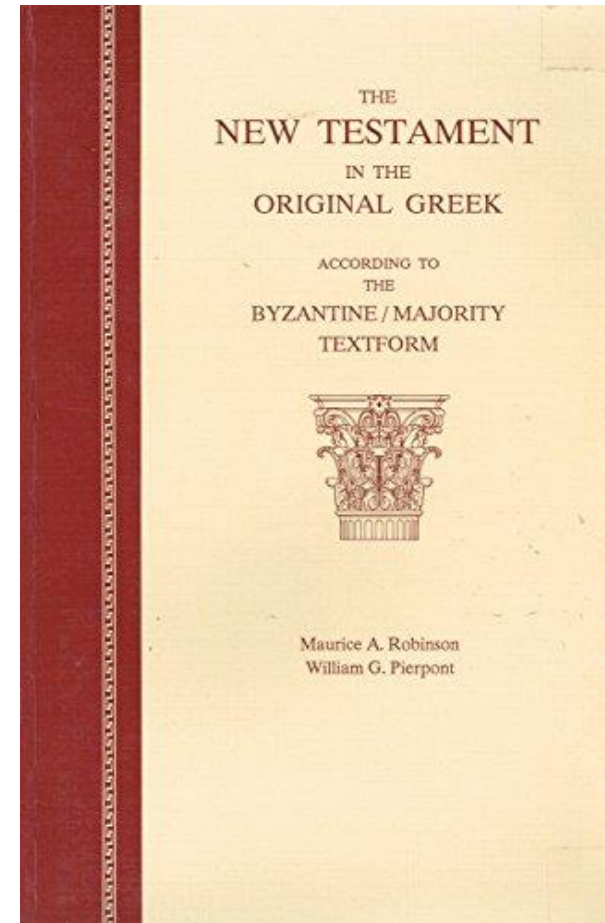
# Example: Luke 6:4

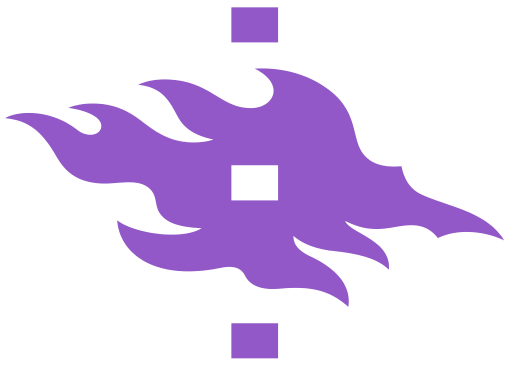
- **Codex Vaticanus (Alex.):** εισηλθεν εις τον οικον του θεου και τους αρτους της προθεσεως λαβων εφαγεν και εδωκεν τοις μετ αυτου ους ουκ εξεστιν φαγειν ει μη μονους τους ιερεις
- **Codex Bezae (West.):** εισελθων εις τον οικον του θεου και τους αρτους της προσθεσεως εφαγεν και εδωκεν και τοις μετ αυτου οις ουκ εξον ην φαγειν ει μη μονοις τοις ιερεισιν. τη αυτη ημερα θεασαμενος τινα εργαζομενον τω σαββατω ειπεν αυτω ανθρωπε ει μεν οιδας τι ποιεις μακαριος ει ει δε μη οιδας επικαταρατος και παραβατης ει του νομου
- **Codex Mosuqensis (Byz.):** ως εισηλθεν εις τον οικον του θεου και τους αρτους της προθεσεως ελαβεν και εφαγεν και εδωκεν και τοις μετ αυτου ους ουκ εξεστιν φαγειν ει μη μονους τους ιερεις



# The Byzantine Stream – The Original Text?

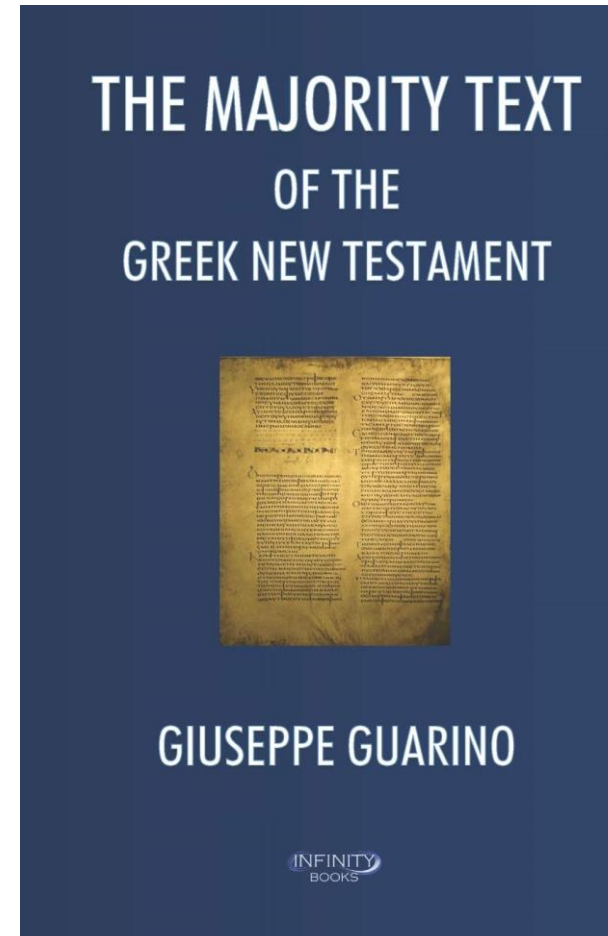
- The original text of the New Testament?
- The original text is preserved in the majority of manuscripts
  - Produced in the Middle-Ages
- Robinson and Pierpont (1991): It is always most probable that the majority of witnesses—which “reflect a high degree of textual uniformity”—will preserve the original form of the text

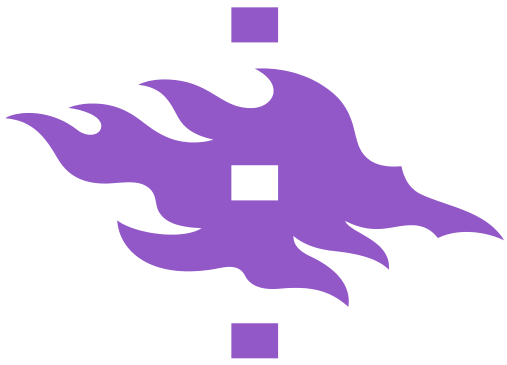




# The Byzantine Stream – The Original Text?

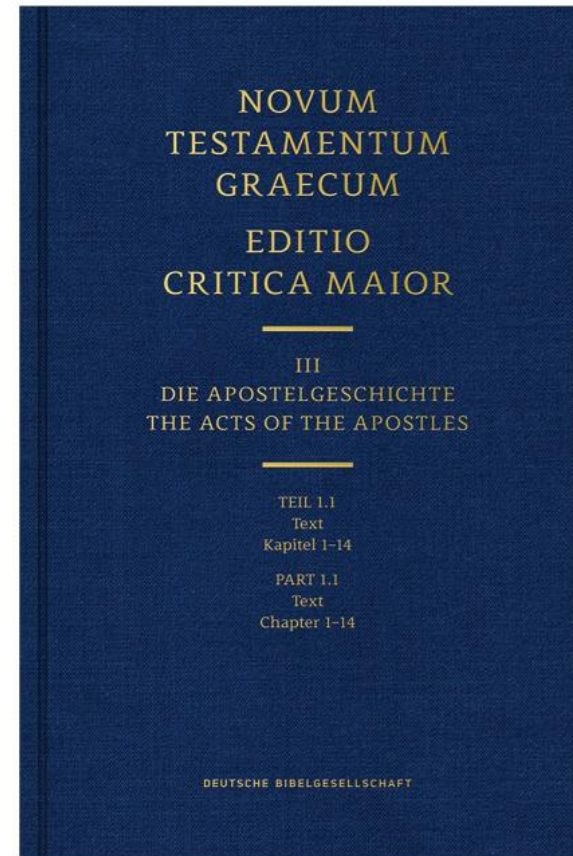
- Others take a more spiritual approach to the issue
- Giuseppe Guarino (2019)
  - “The Bible is inspired and God has preserved its text down through the centuries. Faith believes it and evidence proves it.”
  - “It is the author’s conviction that the Majority of the manuscripts of the original apostolic texts must be viewed as the result of the faithful copying tradition started with the autographs down to our days.”

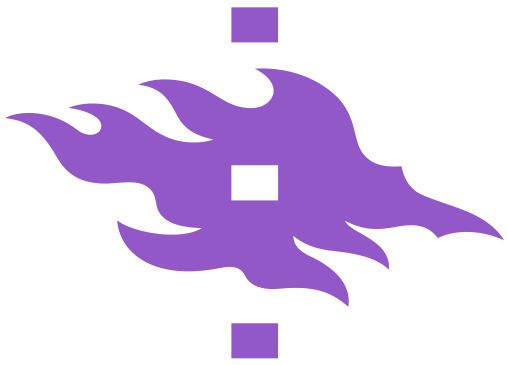




# The Byzantine Stream – Editio Critica Maior

- Editio Critica Maior-Acts contains more Byzantine readings compared to previous critical editions
- 52 changes to the NA28 in Acts
  - 36 conforms with the Byzantine text
  - 2 against the Byzantine text
- Renewed appreciation for the text
- Editors of ECM rejects other textual groups except the Byzantine



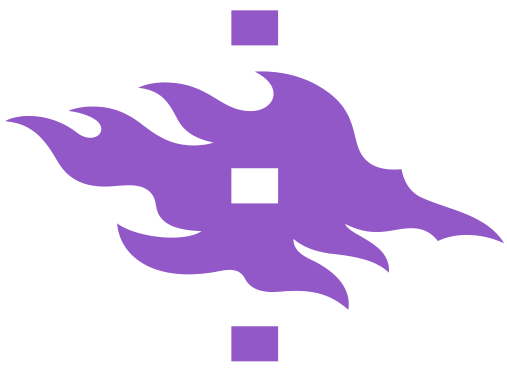


# The Spread of the Byzantine manuscripts

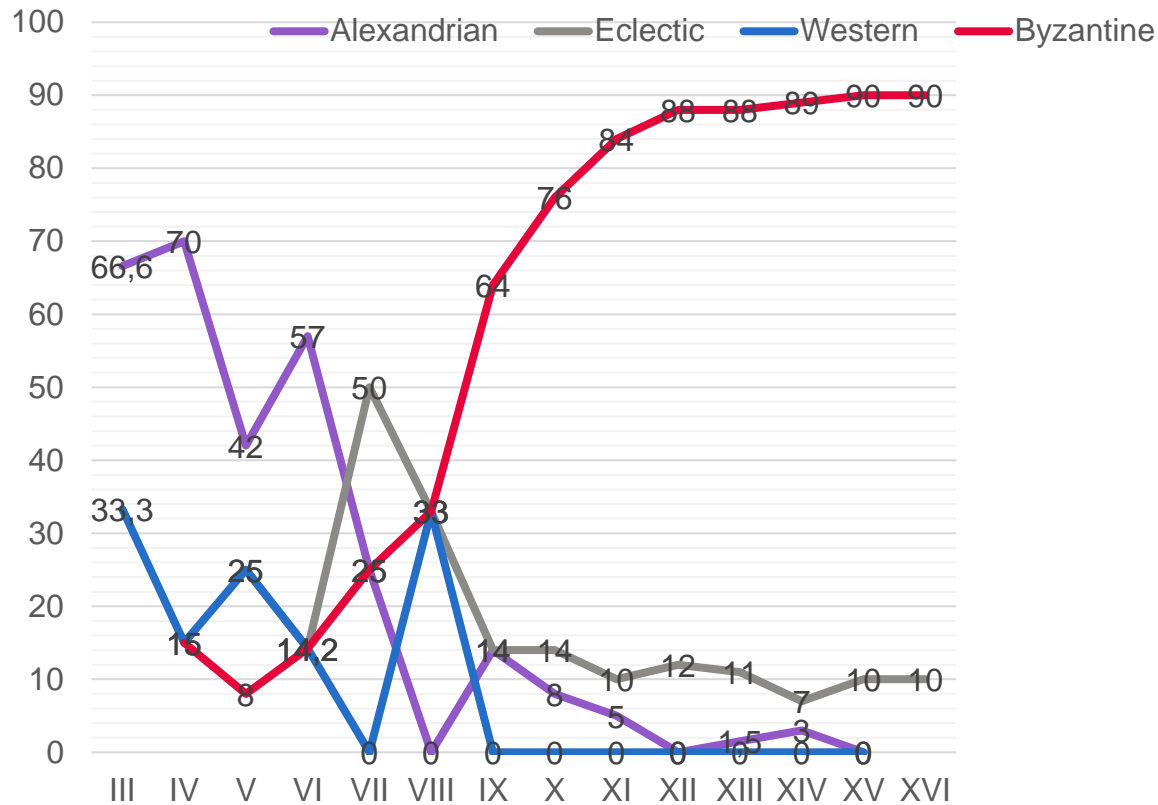
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- What do the numbers of the manuscripts reveal about the Byzantine text?
  - How and when did the Byzantine manuscripts come to dominate the textual tradition of the New Testament?
- The earliest NT manuscripts represents *Alexandrian* and *Western* texts
- The Byzantine text is first encountered in a very rudimentary form in Basil the Great (330–379) and John Chrysostom (347–407)
- Acts of the Apostles as an example
- From the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries the Byzantine text is a rarity (one surviving manuscript / century)
- Something happened in the 9<sup>th</sup> century
  - The ratio of the Byzantine manuscripts rapidly increased

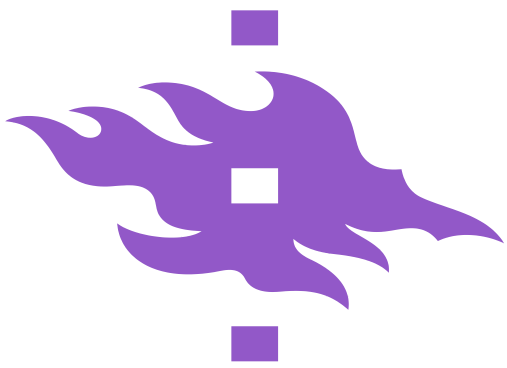




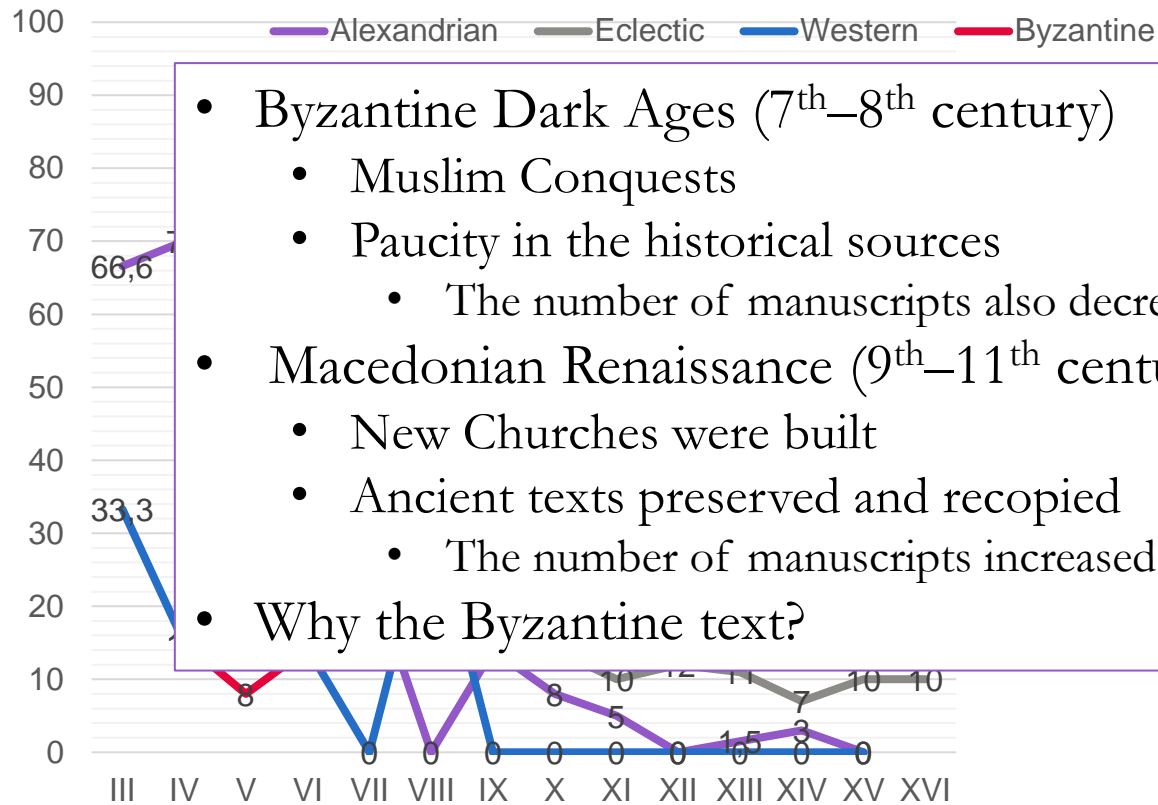
# The ratio of the manuscripts (Acts of the Apostles)



- 425 manuscripts of Acts included in the analysis
- Eclectic manuscripts mix different types of texts
- One Byzantine manuscript per century between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries
- The classification is based on the previous studies



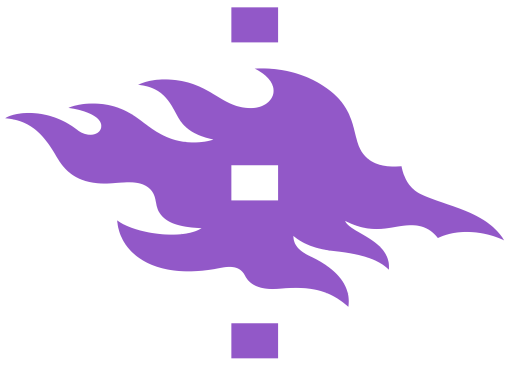
# The ratio of the manuscripts (Acts of the Apostles)



- 425 manuscripts of Acts

- Byzantine Dark Ages (7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century)
  - Muslim Conquests
  - Paucity in the historical sources
    - The number of manuscripts also decreased
- Macedonian Renaissance (9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries)
  - New Churches were built
  - Ancient texts preserved and recopied
    - The number of manuscripts increased
- Why the Byzantine text?

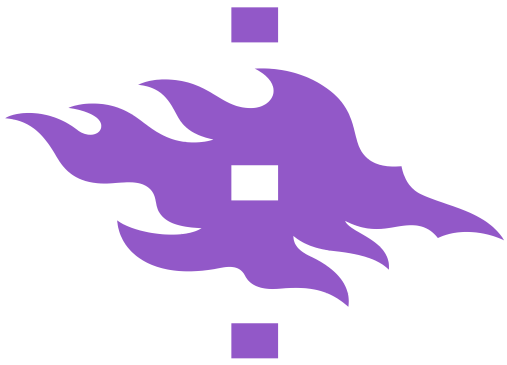
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# Biased Cultural Selection

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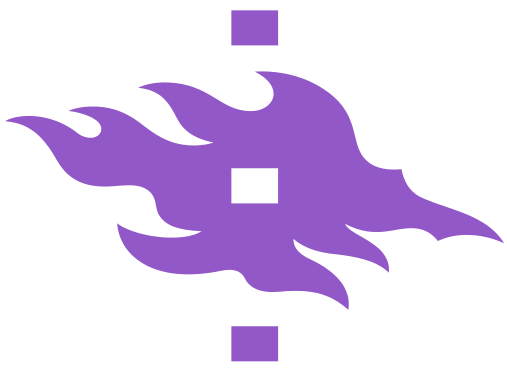
- Why we choose some cultural traits over others?
  - The trait is attractive (content-based selection)
    - Byzantine text contains several attractive elements
      - Smooth language, coherent and harmonious
  - Some individuals of great authority use the trait (model-based selection)
    - Basil the Great, John Chrysostom
    - Church subjected itself to these authorities
  - Some traits are selected due to their popularity (frequency-based selection)
    - When the Byzantine text became the majority text, the pressure to conform to it increased
      - Increasing the frequency of the text



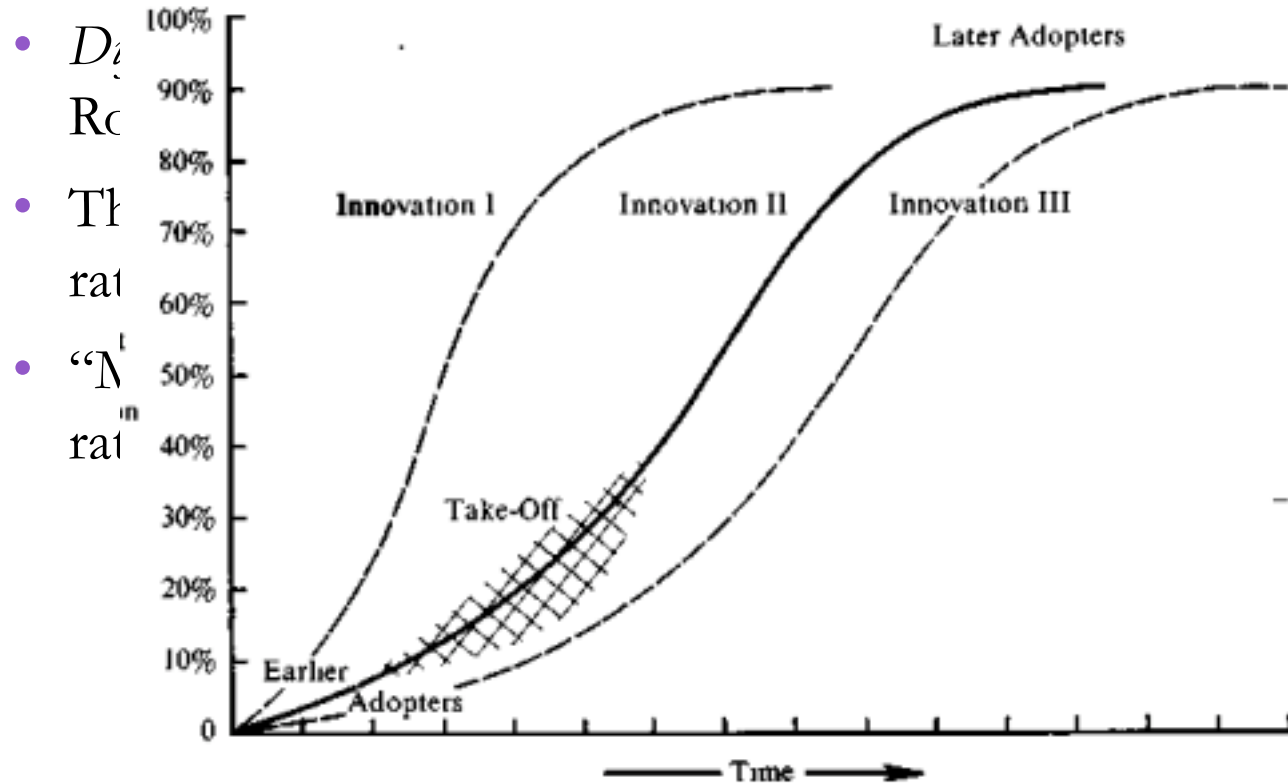
# The Diffusion of Innovations

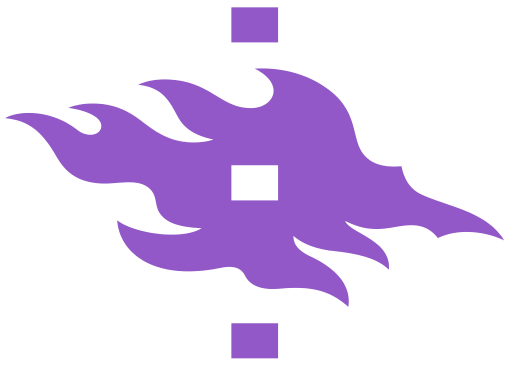
- *Diffusion of Innovation* by Everett Rogers (1962)
- Theory to explain why, how and what rate innovations or ideas spread
- “Most innovations have an s-shaped rate of adoption”





# The Diffusion of Innovations

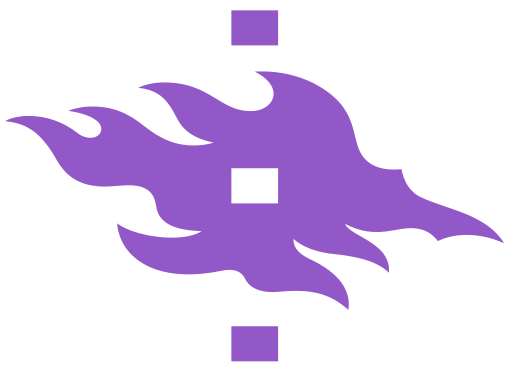




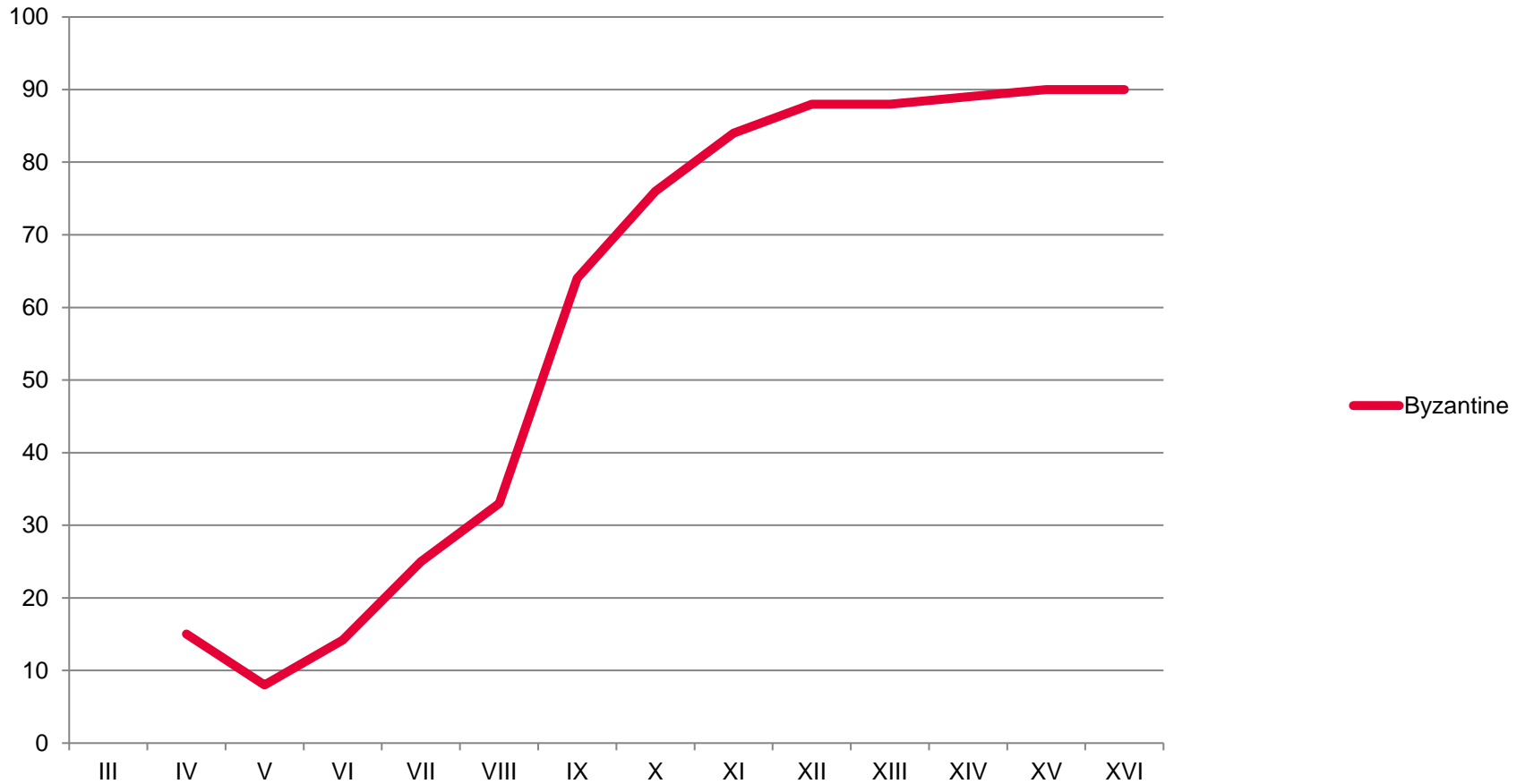
# The Diffusion of Innovations

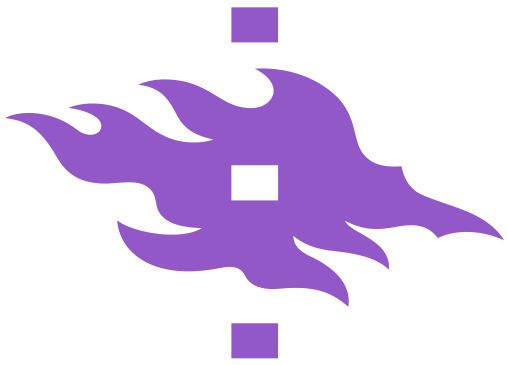
- *Diffusion of Innovation* by Everett Rogers (1962)
- Theory to explain why, how and what rate innovations or ideas spread
- “Most innovations have an s-shaped rate of adoption”
- Heinrich: “A biased cultural transmission can generate S-dynamics but only when biased cultural transmission is the predominate force”.





# The S-Shaped Adoption Rate of the Byzantine Text





# Concluding remarks

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- The Byzantine text should be seen as an innovation
  - Emerged in the late fourth century
  - Superseded all the other textual streams in the ninth century
  - Became the Majority Text
    - Textus Receptus
      - King James Bible
      - The base for all later translations of the Bible
- The increasing frequency of the Byzantine variants in the ECM...?
  - Should we be worried...?