# A Text-Critical Analysis of John 7:53–8:11 with a Focus on Its Stylistic Discontinuity

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## 1. Introduction

John 7:53–8:11, the pericope of the woman caught in adultery, is a well-known text-critical issue in the New Testament. The originality of this pericope as part of John's Gospel has long been investigated by biblical scholars. As early as the fourth century, church fathers had already recognized the absence of John 7:53–8:11 in some manuscripts of their time. Augustine affirmed the originality of this pericope and believed that some manuscripts intentionally omitted the passage. Augustine's resolution temporarily settled this text-critical issue for almost fifteen centuries but has been seriously challenged in the modern era.[1] B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort proposed that John 7:53–8:11 had the origin from an extraneous independent source and was later

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1) Augustine, *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, R. J. Deferrari, ed., C. T. Wilcox, et al., trans., Writings of Saint Augustine 15, The Fathers of the Church, A New Translation 27 (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 107–108; J. N. Cerone, "Introduction", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 1–2; D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 343.

interpolated into John's Gospel in Western manuscripts.[2] Most contemporary biblical scholars argue against the pericope of the woman caught in adultery as an original composition of John's Gospel. NTG[28][3] and GNT[5][4] both identify John 7:53–8:11 not only as a later addition to the original Greek text by placing double square brackets around the passage but also as a nonsignificant variant for textual reconstruction by providing a negative apparatus and assigning the A rating in the apparatus respectively.[5] Almost all translations indicate John 7:53–8:11 to be a non-original text through various means, such as brackets or italics.[6] Recent commentaries on John's Gospel generally deny the possibility of John 7:53–8:11 being an original part.[7]

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2) B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, eds., *Introduction and Appendix*, Vol. 1 of *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Cambridge Library Collection Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 82–88.

3) The apparatus of NTG[28]: Ad ⟦ 7:53−8:11 ⟧ 53, $ff^2$.

4) The apparatus of GNT[5]: omit 7:53–8:11 $\mathfrak{P}^{66, 75}$, ℵ, A[vid], B, C[vid], L, N, T, W, Δ, Θ, Ψ, 0141, 33, 157, 565, 1241, 1333; include 7:53–8:11 D, 180, 205, 579, 597, 700, 892, 1006, 1010, 1071, 1243, 1292, 1342, 1505, Bzy [(F gap 7:28–8:10), G, H, M]; include 7:53–8:11 with asterisks or obeli (E include so only 8:2–11), S, 28; include only 8:3–11 (Λ with asterisks); include 7:53–8:11 after Lk 21:38 $f^{13}$, after Jn 7:36 225, after Jn 21:25 (with critical note) 1; include 8:3–11 after Lk 24:53 1333[s].

5) NTG[28] contains both positive and negative apparatuses. For the variant-unit with the variants that are substantial for establishing the original text, a positive apparatus that lists readings for and against the text is provided. For the variant-unit with the variants that are valuable for understanding the history of the text instead of establishing the original text, a negative apparatus that only lists readings against the text is provided. GNT[5] offers only the positive apparatus for variant-units but indicates the committee's level of certainty regarding which variant is the original reading by assigning a rating to each variant-unit in the apparatus, namely A rating (certain), B rating (almost certain), C rating (with difficulty), and D rating (uncertain). See S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 150, 165–166.

6) J. N. Cerone, "Introduction", 2.

7) C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 589–591; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 143–144; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 3 vols., Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 1:332–336; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 333–334; C. S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 735–736; A. T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 524–528; J. R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 493–495; F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), 259; L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand

Although the committees of NTG[28] and GNT[5], the translators of the New Testament, and the commentators seem to treat it as a scholarly consensus that the pericope of the woman caught in adultery is not an original part of John's Gospel, some textual critics still dispute over this complicated text-critical issue. Both those who hold to the Johannine originality of John 7:53–8:11 and those who regard John 7:53–8:11 as a later interpolation accordingly offer various textual evidence. In order to assess which view is more convincing, a thorough and rigorous study on the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 is necessary. In addition, the extant studies of both views only focus on whether John 7:53–8:11 can fit into the broader context of John's Gospel but fail to examine whether the pericope demonstrates the stylistic continuity with its co-text. However, according to the principle of modern linguistics, it is the co-text of John 7:53– 8:11, as its immediate linguistic context, that serves as the primary determinant for the Johannine originality of the pericope.[8] This paper will first survey the current scholarship of the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 in terms of the two views and their respective text-critical evidence. By adopting reasoned eclecticism to evaluate both external and internal evidence, the paper will then conduct a text-critical analysis of John 7:53–8:11.[9] Based on this analysis, this study argues that John 7:53–8:11 should be removed from the text of John's Gospel in the Greek New Testament and modern translations due to the non-Johannine originality of this pericope.

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Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 778–779.

8) According to the theory of SFL, co-text is the linguistic units, involving words, clauses, and clause complexes, within a specific discourse that surround a particular point in the discourse. It is the co-text of a phrase, being its immediate linguistic environment in the discourse, that serves as the primary constraint on its meaning. See C. M. I. M. Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms in Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Key Terms Series (London: Continuum, 2010), 74; S. E. Porter, "Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory", M. D. Carroll R., ed., *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 299 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 198; J. T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 136 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 42.

9) Whether the story of the woman caught in adultery is the original text of John's Gospel and whether the story itself is authentic are two separate issues. This paper aims to examine the originality of John 7:53–8:11 rather than the authenticity of the pericope itself.

## 2. A Survey of Scholarship

Only a minority of textual critics argue for the originality of John 7:53–8:11. Those with this minority view, such as Z. C. Hodges, J. P. Heil, M. Robinson, and J. D. Punch, all acknowledge that the pericope of the woman caught in adultery is absent from the earlier and better manuscript traditions. Appealing to the external evidence, Hodges claims that John 7:53–8:11 must have been omitted in some manuscript traditions at a date earlier than all the surviving manuscripts. Consequently, Hodges employs later Greek manuscripts, early versions, and patristic citations as the witness to the pericope.[10] With the presupposition that the pericope is an original part of John's Gospel, Hodges offers an exposition of the passage within the Johannine context as the internal evidence.[11] Turning to the internal evidence, Heil attempts to attest to the linguistic and literary linkages between John 7:53–8:11 and the Johannine narrative. On the basis of this analysis, Heil suggests reconsidering the external evidence of the pericope.[12] Considering both the external and internal evidence, Robinson affirms the Johannine originality of John 7:53–8:11. Robinson's conclusion is reached based on his observation that a large number of manuscripts and lectionaries contain the pericope and his perception that the linguistic features of the pericope demonstrate Johannine nature.[13] Examining both the internal and external evidence, Punch proposes the theory of ecclesiastical suppression which asserts that John 7:53–8:11 was omitted to avoid the misinterpretation and/or misapplication of the passage.[14] Internally,

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10) Z. C. Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11): The Text", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979), 318–332.

11) Z. C. Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11): Exposition", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137 (1980), 41–53.

12) J. P. Heil, "A Rejoinder to 'Reconsidering "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered"'", *ÉglThéol* 25 (1994), 361–366; J. P. Heil, "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress (John 7,53–8,11) Reconsidered", *Biblica* 72 (1991), 182–191.

13) M. A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations regarding the Pericope Adulterae based upon Fresh Collations of nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts Containing the Passage", *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 13 (2000), 35–59; M. A. Robinson, "The Pericope Adulterae: A Johannine Tapestry with Double Interlock", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 115–145.

14) In his published dissertation, *The Pericope Adulterae: Theories of Insertion & Omission*, Punch evaluates five theories that deal with the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 based on

Punch seeks to verify the contextual compatibility as well as the grammatical and syntactical congruity of the pericope with the broader Johannine context. Externally, Punch relies on Codex Bezae, lectionary texts, early versions, and patristic citations.[15]

The majority of textual critics argue against the originality of John 7:53–8:11. Those with this majority view, such as B. D. Ehrman, D. C. Parker, J. Knust, T. Wasserman, and C. Keith, offer diverse textual evidence to testify that the pericope of the woman caught in adultery is not an original part of John's Gospel. Ehrman concentrates on the story of Jesus' intervention in an execution proceeding recorded by Didymus, a fourth-century Alexandrian theologian, in his Ecclesiastes commentary, which is similar to the one in John 7:53-8:11 and has been used to support the Johannine originality of the pericope. Because Didymus did not identify the story as the Johannine origin nor the original text, Ehrman rejects the reliability of this patristic evidence.[16] By tracing the reception history of John 7:53-8:11 in terms of both its location and text form, Parker concludes that the pericope was received into different places of John's Gospel at a later date instead of the original text.[17] Knust reviews patristic writings but finds no suspicion from church fathers regarding the misinterpretation and/or misapplication of John 7:53-8:11. Moreover, the scribal practice requires preservation rather than deletion, especially for such an extensive passage. Knust thus contends that the suppression theory is invalid and

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both internal and external evidence. The five theorise are redactional insertion, contending that the pericope was inserted by a later Johannine redactor or community; ecclesiastical interpolation, claiming that the pericope was inserted by a later scribe other than the Johannine redactor or community; liturgical omission, stating that the pericope was omitted due to lectionary practice; accidental omission, suggesting that the pericope was accidentally omitted; ecclesiastical suppression, asserting that the pericope was omitted to avoid the misinterpretation and/or misapplication of the passage. According to this evaluation, Punch proposes ecclesiastical suppression since this theory accounts for the internal and external evidence in a less complex way than the other four theories. See J. D. Punch, *The Pericope Adulterae: Theories of Insertion & Omission* (S. I.: LAP Lambert, 2012).

15) J. D. Punch, "The Piously Offensive Pericope Adulterae", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 7–31.

16) B. D. Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress", *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, New Testament Tools and Studies 33 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 196–220.

17) D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts*, 342–343; D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 95–102.

the pericope cannot be an intentional omission.[18] Since the extant manuscripts without John 7:53-8:11 reflect scribes' great concern for the fidelity of the text, Wasserman asserts that the pericope is unlikely to be an unintentional or intentional omission but rather the later addition of an existing Jesus tradition to John's Gospel in the second or third century.[19] Keith emphasizes the value of socio-historical context in determining whether John 7:53-8:11 is an original part of John's Gospel. In light of Keith's estimation, it is more plausible that the pericope is a later composition due to the need of the early church to prove Jesus' literacy.[20]

## 3.  Methodology

In contemporary New Testament scholarship, there are two distinct views of textual criticism. Traditionally, biblical scholars regard textual criticism as textual reconstruction, the aim of which is to establish the original New Testament text. Recently, some biblical scholars have treated textual criticism as tracking textual transmission, the goal of which is to understand the reception history of the New Testament text and the social context of early Christianity.[21] This paper holds a traditional view and thus the study in the paper is undertaken for the purpose of reconstructing the original Greek text of the New Testament.

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18) J. Knust, "Early Christian Re-Writing and the History of the Pericope Adulterae", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006), 485–536; J. Knust, "'Taking away from': Patristic Evidence and the Omission of the Pericope Adulterae from John's Gospel", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 65–88; J. Knust and T. Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

19) T. Wasserman, "The Strange Case of the Missing Adulteress", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 33–63; J. Knust and T. Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story*.

20) C. Keith, "The Pericope Adulterae: A Theory of Attentive Insertion", D. A. Black and J. N. Cerone, eds., *The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research*, Library of New Testament Studies 551 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 89–113; C. Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 38 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

21) S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 1.

In the process of textual reconstruction, it is important to take into account all available evidence of different textual variants in order to ascertain which variant represents the original reading. This paper adopts reasoned eclecticism, which is generally acknowledged as the most appropriate method for New Testament textual criticism. Evaluating both external and internal evidence, this method will provide adequate objectivity for textual reconstruction.[22]

External textual evidence concentrates on the manuscripts that testify to a particular textual variant, such as Greek manuscripts, lectionary texts, early versions, and church father citations. Because it acts as the most objective witness for the textual history of the New Testament, external evidence usually takes priority over internal evidence in establishing the original text. When external evidence is not decisive, internal evidence will have more value in making text-critical decisions. In the contemporary study of textual criticism, three external criteria, date and text-type, geographical distribution, and genealogical relationship, are employed to compare individual manuscripts for their reliability and weight in assessing different variants.[23] The strongest variants will be those readings that are supported by high-quality manuscripts of an early date from diverse geographical locations without apparent genealogical relationships.[24] In practice, earlier manuscripts from the fourth century and before are generally considered to have greater weight than later manuscripts, while later manuscripts until the tenth century may also have some measure of importance.[25] Furthermore, manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-type are commonly regarded as the superior witness to the original Greek text of the New Testament and are widely recognized to have greater weight than manuscripts of other text-types.[26]

Internal evidence focuses on the features of the New Testament text itself, such as language, style, and context, so as to estimate the probability of a particular textual variant reflecting the original Greek text. Due to its subjective

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22) M. W. Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism", B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes, eds., *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, 2nd ed., New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 771; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 92.

23) M. W. Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism", 771; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 100–102.

24) S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 107–108.

25) Ibid., 104.

26) Ibid., 75–76.

nature, internal evidence normally cannot overrule external evidence in making text-critical judgments. In the contemporary study of textual criticism, two sets of internal criteria, transcriptional probabilities, and intrinsic probabilities, are utilized to select the variant that is closest to the original text.[27] Transcriptional probabilities are concerned with inspecting whether the variation of a variant-unit results from particular scribal tendencies during the transmission of the New Testament text.[28] Intrinsic probabilities are related to analyzing which variant of a variant-unit most conforms to the author's style when writing the New Testament text.[29] Since the probability is inferred from predictions about how the text would have been transmitted or written on the basis of scribal tendencies or the author's style, it is almost impossible to weigh internal evidence with absolute certainty.[30] The strongest variants will be those readings that are least likely to have been altered because of scribal tendencies in transmitting the text and have the most continuity with the author's style in writing the text.[31]

## 4. Text-Critical Analysis

Before progressing to the text-critical analysis, it is necessary to first define and categorize the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 based on the grammatical structure of the Greek language. According to the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the rank scale is used to divide the grammatical structure of a language into a hierarchy of distinct constituents, namely morpheme, word, word group, clause, clause complex, and paragraph. The variant-unit thus can be defined by the rank scale in light of variations at different levels. Variations at

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27) M. W. Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism", 771; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 110.
28) On the one hand, scribes can introduce errors into the text for various reasons. One the other hand, they may sometimes correct what they perceived to be errors in the text. See S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 110, 112.
29) The author's style refers to the variation in language while addressing different social situations. The stylistic continuity includes contextual cohesion, theological coherence, linguistic conformity, and source consistency. See Ibid., 110, 130.
30) Ibid., 110.
31) Ibid., 112, 129.

the word level, the word group level, the clause level, the clause complex level, and the paragraph level respectively refer to variety among the elements of the word, the elements of the word group, the elements of the clause, the elements of the clause complex, and the elements of the paragraph. Therefore, the variant-unit consisting of variations at the word level, the word group level, the clause level, the clause complex level, and the paragraph level respectively can be defined as the word level variant-unit, the word group level variant-unit, the clause level variant-unit, the clause complex level variant-unit, and the paragraph level variant-unit.[32]

Given the complicated nature of the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 which involves many variant-units with different readings,[33] variations can be found at the word level, the word group level, the clause level, the clause complex level, and the paragraph level as presented in the apparatuses of NTG[28] and GNT[5].[34] This paper will only investigate the variation at the paragraph level, namely whether the pericope of the woman caught in adultery as the paragraph level variant-unit was original to or interpolated in John's Gospel. From the perspective of textual criticism as textual reconstruction, this section will conduct a text-critical analysis of John 7:53–8:11 to determine the Johannine originality of this pericope by adopting reasoned eclecticism. To establish the original New Testament text, both external and internal evidence will be evaluated according to the criteria and principles mentioned above.

## 4.1. External Evidence

The external evidence of the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 can be classified into three groups, manuscripts that do not include the pericope,

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32) Ibid., 84; C. S. Stevens, *History of the Pauline Corpus in Texts, Transmissions and Trajectories: A Textual Analysis of Manuscripts from the Second to the Fifth Century*, Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 54–57.

33) In the study of New Testament textual criticism, it is necessary to distinguish between a variant-unit and a reading. A variant-unit is a section of the Greek New Testament that has different forms of Greek text in different manuscripts, whereas a reading is an individual variant form of Greek text that constitutes a variant-unit. See S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 81.

34) For details about the textual variants involved in John 7:53–8:11, see the apparatuses of NTG[28] and GNT[5].

manuscripts that include the pericope with suspicion, and manuscripts that include the pericope without suspicion. For the textual reconstruction of the New Testament, it is generally acknowledged that only the manuscripts before the tenth century should be considered as the significant witness that contributes to the determination of the original reading. As a result, this section will concentrate on the manuscripts with continuous Greek text before the tenth century, which will suffice for the analysis of the paper.

Most manuscripts with continuous Greek text before the tenth century do not have John 7:53–8:11. Papyrus 66 (third century/Alexandrian text-type),[35] papyrus 75 (third century/Alexandrian text-type),[36] Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century/Alexandrian text-type),[37] Codex Vaticanus (fourth century/Alexandrian text-type),[38] Codex Regius (eighth century/Alexandrian text-type),[39] Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus (sixth century/Byzantine text-type),[40] Codex

35) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, E. F. Rhodes, trans., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 100; J. Chapa, "The Early Text of John", C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, eds. *The Early Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 147; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56–57.

36) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 101; J. Chapa, "The Early Text of John", 145; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 58–59.

37) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 107; J. Chapa, "The Early Text of John", 155; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 58–67.

38) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 101; J. Chapa, "The Early Text of John", 155; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 67–69.

39) The Greek text of Codex Regius, a manuscript of the Gospels (nearly complete), represents the Alexandrian text-type. The text of this manuscript frequently agrees with Codex Vadcanus although it badly written by a scribe with many ignorant errors. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 77.

40) The Greek text of Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus predominantly belongs to the Byzantine text-type but contains a number of readings with earlier text-types. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 77, 79.

Borgianus (fifth century/Alexandrian text-type),[41] Codex Freerianus (fifth century/Alexandrian text-type),[42] Codex Sangallensis (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[43] Codex Koridethi (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[44] Codex Athous Laurae (eighth or ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[45] Majuscule 0141 (tenth century/eclectic text-type),[46] Minuscule 33 (ninth century/Alexandrian text-type),[47] Minuscule 565 (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[48] and

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41) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 80.

42) The Greek text of Codex Freerianus has mixed text-types. The text of John represents the Alexandrian text-type. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 80.

43) The Greek text of Codex Sangallensis, a manuscript of the Gospels (complete with the exception of John 19:17–35), has mixed text-types. The text of Mark represents the Alexandrian text-type, which is similar to that of Codex Regius. The text of Matthew, Luke, and John represents the Byzantine text-type. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 82–83.

44) The Greek text of Codex Koridethi, a manuscript of the Gospels, belongs to the Byzantine text-type. Codex Koridethi is roughly and inelegantly written by a scribe who was unfamiliar with Greek, which might reduce the reliability of this manuscript. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 83.

45) The Greek text of Codex Athous Laurae, a manuscript of most New Testament books, has mixed text-types. The text of Mark mainly represents the Alexandrian text-type but have some readings with the Western text-type. The text of other Gospels represents the Byzantine text-type. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 118; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 84–85.

46) According to Aland's categories of New Testament manuscripts, the Greek text of Majuscule 0141 is classified into Category III as the eclectic text-type. Most textual critics do not regard Majuscule 0141 as a significant manuscript. It can be inferred that the text-type of this manuscript is inferior to the Alexandrian text-type. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 122.

47) The Greek text of Minuscule 33 excellently represents the Alexandrian text-type but shows the influence of the Byzantine text-type in Acts and the Pauline Epistles. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The*

Minuscule 1424 (ninth or tenth century/Byzantine text-type)[49] do not bear the pericope. Although the part that might bear the pericope is defective in Codices Alexandrinus and Ephraemi, the missing leaves of both codices are highly unlikely to possess the pericope because of the limited space.[50] Thus Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century/Byzantine text-type)[51] and Codex Ephraemi (fifth century/Alexandrian text-type)[52] can also be counted as manuscripts that do not have John 7:53–8:11.

Some manuscripts with continuous Greek text before the tenth century have John 7:53–8:11 but indicate the pericope as the suspicious text with asterisks or obeli. Codex Vaticanus 354 (tenth century/Byzantine text-type)[53] records the

_Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 87–88.

48) K. Aland and B. Aland, _The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism_, 133; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, _The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 89.

49) K. Aland and B. Aland, _The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism_, 135; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, _The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 90–91.

50) B. M. Metzger, _A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament_, 4th Rev. ed., 2nd ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1994), 187.

51) The Greek text of Codex Alexandrinus has mixed text-types. The text of the Gospels represents the oldest examples of the Byzantine text-type, but the text of the other New Testament books represents the Alexandrian text-type, ranking along with Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus as the superior witness to the original New Testament text. See K. Aland and B. Aland, _The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism_, 109; C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, "Introduction: In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament", C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, eds., _The Early Text of the New Testament_ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, _The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 67.

52) The Greek text of Codex Ephraemi, which has been erased during the twelfth century and many sheets has been rewritten, frequently agrees with the secondary Alexandrian text-type but also has the features of all the major text-types. Despite its relatively earlier date, the value of Codex Ephraemi is much less than expected. See K. Aland and B. Aland, _The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism_, 109; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, _The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 69–70.

53) K. Aland and B. Aland, _The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism_, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, _The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration_, 80.

complete John 7:53–8:11, while Codex Basilensis (eighth century/Byzantine text-type)[54] records only John 8:2–11 and Codex Tischendorfianus III (ninth century/Byzantine text-type)[55] records only John 8:3–11. In spite of having the pericope, these manuscripts explicitly indicate its dubious originality.

Several manuscripts with continuous Greek text before the tenth century have John 7:53–8:11 as the authentic text. Codex Bezae (fifth century/Western text-type),[56] Codex Boreelianus (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[57] Codex Seidelianus I (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[58] Codex Seidelianus II (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[59] Codex Campianus (ninth century/Byzantine text-type),[60] and Minuscule 892 (ninth century/Alexandrian text-type)[61]

54) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 110; B. M. Metzgerand B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 74.

55) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 118; B. M. Metzgerand B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 83.

56) The Greek text of Codex Bezae represents the Western text-type. The textual feature of Codex Bezae is characterized by the additions, omissions, and alterations of the text, especially in Luke and Acts, which leads to many variations from the text of other manuscripts. Thus the reliability of Codex Bezae has to be questioned. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109–110; C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, "Introduction: In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament", 7; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 70–71.

57) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 110; B. M. Metzgerand B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 74.

58) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 110; B. M. Metzgerand B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 74–75.

59) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 110; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 76.

60) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 77.

61) The Greek text of Minuscule 892, a manuscript of the four Gospels, represents the Alexandrian

contain the pericope.

As the external evidence demonstrates, John 7:53–8:11 lacks support from high-quality manuscripts of an early date from diverse geographical locations without apparent genealogical relationships. In general, earlier manuscripts from the fourth century and before as well as manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-type are considered as the superior witness to the original Greek text of the New Testament and are widely recognized to have greater weight than other manuscripts. However, John 7:53–8:11 is absent from almost all these manuscripts except for Minuscule 892, a manuscript of the Alexandrian text-type from the ninth century. It is worth noting that all four manuscripts which are commonly regarded as the best manuscripts of the above list in New Testament textual criticism, Papyrus 66, papyrus 75, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus, do not include John 7:53–8:11. It is true that most earlier manuscripts represent the Alexandrian text-type, but the two earlier manuscripts of the Byzantine text-type, Codex Alexandrinus from the fifth century[62] and Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus from the sixth century,[63] do not include John 7:53–8:11 either. Furthermore, the text without the pericope is testified by several manuscripts of the Alexandrian, Byzantine, and eclectic text-types respectively, while the text with the pericope is primarily testified by the manuscripts of Byzantine text-type with one manuscript each of the Alexandrian and Western text-types. That is to say, the witness against John 7:53–8:11 is more geographically and genetically diverse.

As for the manuscripts that have John 7:53–8:11 as the authentic text, the

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text-type and preserves many remarkable early readings. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 134; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 90.

62) The Greek text of Codex Alexandrinus has mixed text-types. The text of the Gospels represents the oldest examples of the Byzantine text-type. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109; C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, "Introduction: In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament", 7; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 67.

63) The Greek text of Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus predominantly belongs to the Byzantine text-type but contains a number of readings with earlier text-types. See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 113; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 77, 79.

earliest one is Codex Bezae from the fifth century. Codex Bezae represents the Western text-type, a text-type probably aiming at revising and standardizing the text of available manuscripts.[64] In addition, the textual feature of Codex Bezae is characterized by the additions, omissions, and alterations of the text, which leads to many variations from the text of other manuscripts.[65] Apart from Minuscule 892, a manuscript of the Alexandrian text-type from the ninth century, all the other manuscripts containing John 7:53–8:11 represent the Byzantine text-type from the ninth century or after. The Byzantine text-type most likely results from revising and standardizing the text of available manuscripts and tends to include everything. Despite the large quantity of manuscripts, the Byzantine text-type may not be counted as a reliable witness to the original New Testament text.[66] A further indication of its non-original character is that there is no unified narrative and position for John 7:53–8:11 since the pericope involves many variant-units with different readings and has been inserted in various places of the New Testament. From these observations, it can be perceived that John 7:53–8:11 does not belong to the original text of John's Gospel.

The external evidence proposed by the textual critics for the originality of John 7:53–8:11 is not reliable. Hodges tends to verify the originality of John 7:53–8:11 based on the authenticity of the story itself.[67] Even though the story of the woman caught in adultery is authentic, this fact cannot confirm the Johannine originality of the pericope since these are two separate issues. Actually, John 20:30 explicitly declares that not all the stories of Jesus are written in the Gospel. Moreover, as Hodges admits himself, his hypothesis that John 7:53–8:11 must have been omitted in some manuscript traditions at a date earlier than all the surviving manuscripts cannot be decisively proved.[68]

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64) S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 76.

65) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 109–110; C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, "Introduction: In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament", 7; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 70–71.

66) D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 100; S. E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*, Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 31; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 78.

67) Z. C. Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11): The Text", 319–320.

68) Ibid., 331–332.

Robinson, as a proponent of both the Byzantine text-type and the Majority text approach,[69] relies heavily on manuscripts of the Byzantine text-type and establishes the original New Testament text simply based on the majority reading.[70] Consequently, Robinson's conclusion concerning the originality of John 7:53-8:11 is reached according to his observation that a large quantity of manuscripts and lectionaries representing the Byzantine text-type contain the pericope.[71] However, the quality of the Byzantine text-type is greatly inferior to the other text-types and the Majority text approach has been criticized by most biblical scholars due to its inadequate theoretical foundation.[72] Punch appeals to Codex Bezae as the major witness to the Johannine originality of John 7:53-8:11,[73] whereas the text-type and textual features of this manuscript are questionable.[74]

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69) Hodges is also a proponent of the Majority text approach but suggests that the manuscript tradition of each reading should be considered, whereas Robinson insists the validity of the majority reading regardless of other factors. See S. E. Porter, "Textual Criticism", C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 1212; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 91.

70) Robinson argues for the priority of the Byzantine text-type and the credibility of the Majority text approach in many of his works. In the Greek New Testament with the Byzantine textform edited by Robinson and Pierpont, John 7:53-8:11 is included as the original text without any textual note. See M. A. Robinson, "'It's All about Variants' – Unless 'No Longer Written'", D. L. Akin and T. W. Hudgins, eds., *Getting into the Text: New Testament Essays in Honor of David Alan Black* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017), 116–153; M. A. Robinson, "The Case for Byzantine Priority", D. A. Black, ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 125–139; M. A. Robinson, "The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to 'Majority Text' Theory" (Toccoa Falls, GA: Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 8–9, 1991), 1–15; M. A. Robinson, "The Credibility of the Majority Text Theory and its Value for Apologetics" (Nashville, TN: Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 21, 1986.), 1–18; M. A. Robinson and W. G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Southborough: Chilton, 2005).

71) M. A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations regarding the Pericope Adulterae based upon Fresh Collations of nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts Containing the Passage", 35–59; M. A. Robinson, "The Pericope Adulterae: A Johannine Tapestry with Double Interlock", 115–145.

72) S. E. Porter, "Textual Criticism", 1212; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 78, 96; C. S. Stevens, *History of the Pauline Corpus in Texts, Transmissions and Trajectories: A Textual Analysis of Manuscripts from the Second to the Fifth Century*, 31–32.

73) J. D. Punch, "The Piously Offensive Pericope Adulterae", 23–25.

74) K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical*

Because John 7:53–8:11 cannot be found in the earliest and best manuscripts, the textual critics have to rely on the later Greek manuscripts, lectionary texts, early versions, and patristic citations. Most manuscripts containing the pericope are from or after the ninth century and represent the Byzantine text-type, a text-type that has almost been dismissed as a reliable witness to the original New Testament text.[75] Moreover, John 7:53–8:11 is also absent from the early lectionaries, the oldest and best forms of the Syriac and Coptic versions, the Sahidic version, the sub-Achmimic version, the older Bohairic version, the Gothic version, and some manuscripts of the Old Latin, Old Georgian, and Armenian versions. No Greek church fathers before the twelfth century mention the pericope of the woman caught in adultery in their commentaries on John's Gospel.[76] Although Didymus, a fourth-century Alexandrian theologian, records a similar story in his Ecclesiastes commentary, Ehrman has proved the unreliability of this patristic witness.[77] Therefore, the attempts of the textual critics to argue for the originality of John 7:53–8:11 are unsuccessful and the external evidence against the Johannine originality of the pericope appears to be overwhelming.

## 4.2.  Internal Evidence

The internal evidence of the text-critical issue in John 7:53–8:11 involves transcriptional and intrinsic probabilities. For the textual reconstruction of the New Testament, the reading that is least likely to have been altered due to scribal tendencies and has the most continuity with the author's style usually

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Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 109–110; C. E. Hill and M. J. Kruger, "Introduction: In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament", 7; B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration, 70–71; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism, 76.

75) D. C. Parker, The Living Text of the Gospels, 100; S. E. Porter, How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation, 31; S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism, 78.

76) B. M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, 187–188; D. C. Parker, The Living Text of the Gospels, 96.

77) B. D. Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress", 196–220; D. C. Parker, An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts, 343.

reflects the original Greek text. This section will estimate both the transcriptional probabilities of whether the pericope is an omission from or an addition to the text of John's Gospel and the intrinsic probabilities of whether the pericope conforms to the style of John's language with particular attention to its co-text in the discourse unit of John 7:37–8:59.

Regarding transcriptional probabilities, John 7:53–8:11 may be either an omission from or an addition to the text of John's Gospel. As Wasserman verifies, the extant manuscripts without the pericope of the woman caught in adultery reflect scribes' great concern for the fidelity of the text. Given the high quality of these early manuscripts and the nature of the pericope, John 7:53-8:11 is almost impossible to be an unintentional or intentional omission.[78] According to the common scribal practice, the editorial deletion is sternly warned and is regarded as unacceptable. For such an extensive passage like John 7:53-8:11, the scribes are more likely to preserve than to delete the pericope.[79] Closely reviewing patristic witnesses, Knust finds no suspicion from church fathers regarding the misinterpretation and/or misapplication of John 7:53-8:11, which further testifies that the intentional deletion of the pericope is almost impossible.[80] Based on the text-type of the pericope, largely the Byzantine tradition, John 7:53–8:11 might be an early oral tradition of Jesus which was later added to John's Gospel in the second or third century.[81] In line with transcriptional probabilities, John 7:53–8:11 does not belong to the original text of John's Gospel since the pericope is most likely to have been added during the transmission of the New Testament text.

Concerning intrinsic probabilities, the co-text of John 7:53–8:11 must be analyzed to discern whether the pericope conforms to the style of John's language in the immediate context of the text. According to the theory of SFL, co-text is the linguistic units, involving words, clauses, and clause complexes,

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78) B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 189; D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts*, 342; T. Wasserman, "The Strange Case of the Missing Adulteress", 33–63.

79) J. Knust, "'Taking away from': Patristic Evidence and the Omission of the Pericope Adulterae from John's Gospel", 88.

80) Ibid., 87–88.

81) D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, 100; S. E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*, 31.

within a specific discourse that surround a particular point in the discourse.[82]
Previous studies, no matter the minority or majority view, normally concentrate
on whether the style of John 7:53–8:11 in terms of its theme, syntactical
features, and vocabulary accord with the rest of John's Gospel. However, it is
the co-text of the pericope, being its immediate linguistic environment, that
serves as the primary determinant for the originality of John 7:53–8:11. Even
though the pericope of the woman caught in adultery can fit into the broader
context of John's Gospel, John 7:53–8:11 cannot be counted as the original
composition without demonstrating the stylistic continuity with its co-text,
which comprises contextual cohesion, theological coherence, linguistic
conformity, and source consistency.[83]

In light of S. E. Porter's boundary markers of discourse and Robert E.
Longacre's transition markers of episode, namely shift in grammatical person,
shift in verb tense-forms, connective word, temporal expression, locative
expression, circumstances change, and participant switch, John 7:37–8:59
constitutes a discourse unit, in which John 7:53–8:11 is embedded.[84] In the
primary clause of John 7:37, the conjunction δέ is a connective word, which
frequently connects a sequence of related events.[85] The nominal group τῇ
ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς is a temporal expression that suggests a
different time. These markers indicate that John 7:37 introduces a discourse unit.
In the primary clause of John 8:59, the prepositional group ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ is a

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82) C. M. I. M. Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms in Systemic Functional Linguistics*, 74; S. E. Porter,
"Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory", 198; J. T. Reed, *A
Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*,
42.

83) S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 130.

84) Porter identifies shift in grammatical person, shift in verb tense-forms, connective word (e.g.
ἀλλά, γάρ, δέ, καί, οὖν, and τότε), and time word (e.g. μετά, νύν, νύνι, ὅτε, πρίν, πρὸ, and
πρότερος) as boundary markers of discourse. Longacre identifies temporal expression, locative
expression, circumstances change, and participant switch as transition markers of episode. See
R. E. Longacre, "A Top-Down, Template-Driven Narrative Analysis, Illustrated by
Application to Mark's Gospel", S. E. Porter and J. T. Reed, eds., *Discourse Analysis and the
New Testament: Approaches and Results*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament,
Supplement Series 170 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 145; S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the
Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., Biblical Languages, Greek 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic,
1994), 301.

85) J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic
Domains*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible, 1989), 788; S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the
Greek New Testament*, 208.

locative expression that implies a different locale for John 9:1. The conjunction καὶ in John 9:1 is a connective word, which is widely used to conjoin grammatical units with equal status and most likely signifies the start of a new episode in this verse.[86] The nominal groups ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς in John 9:1 and οἱ μαθηταὶ in John 9:2, introducing new participants into the scene, suggest a participant switch from the Jews who tried to stone Jesus in John 8:59. These markers indicate that John 8:59 closes a discourse unit.

Examining the co-text of John 7:53–8:11 in the discourse unit of John 7:37–8:59, the pericope demonstrates stylistic discontinuity at three levels, contextual cohesion, theological coherence, and linguistic conformity. First, it can be perceived from the temporal expression τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς in John 7:37 as well as the narrative in John 7:37–7:52 and John 8:12–8:59 that both these two passages take place on the last day of the festival. Nevertheless, the temporal expression ὄρθρου in John 8:2 signifies that John 8:2–8:11 happens on a different day from the previous narrative. Second, the reduced form αὐτοῖς in John 8:12 does not specify to whom Jesus spoke again, which means that Jesus' interlocutors have been stated in the preceding passage. However, the antecedent of αὐτοῖς with the plural form can only be found in John 7:37–7:52 but not in John 7:53–8:11 since the woman caught in adultery is Jesus' only interlocutor in the final scene of the pericope. That is to say, John 8:12–8:59 is connected with John 7:37–7:52, rather than John 7:53–8:11, to compose the complete narrative of Jesus' last-day teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles. Third, the theological theme of both John 7:37–7:52 and John 8:12–8:59 is concerned with Jesus' identity, whereas that of John 7:53–8:11 is related to Jesus' forgiveness. Fourth, the semantic domains in John 7:53–8:11 are distinct from those in its co-text.[87] Domain 3 "Plants" is used in John 7:53–8:11 but does not occur in John 7:37–7:52 nor John 8:12–8:59. Domain 17 "Stances and Events Related to Stances" is frequently used in John 7:53–8:11 but only seldom appears in John 7:37–7:52 and is not adopted in John 8:12–8:59. Domain 10 "Kinship Terms," domain 12 "Supernatural Beings and

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86) J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 810; S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 211.

87) The semantic domains in John 7:53–8:11, John 7:37–7:52, and John 8:12–8:59 are analyzed according to *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida.

Powers," domain 14 "Physical Events and States," domain 23 "Physiological
Processes and States," domain 25 "Attitudes and Emotions," domain 28
"Know," domain "31 Hold a View, Believe, Trust," domain 57 "Possess,
Transfer, Exchange," domain 63 "Whole, Unite, Part, Divide," domain 64
"Comparison," and domain 70 "Real, Unreal" never occur in John 7:53–8:11 but
are adopted in both John 7:37–7:52 and John 8:12–8:59. Domain 13 "Be,
Become, Exist, Happen," domain 69 "Affirmation, Negation," and domain 90
"Case" appear only once in John 7:53–8:11 but are frequently adopted in both
John 7:37–7:52 and John 8:12–8:59.[88] Fifth, as many textual critics have
affirmed, the vocabulary of John 7:53–8:11 apparently differs from not only that
of its co-text but also that of John's Gospel.[89] Sixth, John 7:53–8:11 presents
some unique syntactical features that are nonexistent in either its co-text or the
rest of John's Gospel. For example, the pericope uses the conjunction δέ at a
much higher frequency.[90] In accordance with intrinsic probabilities, John
7:53–8:11 does not belong to the original text of John's Gospel since the
pericope has no continuity with John's narrative in its co-text.

The internal evidence proposed by the textual critics for the originality of
John 7:53–8:11 is not convincing. Hodges' exposition of the passage is done
based on the presupposition that the pericope is an original part of John's
Gospel,[91] hence the exposition cannot be counted as valid internal evidence.
Heil fails to inspect the linguistic and literary linkages between John 7:53-8:11
and its co-text in the discourse unit of John 7:37–8:59,[92] which are essential for
assessing the Johannine originality of the pericope. Furthermore, Daniel B.
Wallace provides cogent proof that the four linguistic and five literary linkages
between John 7:53-8:11 and the rest of John's Gospel identified by Heil in fact
further attest to the non-Johannine nature of the pericope.[93] Both Robinson and

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88) For details of semantic domains in John 7:53–8:11, John 7:37–7:52, and John 8:12–8:59, see
Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3.
89) B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to
the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 188; D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the
New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts*; D. B. Wallace, "Reconsidering 'The Story of
Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered'", *New Testament Studies* 39 (1993), 291–292.
90) D. B. Wallace, "Reconsidering 'The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered'", 291.
91) Z. C. Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11): Exposition", 41–53.
92) J. P. Heil, "A Rejoinder to 'Reconsidering "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress
Reconsidered"'", 361–366; J. P. Heil, "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress (John 7,53–8,11)
Reconsidered", 182–191.

Punch seek to verify the stylistic continuity of John 7:53–8:11 with the broader context of John's Gospel,[94] whereas it is the stylistic continuity of the pericope with its co-text that serves as the primary determinant for the originality of the pericope. Therefore, the endeavors of the textual critics to argue for the originality of John 7:53–8:11 are unsuccessful and the internal evidence against the Johannine originality of the pericope appears to be more substantial.

## 5. Conclusion

According to the text-critical analysis above, it can be concluded that both the external and internal evidence testify against the originality of John 7:53–8:11, the pericope of the woman caught in adultery. Since this text-critical analysis is conducted for the purpose of reconstructing the original Greek text of the New Testament, this paper proposes that John 7:53–8:11 should be removed from the text of John's Gospel in the Greek New Testament and modern translations. As the non-original text, the pericope remaining in its usual place interrupts the Tabernacles discourse in John's Gospel and will mislead contemporary readers. Given the fact that John 7:53–8:11 has been included in the New Testament for such a long history, the pericope can be placed in a footnote at the end of the Gospel with the textual note indicating its non-Johannine originality.

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93) D. B. Wallace, "Reconsidering 'The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered'", 290–296.
94) J. D. Punch, "The Piously Offensive Pericope Adulterae", 7–31; M. A. Robinson, "The Pericope Adulterae: A Johannine Tapestry with Double Interlock", 115–145.

Appendix 1: Semantic Domains in John 7:53–8:11

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 92 Discourse Referentials | 45 |
| 89 Relations | 25 |
| 33 Communication | 16 |
| 67 Time | 10 |
| 84 Spacial Extensions | 8 |
| 15 Linear Movement | 8 |
| 83 Spacial Positions | 7 |
| 17 Stances and Events Related to Stances | 5 |
| 93 Names of Persons and Places | 4 |
| 9 People | 4 |
| 88 Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior | 4 |
| 85 Existence in Space | 3 |
| 2 Natural Substances | 3 |
| 60 Number | 3 |
| 59 Quantity | 2 |
| 7 Constructions | 2 |
| 11 Groups and Classes of Persons and Members of Such Groups and Classes | 2 |
| 37 Control, Rule | 2 |
| 56 Courts and Legal Procedures | 2 |
| 3 Plants | 1 |
| 69 Affirmation, Negation | 1 |
| 90 Case | 1 |
| 53 Religious Activities | 1 |
| 13 Be, Become, Exist, Happen | 1 |
| 42 Perform, Do | 1 |
| 87 Status | 1 |
| 68 Aspect | 1 |
| 20 Violence, Harm, Destroy, Kill | 1 |
| 1 Geographical Objects and Features | 1 |
| 27 Learn | 1 |
| 8 Body, Body Parts, and Body Products | 1 |

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 58 Nature, Class, Example | 1 |
| 24 Sensory Events and States | 1 |

Appendix 2: Semantic Domains in John 7:37–52

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 92 Discourse Referentials | 70 |
| 89 Relations | 34 |
| 33 Communication | 21 |
| 93 Names of Persons and Places | 9 |
| 69 Affirmation, Negation | 9 |
| 67 Time | 8 |
| 90 Case | 7 |
| 84 Spacial Extensions | 7 |
| 15 Linear Movement | 6 |
| 53 Religious Activities | 6 |
| 13 Be, Become, Exist, Happen | 5 |
| 11 Groups and Classes of Persons and Members of Such Groups and Classes | 5 |
| 31 Hold a View, Believe, Trust | 4 |
| 63 Whole, Unite, Part, Divide | 4 |
| 87 Status | 3 |
| 85 Existence in Space | 3 |
| 23 Physiological Processes and States | 3 |
| 68 Aspect | 3 |
| 61 Sequence | 2 |
| 83 Spacial Positions | 2 |
| 1 Geographical Objects and Features | 2 |
| 12 Supernatural Beings and Powers | 2 |
| 28 Know | 2 |
| 9 People | 2 |
| 37 Control, Rule | 2 |
| 35 Help, Care For | 2 |
| 27 Learn | 2 |

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 17 Stances and Events Related to Stances | 2 |
| 56 Courts and Legal Procedures | 2 |
| 51 Festivals | 1 |
| 58 Nature, Class, Example | 1 |
| 26 Psychological Faculties | 1 |
| 14 Physical Events and States | 1 |
| 2 Natural Substances | 1 |
| 57 Possess, Transfer, Exchange | 1 |
| 60 Number | 1 |
| 10 Kinship Terms | 1 |
| 24 Sensory Events and States | 1 |
| 70 Real, Unreal | 1 |
| 39 Hostility, Strife | 1 |
| 64 Comparison | 1 |
| 25 Attitudes and Emotions | 1 |

Appendix 3: Semantic Domains in John 8:12–59

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 92 Discourse Referentials | 298 |
| 89 Relations | 111 |
| 33 Communication | 79 |
| 90 Case | 40 |
| 69 Affirmation, Negation | 37 |
| 13 Be, Become, Exist, Happen | 36 |
| 93 Names of Persons and Places | 30 |
| 67 Time | 26 |
| 15 Linear Movement | 23 |
| 83 Spacial Positions | 19 |
| 72 True, False | 19 |
| 12 Supernatural Beings and Powers | 18 |
| 10 Kinship Terms | 16 |
| 28 Know | 13 |
| 36 Guide, Discipline, Follow | 8 |

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 88 Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior | 8 |
| 24 Sensory Events and States | 8 |
| 85 Existence in Space | 7 |
| 58 Nature, Class, Example | 7 |
| 74 Able, Capable | 7 |
| 87 Status | 6 |
| 9 People | 6 |
| 30 Think | 6 |
| 31 Hold a View, Believe, Trust | 6 |
| 57 Possess, Transfer, Exchange | 6 |
| 23 Physiological Processes and States | 6 |
| 37 Control, Rule | 6 |
| 25 Attitudes and Emotions | 6 |
| 91 Discourse Markers | 5 |
| 84 Spacial Extensions | 4 |
| 20 Violence, Harm, Destroy, Kill | 4 |
| 59 Quantity | 3 |
| 42 Perform, Do | 3 |
| 60 Number | 3 |
| 7 Constructions | 3 |
| 14 Physical Events and States | 2 |
| 41 Behavior and Related States | 2 |
| 71 Mode | 2 |
| 27 Learn | 2 |
| 32 Understand | 2 |
| 64 Comparison | 2 |
| 68 Aspect | 2 |
| 70 Real, Unreal | 2 |
| 53 Religious Activities | 2 |
| 6 Artifacts | 1 |
| 11 Groups and Classes of Persons and Members of Such Groups and Classes | 1 |
| 8 Body, Body Parts, and Body Products | 1 |
| 81 Spacial Dimensions | 1 |

| Semantic Domains | Instances |
|---|---|
| 78 Degree | 1 |
| 63 Whole, Unite, Part, Divide | 1 |
| 2 Natural Substances | 1 |

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<Abstract>

# A Text-Critical Analysis of John 7:53-8:11
# with a Focus on Its Stylistic Discontinuity

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John 7:53–8:11, the pericope of the woman caught in adultery, is a well-known text-critical issue in the New Testament. The originality of this pericope as part of John's Gospel has long been investigated by biblical scholars. Most contemporary biblical scholars argue that the pericope of the woman caught in adultery was not an original composition of John's Gospel. NTG[28] and GNT[5] both identify John 7:53–8:11 not only as a later addition to the original Greek text by placing double square brackets around the passage but also as a nonsignificant variant for textual reconstruction by providing a negative apparatus and assigning the A rating in the apparatus. Almost all translations indicate John 7:53–8:11 to be a non-original text through various means. Recent commentaries on John's Gospel generally deny the possibility of John 7:53–8:11 being part of the original part. On the other hand, some textual critics still hold to the Johannine originality of John 7:53–8:11 and offer various textual evidence.

However, the extant studies of both views only focus on whether John 7:53–8:11 can fit into the broader context of John's Gospel but fail to examine the stylistic continuity of the pericope with its co-text. According to the principle of modern linguistics, it is the co-text of John 7:53–8:11, as its immediate linguistic context, that serves as the primary determinant for the Johannine authenticity of the pericope. This paper conducts a text-critical analysis on John 7:53–8:11, adopting reasoned eclecticism to evaluate both external and internal evidence and paying particular attention to whether the pericope demonstrates the stylistic continuity with its co-text. Based on this analysis, the paper argues that John 7:53–8:11 has no canonical authority. Since this text-critical analysis is conducted for the purpose of reconstructing the original Greek text of the New Testament, this paper proposes that John 7:53–8:11 should be removed from the text of John's Gospel in the Greek New Testament and modern translations. As

the non-canonical text, the pericope remaining in its usual place interrupts the Tabernacles discourse in John's Gospel and will mislead contemporary readers. Given the fact that John 7:53–8:11 has been included in the New Testament for such a long history, the pericope can be placed in a footnote at the end of the Gospel with the textual note indicating its non-Johannine originality.