

# Comparison of Extant Historical Documents

*adapted from ESV Study Bible, p. 2588*

Comparing the NT text to some better known ancient authors, it still has no equal. The chart below illustrates this by comparing the copies of five GrecoRoman historians' works with the NT. If one is skeptical about what the original NT text said, that skepticism needs to be multiplied many times over when it comes to the writings of all other ancient Greek and Latin authors. Although it is true that there are some doubts about the precise wording of the original in some places, NT textual criticism has an unparalleled abundance of materials to work with, in terms of both quantity and age of manuscripts. Nothing else comes close.

Histories	Date of origin	Oldest manuscripts	Number surviving
Livy	59 BC - AD 17	4th century	27
Tacitus	AD 56-120	9th century	3
Suetonius	AD 69-140	9th century	200+
Thucydides	460-400 BC	1st century AD	20
Herodotus	484-425 BC	1st century AD	75
New Testament	40s-late 1st century AD	c. 100-150 AD	c. 5,700 (counting only Greek manuscripts) (plus more than 10,000 in Latin, more than a million quotations from the church fathers, etc.)

see also <http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence> for addt'l support for NT reliability