

ScriptureFonts: A Review

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WordPerfect is like the English language; it is often arbitrary and inconsistent but it has virtually become the lingua franca of the word processing world. About sixty percent of people doing word processing are using *WordPerfect*.¹ For office and corporate use, *WordPerfect* is among the most powerful, feature laden programs available today. However, for some complex academic applications, *WordPerfect* provides meager support.

One such application is the processing of foreign characters. Access to Western European characters via alternate keyboards is not supported by default. Users requiring frequent access to such characters are forced to go through the laborious process of designing their own keyboard. While non-Roman character sets (e.g., Greek, Hebrew and Cyrillic) are provided, a satisfactory means for entering, displaying and printing these character sets is not.²

Rest assured that the prospects for *WordPerfect* users to enjoy painless non-Roman text manipulation with acceptable printed results is not entirely bleak. For example, if biblical languages are required, Zondervan Publishing's *ScriptureFonts* offers a solution. With the right hardware and software combination this package brings full Greek and Hebrew support to *WordPerfect 5.0/5.1*.

What are the system requirements for *ScriptureFonts*? First, either *WordPerfect 5.0* (dated later than January 1989) or *WordPerfect 5.1* is required. Second, only EGA, VGA and the Hercules Graphics Card Plus or Hercules InColor Card are supported.³ Standard Hercules Graphics or CGA cards are not.⁴ Third, dot matrix printer support is provided for Epson FX and LQ models, Toshiba 321SL, 341SL and 351SX models and a variety of Panasonic models, some which need a memory upgrade.⁵ Printers that provide true emulation compatibility with these printers are also supported.⁶ A full range of Hewlett-Packard laser printer drivers are included along with PostScript Greek and Hebrew fonts. Finally, a hard-disk with between 350K and 2MB of free space is required.⁷

Program installation is automated. However, configuring the package for daily use requires a few steps which may be intimidating for some. First time configuration involves loading the *ScriptureFonts* TSR,⁸ loading *WordPerfect*, and then installing a keyboard, screen font, graphics driver, screen driver and a printer (all within *WordPerfect*). Installing laser printer drivers requires more effort than does installing dot-matrix drivers, especially if other soft font packages are being used. The manual, however, provides a lucid presentation of the steps necessary to get things working.

Once configured, *ScriptureFonts* is user-friendly. After the *ScriptureFonts* keyboard is selected (via *WordPerfect*'s Setup Screen) <ALT> and <CTRL> combinations allow the user to toggle between English, Greek and Hebrew keyboards. Other key combinations pop up such things as a brief online manual (<ALT M>), diagrams of the Greek and Hebrew keyboard layouts (<ALT K> and <ALT Y>) and a summary of all *ScriptureFonts* commands (<ALT S>). A single letter indicator found at the bottom right of the screen displays the active keyboard.

Loading *ScriptureFonts* does not impede the normal functioning of *WordPerfect* in any way. (Note, however, that because *ScriptureFonts* runs in the 512 character, 8 colour mode, those who prefer to use a sixteen colour display will have to sacrifice some colour.) The full gambit of *WordPerfect*'s editing features remain available, and ready for use with Roman text. Many also function well with Greek and Hebrew text. For example, copying, moving or deleting blocked portions of Greek and Hebrew is routine, and *ScriptureFonts*' "meta-macro" feature permits searching and replacing of Greek and Hebrew words. In other cases, Greek and Hebrew text is treated less graciously than Roman text. To cite two examples: editing extensive pieces of a block of Hebrew can produce some awkward formatting problems (see below), and Greek and Hebrew words are ignored by a word count.

ScriptureFonts excels in its implementation of Greek. <ALT G> toggles into the Greek keyboard. A full Hellenistic font (including iota subscript, final sigma, digamma, stigma, koppa and sampi), diacriticals and punctuation marks are supported. <CTRL> combinations permit entry of complex characters. For example, iota subscript is entered by typing <CTRL I> after the letter under which it is to appear. Typing <CTRL R>, <CTRL A> enters a rough breathing mark and an acute accent over the previous character.⁹ Mixing English and Greek fonts within a single line of text, or editing previously entered Greek text presents no special

problems. Furthermore, all letters and diacriticals are visible on screen in the standard *WordPerfect* text editing mode.¹⁰

ScriptureFonts' implementation of Hebrew, though less successful, is still rather impressive. A fully pointed Hebrew text, with final forms, maqqef, dagesh and mappiq. A push-right mode (<ALT I>) allows smooth entry of Hebrew text into a line of English or Greek text. A full right to left Hebrew entry mode is also supported (<ALT H>). Vowels are entered via "regular" keystrokes (e.g., the segol is entered by pressing "e"). Consonantal markings and final forms are entered via <SHIFT> and <ALT> combinations.¹¹

The following shortcomings, however, must be noted. First, vowels are not visible in *WordPerfect*'s standard editing mode. Rather, as part of an overstrike character pair they can be viewed in the Reveal Codes Mode or in the View Document Mode.¹² Second, right and left justified Hebrew text is not supported (one must be satisfied with a ragged left margin).¹³ Finally, as noted, only limited editing within a block of Hebrew text is permitted. Adding more than a few characters can cause the block to be miswrapped. This makes preparing large chunks of Hebrew text very frustrating indeed.

The printed output from *ScriptureFonts* is, of course, printer dependent. One will notice that printing is slower because fonts are downloaded to the printer at print time. Altering the appearance of Hebrew and Greek text from normal to italic or underline produces mixed results. For example, my Epson LQ 800 produced very nice underlined and italicized Greek text, but Hebrew text could not be italicized and underlining was inconsistent. Neither Greek nor Hebrew could be printed in bold typeface.

Scripturefonts comes packaged with a stand-alone utility that translates tagged Greek and Hebrew ASCII files in the Packard-TLG-Beta format, the Michigan-Claremont-Westminster format and the NIV^{PC} format into *WordPerfect* files that display properly with *ScriptureFonts*. Examples of coded text are included.

In the final analysis, *ScriptureFonts* is a quality program that does some amazing things within the *WordPerfect* environment. It is relatively easy to install and easy to use. It provides biblical language support while at the same time preserving the powerful text editing and graphics features of *WordPerfect*. For those possessing the prerequisite hardware, and requiring Greek, and occasional Hebrew font support, the combination of

WordPerfect and *ScriptureFonts* is highly recommended. However, if you wish to perform extensive editing of Hebrew text you should be aware that *ScriptureFonts*' implementation of Hebrew is not without its shortcomings.

Notes

1. Versions of *WordPerfect* are available for Macintosh and NeXT systems as well as for a variety of IBM compatible operating systems and environments (e.g., OS/2, UNIX, DOS and *Microsoft Windows*). In this context we are concerned only with *WordPerfect 5.0/5.1* for DOS. This is the most popular version by far.
2. This is as much a weakness of the IBM PC and its Disk Operating System as it is of *WordPerfect*. The IBM PC's display is ROM based. That is, characters are essentially hard-coded into the video card. Only the high end video cards (EGA, VGA and Hercules Plus) provide ramfont capabilities which allow applications to download non-Roman characters for display.
3. The manual reports that *ScriptureFonts* will not support VGA or EGA cards driving monochrome monitors.
4. These graphics adapters do not work because they do not accept downloadable characters. If you are uncertain as to what graphics adapter you have installed in your system, run the *WordPerfect* program WPINFO which is packaged with version 5.1.
5. For example, the KX-P1180, KX-P1124 and KX-P1524 all require a memory upgrade.
6. Many printers that claim full compatibility with one of these printers may not in fact be fully compatible.
7. How much hard-disk space is used by *ScriptureFonts* depends primarily upon what printers are installed. The basic *ScriptureFonts* files and the Epson LQ printer drivers take up 325K of disk space.

8. A TSR (terminate-and-stay-resident) program loads into RAM and continues to perform a function (or, at least, remains memory resident and ready to perform a function when accessed by a "hot key") while another program is being used. The *ScriptureFonts* TSR utilizes about 7K of memory.
9. To delete or alter a particular diacritical mark both the diacritical and the letter to which it is attached must be re-entered.
10. EGA and VGA adaptors do not possess enough memory to hold a complete set of downloaded Greek and Hebrew fonts. Therefore, the Greek font consists of characters from the ROM chip as well as those downloaded from *ScriptureFonts* to the video adapter. What this means is that the Greek characters will not be displayed in a completely uniform fashion. Rather, some characters will be positioned one or two pixels higher than others. This has no effect upon the printed output.
11. Literal vowels, used in some scholarly contexts, are also supported.
12. Text can be edited in the former but not in the latter.
13. The Hebrew left to right word wrap zone is set via a command line switch given when the *ScriptureFonts*' TSR is loaded. For example, typing SF /w2.5 will set the wrap zone to 2.5 inches. (*WordPerfect* must be configured to use inches as its default units of measure for the word wrap to work properly.)