

A simple history of NT textual development

Introductory note

This is not an especially original piece of work. I am deeply indebted to a number of specialists in this field, people who have studied textual matters for decades in a professional capacity. The argumentation, development, selection of information, layout and design is all mine, but much of the root data on actual texts is derived from other scholars, for which I express my gratitude. A glossary is provided at the end of this paper.

Manuscripts (MSS.)

Printing was invented in 1540, supposedly by Johannes Gutenberg; therefore, three quarters of the Bible's history is dependent upon hand written copies.

However, the NT is the most authenticated piece of ancient literature. The number of available mss. is greater than any other ancient work of writing. Also the earliest extant mss. of the NT were written much nearer to the date of the autographs than virtually any other piece of ancient literature.

For instance: there are nearly 5000 Greek mss., about 200 contain all of the NT. There are 8000 Latin and 1000 other language versions. The oldest were written within 300 years of the close of the NT. Some fragments of the NT MSS. date to within 100 years. In the case of classical works, the oldest mss. of classical Greek authors is a 1000 years or more after the author's death; of the Latin writers, the minimum is 300 years for Virgil. MSS evidence is also much slimmer: for Aeschylus - 50 MSS., for Sophocles - 100 MSS., for the *Annals of Tacitus* - 1 MS. and for the *Poems of Catullus* - 3 MSS.

Textual Criticism

Textual Criticism is: *'the study of copies of any written work of which the autographs (the original) is unknown, with the purpose of ascertaining the original text.'*¹ It could simply be described as the science of reconstructing the original text by analysing the available MSS.

There are hundreds of extant Greek NT texts but it would be hard to find two in all respects alike. There are variations in spelling, order, actual words and even in whole verses. This springs from the nature of copying. The variant readings are not 'errors' in the sense of doctrinal, moral and historical inaccuracies; but there are about 200,000 variant readings in the available MSS. This is not as bad as it seems; e.g. if a single word is misspelled in the same way in 3000 separate MSS., it is counted as 3000 variant readings. It is in reality, however, only one.

These readings do not involve any moral or doctrinal teaching of the Bible. Someone has calculated that there is a textual variant for one word in seven, but only one in a thousand makes any difference to the sense of the verse.

Most of the variant readings are unintentional copying errors (omitting or repeating letters and words, transposition of letters etc.). Sometimes copyists would write from dictation to enable multiple copies to be made at once. This produced audible errors. Many Greek

¹ Greenlee, p11.

words could be easily confused (e.g. 'your' = *hemon*, 'our' = *humon*). Sometimes changes were intentional i.e. the correction of grammar, historical or perceived doctrinal matters.

The essential difference between advocates of the traditional text and advocates of the modern critical text is that the former suggest that the greater the number of MSS. in agreement, the greater the possibility of ascertaining the true text, especially if those MSS. cover a wide geographical area. The latter insist that the older documents have fewer copies intervening in the gap between the autographs and the MSS. in question, therefore, are more accurate. However, although this is logical, it is possible that old MSS. resulted from many copies and that later MSS. from few copies.

Examples of discrepancies (Variants)

1 Tim 3:16 - AV: God was manifest in the flesh (ΘΣ = '*theos*'). RSV: He was manifest in the flesh (ΟΣ = '*he who*').

2 Pt 2:18 - AV: were clean (i.e. completely) escaped (ΟΝΤΩΣ). RSV: have barely escaped (ΟΛΙΤΩΣ = scarcely).

Families or text-types

Careful comparison has shown that many of the texts agree in their choice of a certain proportion of disputed readings. These may be grouped together. As scribe after scribe copied the text, there developed certain traditions. If all the MSS. of a group which generally agree, preserve a reading not found elsewhere, it is evident, either that the reading was original and other transcriptions are erroneous; or that the copyist of some MS. from which the whole group developed, introduced this variant into the text. Conversely, if two or three MSS. of such a group have readings unknown to the earlier members of the group, it will be probable that the responsible error was made in some MS. later than these earlier members. In this way some variant readings are shown to be late and irrelevant, others to be early and possibly original.

There have been various attempts to define text-types (see later) but today these have been reduced to two families: the Byzantine (which undergirds the KJV, the NKJV and the new World English Bible), plus the Alexandrian (which is the basis of all other modern versions after 1881).

Pre-Reformation summary

The original MSS. were written by the apostles and their delegates and in due course of time these wore out and have now become lost. However, it was the professional job of scribes to accurately copy documents and multiply them. These were copied on to papyrus rolls where available or, more expensively, vellum sheets.

After the death of the apostles there were various copied Greek MSS. available, as well as different Bible versions in various languages (e.g. Coptic, Syrian). The early Church Fathers (theologians) had access to some of these and their quotes of them are valuable to subsequent Bible translators and textual scientists.

Over time the common Bible version became the Latin Vulgate of Jerome (as Latin had superseded Greek as the lingua franca) and this became the authorised source for the Roman Church (formalised in 1546 at the Council of Trent).

Until the Greek text of Erasmus was published and printed, the ordinary person had little access to the Bible in Latin, let alone any Greek text for the NT. Since most people could not read Latin, the Bible was a closed book to them. There were a few exceptions, such as the partial translations from Latin of Alfred, Bede and others into English² and the full translation of Wycliffe / Nicholas of Hereford / Purvey (1388, 1395).³ Copying Wycliffe's work resulted in persecution. In general, no ordinary person had a vernacular whole Bible translation in medieval times. A few scholarly monks could read it in Latin.

Until the invention of printing just before the Reformation, Greek MSS. were like gold dust and only certain monasteries and the libraries of princes would have any, where texts were copied and translations made for scholars.

Subsequent to the publication of Erasmus' Greek text, and other works, scholars were able to make accurate translations of the NT into their own languages and once more, after 1,000 years, the ordinary person had access to the Scriptures. This was the single most important feature of the Reformation.

But how did the development of discovering what was in the original texts take place?

Erasmus

Biography

- Desiderius Erasmus [1466-1536] was born in Gouda, Holland, but later resided in Rotterdam. He was an illegitimate son of a priest who became a monk at 21 and a priest at 26.
- He was a self-taught classical scholar, becoming interested in the Greek New Testament at 34.
- In 1511 he published the famous satirical work, *Praise of Folly*, ridiculing hypocritical church practices.
- His first edition of the Greek New Testament appeared in 1516, when he was 50.
- The Reformation began the next year with Luther's *95 Theses*, but, despite his criticisms of Roman Catholicism, Erasmus was not a true believer, who remained in Romanism. Luther criticised Erasmus' Pelagian defence of free-will in his book, *The Bondage of the Will*.

Texts published

- *The entire New Testament, diligently researched and corrected by Erasmus of Rotterdam, &c*. Basel: Johann Froben, 1516.
- His second edition (1519) corrected numerous typographical errors, and added more notes. Mill observed around 400 changes in the text.

² Adhelm [640-709] translated the Psalms; Egbert [c.700] translated the Gospels; Bede [674-735] translated John; Alfred [849-901] translated various short passages including the Ten Commandments; Aelfric [c. 1000] translated part of the OT; Orm [c. 1200] produced a paraphrase of the Gospels and Acts; William of Shoreham [c. 1320] translated some parts into a Southern English dialect and Rolle [1320—1340] translated the Psalms into a Northern English dialect.

³ Wycliffe completed his translation of the NT in 1380, based upon the Latin Vulgate. The OT was finished by Nicholas in 1388 after Wycliffe's death. John Purvey revised this in 1395, removing the Latinisms and replacing them with English idioms. Few would have had access to this.

- In his third edition (1522) Erasmus inserted the '*Comma Johanneum*' in 1 John 5:7, (from the 16th c. *Codex Montfortianus*) simply to avoid the criticism which had followed his earlier faithfulness to his MSS.⁴
- The fourth edition (1527) generally improved the text, adopting many readings of the *Complutensian Polyglot* for the book of Revelation, and also included a third column giving the text of the Vulgate beside his own Latin version.
- The fifth edition of 1535 differed very little from the fourth, except that the Vulgate was left out, reducing the size.

Textual sources

- Erasmus' Greek text was based upon three cursive manuscripts available to him in Basle, which date from, the 12th - 15th century. He also used readings from three other cursives at Basle of roughly the same dates.
- For his second edition (1519) he also consulted another 12th century cursive.
- He also used his notes on readings of the Latin Vulgate, Patristic quotations, and other unspecified Greek copies compiled in preparation for his revision of the Latin Vulgate.
- The cursive 12th c. manuscript for the book of Revelation, was scarcely legible in places, and lacked the final leaf containing the last six verses of the book, which he translated into Greek from the Latin Vulgate. In various other places in the Apocalypse he followed the readings of the Vulgate in opposition to the Greek, as he did in a few cases elsewhere.

Method

His first edition was rushed for the publisher and used readings based on unspecified Greek texts; Kenyon says that it, '*swarms with errors*'.⁵ Quotes from the Fathers were also authoritative for his choice of readings, despite lack of support from Greek texts. For example Erasmus introduced into the Greek text material from the Vulgate which is not in the Greek MSS. e.g. Acts 9:6. Acts 8:37 also has virtually no Greek MS. support but it is in the Vulgate and some Fathers. Yet his first two editions omitted 1 Jn 5:7-8, which is in the Vulgate. In Revelation he resorted to conjecture in places using Latin sources and back-translating into Greek. Some of these poor readings passed into the later texts of Estienne, Elzevir, and Beza, and are found in the King James version, e.g. Rev 17:4 *filthiness* instead of *unclean things*; however, the degree of error is slight.

Influence

Some, particularly French scholars, criticised the first two editions, especially for the omission of the clause in 1 John 5:7-8; but many responded more favourably. Luther used the second edition for his German translation of 1522 while Tyndale used the third edition in his English translation of 1526. The text of the fourth and fifth editions was closely followed by Robert Estienne in his influential third edition (1550), which was the basis for all editions later published by Beza (1565-98), and subsequently followed by the translators of the *King James Version*. The editions of Elzevir (1624, 1633) also derived from Erasmus 1527, as mediated by Estienne and Beza. Erasmus' text therefore became the foundation for nearly all editions and translations of the Greek text published for two centuries afterwards.⁶

⁴ See: Tregelles, *Account of the Printed Text*, p. 26. Regarding the pressure Erasmus was under to insert the Comma against his better judgment see H.J. de Jonge, 'Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum,' *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 [1980], pp. 381-389.

⁵ Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How it Came to Us*, c 2.

⁶ I acknowledge a debt in this paragraph to Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

The Complutensian text

Biography

James Lopez de Stunica edited the text but the sponsorship of the project was by Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, archbishop of Toledo, who made it volume 5 of his Polyglot Bible. The text was printed at Alcala under the patronage of Ximenes and was known as the *Complutensian* from the Latin place name of Alcala.

Texts published

- These six large volumes were commonly called *the Complutensian Polyglot*.
- 1522. James Lopez de Stunica [Diego Lopez de Zuñiga], et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Grece et Latine in Academia Complutensi Noviter Impressum* [The Greek and Latin New Testament, Now Printed in the Complutensian College], being volume 5 of *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*. [The Holy Bible in Several Languages, being a combination of the Old Testament in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, the Greek and Latin New Testament, and a vocabulary of the Hebrew and Chaldee of the Old Testament, with a Hebrew Grammar, and also a Greek Dictionary; 1514, 1515, 1517. 6 vols.]
- Stunica had three research scholars to aid his work.
- This Greek text was generally much more accurate than Erasmus'. It was printed in 1514, before Erasmus had edited his text, but publishing was delayed until 1522 awaiting permission from the pope.
- 600 sets were printed; ninety-seven remain.

Textual sources and method

- MSS. were from the Vatican library provided by Cardinal Ximenes.
- These were said to be '*very ancient and correct ones; and of such antiquity, that it would be utterly wrong not to own their authority*' (preface to NT). This claim is now disputed and the texts are considered to be similar to those used by Erasmus. In some places the Greek text is back-translated from the Vulgate e.g. 1 John 5:7. Stunica did this because he believed that the Latin texts in the Vatican were the truth and the Greeks texts were corrupted.
- Kenyon says that the MSS. were modern and of inferior value.

Influence

Its influence was diminished because Erasmus' text appeared first. It was used as a source by Erasmus in his revised fourth edition, and as a text whose readings appeared in the margin of Estienne 1550.

Stephen's text

Biography

Robert Estienne [1503-1559] was a French scholar and printer who was called 'Robert Stephens' in England and his text is often called the '*Stephanus Text*'. He was appointed in 1539 as a printer in Latin, Greek and Hebrew to King Francis I. Due to his Protestant faith he was attacked from the Sorbonne for his Bible annotations. Thus he fled to Geneva in 1551 where he published several of Calvin's works amongst other items.

Texts published

- *Novum Testamentum Græce*. Lutetia: ex officina Roberti Stephani Typographi, Typis Regiis. 1546

- 2nd ed. 1549.
- 3rd ed. 1550. This can be said to be essentially the *Textus Receptus* as later published by the Elzevir family. Mainly based upon Erasmus' fourth or fifth edition.
- 4th ed. Geneva 1551. The fourth edition presented the text of the third edition in numbered verses to facilitate a Greek concordance, which was finally published in Geneva in 1594 by his son Henry. His verse numbers were adopted in all subsequent editions and translations.

Textual sources and method

- His first two editions mostly followed Erasmus' fourth edition (1527), whom he does not mention, referring to MSS. in the king's library, but with many departures from it according to the Complutensian edition.
- In his third edition (1550) he followed Erasmus more closely (still without notice), and presented the various readings of the Complutensian in the margin.
- He also used readings from MSS. from Italy, eight from the Royal Library, and six from private libraries; but they are not identified. These were actually collated by his son Henry in a defective manner. Most of these were the ordinary modern type available in Paris.
- One exception is that one of Estienne's Italian manuscripts was *the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, an old manuscript which later became important in textual criticism.
- This third edition, with a collection of various readings in the margin, was the first Greek text with a critical apparatus and is essentially the basis of the *Textus Receptus*.
- However, in several places his text follows Erasmus against all known MSS. Often his MSS. are cited together for readings that differ from the text. Furthermore, in 1 John 5:7, a printing error gave the impression that all seven of his MSS. supported the disputed clause (the 'three witnesses') but it was in none.

Influence

- Famous for introducing NT verse numbers.
- The texts of the third and fourth editions (1550, 1551) were used by William Whittingham (et. al.) for the English version of the New Testament in the *Geneva Bible*.
- Beza used the text of 1550-51 as the basis for his own editions and it generally came to be regarded as a standard text.
- It became the most commonly used text for the purpose of manuscript collation and exegetical commentary, and has been reprinted hundreds of times in various forms, up to the present day. Literal translations are given in Newberry 1877, Berry 1897, and Young's Literal Translation.

Beza

Biography

Beza [1519-1605] was Calvin's successor in Geneva and a prominent theologian and scholar. He began the scholastic development of Calvinism, which came to maturity in Francis Turretin. However, he is more famous for his textual work.

Texts published

- *Novum Testamentum, cum versione Latina veteri, et nova Theodori Bezae*. Geneva, 1565 (folio).
- 2nd folio edition 1582.
- 3rd folio edition 1589.
- 4th folio edition 1598.

- Five 8vo editions (1565, 1567, 1580, 1590, 1604).

Textual sources and method

- The basis of Beza's text was Estienne 1551 with less than a hundred changes. It is doubtful that these changes were improvements.
- Beza's annotations to the text showed more critical independence, as may be seen in the note to John 8:1-12, which he regarded as inauthentic.
- His annotations included the readings gathered by Henry Estienne for his father, whose collations had come into Beza's possession, and included notes on the readings of the Peshitta Syriac version (translated into Latin by Tremellius).



Influence

- Beza's text of 1598 was the one most often followed by the translators of the KJV, and is also the basis of the later Elzevir editions, which were esteemed in Europe as much as Estienne's editions were in England.
- His text of 1598 is reprinted with a few alterations in Scrivener's reconstruction (1881) of the text underlying that version, in which all departures from Beza are marked. This is the text most commonly used by scholars following the Byzantine text today.

The Elzevir texts

Biography

- The Elzevirs were a famous Dutch family of printers, of Flemish ancestry, most notably for their accurate editions of the Greek New Testament. They were especially esteemed throughout Europe, with their text being the standard used for commentary.
- Isaac published the 1624 edition. His brother Abraham published the 1633 edition, with his uncle Bonaventure, after that printing sold out. Some reference works say that the *Textus Receptus* was printed by the 'brothers Elzevir' and others by the uncle and nephew. In a sense both are correct.

Texts published

- *Novum Testamentum Græce*. Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden]: Ex officina Elzeviriana, 1624. This edition was small and convenient having all verse numbers on the inside margin of each page. [Isaac Elzevir.]
- 2nd edition 1633. [Bonaventure & Abraham Elzevir.] Jeremias Hoelzlin, ed. *Novum Testamentum Græce*. Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden]: Ex officina Elzeviriana, 1633. This second Elzevir edition differs little from the first. The preface was written by Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655) and the editor was Jeremias Hoelzlin (1583-1644), both professors at Leiden. It had all the verse numbers to the left of the text and within the text itself. Each verse was started separately and the first letter was capitalised. The text of this 1633 edition became known as the '*Textus Receptus*' ['received text'] because of an advertisement in Heinsius' preface that said, '*Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*', 'Therefore you have the text now received by all in which we give nothing altered or corrupt.'

Textual sources

The 1624 Elzevir text is practically a reprint of the text of Beza 1565, with about fifty minor differences.

Influence

The *Textus Receptus* (TR) is very famous and has been a war-cry for defenders of the KJV. However, in actuality the 1633 Elzevir edition known as the TR was published years after the publication of the KJV in 1611 (which was based upon Beza 1598) and was based upon Beza 1565, which was essentially Estienne 1551. The TR was less accurate than the text used for the KJV.

The TR at this point

The textus receptus, slavishly followed, with slight diversities, in hundreds of editions, and substantially represented in all the principal modern Protestant translations prior to the nineteenth century, thus resolves itself essentially into that of the last edition of Erasmus, framed from a few modern and inferior manuscripts and the Complutensian Polyglot, in the infancy of Biblical criticism. In more than twenty places its reading is supported by the authority of no known Greek manuscript.⁷

This is the view of a scholastic supporter of the modern critical text. It is arguable that the modern texts are not at all inferior and that certain principles of modern critical theory are hypothetical and egregious.

The current basis for the Trinitarian Bible Society's printing of the *Textus Receptus* is the 1598 edition of Beza. The KJV is based upon the 1549 and 1551 editions of Stephanus and Beza's editions of 1589 and 1598.

John Mill

Biography

John Mill []

Text published

The edition of John Mill (Oxford, 1707, fol.; improved and enlarged by Ludolph Kuster, Amsterdam, Leipsic, and Rotterdam, 1710). A reprint of Stephens's text of 1550.

Influence

The work of thirty years, marks an epoch in the history of textual criticism by its vast additions to the store of critical material through the collation of the new manuscripts, the collection of readings from the ancient versions, and especially from the quotations found in the writings of the Christian Fathers, and by its very learned and valuable prolegomena. Mill gave his judgment on many readings in his notes and prolegomena, but did not venture to form a text of his own, reprinting Stephens's text of 1550 without intentional variation.⁸

⁷ Kenyon, op. cit. c 2:2.

⁸ Kenyon, op. cit. c2:3.

Bengel

Biography

John Albert Bengel [1687-1752] was a Lutheran schoolmaster. Bengel died in 1752, after having also provided a complete exegetical commentary to his Greek text, which was highly praised by Spurgeon and is still useful today: *Gnomon of the New Testament by John Albert Bengel*.

Texts published

Bengel, 1725. *Prodromus Novi Testamenti recte cauteque ordinandi* [Forerunner of a New Testament to be settled rightly and carefully].

- Published as an appendix to *Chrysostomi libri VI de sacerdotio* (Denkendorf, 1725).
- In this essay Bengel published a prospectus for an edition of the Greek Testament which he had already begun to prepare.
- He outlines his text-critical principles, which included **A NEW CLASSIFICATION OF MANUSCRIPTS INTO TWO PRIMITIVE GROUPS**: the Asiatic and the African. The first group he supposed to be of Byzantine origin, and to it belonged the majority of modern manuscripts and the Syriac version; the second, of Egyptian provenance, was represented by *Codex Alexandrinus* and the manuscripts of the early Latin and Coptic versions. This split into two basic families of MSS. is accepted by most people today.

Bengel, 1734. Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΦΗΚΗ. *Novum Testamentum Græcum*, J.A.B. [Full title: *The Greek New Testament, so prepared that the approved text of the editions is in the middle, and in the margin selected various readings distributed into their ranks of preference, and collateral places, with an appended apparatus, featuring principally a revised compendium of the sacred criticism of Mill, supplemented and also abridged, by the service of J.A.B.*]. Edente Jo. Albert Bengel. Tubingæ, 1734 (4 vols.).

- Bengel's edition is remarkable for its completeness and its usefulness as a resource for study.
- The text was the first to be presented in paragraphs.
- It is accompanied by a selection of noteworthy readings in the margin (drawn from Mill's apparatus), each graded according to its relative worthiness to be considered as the original reading. This was done by assigning to each a letter of the Greek alphabet (a, b, g, d, e), according to whether the reading was, in his judgment, much preferable, somewhat preferable, equal, somewhat inferior, or much inferior to the one displayed in the body of the text (which was composed only of readings to be found in previous editions of the Received Text).
- Following the text is a lengthy Critical Apparatus in which the various readings are discussed, and the reasons for the evaluations given. Here he bases these evaluations upon an innovative theory of manuscript groups, in which the readings are referred to either the debased Asiatic (Byzantine) family, or to the more pristine African (Alexandrian) family, which was often seconded by the Old Latin and Greek-Latin manuscripts. Unlike previous editors, he also gives citations both for and against each deviation from the Received text, so that if a manuscript is not mentioned in a given place the reader would not be left doubting whether it supported the text or not.⁹

Textual sources

Readings of the following fifteen Greek manuscripts (here designated by the notation of Scrivener and Miller 1894) were first published in Bengel's *Apparatus Criticus*:

⁹ I acknowledge a debt in this section to Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

- Uncials: Evan. V (9th century); Paul. M (10th century).
- Cursives: Evan.1 (10th cent.); Evan.2 (15th cent.); Evan.83 (11th cent.); Evan.84 (12th cent.); Evan.85 (13th cent.); Evan.86 (10th cent.); Evan.97 (15th cent.); Evan.101 (16th cent.); Act.45 (15th cent.); Act.46 (11th cent.); Paul.54 (12th cent.); Apoc.80 (12th cent.).
- Lectionary: Evst.24 (10th cent.).

Method

Bengel highlighted a rule of criticism, '*before the easy reading, stands the difficult.*'

The edition of Johann Albrecht Bengel (Tübingen, 1734, 4to), while it had the advantage of some new manuscripts, was specially valuable for its discussions and illustrations of the principles of criticism, and its classification of manuscripts; but, except in the Apocalypse, Bengel did not venture to introduce any reading, even though he believed it unquestionably genuine, which had not previously appeared in some printed edition. His judgment of the value of different readings was, however, given in the margin (cf. E. Nestle, *Bengel als Gelehrter*, Tübingen, 1893, pp. 39 sqq.).¹⁰

In Bengel's Preface to his Gnomon he includes an enumerated list of 27 'suggestions' (*Monita*) which are a summary of his critical principles. The following extract of these is taken from pages 13 through 17 of Fausset's translation:

1. By far the more numerous portions of the Sacred Text (thanks be to God) labour under no variety of reading deserving notice.
2. These portions contain the whole scheme of salvation, and establish every particular of it by every test of truth.
3. Every various reading ought and may be referred to these portions, and decided by them as by a normal standard.
4. The text and various readings of the New Testament are found in manuscripts and in books printed from manuscripts, whether Greek, Latin, Graeco-Latin, Syriac, etc., Latinizing Greek, or other languages, the clear quotations of Irenaeus, etc., according as Divine Providence dispenses its bounty to each generation. We include all these under the title of Codices, which has sometimes as comprehensive a signification.
5. These codices, however, have been diffused through churches of all ages and countries, and approach so near to the original autographs, that, when taken together, in all the multitude of their varieties, they exhibit the genuine text.
6. No conjecture is ever on any consideration to be listened to. It is safer to bracket any portion of the text, which may haply to appear to labour under inextricable difficulties.
7. All the codices taken together, should form the normal standard, by which to decide in the case of each taken separately.
8. The Greek codices, which possess an antiquity so high, that it surpasses even the very variety of reading, are very few in number: the rest are very numerous.
9. Although versions and fathers are of little authority where they differ from the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, yet, where the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament differ from each other, those have the greatest authority, with which versions and fathers agree.
10. The text of the Latin Vulgate, where it is supported by the consent of the Latin fathers, or even of other competent witnesses, deserves the utmost consideration, on account of its singular antiquity.
11. The number of witnesses who support each reading of every passage ought to be carefully examined: and to that end, in so doing, we should separate those codices which contain only the Gospels, from those which contain the Acts and the Epistles,

¹⁰ Kenyon, op. cit. c2:3.

with or without the Apocalypse, or those which contain that book alone; those which are entire, from those which have been mutilated; those which have been collated for the Stephanic edition, from those which have been collated for the Complutensian, or the Elzevirian, or any obscure edition; those which are known to have been carefully collated, as, for instance, the Alexandrine, from those which are not known to have been carefully collated, or which are known to have been carelessly collated, as for instance the Vatican MS., which otherwise would be almost without an equal.

12. And so, in fine, more witnesses are to be preferred to fewer; and, which is more important, witnesses who differ in country, age, and language, are to be preferred to those who are closely connected with each other; and, which is most important of all, ancient witnesses are to be preferred to modern ones. For, since the original autographs (and they were written in Greek) can alone claim to be the well-spring, the amount of authority due to codices drawn from primitive sources, Latin, Greek, etc., depends upon their nearness to that fountain-head.
13. A Reading, which does not allure by too great facility, but shines with its own native dignity of truth, is always to be preferred to those which may fairly be supposed to owe their origin to either the carelessness or the injudicious care of copyists.
14. Thus, a corrupted text is often betrayed by alliteration, parallelism, or the convenience of an Ecclesiastical Lection, especially at the beginning or conclusion of it; from the occurrence of the same words, we are led to suspect an omission; from too great facility, a gloss. Where the passage labours under a manifold variety of readings, the middle reading is the best.
15. **There are, therefore, five principal criteria, by which to determine a disputed text. The antiquity of the witnesses, the diversity of their extraction, and their multitude; the apparent origin of the corrupt reading, and the native colour of the genuine one.**
16. **When these criteria all concur, no doubt can exist, except in the mind of a skeptic.**
17. When, however, it happens that some of these criteria may be adduced in favour of one reading, and some in favour of another, the critic may be drawn sometimes in this, sometimes in that direction; or, even should he decide, others may be less ready to submit to his decision. When one man excels another in powers of vision, whether bodily or mental, discussion is vain. In such a case, one man can neither obtrude on another his own conviction, nor destroy the conviction of another; unless, indeed, the original autograph Scriptures should ever come to light.

Influence

Bengel encountered some opposition from writers who were offended by his recommended changes to the TR, but in general his work was widely appreciated and commended. This is due partly to Bengel's prudent decision not to cause needless offence by introducing the changes into the text itself. It should also be noticed that Bengel did not recommend the omission of the disputed clause in 1 John 5:7 (see Erasmus 1516), but rather defended it; and so he gained the respect of persons who might otherwise have attacked his work. Count Zinzendorf, the patron of the Moravian Brethren, announced that Bengel's text was to be the basis of the German version to be used in their churches; and John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church, also used Bengel's text for his English version.¹¹

¹¹ I acknowledge a debt in this paragraph to Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

Wetstein

Biography

Johann Jakob Wetstein [1693-1754]. Swiss NT scholar born at Basle.

Text

2 vols. fol., Amsterdam, 1751-52).

The magnificent edition of Johann Jakob Wetstein (2 vols. fol., Amsterdam, 1751-52), the work of forty years, greatly enlarged the store of critical material by extensive collation of manuscripts and researches into the quotations of the Fathers, and by his description of this material in very valuable and copious prolegomena (reprinted, with additions by Semler, Halle, 1764). He gives also the readings of the chief printed editions which preceded him, and describes them fully. He introduced the present method of denoting the uncial manuscripts by Roman capitals, and the cursives and lectionaries by Arabic figures. Besides the critical matter, Wetstein's edition is a thesaurus of quotations from Greek, Latin, and Rabbinical authors, illustrating the phraseology of the New Testament, or containing passages more or less parallel in sentiment. His publisher insisted on his reprinting the *textus receptus* (substantially that of the Elzevirs); but he gives his critical judgment in the margin and the notes.¹²

Influence

Noteworthy for introducing the cataloguing of uncial manuscripts by Roman capitals [e.g. G₂ I N₂ O₂ T^{b,d}], and the cursives and lectionaries by Arabic figure [e.g. 1, 13, 17, 31, 37, 47, 61, 69].

Griesbach

Biography

Johann Jacob Griesbach [1745-1812]. NT scholar born at Butzbach. He became a professor at Halle in 1773. He developed Bengel's theory of families classifying the text-types into three: Alexandrian, Western and Byzantine (Constantinopolitan).

Texts published¹³

- Griesbach, 1774. *Libri Historici Novi Testamenti, Graece, Pars I. sistens Synopsin Evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci, et Lucae. Textum ad fidem Codd. Versionum et Patrum emendavit et lectionis varietatem adjecit.* Jo. Jac. Griesbach. Halle in Saxony: Curt, 1774.
- Followed by *Libri Historici Novi Testamenti, Graece, Pars II. sistens Evangelium Johannis et Acta Apostolorum.* Halle in Saxony: Curt, 1775, and *Epistolae N.T. et Apoc.* Halle in Saxony: Curt, 1775.
- Reprinted (with the Gospels in the usual order instead of in synoptic arrangement) as *Novum Testamentum Graece, Textum ad fidem Codicum Versionem et Patrum recensuit et Lectionis Variatatem adjecit D.* Jo. Jac. Griesbach. Halle in Saxony: Curt, 1777.
- Griesbach, 1796. *Novum Testamentum Graece, Textum ad fidem Codicum Versionem et Patrum recensuit et Lectionis Variatatem adjecit D.* Jo. Jac. Griesbach. 2nd edition. London and Halle, 1796 and 1806. 2 vols., large octavo. Griesbach's second edition of

¹² Kenyon, op. cit. c2:3.

¹³ Most taken from Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

1796-1806 became the basis of the frequently reprinted manual edition of 1805, the one usually referred to in citations of Griesbach. In the second edition Griesbach presented a more sophisticated theory of the manuscript groups which did not posit recensions as such, and formulated elaborate rules of textual criticism.

- Griesbach, 1805. *Novum Testamentum Græce. Ex Recensione Jo. Jac. Griesbachii, cum selecta Lectionis Varietate*. Lipsiæ, 1805. 2 vols., small octavo. This was Griesbach's manual edition for students, abridged from the second edition (see Griesbach 1796) and with a few changes to the text. It gives the readings finally preferred by Griesbach.

Textual sources

Griesbach's major source was the apparatus of Wettstein 1751; in addition, he made use of the Old Latin texts published by Blanchini and Sabatier. Unlike Wettstein, however, he revises the text itself, rather than making his preferences known in the margin.

Method

- Griesbach was a student of Semler at Halle, and in these volumes he produced a text on the basis of Semler's theory of recensions, which he explains in the preface of the first edition.
- First of all the readings characteristic of the three recensions (Alexandrian, Western, Byzantine) were identified.
- The original text was then reconstructed by a process of extrapolation from the readings typical of the three recensions.
- In its simplest form, this process would involve choosing whatever reading is supported by any two of the three recensions.
- Where all three presented a different reading, Griesbach first of all eliminated the reading of the Byzantine recension, which he considered to be somewhat inferior to the other two, and then decided for either the Alexandrian or the Western reading on the basis of the commonly accepted rules of textual criticism which had already been formulated by Bengel and Wettstein.
- In practice, Griesbach tended to let the reading of the *Received Text* stand in his text if the case for another reading was not strong. He also moderated his recension theory by means of the internal criteria of the text-critical rules. The resulting text differed from the *Received Text* in about a thousand places
- However, his theories changed as time went on. For a discussion of this change in his theory of recensions, see chapter seven of Tregelles¹⁴ in which Tregelles shows that Griesbach was finally unable to keep up a distinction between Alexandrian and Western witnesses.

Influence

- The text of his manual edition, issued at Leipsic in 1805, differs slightly from his larger edition and expresses his later critical judgment.
- Following the work of Bengel and Semler, Griesbach simplified the process of criticism by classifying his manuscripts based on three classes, or recensions: the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Constantinopolitan / Byzantine (the mass of later manuscripts belong to this class).

14 Tregelles, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. London, 1856.

Griesbach's Fifteen Rules

A notable addition to the Preface of Griesbach's second edition (1796) is the following list of critical rules, by which the intrinsic probabilities may be weighed for various readings of the manuscripts.

1. The shorter reading, if not wholly lacking the support of old and weighty witnesses, is to be preferred over the more verbose. For scribes were much more prone to add than to omit. They hardly ever leave out anything on purpose, but they added much. It is true indeed that some things fell out by accident; but likewise not a few things, allowed in by the scribes through errors of the eye, ear, memory, imagination, and judgment, have been added to the text. The shorter reading, even if by the support of the witnesses it may be second best, is especially preferable-- (a) if at the same time it is harder, more obscure, ambiguous, involves an ellipsis, reflects Hebrew idiom, or is ungrammatical; (b) if the same thing is read expressed with different phrases in different manuscripts; (c) if the order of words is inconsistent and unstable; (d) at the beginning of a section; (e) if the fuller reading gives the impression of incorporating a definition or interpretation, or verbally conforms to parallel passages, or seems to have come in from lectionaries. But on the contrary we should set the fuller reading before the shorter (unless the latter is seen in many notable witnesses) -- (a) if a "similarity of ending" might have provided an opportunity for an omission; (b) if that which was omitted could to the scribe have seemed obscure, harsh, superfluous, unusual, paradoxical, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, or opposed to parallel passages; (c) if that which is absent could be absent without harm to the sense or structure of the words, as for example prepositions which may be called incidental, especially brief ones, and so forth, the lack of which would not easily be noticed by a scribe in reading again what he had written; (d) if the shorter reading is by nature less characteristic of the style or outlook of the author; (e) if it wholly lacks sense; (f) if it is probable that it has crept in from parallel passages or from the lectionaries.
2. The more difficult and more obscure reading is preferable to that in which everything is so plain and free of problems that every scribe is easily able to understand it. Because of their obscurity and difficulty chiefly unlearned scribes were vexed by those readings-- (a) the sense of which cannot be easily perceived without a thorough acquaintance with Greek idiom, Hebraisms, history, archeology, and so forth; (b) in which the thought is obstructed by various kinds of difficulties entering in, e.g., by reason of the diction, or the connection of the dependent members of a discourse being loose, or the sinews of an argument, being far extended from the beginning to the conclusion of its thesis, seeming to be cut.
3. The harsher reading is preferable to that which instead flows pleasantly and smoothly in style. A harsher reading is one that involves an ellipsis, reflects Hebrew idiom, is ungrammatical, repugnant to customary Greek usage, or offensive to the ears.
4. The more unusual reading is preferable to that which constitutes nothing unusual. Therefore rare words, or those at least in meaning, rare usages, phrases and verbal constructions less in use than the trite ones, should be preferred over the more common. Surely the scribes seized eagerly on the more customary instead of the more exquisite, and for the latter they were accustomed to substitute definitions and explanations (especially if such were already provided in the margin or in parallel passages).
5. Expressions less emphatic, unless the context and goal of the author demand emphasis, approach closer to the genuine text than discrepant readings in which there is, or appears to be, a greater vigor. For polished scribes, like commentators, love and seek out emphases.
6. The reading that, in comparison with others, produces a sense fitted to the support of piety (especially monastic) is suspect.

7. Preferable to others is the reading for which the meaning is apparently quite false, but which in fact, after thorough examination, is discovered to be true.
8. Among many readings in one place, that reading is rightly considered suspect that manifestly gives the dogmas of the orthodox better than the others. When even today many unreasonable books, I would not say all, are scratched out by monks and other men devoted to the Catholic party, it is not credible that any convenient readings of the manuscripts from which everyone copied would be neglected which seemed either to confirm splendidly some Catholic dogma or forcefully to destroy a heresy. For we know that nearly all readings, even those manifestly false, were defended on the condition that they were agreeable to the orthodox, and then from the beginning of the third century these were tenaciously protected and diligently propagated, while other readings in the same place, which gave no protection to ecclesiastical dogmas, were rashly attributed to treacherous heretics.
9. With scribes there may be a tendency to repeat words and sentences in different places having identical terminations, either repeating what they had lately written or anticipating what was soon to be written, the eyes running ahead of the pen. Readings arising from such easily explained tricks of symmetry are of no value.
10. Others to be led into error by similar enticements are those scribes who, before they begin to write a sentence had already read the whole, or who while writing look with a flitting eye into the original set before them, and often wrongly take a syllable or word from the preceding or following writing, thus producing new readings. If it happens that two neighbouring words begin with the same syllable or letter, an occurrence by no means rare, then it may be that the first is simply omitted or the second is accidentally passed over, of which the former is especially likely. One can scarcely avoid mental errors such as these, any little book of few words to be copied giving trouble, unless one applies the whole mind to the business; but few scribes seem to have done it. Readings therefore which have flowed from this source of errors, even though ancient and so afterwards spread among very many manuscripts, are rightly rejected, especially if manuscripts otherwise related are found to be pure of these contagious blemishes.
11. Among many in the same place, that reading is preferable which falls midway between the others, that is, the one which in a manner of speaking holds together the threads so that, if this one is admitted as the primitive one, it easily appears on what account, or rather, by what descent of errors, all the other readings have sprung forth from it.
12. Readings may be rejected which appear to incorporate a definition or an interpretation, alterations of which kind the discriminating critical sense will detect with no trouble
13. Readings brought into the text from commentaries of the Fathers or ancient marginal annotations are to be rejected, when the great majority of critics explain them thus. ("He proceeds at some length to caution against the promiscuous assumption of such corruptions in the earlier codices and versions from such sources." - Alford)
14. We reject readings appearing first in lectionaries, which were added most often to the beginning of the portions to be read in the church service, or sometimes at the end or even in the middle for the sake of contextual clarity, and which were to be added in a public reading of the series, [the portions of which were] so divided or transposed that, separated from that which precedes or follows, there seemed hardly enough for them to be rightly understood. ("Similar cautions are here added against assuming this too promiscuously." - Alford)
15. Readings brought into the Greek manuscripts from the Latin versions are condemned. ('Cautions are here also inserted against the practice of the earlier critics, who if they found in the Graeco-Latin MSS. or even in those of high antiquity and value, a solitary reading agreeing with the Latin, hastily condemned that codex as Latinizing.' - Alford)

Scholz

Biography

Johann Martin Augustin Scholz [1830-1836]. Catholic scholar. Scholz was a poor critic, and as an editor and collator careless.

Texts published

Scholz, 1830. *Novum Testamentum Graece. Textum ad fidem Testium Criticorum recensuit, Lectionum Familias subiecit, &c. Lipsic: 1830, 1836. 2 vols.*

Textual sources

- Scholz spent many years travelling around Europe and the Near East collating manuscripts. Readings from 616 cursive manuscripts previously unexamined by scholars were recorded in his apparatus, along with the information given by Wettstein and others.
- He was the first to publish readings from a collation of the *Codex Vaticanus* that was made in 1669 by Bartolucci, Librarian of the Vatican. Scholz had discovered a transcript of this collation, which was previously unknown, in the Imperial Library of Paris in 1819. It is much inferior to the collations already published in Birch 1788 and Ford 1799.

Method

- Scholz was a pupil of J.L. Hug and learned to think of the manuscripts as members of families having their origin in ancient recensions. But he rejected Hug's elaborate theory of the recensions, and adopted instead Bengel's simple division of African and Asian witnesses, which he styled 'Alexandrian' and 'Constantinopolitan'. Against Bengel, however, Scholz preferred the latter group of witnesses, and his text purported to be a reconstruction of the primitive text on the basis of the majority readings of his Constantinopolitan witnesses (i.e. Byzantine).
- 'Alexandrian' = the oldest Greek copies, the Old Latin version, the Vulgate, both Coptic versions, the Ethiopic version, and the citations of Clement and Origen.
- 'Constantinopolitan' = the later Greek copies, with the Syriac, Gothic, Georgian, and Slavonic versions.
- Between the text and apparatus he set forth the readings which he believed to be typical of the Alexandrian group. He also indicated there the readings typical of the Constantinopolitan where he has not adopted them in the text, against his general method.

Influence

- Scholz's edition was especially well received in England, where scholarship was taking a more conservative direction than in Germany. Scholz was understood to be a defender of the traditional text, and his apparatus seemed to surpass all previous editions in its completeness. Before long, however, his apparatus was found to be so unreliable as to be practically useless. But in applying his system, he was inconsistent, particularly in his second volume, and at a later period of his life he abandoned it.
- His text continued to receive respect, and was chosen for Bagster's Hexapla (1841); but it had little influence after 1845, when he publicly announced that he had changed his mind, and would now recommend the Alexandrian readings instead.

Lachmann

Biography

Karl Konrad Friedrich Wilhelm Lachmann [1793-1851]. German philologist and founder of modern textual criticism. Born at Brunswick and professor of philology at Berlin from 1825.

Texts published

- Lachmann, 1831. *Novum Testamentum Græce, ex recensione Caroli Lachmanni*. Berolini, 1831.
- Lachmann, 1842. *Testamentum Novum Græce et Latine Carolus Lachmannus recensuit. Philippus Butmannus, Ph. F. Græcæ Lectionis Auctoritatis, apposuit*. Berolini, 1842, 1850. 2 vols.

Textual sources

- For the first edition he consulted collations of a small number of the oldest manuscripts, and the citations of Origen and Irenæus, and simply chose the readings of the majority of these without any regard for the later copies.
- His second edition consulted: codd. A B C D P Q T Z of the Gospels, A B C D E in the Acts and Catholic Epistles, A B C D G in the Pauline Epistles, and A B C in the Apocalypse, with the Latin Vulgate, and codd. *a* (Vercellensis, fourth century), *b* (Veronensis, fifth century), and *c* (Colbertinus, eleventh century) of the Old Latin, for the Gospels, besides the Latin versions of the Greco-Latin manuscripts in the above list; of the Fathers he used Irenæus, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers, Lucifer of Cagliari, and, in the Apocalypse, Primasius.

Method

Lachmann's first Greek text was constructed on a simpler method than that of Griesbach, although with a less ambitious aim: his stated purpose was to reconstruct the text current in the fourth century, without claiming to present the original and without attempting to explain the evidence of later manuscripts. Where his chosen authorities were evenly balanced, he employed Latin witnesses to decide the issue. He did not employ theories of recensions or rules of internal evidence (see Wettstein, Bengel, Griesbach), but based his decisions solely on manuscript data. Tregelles, who very fully describes the editions of Lachmann in his *Account of the Printed Text* (p97-115), especially questions the neglect of the Syriac and Coptic versions and the citations of other early ecclesiastical writers, and also points out that the collations used by Lachmann were inadequate for his purpose.

Lachmann's second edition is a critically revised Latin Vulgate in the lower margin (based upon collations of two manuscripts of the sixth century), and annotations to the Greek text (supplied by Philip Butmann the younger) indicating the manuscript authority for the readings adopted. The text is not the same as the first edition, but revised on a wider basis of authorities and with more weight given to Latin witnesses.¹⁵

The following is a paraphrase of the six rules of documentary evidence set forth rather obscurely by Lachmann in his Preface to the second edition:

1. The text is best established where all authorities agree.
2. The text is somewhat doubtful where some of the authorities are defective.
3. The text is well established where authorities of different regions agree.
4. The text is doubtful where authorities of different regions disagree.

¹⁵ Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

5. The text is very doubtful where authorities of one region uniformly display a reading different from a reading uniformly displayed in another region.
6. When the text is doubtful or very doubtful by reason of the situation described in 4 or 5, then the reading which is most uniformly displayed in its region should be preferred.

Influence

Because the oldest manuscripts chosen by Lachmann correspond to Griesbach's Alexandrian group, Lachmann's text helped to reconstruct the earliest Alexandrian text, but Lachmann himself rejected the idea of grouping manuscripts in this manner. With an esteemed reputation as a scholar, he did much to diminish the long held respect for the TR.

His attempted task was not fully accomplished, partly because the text of some of the most important manuscripts which he used (B C P Q, and the Latin Codex Amiatinus) had been but very imperfectly collated or edited, partly because the range of his authorities was too narrow, and partly because he was sometimes, apparently at least, inconsistent in the application of his principles. But he was the first to found a text wholly on ancient evidence.¹⁶

Scrivener

Biography

F.H.A. (Frederick Henry Ambrose) Scrivener [1813-1891], famous Anglican textual scholar. He represents the conservative school of critics who did not accept the theories of Westcott & Hort. His *Plain Introduction of to the Criticism of the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1861; 4th ed., by E. Miller, 2 vols., London, 1894) is a standard work which was for many years the most widely used introduction for students.

Scrivener was an able defender of the later manuscripts as witnesses to the original text against Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort. In this contention he had the doughty support of John William Burgon in *The Revision Revised* (London, 1883). Among Americans, Ezra Abbot and Joseph Henry Thayer; among Hollanders, W. C. Van Manen, J. Cramer, and J. J. Prins; among Frenchmen, P. Batiffol, J. P. P. Martin, and E. Amélineau; among Italians, Angelo Mai, Carlo Vercellone, and J. Cozza; and among Germans, F. Blass, E. Nestle, B. Weiss, E. Riggenbach, and O. von Gebhardt have made important contributions to textual criticism.¹⁷

Texts published

- Scrivener, 1845. *A Supplement to the Authorised English Version of the New Testament: Being a Critical Illustration of its More Difficult Passages from the Syriac, Latin, and Earlier English Versions, with an Introduction*. London: William Pickering, 1845.
- Scrivener, 1861. *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*. London: Bell & Daldy, 1861. 3rd ed. 1882. 4th ed. revised by Edward Miller, 1894. 2 vols.
- Scrivener, 1864. *A Full Collation of the Sinaitic MS. with the Received Text of the New Testament*. Cambridge, 1864; 2nd ed. 1867.
- Scrivener, 1864 b. *Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis: being an exact Copy, in ordinary Type, of the celebrated Uncial Graeco-Latin Manuscript of the Four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, written early in the Sixth Century, and presented to the University of Cambridge by Theodore Beza A.D. 1581. Edited, with a critical Introduction, Annotations, and Facsimiles*. Cambridge, 1864.

¹⁶ Kenyon, op. cit. 2:5.

¹⁷ Kenyon, op. cit. 2:9.

- Scrivener, 1881. *The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the Text followed in the Authorized Version, together with the Variations adopted in the Revised Version*. Edited for the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, by F.H.A. Scrivener, M.A., D.C.L., L.L.D., Prebendary of Exeter and Vicar of Hendon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1881.
- Scrivener and Miller, 1894. F.H.A. Scrivener and Edward Miller, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, for the Use of Biblical Students*, by the Late Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener; fourth edition, edited by the Rev. Edward Miller. 2 vols. London: George Bell & Sons, 1894.
- Scrivener and Nestle, 1906. F.H.A. Scrivener and Eberhard Nestle, *Novum Testamentum: textus Stephanici, A.D. 1550, cum variis lectionibus editionum Bezae, Elzeviri, Lachmanni, Tischendorfii, Tregellesii, Wescott-Hortii, Versionis Anglicanae Emendatorum. Accedunt parallela s. Scripturae loca*. Editio Quarta, ab Eb. Nestle Correcta. London: George Bell and Sons, 1906.

Textual sources

The first edition includes a collation of Estienne 1550 with the Complutensian Polyglot, Beza 1565, and Elzevir 1624 and 1633. The work was enlarged and thoroughly revised by Edward Miller for the 4th edition. See Scrivener and Miller 1894.

Method

Scrivener, 1881. ‘The special design of this volume is to place clearly before the reader the variations from the Greek text represented by the Authorised Version of the New Testament which have been embodied in the Revised Version ... The Cambridge press has judged it best to set the readings actually adopted by the Revisers at the side of the page, and to keep the continuous text ... uniformly representative of the Authorised Version.’ (Scrivener). Elsewhere it is reported that, by Dr. Scrivener's count, the number of differences indicated in the notes amount to 5,337 (Scrivener and Miller 1894, vol. 2, p. 243). Reprinted in *The Parallel New Testament: Greek and English*.

Scrivener and Miller, 1894. For this revised edition of Scrivener's *Plain Introduction* Edward Miller (another conservative) called upon eminent scholars to contribute new chapters on the ancient versions, and improve other departments of the work. This edition became a virtual encyclopaedia, and for seventy years was the most widely used source of information for textual criticism. Eventually, it became outdated, especially in view of the many papyrus manuscripts discovered during that time, and was replaced by the much shorter introductions of Metzger and Aland. It remains very useful, however, for all sorts of information not included in the more recent works, and is nearly indispensable for historical research. An annotated catalogue of all known Greek manuscripts (the English equivalent of the standard catalogue of materials published in Gregory 1900) is included in the first volume.¹⁸

Scrivener and Nestle, 1906. Here is an edition of Estienne 1550 with an apparatus of the various readings adopted by Beza, Elzevir, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott & Hort, and the translators of the English Revised Version of 1881. Corrected by Eberhard Nestle for the fourth edition.

Influence

Scrivener is the most able defender of the TR and his 1881 edition of the text, based on Beza 1589, is the one used as the current TR text.

¹⁸ Sic. Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

Tischendorf

Biography

Lobegott Friedrich Konstantin von Tischendorf [1815-1874]. German Protestant theologian and textual critic. He spent about eight years of his life in travels in search of manuscripts, visiting the Near East three times (1844, 1853, 1859). He also collated with extreme care and prepared for publication the most important of those from the libraries of Europe which were before known, but had not been published or thoroughly examined.

Texts published

- Tischendorf, 1841., *Novum Testamentum Graece. Textum ad fidem antiquorum testium recensuit: brevem Apparatum Criticum, una cum Variis Lectionibus Elzevirorum, Knappii, Scholzii, Lachmanni subjunxit; Argumenta et Locos Parallelos indicavit; Commentationem Isagogicam, notatis propriis lectionibus Edd. Stephanicae tertiae atque Milliana, Matthaeiana, Griesbachiana, praemisit Aethoheus*. Fridericus Constantinus Tischendorf. Lipsiae: Köhler, 1841. The first edition is more bold than Lachmann 1831 in departing from the TR. Kenyon: 'promising as a first essay, but of no special importance except for the refutation, in the prolegomena, of Scholz's theory of recensions.'
- Tischendorf, 1843. *Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus sive Fragmenta Novi Testamenti*. Leipsic, 1843. The first printed edition of the *Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus*.
- Tischendorf, 1849. *Novum Testamentum Graece. Ad antiquos testes recensuit, Apparatum Criticum multis modis auctum et correctum apposuit, Commentationem Isagogicam praemisit*. Lipsiae: Winter, 1849. This is the second principal recension of Tischendorf. The Introduction sets forth his rules of criticism with examples of their application. The second edition retracted the more precarious readings of the first. The critical apparatus was much enlarged, and the text settled on the basis of ancient authority.
- Tischendorf, 1852. *Codex Claromontanus, sive Epistulae Pauli omnes Graece et Latine e codice Parisiensi celeberrimo nomine Claromantani* [Codex Claromontanus, being the Greek and Latin of all the Epistles of Paul from the Parisian Codex called Claromontanus]. Leipsic, 1852. The first printed edition of the *Codex Claromontanus*.
- Tischendorf, 1856. *Novum Testamentum Graece. Ad antiquos testes denuo recensuit, Apparatum Criticum omni studio perfectum apposuit, Commentationem Isagogicam praetextuit*. Editio Septima. Lipsiae: Winter, 1856, 1859. 2 vols. The seventh edition, and third principal recension of Tischendorf. Very large additions were made to the critical apparatus, not only from manuscripts, Greek and Latin, but from the quotations in the writings of the Christian Fathers, and the evidence was for the first time fully stated, both for and against the readings adopted. His edition of 1859 differs more widely from the TR than that of 1849.
- Tischendorf, 1862. *Bibliorum Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus*. St. Petersburg, 1862. 4 vols. New Testament volume 4. Reprinted in Hildersheim, 1969. In this typographical facsimile edition (published under the auspices of Czar Alexander II of Russia) Tischendorf first presented the text of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which he discovered in a Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai.
- Tischendorf, 1863. *Novum Testamentum Sinaiticum cum Epistola Barnabae et fragmentis Pastoris, &c.* Leipzig, 1863. The New Testament, together with the Epistle of Barnabas and a fragment of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, according to the *Codex Sinaiticus*.
- Tischendorf, 1865. *Novum Testamentum Graece ex Sinaitico codice omnium antiquissimo*. Leipzig, 1865. Octavo. The New Testament from the *Codex Sinaiticus* in ordinary type.

- Tischendorf, 1867. *Novum Testamentum Vaticanum post Angeli Maii aliorumque imperfectos labores ex ipso codice edidit Æ.F.C.* [The Vatican New Testament, after the imperfect work of Angelo Mai and others, edited from the manuscript itself]. Leipzig: Giesecke et Devrient, 1867. Corrected and supplemented in *Appendix Novi Testamenti Vaticani* (Leipzig, 1869). Tischendorf's common type edition of the *Codex Vaticanus* was the first reliable one available to scholars. [The *codex Vaticanus* (B) was known by 1475 when the Vatican library catalogued it but it was not readily accessible until 1889 when a photostatic copy was published.]
- Tischendorf, 1869. *Novum Testamentum Graece, ad antiquissimos testes denuo recensuit apparatus criticum omni studio perfectum apposuit commentationem isagogicam praetexit.* editio octava critica maior. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1869 (vol 1), 1872 (vol 2). Tischendorf's eighth edition (containing the fourth principal recension) is still the standard scholarly source for comprehensive information concerning the various readings of manuscripts. Tischendorf followed a method similar to that of Lachmann, in that he gave decisive weight to the oldest manuscripts without balancing their testimony against that of the *Received Text*. Unlike Lachmann, however, he did make some limited use of internal evidence. Tischendorf also collected a much greater body of information than Lachmann, and his prodigious apparatus of variants has secured for his text a permanent value. In his text, he displayed a marked preference for two manuscripts in particular: *Codex Vaticanus*, which was the oldest known Greek manuscript, and *Codex Sinaiticus*, which was discovered by Tischendorf himself. *Codex Sinaiticus* is very similar to *Codex Vaticanus*, and of comparable age. The united testimony of these two manuscripts dominated Tischendorf's eighth edition. Kenyon: 'This edition far surpassed all that had preceded it in the richness of its critical apparatus, and, as compared with that of 1859, rests much more on the authority of the oldest manuscripts, particularly the Sinaitic.'
- Tischendorf, 1869 b. *The New Testament: The Authorised English Version; With Introduction, and Various Readings From the Three Most Celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Greek Text.* Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1869. The *King James Version* with a full English apparatus of variants from *Codex Vaticanus*, *Codex Sinaiticus*, and *Codex Alexandrinus*. On the average, there is one variant given for every verse; and in fact, many significant readings given here are not to be found in the apparatus of Aland et al. 1979. The reader should take note, however, of the words on page xv of Tischendorf's Introduction: 'Many obvious blunders which are found in the manuscripts are passed over in silence.' Hence, such embarrassments as 'under a candlestick' in Mark 4:21 (a clear error found in both *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*) are not indicated.

Textual sources

- Tischendorf is chiefly famous for supplying the two principle codices of the critical text, the *Codex Vaticanus* (the oldest Greek MSS.) and the *Codex Sinaiticus* (4th c.).
- The following uncial Greek manuscripts were discovered by Tischendorf: \aleph G₂ I N₂ O₂ T^{b,d} Γ Θ^{a-d} Λ Π; first used by him: F^a I^b N₁ O^{b-f} O₂ P₂ Q₂ R_{1,2}T^{a,c} W^{b-e} Θ^{e-h}; published: \aleph B_{1,2} C D₂ E₂ F^a I I^b L₁ M₂ N₁ O^a P_{1,2} Q₁ R₁ W^{a,c} Y Θ^a.

Method

Basic rule: The text is only to be sought from ancient evidence, and especially from Greek manuscripts, but without neglecting the testimonies of versions and fathers.

1. A reading altogether peculiar to one or another ancient document is suspicious; as also is any, even if supported by a class of documents, which seems to evince that it has originated in the revision of a learned man.

2. Readings, however well supported by evidence, are to be rejected, when it is manifest (or very probable) that they have proceeded from the errors of copyists.
3. In parallel passages, whether of the New or Old Testament, especially in the Synoptic Gospels, which ancient copyists continually brought into increased accordance, those testimonies are preferable, in which precise accordance of such parallel passages is not found; unless, indeed, there are important reasons to the contrary.
4. In discrepant readings, that should be preferred which may have given occasion to the rest, or which appears to comprise the elements of the others.
5. Those readings must be maintained which accord with New Testament Greek, or with the particular style of each individual writer.

Influence

Tischendorf is of huge importance to the modern critical text and his discoveries undergird all that followed.

The editions of Tischendorf and Tregelles. Through their combined labours we have a solid basis for a completely critical edition of the Greek Testament in the accurate knowledge, not possessed before, of all manuscripts of the oldest class.¹⁹

Tregelles

Biography

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles [1813-1875]. Self-taught, English textual scholar. Brought up a Quaker, joined the Plymouth Brethren, later became a Presbyterian and eventually joined the Church of England.

[He] 'ranks next to Tischendorf in the importance of his critical labours, and in single-hearted devotion to his chosen task. ... Like Tischendorf, Tregelles visited (in 1845-46, 1849-50, and 1862) the principal libraries in Europe for the purpose of collating manuscripts the text of which had not before been published. These were the uncials B2 D2 E1 F2 G1 H1.2 I1 K1 L2 M1.2 R1 U X Z Γ Λ, the cursives 1, 13, 17, 31, 37, 47, 61, 69, and also Codex Zacynthius (Ξ)'.²⁰

Texts published

- Tregelles, 1854. *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament, with Remarks on its Revision upon Critical Principles, together with a collation of the critical texts of Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann and Tischendorf with that in common use.* London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1854. A detailed history of the printed Received Text, with explanations of critical principles.
- Tregelles, 1856. *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament.* London, 1856. Well worth reading today; his descriptions of manuscripts and presentation of history are considered to be better than any introduction published since. In it he answers the theories of later critics, such as Westcott and Hort.
- Tregelles, 1857. *The Greek New Testament, edited from ancient authorities; with the various readings of all the ancient MSS., the ancient versions, and earlier ecclesiastical writers (to Eusebius inclusive); together with the Latin version of Jerome, from the Codex Amiatinus of the sixth century.* London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1857-1872.

¹⁹ Kenyon op. cit. 2:6.

²⁰ Kenyon, op. cit. 2:7.

Method

- Tregelles published a critical text (1857) constructed on the same method as Lachmann, habitually adopting the readings most widely attested among the earliest witnesses to the text. Like Tischendorf, however, Tregelles took into consideration a much larger body of information than Lachmann, including all Greek manuscripts down to the seventh century, plus the earliest patristic citations and versions. His text was well received by scholars, especially in England, and the statement of evidence in his apparatus was generally acknowledged to be the most accurate of all critical editions.²¹
- However, just a few years later the publication of *Codex Sinaiticus* (1862) and Vercellone's edition of *Codex Vaticanus* (1868) completely eclipsed Tregelles' edition.

Influence

An enormous influence in his presentation of critical textual theory and unfairly overshadowed by the sudden appearance of the old MSS. presented by Tischendorf.

Though Tregelles added far less than Tischendorf to our store of critical material, he did more to establish correct principles of criticism, and his various writings had a wide and most beneficial influence in England.²²

Westcott & Hort

Biography

Brooke Foss Westcott [1825-1901] and Fenton John Anthony Hort [1828-1892]. Westcott was an effective Bishop of Durham and a Cambridge fellow. He authored several important commentaries on the NT. Hort was another Cambridge scholar and also a friend of JB Lightfoot.

Some inflammatory books and tracts have been published which seek to defend the KJV-Only position by defaming the character of Westcott and Hort in various ways. This is usually based on defective argumentation (e.g. straw man, non-causal association, libel, lies etc.). This approach must be condemned as unrighteous. Textual conservatives must be scholarly in their defence of the TR; the truth is what is vital, anything less is beneath us.

Texts published

Westcott and Hort, 1881. *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881. A very influential work. The 'Introduction' and 'Appendix of Notes on Select Readings' volume of the original edition was written by Hort, where he sets forth the arguments and theories on which the text was reconstructed.

Method

- Westcott and Hort were the culmination of 19th c. development of textual criticism, chiefly arguing the supremacy of the oldest Greek texts. They set aside the Latin witnesses and the later Greek manuscripts; but the oldest known Greek copies, *Codex Vaticanus* [B] and *Codex Sinaiticus* [Aleph], they elevated to a class called 'Neutral', and virtually identified them with the original manuscripts.

²¹ Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

²² Kenyon, op. cit. 2:7.

- A reason was required to explain how this important text had disappeared early from the manuscript tradition. Hort offered in the introduction a theoretical history of the manuscript tradition to explain this; to many it appeared to be fanciful.
- Families or local texts grew up from the earliest days as copies were made of texts in key Christian centres (e.g. Rome, Alexandria, Caesarea, Jerusalem, Constantinople). As a result, common variants developed in these areas so that a given text could be identified with a particular city or area. Sometimes MSS. of one locality would be compared to those of another and the result would be a mixed text. Closely related MSS. are identified by agreement in their errors. Westcott & Hort's theory is based upon the discovery that the vast majority of 5000 Greek MSS., especially the late uncials and most of the minuscules, share a large group of variant readings which are not found in the 'oldest' sources. This means that the bulk of our MSS. embody a text type which emerged in the 4thc. possibly combining readings of earlier texts; this arose after the toleration of Christianity by Constantine enabling better copying and a unification of tradition. This is the Byzantine or Syrian Text distributed throughout the Byzantine Empire. This was reproduced in virtually all later MSS. Their theory of four text-types was as follows.
 - ❖ THE NEUTRAL TEXT was the most primitive and pure type. *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus* are relics of the Neutral type.
 - ❖ THE WESTERN TEXT-TYPE arose early on as an uncontrolled popular edition, and persisted mainly in the Latin witnesses after Greek copies were no longer being produced in Italy. Characterised by a tendency to paraphrase or to modify the form of expression, and also to interpolate from parallel passages or from extraneous sources. [This family group has now been abandoned.]
 - ❖ THE SYRIAN, the latest form, a mixed text, borrowing from all, and aiming to be easy, smooth, and complete. Also known as THE BYZANTINE GROUP, which includes the mass of later copies, began in the fourth century as an official church-sponsored edition of the New Testament, written probably in Antioch, which combined the various readings of the Western and Neutral groups. This edition was so effectively propagated throughout Europe that both the older Neutral and Western text-types ceased to be copied, and eventually decayed.
 - ❖ The Neutral text survived for a while in Egypt, but then suffered corruption and became THE ALEXANDRIAN TYPE. The Alexandrian was much purer than the Western, but betraying a tendency to polish the language.
 - ❖ They regard B [Vaticanus] as pre-eminent above all other manuscripts for the purity of its text; the readings of \aleph and B combined as generally deserving acceptance as genuine, ancestries having 'diverged from a point near the autographs'; and they attach great weight to every combination of B with another primary Greek manuscript, as L C T D Ξ A Z 33.
- This is pure speculation, but Westcott & Hort further bolstered their theory with external arguments (from the oldest manuscripts, as in Lachmann) and internal evidence (from the tendencies of scribes, as in the rules of Griesbach 1796). These supported another principle, '*Readings are to be preferred that are found in a manuscript that habitually contains superior readings,*' as determined by their rules of internal criticism. The text of Westcott & Hort therefore was founded upon three arguments and was considered by many scholars to be the best possible text.

Critical Rules of Westcott & Hort

1. Older readings, MSS., or groups are to be preferred. ('The shorter the interval between the time of the autograph and the end of the period of transmission in question, the stronger the presumption that earlier date implies greater purity of text.') (2.59; cf. 2.5-6, 31)

2. Readings are approved or rejected by reason of the quality, and not the number, of their supporting witnesses. ('No available presumptions whatever as to text can be obtained from number alone, that is, from number not as yet interpreted by descent.')(2.44)
3. A reading combining two simple, alternative readings is later than the two readings comprising the conflation, and MSS rarely or never supporting conflate reading are text antecedent to mixture and are of special value. (2.49-50).
4. The reading is to be preferred that makes the best sense, that is, that best conforms to the grammar and is most congruous with the purport of the rest of the sentence and of the larger context. (2.20)
5. The reading is to be preferred that best conforms to the usual style of the author and to that author's material in other passages. (2.20)
6. The reading is to be preferred that most fitly explains the existence of the others. (2.22-23)
7. The reading is less likely to be original that combines the appearance of an improvement in the sense with the absence of its reality; the scribal alteration will have an apparent excellence, while the original will have the highest real excellence. (2.27, 29)
8. The reading is less likely to be original that shows a disposition to smooth away difficulties (another way of stating that the harder reading is preferable). (2.28)
9. Readings are to be preferred that are found in a MS that habitually contains superior readings as determined by intrinsic and transcriptional probability. Certainty is increased if such a better MS is found also to be an older MS (2.32-33) and if such a MS habitually contains reading that prove themselves antecedent to mixture and independent of external contamination by other, inferior texts (2.150-51). The same principles apply to groups of MSS. (2.260-61).

Some criticisms

- It is a theory that cannot be proved.
- Ten copies may stem from an erring parent MS, but they may also be ten accurate copies; who is to decide?
- Trusted copies are more likely to be used and gradually get destroyed.
- A good copy could be made of an accurate MS. 1000 years later and thus also is accurate, though recent.
- A variant that first appeared in a 4th c. MS., when hundreds of MSS. reflecting the true reading of the original were in circulation, would not become the dominant reading.
- The readings found in the largest number of MSS. are most likely to trace back to the earliest copies and autographs. These would have time to multiply the most and spread the furthest.

Influence

Westcott & Hort represent the final decision of textual critics to focus on older (Alexandrian) texts and devalue the majority (Byzantine) newer texts. The success of their text was largely due to personal influence and advantageous timing.

In the 1860's the two most ancient copies, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, were both published for the first time, creating a public sensation. Westcott and Hort began work on their text, and in 1870, the year that the English Revised Version was commissioned by the church authorities in England, they were able to distribute to the members of the revision committee a draft copy of their text; they both served on the revision committee and they published their text in 1881, the same year that the revision was published. For ten years, then, Westcott and Hort continually advocated their views in favour of the texts of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in regular meetings of the most influential scholars of Great

Britain and America; and it is hardly surprising that their text should be so well regarded when it appeared. In fact two generations passed before most scholars would recognise that the genealogical theories of Westcott and Hort were without adequate empirical foundation.

The text of Westcott & Hort was most vigorously assailed by John William Burgon, Dean of Chichester, and more temperately criticised by others (see volume 2, chapter 10 of Scrivener and Miller 1894, Miller 1897, and Hoskier 1914). The common theme of criticism was the lack of historical basis for their hypothesis of an early Byzantine recension in Antioch (by a character named Lucius).²³

The hypothesis which Hort so powerfully worked out has to some extent wrought its own undoing. The lines of study that it suggested have brought to light so many new facts and so many serious problems that the tone of certitude at one time in fashion has passed away. To Scrivener's description of Westcott and Hort's text as a *splendidum peccatum* few will assent. Yet, beyond question, the situation has materially changed. The "Western Text" or, to call it by a safer name, the "Syro-Western Text," which Westcott and Hort took to be a fairly well delineated fact, has become an imperious problem. The genealogical theory has fulfilled the chief function of a good working hypothesis by introducing order into chaos and pointing to the promising lines of attack upon the vast body of data awaiting the student. But genealogical certitude has declined. With its decline has come a growing disposition to concede to exegesis a certain right against the overweening authority of any group of manuscripts, however imposing. The good text-critic should also be an accomplished exegete.²⁴

Nestle

Biography

Eberhard Nestle [1851-1913]. German Biblical scholar and textual critic. Nestle died in 1913, and his son Erwin was appointed to be the editor beginning with the tenth edition (1914).

Texts published

- Nestle, 1898. *Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critico ex editionibus et libris manuscriptis collecto*. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1898; 2nd ed. 1899; 3rd ed. 1901; 4th ed. 1903; 5th ed. 1904; 6th ed. 1906; 7th ed. 1908; 8th ed. 1910; 9th ed. 1912. Nestle created his first text by comparing Tischendorf 1869, Westcott and Hort 1881, and Weymouth 1892, and placing in his text whichever reading was followed by two of the three. In the margin all differences between the three are recorded. For the third edition (1901) he replaced Weymouth with Weiss 1894. Originally the marginal apparatus showed only the minority readings of the three editions from which the text was constructed, plus the readings of the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in a separate paragraph below. For each edition Nestle added more information to the lower margin, making direct reference to many different manuscripts, versions, and Fathers.²⁵
- Nestle, 1904. *H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ. Text with Critical Apparatus*. London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1904. Corrected reprint 1923. The text of this edition is that of Nestle's fourth (1903), with however a completely different apparatus, showing only the

²³ Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

²⁴ Kenyon, op. cit. 2:9.

²⁵ Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

readings of the former edition published by the Society (based upon Elzevir 1624) and those of Palmer 1881.

- Nestle, 1927. Erwin Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critico curavit Eberhard Nestle novis curis elaboravit*. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 10th ed. 1914; 11th ed. 1920; 12th ed. 1923; 13th ed. 1927; 14th ed. 1930; 15th ed. 1932; 16th ed. 1936; 17th ed. 1941; 18th ed. 1948; 19th ed. 1949; 20th ed. 1950; 21st ed. 1952; 22nd ed. 1956; 23rd ed. 1957; 24th ed. 1960; 25th ed. 1963. Erwin Nestle took over editorship of the Nestle text when his father died in 1913, and so was responsible for additions to the apparatus beginning with the 10th edition (1914). The text of the 17th edition (1941) differed from that of the third edition (1901) in only about a dozen places, and the text remained the same from the 17th through the 25th edition (1963). This text was reproduced with a different apparatus in Nestle and Kilpatrick 1958. An interlinear translation is given in Marshall 1958. It was the basis of the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible.
- Kurt Aland, who later became executive editor of the work, was first employed by Erwin Nestle as an editor of the apparatus for the 21st edition (1952). When he succeeded Nestle as executive editor, he replaced the Nestle text with the UBS text he had helped to create (see Aland et al. 1979).
- Nestle and Kilpatrick, 1958. Erwin Nestle and George D. Kilpatrick, *H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*. Second Edition, with revised critical apparatus. London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1958. The text of this edition corresponds largely to Nestle 1927, but the apparatus has been designed (by G.D. Kilpatrick) for the work of translators. Insignificant variants are left out, and reference is regularly made to Palmer 1881 and Elzevir 1633.

Method

Nestle, 1897. *Einführung in das griechische Neu Testament*. Göttingen, 1897; 2nd ed. 1899; 3rd ed. 1909. English translation: Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament. London: Williams and Norgate, 1901. Translated from the 2nd German edition by William Eadie.

Influence

The Nestle text was the standard used until recent times.

Metzger

Biography

Bruce M. Metzger [1914-2007]. Metzger was an American Biblical scholar and textual critic, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary and a Bible editor on the board of the American Bible Society and United Bible Societies. He wrote prolifically on Greek, the New Testament, and New Testament Textual Criticism.

Method

- Metzger, 1955. *Annotated Bibliography of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament 1914-1939*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1955.
- Metzger, 1964. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964; 2nd ed. 1968; 3rd ed. 1992. In this introduction to textual criticism he explains the view of textual history and text-critical technique which characterises the current mainstream of scholars. Since its appearance, Metzger's introduction has been the most widely used one in American schools. It is more interesting and of more general scope than the comparable

introduction by Kurt and Barbara Aland, Aland and Aland 1981, and also gives much fuller bibliographic information.²⁶

- Metzger, 1975. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. London: United Bible Societies, 1975. Second edition, 1994. The UBS editorial committee discussions for more than three thousand textual variants in this textual commentary, designed as a companion volume to the 3rd edition of the UBS' Greek New Testament. It is by far the most comprehensive textual commentary to be published in the past century. Despite its general excellence, the book does have some rather strange faults: The readings of the Received Text, which are historically important (especially to translators), are often simply ignored, while the insignificant variations of obscure sources are regularly mentioned. Metzger also neglects to mention the decisions of past editors, although surely these have influenced the decisions of the UBS committee. Distributed in America by the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.²⁷
- Metzger, 1977. *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Metzger, 1981. *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Paleography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Metzger et al., 1990. *The New Revised Standard Version, New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. This is a revision of the *Revised Standard Version* on the basis of Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikren, Martini, 1975.

Aland

Biography

Kurt Aland [1915-1994]. A German Theologian and Biblical Scholar who specialised in New Testament textual criticism. He was one of the principal editors of *Novum Testamentum Graece* for the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and *The Greek New Testament* for the United Bible Societies.

Texts published

- Aland, 1963. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum, Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitibus*. edidit Kurt Aland. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1963; 13th edition 1985. In this synopsis of the four Gospels Aland presents a critical apparatus of variant readings much fuller than that of his *Novum Testamentum graece* (see Aland et al. 1979), but still falls short of Tischendorf. Among easily obtainable resources, this work is the most complete with respect to the Gospels.
- Aland, 1963 b. *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963. 2nd edition revised and enlarged, 1994. This is the standard reference for Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. It lists the manuscripts with the designations currently accepted as standard among scholars, and replaces the one compiled by Gregory, although Gregory's system of notation is employed. It also contains a concordant list of manuscript symbols used by Gregory, Tischendorf, and von Soden.²⁸
- Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikren, 1966. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikren, *The Greek New Testament*. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1966; 2nd ed. 1968 (for which Carlo Martini was added to the editorial committee); 3rd ed. 1975 (corrected printing, 1983); 4th ed. 1993 (editors Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes

²⁶ Marlowe, *ibid.*

²⁷ Marlowe, *ibid.*

²⁸ Marlowe, *ibid.*

Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger). The United Bible Societies (UBS), is an association of Bible societies from five countries: The American Bible Society, The National Bible Society of Scotland, the Württemberg Bible Institute (now called the German Bible Society), the Netherlands Bible Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The association was created in 1955 to produce this text, and it now manages international Bible publication used to be done by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The UBS edition was designed to meet the practical needs of translators sponsored by the member Bible societies. The text of the first edition (1966) was a tentative revision of the text of Nestle 1927. A second edition with a few important changes appeared in 1968. In 1975 the third edition presented a substantially different text (see Aland Black Metzger Wikren Martini 1975), which was repeated without change in the fourth edition (1993).

- Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikren, Martini, 1968. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikren, Carlo Martini, *The Greek New Testament*. 2nd edition. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1968. This edition presents a modest revision of the text of the first UBS edition. For this edition a Roman Catholic scholar, Carlo Martini, was been added to the editorial committee.
- Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikren, Martini, 1975. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikren, Carlo Martini, *The Greek New Testament*. 3rd edition. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1975. Corrected printing, 1983. The third edition of the UBS text was altered in more than 500 places from the first edition, most of the changes being made at the suggestion of Kurt Aland. Since 1952 Aland had been co-editor of the Nestle-Aland editions of the Württembergische Bibelanstalt along with Erwin Nestle (see Nestle 1927), and he appears to have been the dominant member of the UBS committee from the start. The text of the UBS third edition was in fact so much in accordance with Aland's preferences that he chose to adopt it, with changes in punctuation only, as the text for the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland. The differences between the UBS 3rd edition and the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland are to be found only in their apparatus and other marginal equipment.
- In the corrected third edition of UBS (1983) the punctuation of the text was conformed to that of Nestle-Aland 26. The fourth edition (1993) makes no changes in the text, but presents a thoroughly revised critical apparatus. This is the most widely used student's edition today. For a detailed explanation and defence of the text of the UBS third edition see Metzger 1975. For a thorough explanation of the apparatus see Aland and Aland 1981. For an English version that closely follows the text see *the New Revised Standard Version*. For a literal interlinear translation see Douglas 1990. For a collection in English of its significant variations from the text underlying *the King James version* see the marginal annotations of the *New King James Version*.
- Aland et al., 1979. Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece post Eberhard Nestle et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, Allen Wikgren; apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Kurt Aland et Barbara Aland una cum Instituto studiorum textus Novi Testamenti Monasteriensi (Westphalia)*. 26th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979; 27th edition, 1993. This critical edition, commonly called Nestle-Aland, purports to be the twenty-sixth in the series of Nestle editions (see Nestle 1898 and Nestle 1927); but for this edition the Nestle text was replaced by the text of Aland Black Metzger Wikren Martini 1975, and major changes were also made in the apparatus. The publisher of the Nestle editions, the Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, was also reconstituted as the Deutsche Bibelgesellshaft prior to its appearance. In short, the 26th edition has almost nothing in common with the editions of Eberhard

Nestle.²⁹ For a detailed explanation and defence of the text of the UBS third edition see Metzger 1975.

- The 27th edition (1993) presents the same text as the 26th edition, with a slightly revised apparatus and a much improved Introduction. This edition is distributed in America by the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.
- Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Metzger, Martini, 1993. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger, *The Greek New Testament*. 4th edition. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1993. The text of this edition is identical to that of the third UBS edition (see Aland Black Metzger Wikren Martini 1975), but the apparatus is thoroughly revised and corrected. Changes in the committee are worthy of note: Johannes Karavidopoulos and Barbara Aland (wife of Kurt) have filled vacancies left by Matthew Black and Allen Wikren, with Barbara Aland presiding over the committee.

Method

Aland and Aland, 1981. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *Der Text des Neuen Testaments: Einführung in die wissenschaftlichen Ausgaben sowie in Theorie und Praxis der modernen Textkritik*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981. English translation: *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 2nd edition, revised and enlarged, 1989. This introduction gives a great deal of specific information about the Nestle-Aland edition (see Aland et al. 1979) and the UBS editions (see Aland Black Metzger Wikren Martini 1975), for which it is intended to supply comprehensive Prolegomena. As a general introduction, however, it is in several ways less satisfactory than Metzger 1964.

Influence

Nestle-Aland 26 (same text as the 27th edition) is the most widely used academic edition today.

Interim Conclusion

This gives a summary of the contributions of textual critics since the Reformation. Many names of scholars have been left out but those included are the most important. For a full bibliography of text critics see Michael D Marlowe, *Bible Research*, at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html> a work that has been extensively quoted in this paper.

For most Bible students the information given here is more than required, and rather technical, but it is necessary for a proper summary. Students can sift what they need. Far too many articles on this subject are simplistic, superficial, prejudiced and misleading. The only way to properly cover this complex subject is to give sufficient detail of the process of textual criticism. For textual scholars, the presentation given here would be considered simplistic but, I hope, accurate.

Summary of the modern position on textual families

The division of texts into text-types, or families, was first suggested by Bengel and then developed by various scholars, with fashions rising and falling, until it was set in stone by Westcott and Hort (though their actual suggestions of families has been amended).

²⁹ Marlowe, *ibid.*

The division of Greek texts into families, has today narrowed itself down into two main streams, the Alexandrian, based on the older, fewer MSS, and the Byzantine, based upon the majority, younger MSS.

Westcott and Hort's text-types have been amended. Their Syrian text-type is the same as the Byzantine text-type. The Western family is now abandoned, while the Neutral (purest) text (represented in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) they claim developed into the Alexandrian family. Thus we are left with the Byzantine and Alexandrian text-types.

The Alexandrian text is the basis of most modern Bible versions. The Byzantine is the foundation of the KJV, the NKJV and the World English Bible alone.

Alexandrian family (text-type)

This is represented in the Nestle-Aland 27 - UBS 4 texts.

Problems for the Alexandrian family

- The two chief MSS. contradict each other thousands of times. B and Aleph disagree over 3000 times in the Gospels alone. *'It is, in fact, easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS. differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree.'*³⁰
- Vaticanus omits 2,877 words of the Gospels; Sinaiticus omits 3,455 words from the Gospels.
- 'Jesus' is omitted 70 times; 'Christ' is omitted 29 times.
- It contradicts the Byzantine text in thousands of places.
- In Mk 1:2 the Alexandrian text makes Isaiah the author of the book of Malachi.
- Verses and passages found in the Fathers from around 200-300 are missing from the Alexandrian text MSS. which date from c. 300-400. These readings are found in MSS. in existence from 500 onwards. For example, Mk 16:9-20 is found in the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the 2nd c. and in almost every MSS. of Mark's Gospel from 500 onwards. It is missing in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
- Wording in the text is sometimes difficult, abrupt or impossible.
- It omits many key passages found in the Byzantine text and used for two thousand years in Bible versions used by God.
- The critical propositions of Westcott-Hort were based upon mere theories, some of which have been debunked (such as the Lucian revision). The idea that Lucian edited the text (i.e. made a new text by revising earlier ones) in Antioch in the 4th c. has no evidential support.
- The collation of eclectic texts is somewhat arbitrary and subjective, based on probabilities, since there are so many contradictory options, whereas the Byzantine texts are in more agreement.
- Westcott & Hort could not account for the continued use of the Majority Text after 300 AD along with the disuse of the B and Aleph texts. Modern textual critics cannot either.

Byzantine family (text-type)

This represented in the Scrivener 1881 – Beza 1589 texts.

The Byzantine text-type = the Traditional Text = the Received Text (or Textus Receptus) = the Syrian Text (of Westcott – Hort).

³⁰ John Burgon, quoted in Anderson, p16.

Arguments for the Byzantine family text

- One key factor is that older, worn out manuscripts were usually destroyed when a replacement had been copied and checked - hence no old manuscripts. Very old manuscripts = poor manuscripts that escaped burning. '*Mere antiquity does not prove the excellence of a copy.*'³¹
- It has overwhelming support in the majority of Greek manuscripts.
- Some modern textual scholars now agree that the Majority Text is very early i.e. pre - Nicea (325 AD). Early papyri have been found with so called 'late' readings.
- It has overwhelming support from the Lectionaries³² and the early Versions; this includes the Syriac (or Aramaic) and Latin Versions which go back to the mid-second century; the Peshitta, (a good early Syriac translation) contains Byzantine readings, and the Ulfilas Gothic version of the fourth century.
- Approximately 95% of the Uncial manuscripts have a Byzantine type of text.
- Over 95% of the Minuscules have a Byzantine type of text.
- Byzantine manuscripts were stored in wet climates and did not last as long, so the oldest ones are dated from the 5th to the 15th century. Alexandrian manuscripts were mostly stored in dry, desert climates (e.g. Egypt) and lasted longer, so some date as far back as before the 4th century. [Alexandrian supporters dispute this and it cannot be proven.]
- The early church fathers quoted the Byzantine text.
- Egypt never received any original manuscripts to use as a basis for copies.
- Earlier is not necessarily closer to the autograph. Older does not mean better, and it may mean it's worse, since well-used books wear out, and little-used books stay preserved longer.
- When a scribe had a choice of manuscripts to copy, he would normally copy the one that he trusted the most, thus causing the most trusted text to be copied more often.
- The Westcott Hort text is heavily weighted to a small number of manuscripts relative to those available to us, and relies heavily on one manuscript, *Codex Sinaiticus*, that was pulled from a trash can at a monastery.
- Both *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* demonstrate clear and embarrassing errors (such as 'under a candlestick' in Mark 4:21, in both). This shows that they cannot be trusted yet they are the foundation of the modern critical text.
- The Holy Spirit takes an active interest in preserving what He has inspired. If the Word of God is eternal, God is able to preserve the original words, even if the autographs wore out over time. Would he allow the church to have the wrong text for most of church history? The greatest period of spiritual revival in history was the Reformation, and this was based upon Byzantine MSS. On the contrary, the period where the Alexandrian texts have been in the ascendancy is the period of the greatest apostasy in the church.
- The *Codex Sinaiticus* was used by theologians in Alexandria, such as Origen, men who made great errors by allegorising and trying to mix Greek thought with God's word in order to make it appeal to the Greek mind and to the masses.
- Hort's theory was actually never tested, yet most Bible scholars accepted it as true.
- Hort's notion of a Lucianic Recension (a supposed major ecclesiastical revision of the Greek NT text by a certain unknown Lucius) has since been abandoned by all or most Biblical scholars.
- Westcott and Hort are not to be trusted for their ecclesiastic connections and beliefs.

³¹ Kenyon, op. cit. 2, 'Principles of Textual criticism'.

³² Early church service books containing selected readings from the Gospels, Acts and Epistles

- There are nine levels of corrections on Sinaiticus made by revisers throughout the centuries between the lines of text. It shows plain evidence of corruption.
- Sinaiticus has many unique readings (words not used in any other text).
- There are huge numbers of disagreements in Sinaiticus even with other 'old' manuscripts found in the 19th century.

Problems for the Byzantine family

- Readings of ancient versions (e.g. Latin and Syriac) sometimes agree with the older Greek copies rather than the later ones.
- Scripture quotations from theologians who lived outside of Egypt sometimes support the earlier manuscripts.

Table of comparisons

Byzantine family	Alexandrian family
E.g. TR (Received Text) and Majority Text, Younger cursive MSS., mostly from medieval period. 5000+ manuscripts that are reasonably consistent.	E.g. the W-H (Westcott-Hort) critical text, or Eclectic text. Older MSS., most are 7 th c. or earlier. A few inconsistent, contradictory texts, mainly the Codex Sinaiticus (also called Codex Aleph) and Codex Vaticanus (also called Codex B). Scholars use these to select an eclectic (hybrid) text.
Developed during the Reformation period and the foundation of Biblical studies until 1881.	In the ascendancy since 1881 (Revised Version). Developed during a period of downgrade in the church and theology (e.g. Modernism, Liberalism, Evolutionary Theory, developing atheism, rise of many sects and cults etc.)
The foundation of the KJV, NKJV, and the World English Bible and any version before 1881.	The basis for the United Bible Society (UBS) & the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament. The foundation for almost all modern versions translated after 1881.
The text used by Calvin, Beza, Luther, Spurgeon, Turretin, Perkins, Owen, Bunyan, Thomas Goodwin, Ames, and so on. The text used by all the sound Reformed confessions of faith.	The text used by all the current rogue and apostate church movements.
Contains: The descent of the angel into the pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:3b-4). The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:13b). The woman taken in adultery (Jn 7:53-8:11). [Note that there is no relationship between Jn 7:52 and Jn 8:12.] The last 12 verses of Mk 16. The appearance of the angel to Christ and the sweating of great drops of blood (Lk 22:43-44).	Omits or questions these and many more.

The Majority Text³³

The Greek Text According to the Majority Text, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

³³ Sources used here are: Michael D. Marlowe, *What about the Majority Text?*; Dr. Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, [this has been severely criticised] and others.

[This is the text] found in most of the Greek MSS. It differs from the Received Text in passages where the MSS. used by the editors of the 16th c. Greek editions deviated from the consensus of the majority of MSS. The Majority Text, however, stands closer to the Received Text than to the Critical Text.³⁴

Different writers confuse this issue by referring to two separate textual issues. The first is that the large number of Byzantine manuscripts (as opposed to the fewer but older Alexandrian ones) are sometimes called the 'Traditional Text' (since it was traditionally used by the historical church) or 'The Majority Text' since they were in the majority. However, in modern times the term has come to mean something more specific, which is different to the Traditional Text.

There is no specific manuscript that forms the 'Majority Text'. It is formed by comparing all known manuscripts and deriving readings that are more numerous than others; the majority text wins. There are two published versions of the Majority Greek text: Hodges & Farstad 1982 and Pierpont & Robinson 1991.

The Difference between the Majority Text and the TR

The TR is not single Greek text either but is a family of printed texts published during the Reformation, most notably by the Elzevir family, particularly their 1633 edition. This is based on the editions of Erasmus (1516), Estienne (Stephens) and Beza (see earlier). In turn these printed editions are based on a small number of late medieval manuscripts.

The Majority Text is developed from all extant Greek manuscripts; the majority of which are also late medieval manuscripts, creating a similarity between the TR and the Majority Text. Both are of the Byzantine family (text-type). Both are contrasted with the older Alexandrian texts (dated from 2nd c. – 7th c.)

The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text differs from the TR 1005 times (most of these differences are trivial) whereas the Westcott-Hort critical text differs 3618 times. The Majority Text also agrees with the TR in some significant verses, such as John 8:1-11 and 'God was manifest' in 1 Tim 3:16.

Support

Few modern textual scholars support the MT or the TR because most are advocates of the critical N-A / UBS text and accompanying methodology. [See: 'Problems for the Byzantine family'.] The most well known advocate of the Majority Text is Wilbur Pickering, followed by Zane C Hodges.

Gordon Fee examined Pickering's arguments in a series of articles³⁵ claiming they are badly flawed. Maurice Robinson agreed with this. Yet Dr. Maurice A. Robinson, an outstanding academic, is the most competent scholar who favours something like the Majority Text. [He is professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, North Carolina.] While Pickering is questionable in certain places, the methodology of the Majority Text is sound. One hopes that Maurice Robinson will write a defence of this at some point.

³⁴ Gromacki, p22.

³⁵ See Fee's critique in 'Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus' in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 21 (1978) 19-33, plus "A Rejoinder," 157-60; 'A Critique of W. N. Pickering's The Identity of the New Testament Text' in *Westminster Theological Journal*, 41 (1979) 397-423; 'The Majority Text and the Original Text of the New Testament' in *The Bible Translator*, 31 (1980) 107-18; and chapter 10 of *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

Conclusion

It is no wonder that the ordinary Bible reader sometimes tries to understand all this and falls into despair and gives up. Others read inflammatory articles by biased, unwise preachers and think they know everything. Tracts by supporters of the TR and of the Alexandrian text have been filled with errors and inconsistencies which just whip up fervour for prior agendas. It is wicked that some prominent Reformed evangelicals are also guilty in this matter. What we need to do is establish some basic facts.

1. We are never going to be able to establish the exact original Greek text for certain.
2. People who hold different views to us on textual matters are not sinful or of the devil for this reason alone. They just have a different view based upon different considerations. People will not go to hell because they read a Bible based upon the Alexandrian text.
3. Regarding salvation, we are able to gain the correct information from Bibles based upon both the Alexandrian and the Byzantine text. However, some Bible versions are such appalling paraphrases that this is much less true for those.
4. Whether you have an Alexandrian or a Byzantine foundational text, your choice of Bible version ought to be based on a literal translation not a paraphrase. An NASB is of more value than an NIV, but a NKJV is better than both.
5. In the main, the differences between the two families is slight. People talk of over 5,000 differences between the KJV and the RV, and this is true, but most of these are trivial, only a few hundred are more significant. However, there are some rather important passages, which are omitted, in the Alexandrian text (such as Jn 8:1-11). Sometimes doctrine is affected. In 1 Tim 3:16 WH omit the word 'God' and substitute 'He' or 'who' i.e. 'He was manifest in the flesh'. The deity of Jesus is weakened as a result. The texts show a great deal of evidence for keeping the word 'God'. Aleph is virtually alone in omitting it. Similarly Mk 1:1 omits 'the Son of God' in Westcott and Hort. Another case is Isaiah 7:14 which requires 'virgin', 'not young woman'. There is no sign in a woman having a child, but there is if that young woman is a virgin.

The main doctrines that supporters of the critical N-A / UBS text ignore are the sovereignty of God and the providence of God. God supervises history for the benefit of the elect and he promised that he would guide us into all truth (Jn 16). He also told us that the Scriptures are the source of all the information we need for salvation and life (2 Tim 3:16). Thus it is impossible to believe that for the vast majority of church history the text used for NT translation was seriously faulty.

Therefore, it is the opinion of this writer that, while we should endeavour to continue researching to reconstruct the best possible NT text based on the majority of MSS. (i.e. the Majority Text) we should be confident that the TR, or Traditional Text of the Byzantine family, is essentially accurate.

Glossary

Autographs

Original hand-written texts; the basis of later copies.

Collate, collation

The accumulation, organising, categorising and systematising of texts.

Critical apparatus

A listing of variant readings, with accompanying manuscript support, printed in critical editions of the Greek New Testament.

Critical edition or critical text

A printed edition of the Greek New Testament that has been produced by critical analysis of textual variants. Such editions will usually have a critical apparatus. [In literary matters, 'criticism' does not mean 'censure' or 'disapproval' but the analysis and judgment of the merits and faults of a literary work.]

Codex

A manuscript in modern book form of pages as opposed to a scroll, but especially applied to old uncial manuscripts.

Cursive

Flowing script as opposed to manuscripts written in separate capital letters. Nearly all Greek New Testament manuscripts after the eighth century are cursives. [See minuscules.]

Eclectic text

The process of textual criticism by selecting what is best from a number of different criteria and what seems the best reading from a number of different manuscripts. It is an amalgamation of methods and manuscripts. The method inevitable is subjective and varies from person to person (as the history of the text demonstrates).

Extant

Surviving manuscripts or portions of manuscripts.

Folio

A printing term; the leaf of a codex manuscript that, when folded in half, provided for four pages (front and back).

Gloss

A short explanation of something in the text, usually written in the margin or between the lines. A copying error occurred when glosses were incorporated into the text by the next copyist.

Lacuna(e)

Gaps, blank spaces, tears, or missing pages in a manuscript.

Lectionaries

Early church service books containing selected readings from the Gospels, Acts and Epistles. There are about 2000 produced mainly between the 9th and 15th c. They are designated by an italic *l* or Lect. followed by a numeral (e.g. *l* 225 or Lect. 225).

Majuscule

Large uncial letters, each written separately, so as not to connect with other letters.

Minuscules

Smaller letters in a cursive, free flowing hand. There are about 2700 minuscule MSS. dating from 9th - 16th c. They are designated by numerals (e.g. Cod. 13).

MS.

Manuscript. Hand-written copies of texts.

MSS.

Manuscripts.

Octavo [8vo]

A printing term; a book printed on octavo pages, that is, the pages were cut eight from a sheet. Such books are usually small size (as compared to the larger quarto).

Palimpsest

A manuscript in which the original writing has been erased and then written over. Modern technology enables scholars to read the original writing underneath the overprinted text.

Papyrus, papyri

A tall reed. The pith of this is cut into strips, laid in a cross-work pattern, and glued together to make a page for writing. The papyrus rolls of Egypt have been used as a writing surface since the early third millennium BC. The Greeks adopted papyrus around 900 BC and later the Romans adopted its use. However, the oldest extant Greek rolls of papyrus date from the fourth century BC. The inner pith of the papyrus plant was called byblos. From this comes the Greek word biblion (book) and the English word Bible. The word paper is derived from papyrus. Papyrus is perishable, requiring a dry climate for its preservation. That is why so many papyri have been discovered in the desert sands of Egypt. Some papyrus fragments have also been found in the caves near the Dead Sea, where the climate is likewise sufficiently dry.³⁶

Parchment

Made from sheep and goat skins, began to replace leather (vellum) as early as the third century BC, though actual parchment codices date from the second century. This material was more expensive than papyrus.

Polyglot

A compendium of various texts arranged in parallel columns. Two languages comprise a diglot; three languages a triglot; and so on.

Quarto

A printing term; a book printed on quarto pages, i.e., pages cut four from a sheet. Bigger than octavo.

Quire

Four sheets of paper folded once and stitched at the fold. Scribes would use several quires to make up an entire codex. After the fifteenth century, a quire denoted a collection of 24 sheets of paper of the same size, constituting one 20th of a ream.

Recension

A critical, thoroughgoing revision of a text. The theory of texts being based upon certain families or text-types. The recension produces a text-type.

Redaction

The process of editing material for a written work.

Scroll

A roll of papyrus, parchment, or leather used for writing a literary work. The papyrus scroll of Egypt can be traced as far back as 2500 BC. Jews used leather scrolls for writing the books of the Old Testament. A few early manuscripts of the New Testament were written

³⁶ Bible Translation magazine.

on scrolls, but all these papyri were written on the back of other existing writings. Thus, none of these works were originally composed in the scroll format. Christians predominantly used the codex.

Text-type

A term for the close textual relationship of manuscripts, also called a 'family' (such as Alexandrian, Caesarean, Western, Neutral, and Byzantine).

Textual criticism

The examination of variant readings in ancient manuscripts to reconstruct the original wording of a text. This kind of study is needed for texts whose autographs are not extant.

Uncial

An old form of capital letters (see majuscules). Most uncial MSS. are on parchment. Uncial MSS. are designated by letter and number (e.g. Aleph, D etc.).

United Bible Society [UBS]

The United Bible Societies are publishers of editions of the Greek New Testament. After the UBS had published two editions of the Greek New Testament, they united with the work being done on a new edition (the twenty-sixth) of the Nestle-Aland text. Thus, the UBS' third edition of the *Greek New Testament* and the Nestle-Aland twenty-sixth edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* have the same text. Each, however, has different punctuation and a different critical apparatus. [The UBS text has a complete listing of witnesses for select variation units; the Nestle-Aland text has a condensed listing of the manuscript evidence for almost all the variation units. Both editions have since gone into another edition (the fourth and twenty-seventh, respectively), manifesting changes to the critical apparatus but not to the wording of the text itself.]

Variant readings

Different readings in the extant manuscripts for any given portion of a text.

Vellum

Prepared soft animal skins used to write on. Vellum had a finer quality than parchment and was prepared from the skins of calves or lambs. After the fourth century most Christian codices were made of vellum or parchment. Leather (tanned skins) was the forerunner of parchment, was in use about as long as papyrus.

Versions

These are translations from Greek into another language. Produced during the first seven centuries were Itala (Old Latin), Latin Vulgate (8000 MSS. extant), Old Syriac, *Peshitta* (or Peshitto meaning 'simple', this is the standard Syrian text with 350 extant MSS.) and later Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Ethiopic and Georgian. The most important was the *Vulgate*, Jerome's NT was a revision of the Old Latin but the OT was a direct translation from the Hebrew. The original MS. of the versions are not extant, they are only known through copies; so textual criticism has to be applied to unearth the original.

Vulgate

Early Latin translation of the Bible made by Jerome [c.345-c.419].

Key Textual Sources

Codex Alexandrinus

Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph)

Codex Vaticanus (B): The oldest manuscript.

Peshitta [Old Syriac]

The *Vulgate* [Latin]

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