

A simple explanation of Bible texts

And a summary about how they were perverted

Introduction

This is far more important than most church people presume. Although the analysis of textual issues regarding the Old and New Testaments is very complex, nevertheless it is possible to reduce the complexities to basic principles so that the layman can understand what is going on.

The upshot of the matter is that every Christian has to choose from a wide variety of Bible versions and most have no faculties to be able to make this choice. It is my contention, that some of the versions are not just faulty, they are downright perverse. In fact, there has been a global elite conspiracy since the mid-19th century to pervert the Scriptures in order to enable a satanic plan to subvert societies and nations. In fact, certain Freemasons, Roman Catholics and others sought to introduce occult ideas into the Biblical text, as well as push for the inclusion of uninspired writings, such as the Apocrypha – which advocates the doctrine of Purgatory.

It is vital for believers to have some idea about textual matters so that they can choose the right Bible version based on the right manuscripts using the right translation methods. It is imperative that we have in our hands words that we can be assured are as close to the words of God as possible. We have no right to choose the version that we like the most or reads the easiest (which is what most people do).

While aspects of textual investigation are exceedingly complex, I aim here to give a broad understanding of the most important issues that are easily understood by all.

Manuscripts

Printing by moveable type was not invented until 1540 by Gutenberg, therefore, for most of church history Christians had to use hand-written copies of Scripture. These were laborious to produce and consequently very expensive. Few believers would have had an entire Bible in scrolls and codices before the age of printing.

NT Manuscripts

There are over 5000 Greek manuscripts,¹ 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 manuscripts date to within 100 years. In the case of classical works, the oldest manuscripts of classical Greek authors are a 1000 years or more after the author's death.

Of the 3,000 Greek manuscripts of the whole NT, 1,700 are from the 12th-14th centuries; 640 from the 9th-11th centuries. These agree on 99% of the words of the NT. The late date is not a problem (see later).

¹ In 1998 there were 5,338.

Manuscript evidence is also much slimmer for secular works; e.g. for Aeschylus – 50 manuscripts, for Sophocles – 100 and for the *Annals of Tacitus* – 1.

It would be hard to find two manuscripts 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. This is not as bad as it seems; e.g. if a single word is misspelled in the same way in 3000 separate manuscripts, 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. Words could be easily confused; e.g. 'your' = *hemon*, 'our' = *humon*. Also, 1 Tim 3:16 - AV: **God was manifest in the flesh** (ΘΣ = '*theos*'). RSV: **He was manifest in the flesh** (ΟΣ = '*he who*').

Types of scribal error

- Intentional errors.
- Omission.
- Addition.
- Transposition.
- Itacism (interchange of vowels).
- Fission (dividing one original word into two).
- Fusion (joining together two original words into one in the copy).
- Contracted and abbreviated forms (sometimes copyists used abbreviations which later copyists misunderstood).

Apparatus: rules for choosing the best reading

Basic guidelines for the preferred reading would be:

- The older reading.
- The more difficult reading (according to modern critical scholars).
- The shorter reading.
- The reading which best explains the rise of variations.
- The reading with the widest geographical acceptance.
- The reading which conforms to the literary style of the author.
- The reading which agrees doctrinally with scripture.

Until the publication of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri in 1933 (P45, P46, P47, dated from 3rdc.) there was no codex known to scholars that was older than the 4thc. The C B fragments are dated by Kenyon in the third century with some confidence.

The basic languages

Old Testament

Hebrew texts

There are two basic text types. The first is the Hebrew original text that is now lost. This was written in Hebrew (and some Aramaic) words without any vowels.

The source of Hebrew text in most western Bibles is the Masoretic text, which was gradually produced by the end of the 10th century. This was written using vowel points so some judgment had to be made by the editors as to what words were applicable since words without vowels can mean different things. For example SNG could be song, sing, sung, sang, snog, snag, snug etc.

Greek Text

This is the Septuagint (or LXX), so-called since it was claimed to be written by 70 or 72 Jewish elders translating the Hebrew text into Greek since most people spoke Greek in the Mediterranean after the establishment of the Greek Empire by Alexander, including most Jews, but especially Jews in Egypt, where it was produced.

The LXX differs substantially from the Masoretic text, especially in the books after the Pentateuch.

The only church tradition that uses the LXX as its OT today is the Russian / Eastern Orthodox Church. Indeed this church claims that the Masoretic text used in the west is faulty. Their argument is not normally considered by evangelicals but they claim to have some valid points (see later).

New Testament

Greek text

The NT was written in Greek because that was the lingua franca at the time. Claims that the Gospels were originally written in Hebrew have no foundation whatsoever; no evidence has been found for this. In fact, NT books, including at least the Synoptic Gospels, were written in colloquial Greek very soon after the cross.

Other language types

After the initial Greek texts were written by the apostles, different language groups made their own translations into their tongues fairly early on. Thus we find Old Syrian texts, the Peshitta,² later Syriac, Coptic texts, Gothic texts, Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, Old Latin and so on.

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 apart from the Psalms which compared the LXX.

Miscellaneous witnesses

As well as actual NT texts there are many sources that enable us to compare the Greek text of specific passages. These are found in early church documents such as lectionaries (Bible readings for church services), catechisms, polemics, liturgies, sermons and commentaries.

Lectionaries

There are 2193 lectionaries produced mainly between the 9th and 15th century, but some date from the 6th century. They are designated by an italic *l* or 'Lect.' followed by a numeral (e.g. *l* 225 or Lect. 225). These are daily and weekly Bible readings plus readings for festivals from the Gospels and NT letters, in no set sequence.

² The Peshitta, the ancient Syriac version of the Bible, used in Syriac-speaking Christian countries from the early 5th century and still the official Bible of the Syrian Christian Churches. There are 350 extant manuscripts.

Versions

Ancient versions of the OT and NT cast light on the text and provide a comparison. The chief alternative version of the OT is the Septuagint (see earlier and later).

As already mentioned, there are many old versions of the NT: Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopic, Latin etc. (see earlier and later). These can be very important to help identify correct readings.

Versions are also very helpful to check their agreement with a certain text type or family. They also show the transmission and geographical spread of such families giving significant historical data. Some versions are very old and continued for centuries.

Patristic citations

In other words, Bible quotations from the church fathers (early church theologians) in Greek and later in Latin. There are so many of these that virtually all of the NT could be produced just from their writings. For example, a commentary on a Gospel will contain all the words of that Gospel.

The problem is that the fathers sometimes quoted loosely, or in paraphrase. Secondly, the works of the fathers have also been copied and contain mistakes.

John Burgon catalogued over 86,000 patristic citations in 16 volumes to show their importance.³

Lower criticism

Textual criticism is also called sometimes 'lower criticism' in old books to distinguish it from 'higher criticism' (or literary criticism) which seeks to study the style and historical background to establish the sources of Biblical books. This form of criticism has been very destructive suggesting, for instance, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. Textual criticism is necessary to establish the correct form of the original work by evaluating manuscripts.

OT text

Early work

The origins of the Sopherim, or scribes, goes back to Ezra and these were highly disciplined in copying Scripture. They were so intent on accurate copying that they did not even produce treatises or commentaries, lest these should influence later copyists.

They were accurate text critics, however, over-emphasis on avoiding abusing the name of God changed the word Yahweh to Adonai ('Lord') in 134 places.⁴

Following the Sopherim were the Zugoth (pairs of textual scholars); the Tannaim (teachers) who also wrote the Mishna oral tradition; the Amoraim (the expositors) who produced a commentary on the Mishna (which led to the Talmud); and finally in the 6th century the Masoretes.

³ JW Burgon, 'Revision Revised', p297.

⁴ According to CD Ginsburg, 'Introduction to the Hebrew Bible', p318-334.

The Masoretic Text

Origins

It was the sole job of the Masoretes to produce the traditional text exactly as it had been passed down to them. Their work developed from the labours of Rabbi Akiba in the early 2nd century. By this time the text had been scrutinised and standardised by the scribes, which was accepted by all Jewish scholars. All textual critics agree that the Masoretic Text is the result of an official revision done by Jewish scholars in the first and second centuries. This represented the purest form of the original text. Other versions, such as the LXX are not true reflections of the original Hebrew text and contain many errors.

Disciplined procedures

The Masoretes took extraordinary pains to copy the OT without any errors. This included the safeguards of rules, such as counting the number of times each letter appears within a book.⁵ No other ancient document was ever subjected to such rigorous checking.

Originally a consonantal text

At this point the text was consonantal, i.e. it had no vowels so readers could confuse certain words. While Hebrew was a living language this posed no serious problems and the margin notes gave assistance.

In time the Hebrew language ceased to be used by everyday Jews. In the first century AD most Jews in Palestine spoke Aramaic (Syriac). Many educated Jews had written in Greek from before the birth of Jesus; in fact by 20AD it was fashionable to be as Greek as possible in architecture, customs, dress, writing and speech in Jerusalem. Such Jews were called 'Hellenists' and these formed perhaps half of the early church in Jerusalem. After about 200-300 AD Latin began to overtake Greek and many Jews both spoke and wrote in Latin and formed part of the population of Rome and the Roman colonies. Paul was a Roman citizen born in a Roman colony and able to speak Latin, Greek and Hebrew in the early 1st century.

The need for vowels

This led to the need to provide a system of vocalisation for the Hebrew text to ensure proper pronunciation and meaning. Initially the Masoretes used three consonants to represent vowels (*he*, *waw*, *yod*, representing a, u/o, i/e). Then followed dots and dashes below and above the consonants. In this way the consonantal text was not altered.

An accurate text

The Masoretic Text is universally accepted as an accurate representation of the original autographs (except by the Eastern Orthodox Church). It is thought by scholars that this text became the standard about 100AD. There are very few variant readings. Evangelicals attribute the unbelievable discipline and accuracy of the Masoretes to result from divine providence to ensure God's word was kept pure.

An example of its accuracy is witnessed in its recording of the names of foreign kings, which also appear in ancient documents. These have proved to be accurate during over 3,000 years with various authors while secular historians have made significant mistakes.

Apart from the Masoretic Text, we have other witnesses to the true text such as: the LXX,

⁵ The Masoretes did not change obvious errors in the text passed down to them but identified them as *kethib* ('it is written') and placed the correct form in the margin called *qere* ('to be read'). E.g. Ezek 42:16 'five cubits reed' should be read as 'five hundred reeds'.

the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch⁶ and the Targums,⁷ as well as ancient versions and ancient copies found of the consonantal text.⁸

The standardised Masoretic text

The OT text that was standardised by the Masoretes between the 5th to 9th century was called the Masoretic text (sometimes 'M' by scholars).⁹ There are very few manuscripts from this period. This is due to various reasons including the continual persecution of the Jewish people, the perishable nature of vellum and parchment but mainly because the scribes carefully destroyed manuscripts, which were old or had any faults.

The available Masoretic texts from the 9th century onward are very good with few variant readings (they agree with each other well). These scribes were very precise and devout. They counted the lines and the letters within each line; they had rules for the spacing of words; they could not write from memory; they specified the size of columns, the ink and writing material.

Thus the Masoretic text represents the majority of manuscripts and reflects the traditional OT text used by Hebrews. Although some Masoretic manuscripts differ, these are minor issues affecting vowel points, accents, divisions of the text and orthography (spelling system).

Archaeology and Dead Sea Scrolls

The accuracy of their work is tested by archaeological discoveries, comparison with duplicate passages in different books and the substantial agreement with the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947-56 was very important. Thousands of fragments of manuscripts of 400 books of the Essene library were found in 11 caves near Qumran, west of the Dead Sea. They had been copied between 100 BC and 200 AD.

Before these scrolls were discovered, the earliest hand copied manuscript of the OT was dated about 900 AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls included a complete manuscript of Isaiah, dated about 100 BC, 1000 years older than any previously known copy. Comparison of the two manuscripts separated by 1000 years shows remarkable similarity. The Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah was 95% identical, word for word, with the standard Masoretic text. The differences were minor incidental matters such as spelling.

Publications

For several generations the Asher family supervised the Masoretic text. Moses ben Asher produced a text called the *Codex Cairensis* in 895 containing the Prophets. In 1008 Aaron ben Moses ben Asher produced the *Codex Leningradensis* (see below) – the oldest manuscript containing the whole OT. This was the basis of Kittel's third edition of *Biblia Hebraica*.

In 1524-5 Daniel Bomberg published an edition of the Masoretic text based on the work of Jacob ben Chayyim, a Christian Jew. This was used by the translators of the King James

⁶ Useful for comparison but not to be trusted above the MT. It shows evidence of deliberate sectarian corruption.

⁷ An ancient Aramaic paraphrase or interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, of a type made from about the 1st century AD when Hebrew was ceasing to be a spoken language.

⁸ Such as those found in the Judaeen desert at Wadi Marabbaat and al Nahal Hever. The Minor Prophets scroll found dates from the 2nd century AD.

⁹ Based on the word 'masora' referring to the notes printed beside the Hebrew text by Jewish scribes. It literally means 'tradition'.

Bible. It was also the basis of Kittel's first two editions of his Hebrew text. There are slight differences in some readings between the work of ben Chayyim and ben Asher. For example Jer 3:7 has 'and I said' in ben Chayyim (also KJV, ASV, LXX, NKJV¹⁰) but 'I thought' in ben Asher (also NASB, RSV, NRSV, NIV).

The first modern collection of OT manuscripts was published by Benjamin Kennicott [1776-1780] in Oxford. His lists included readings from 615 manuscripts and 52 printed editions. Later Giovanni de Rossi [1784-1788] listed citations from 731 manuscripts and 300 printed editions. In 1890, many fragments of Jewish writings were found in an ancient synagogue in Cairo. These *Cairo Geniza* fragments (dated from the 5th to the 9th c. AD) include more than 200,000 Biblical manuscript fragments, which support the Masoretic text.

The text of the current edition of the Hebrew Bible, known as *Kittel's Biblia Hebraica*, is based on four hand copied manuscripts, and primarily on one of them, the *Leningrad Codex* written about 1008. It is the largest and only complete manuscript of the entire OT.

The agreement of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the standard Masoretic text gives us assurance that our OT text is accurate. There are, however, a few manuscripts that agree with the LXX, suggesting there was a slightly differing Hebrew text in circulation as well.

There are also fragments of other very old manuscripts which support the Masoretic text. These include 14 scrolls from before 73AD discovered in Masada of fragments of Leviticus.

*Analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls*¹¹

- Some texts reflect precisely the Masoretic text.
- Others reflect the basic framework of the Masoretic text but there are some spelling differences.
- Others differ from the Masoretic text but agree with the LXX or the Samaritan Pentateuch.
- A few texts do not agree with any previously known text and represent an independent textual tradition.

This is unsurprising as the Qumran Essenes were a maverick Jewish sect that obviously gathered texts from different sources separate from the traditional Jewish scribes in Jerusalem. This would follow what is known; that there were different OT texts circulating in the period but the formally appointed Jerusalem scribes kept the authorised text.

The Dead Sea Scrolls give an overwhelming confirmation of the fidelity of the Masoretic text.¹²

Conclusion

There is no doubt that we can trust that our Old Testament text is very close to the original autographs. It is represented in the Masoretic Text that is accepted by Jews, scholars and all textual critics as the pure text. It is only rejected by those who follow the LXX, despite its many obvious errors and dubious authenticity.

¹⁰ The NKJV is based upon the text of ben Asher but chose to use the ben Chayyim reading here following the KJV because it is theologically better. The Asher text suggests that God thought something would happen that did not.

¹¹ Dr Emanuel Tov, Professor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, one of the editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls; cited in Bruce Metzger & Michael Coogan (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (1993).

¹² Norman Geisler & William Nix, 'A general introduction to the Bible', p261.

The Septuagint

We must look at the LXX in a bit more detail as there are various claims being made about it today, from being the only true version of the OT on the one hand to be a complete fake written c.400 AD on the other.

The traditional view

The LXX is the oldest Greek translation of the OT.

The name 'Septuagint' is derived from the Latin meaning 'The seventy' (i.e. LXX). This is of later origin; the original Greek title was, '*According to the Seventy*'.¹³

The legend, according to the questionable *Letter of Aristeas*, is that 72 Jewish scribes (six from each tribe) were asked by the pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the 3rd century to translate the Torah for inclusion in the massive library at Alexandria (note, only the Torah, i.e. Pentateuch). Translation took place from the 3rd to 1st centuries BC. The LXX ended up being a translation of all the OT books plus some deuterocanonical¹⁴ books (apocryphal books).¹⁵ These are: additions to Esther, Jeremiah and Daniel. 1-4 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, 1 Esdras, Wisdom, Sirach and the Psalms of Solomon. These are considered to be pseudepigraphical works.¹⁶

Alexandrian scribes claimed inspiration for the LXX; indeed Aristeas claimed miraculous agreement in the translation of the 72. This story was then elaborated by Philo and further by some Christian fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian and Augustine).

When the earliest Jewish sources refer to the Greek translations of the OT, they mean only the Torah (five books of Moses). Christian writers from Justin (2nd c.) mean the whole OT.

Eusebius [260-339AD] and Philo refer to a Greek translation of the Pentateuch, but there were likely several of these circulating in the 1st century due to the needs of Greek speaking Jews outside Palestine. The LXX used a different Hebrew text and not the Masoretic text as its base.

After 200AD the LXX was translated into Latin (the new lingua franca), beginning with the Old Latin Version (North Africa, Italy), and the Coptic Version (Egypt).

Complete versions of the LXX date from the 4th c. AD in the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*, (see later, one is faulty the other is a fake) plus the *Codex Alexandrinus* of the 5th century (also faulty). [The oldest Hebrew texts date from 1000 AD.] In fact, it is noteworthy that every manuscript of the LXX which survives was copied by Christians not by Jews.

Differences between the LXX and the Masoretic text have been suggested to be: a) the LXX is a record of an early Hebrew textual variant, now lost; b) intentional or accidental corruption; c) a bit of both.

Philo and Josephus were influenced by the LXX but both modified texts that disagreed with the Hebrew text. Ethiopian Jews are the only Jewish community that accept the LXX today. Gradually Latin overtook Greek in the Roman Empire and many Jews had relocated

¹³ *Kata tous ebdomekonta*.

¹⁴ Secondary canon.

¹⁵ Latin '*apocrypha*' (*scripta*) 'hidden (writings)', from Greek *apokruphos*, from *apokruptein* 'hide away'.

¹⁶ OT books claimed by scholars to be false.

to Aramaic-speaking areas after 70AD, such as Persia, where Aramaic translations were made.

The early church, comprising mostly Greek speakers, commonly used the LXX. Early Christian translations of the OT were from the LXX text. Jerome's *Vulgate* new Latin translation did not use the LXX except for the Psalms.¹⁷ The Greek speaking churches continued to use the LXX while the Eastern Orthodox Church still uses it today. Catholic Bible versions use the LXX to qualify unclear OT Hebrew texts, and include the Apocrypha.

The titles of OT books in modern Bibles follows that of the LXX.

Language used

The LXX uses many Semiticisms, idioms based on Hebrew. However, some parts reveal an ignorance of Hebrew idiom and translate them literally, making no sense. The translation of the Torah is very close to the Hebrew but later books are weaker and some (e.g. in Daniel) show an influence from Midrash (a type of figurative interpretation). Some books are over-literal (e.g. Ecclesiastes) while others are very loosely translated (e.g. Isaiah). This highlights the different translators.¹⁸

The radical view

The LXX is a fake. No manuscripts are extant prior to the 4th century (350AD) and there is no proof that the NT writers quoted from it. NT quotes of the LXX were written back into Bible versions that are corrupt; namely the Alexandrinus (A), Vaticanus (B), Ephraemi (C) and Sinaiticus (Aleph).

No Greek OT manuscripts exist dating back to 250BC nor are there any Jewish records of one [true]. You can make a strong case that the LXX copied from the available NT and added this to the quoted OT text in the 200s AD. Hence the NT is not quoting the LXX but the LXX is quoting the apostles. The LXX is merely the OT part of the Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus versions.

There was no single archetype Greek translation of the OT but rather many [this is true].

The source is Alexandrian Origen's [185-254] *Hexapla* [about 200AD], which did not survive (six Bible translations in columns, the fifth column was the LXX Greek OT).¹⁹ The LXX cannot be traced further back than this. We cannot reconstruct even Origen's LXX let alone an earlier text that he used because we only have a few fragments of the *Hexapla*. Origen held many unorthodox ideas [and it is claimed that his translation re-wrote texts to suit his Gnostic doctrines].²⁰ The *Hexapla* had parallel OT translations by Theodotian (an Ebionite), Symmachus (an Ebionite) and Aquila (a Jewish proselyte) with Gnostic leanings. The preface to the KJV mentions this in explanation of not relying upon the LXX; they said it was learned and well meant but not inspired and contained errors.

The *Hexapla* Greek OT cannot be the original claimed LXX (written about 250BC), copied into the column by Origen, because it contains apocryphal books (such as *Bel and the Dragon*) which had not been written in 250BC.

¹⁷ Some scholars say that the Vulgate used the LXX for the whole OT.

¹⁸ I acknowledge some assistance from 'Theopedia' in this section.

¹⁹ It contained: Hebrew/Hebrew translated into Greek/Aquila's Greek translation/Symmachus' Greek translation/Origen's revised Greek translation (LXX)/Theodotian's revised Septuagint.

²⁰ E.g.: he included apocryphal books in the Bible. Jesus added impossible and mystical things into the Bible. Some miracles did not happen. Certain Biblical events did not occur. Biblical events were allegorised and not taken literally.

This text could not have been used by Jesus 200 years earlier. [But a different LXX Greek source text may have been, we know fragments survived from before Christ was born. The claim is that these papyrus fragments were written after the NT was completed.]

The only scrap of manuscript of the Greek OT is the *Ryland's Papyrus 458* dated at 150BC which only contains Deuteronomy chapters 23-28.

Origen's *Hexapla* found its way into Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, which are thus tainted. The LXX in these texts represent Origen's work and these are the basis of the modern published LXX.

The legend of the 72 (or 70) is a forgery; Aristeas was a pseudo-writer.²¹ Many suspect it was written by Philo [20BC-50AD] after the birth of Christ. The fragment of Aristobulus is highly suspect. [This may well be true.] There is no historical evidence for the legend of the 72 [true]. Apart from that, identifying Jews from the 10 lost tribes was problematic.

The variant readings of the LXX that disagree with the Masoretic text tend towards heretical ideas.

Jesus and the Jews rejected the apocryphal books which the LXX includes [true].

Summary

On balance there is a case for suspecting a late post 250AD date for the LXX and questions about its veracity. Since it heavily varies from the Masoretic OT text after the Pentateuch, there is not reason for Christians to trust it.

Did Jesus and the apostles quote from the LXX?

It is usually stated that they did because many NT quotes follow the LXX translation in opposition to the Masoretic translation. However, in reality this is simplistic.

We only have tiny fragments of the LXX written before the birth of Christ²² and it is hard to say how far the LXX was an accepted source for Jews of that time, or even if an LXX type in circulation was the same as the modern published version. Furthermore, there were many Hebrew text-types and many Greek text-types circulating at the time. However, there was no Masoretic text or even a proto-Masoretic text at that time.

It is likely that there were several Greek text-types that were very similar that were used by Jesus and the apostles. What is certain is that Jesus did not use a Masoretic text because it had not yet been written.

However, Jesus did use the Hebrew texts available at that time in the synagogues. Proof of this is found in Matt 5:18 where he quotes 'jot' and 'tittle' which were a letter (jot) and a mark (tittle) only found in Hebrew OT texts. Jesus often referred to 'the Law and the Prophets' or 'the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms' which are divisions of the Hebrew Bible (the law, the prophets and the Writings). The LXX does not have this division.

²¹ The names he gives of the Hebrew scholars mostly derive from the Maccabean era, much too late. Many are Greek names – most unlikely for Jewish scribes. Other issues identify the letter as being of a later date than 250 BC. The Librarian named Demetrius was never the librarian of Ptolemy Philadelphus but served in the court of Ptolemy Soter. The letter quotes Ptolemy mentioning the naval victory over Antigonus; but the only naval victory occurred many years after Demetrius' death. The letter is a fraud.

²² 2nd c. BC fragments of Leviticus and Deuteronomy and 1st c. fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets.

Advocates of the Septuagint

The Roman Catholic Church

This is due to a) the LXX is the basis of the Douay OT; b) the LXX includes the Apocrypha, which they authorise.

Modern textual critics

The people that rely upon Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus need the LXX because that is the OT included within them. The Alexandrian OT texts are what we know as the Septuagint.

The Eastern / Russian Orthodox Church

This church group believes that the LXX was used by Jesus and the apostles and is the truest textual form of the OT, thus all Orthodox Bibles are based on the LXX, hence the many differences from the western Bibles.

They have some arguments to be debated. For example they affirm that Paul's quote of Psalm 14 in Romans 3:10-18 is taken wholly from the LXX (actually Ps 13 in the LXX) which quotes the entire passage. The Masoretic text does not, but the verses are partly from Ps 14 and partly from other OT passages. [In fact, it is more likely that the LXX is post 200AD and the writer actually quoted Paul and put them into the LXX. Even Origen's notes in the Hexapla state that they should be omitted, but he still left them in.]²³

Another argument is that the LXX explains who Job is, western Bibles do not. They also claim that it is the version of the OT read by the earliest Greek speaking churches going back to the time of the apostles (this is questionable), but it is true that it is the version used throughout Greek speaking churches in the east after about 250AD.

The traditional Protestant view

The LXX is an ancient Greek translation of the OT and is therefore not inspired; in fact it contains many errors, (which is why the KJV editors did not use it). It is a useful comparison to the Masoretic OT text and can, at times, be very helpful in exegesis. However, there are also points where it is clearly faulty and cannot, therefore, be trusted alone.

The LXX also includes apocryphal writings, which Protestants would not accept, though Roman Catholics do.

The LXX also helps to clarify the Koine Greek used in the NT.

While compiled much later, the Masoretic text is accepted by evangelicals to be the closest we can get to a true rendering of the original Hebrew words. This is because Hebrew scribes were diligent in copying new texts and then destroyed the worn out old ones that could be misread due to fading ink or torn pages. The Masoretes then added vowel points to the Hebrew text according to a traditional Hebrew understanding of the words, allowing non-Jews to get to the true meaning.

A survey of NT quotations²⁴

- In 268 NT citations the LXX and Masoretic text agree completely.
- In 50 citations the NT agrees with the LXX that differs slightly from the Masoretic text but have the same meaning.

²³ Alexandrinus omits them. Vaticanus includes them. Sinaiticus includes them but Scribe D corrected them.

²⁴ Gleason Archer & GC Chirichigno, 'OT Quotations in the NT: a complete survey'.

- In 33 citations the NT adheres more closely to the Masoretic text than the LXX.
- In 22 citations the NT adheres more closely to the LXX and deviates slightly from the Masoretic text.

The sane conclusion is that there are only 22 cases where the LXX reading is favoured in the NT and the Masoretic text is slightly different. Since the NT is inspired, then the conclusion must be that these 22 cases follow the original inspired Hebrew text that is now lost. Thus in 5.8% of NT quotes the Masoretic OT text may be slightly wrong. This is not surprising and not unreasonable. No doctrine is affected by these different readings.

The basic NT textual formats

Letter types

Uncials

These are capital letters (majuscules) with rounded enjoined script. Usually there was no spacing between words, requiring some effort to understand exactly what was stated. These were common in European manuscripts of the 4th–8th centuries. The early uncials are considered the most dependable witness to the NT by modern scholars.

Although uncials appear on the papyri, the term ‘Uncial manuscripts’ usually designates parchment manuscripts. There are about 268 known uncials. They were made about 4th - 10thc. They are designated by letter and by number. When the English, Greek and Hebrew alphabets were exhausted, Casper Gregory devised a numerical system in 1890, but the old designations are often preferred (e.g. Aleph, D etc.).

Minuscules

This is a more cursive text that uses lower case letters developed in the 7th century AD. Such flowing text was not suitable on rough papyrus.

There are 2792 dating from 9th-16thc. They are mostly on parchment and are designated by numerals (e.g. Cod. 13).

Text material

Papyrus

This was a grass-type reed (actually a sedge) that grew in Egypt, which could be crushed, mashed and made into a type of paper. It was not very durable and did not survive long in areas of high, dry heat – it turned to dust in decades. The writing on the papyrus is uncial.

The papyri contain portions of various books of the NT, but no papyrus manuscript has the entire content. There are less than 100 manuscripts as they are very perishable. The earliest is from 200 AD but they are usually dated from 3rd to 8th c. The majority are from the 2-4thc.

Designation is by a capital letter followed by a number (e.g. P 53). The most important are the Chester Beatty Papyri containing much of the Gospels, Acts, Pauline letters and Revelation and the Bodmer library collection in Geneva (P 66, P 72, P 74, P 75).

Vellum

This is usually calfskin (e.g goat) treated to be very thin but durable. Writing material made from this was called ‘parchment’.

Manuscript types

Scrolls

From ancient times, documents were recorded in scrolls many feet long and rolled into a column; usually vellum was used for these. The problem was that to find a certain quote you had to unroll large lengths of the scroll. It was very unwieldy.

Pages

Papyrus texts were sometime collections of pages rather than large scrolls, for obvious reasons.

Codices

Singular: 'Codex'. This is basically a large book with many leaves sewn together.

Pens

Writing implements were originally sharpened reeds frayed at the ends like a brush, then a split end like a modern pen by the 3rd century BC.

Quills developed later, taken from the main wing or tail-feather of certain birds. The end of the quill was sharpened with a 'pen-knife' into a point, the channel in the feather then held a small supply of ink. The ink was made from what was available, such as soot and water or octopus/cuttlefish/squid ink.

Writing was originally in uniform columns, 2-3 inches wide. There were no word breaks or punctuation. This was originally used for literary works. There was a cursive (running hand) style used for everyday ordinary letters. A cursive 'running hand' style developed in the 9th century, which led to minuscules. Punctuation also began to be used. 90% of the extant Greek manuscripts are minuscules.

The original texts do use a certain amount of abbreviation but these are not necessarily time saving devices; sometimes it is done out of respect e.g. the 15 special words relating to God which are contractions of the original (i.e. Θες for Θεοσ or Κς for Κυριος).

Lack of word breaks caused confusion e.g. GODISNOWHERE could mean: 'God is now here', or 'God is nowhere!' 1 Tim 3:16 ΟΜΟΛΟΓΟΤΜΕΝΩΖ could be 'confessedly' (as ASV), or 'we confess that' (RSV).

Schools of NT manuscripts

While NT manuscripts are voluminous and gathering them into families is rather subjective, many do show common similarities, such as in their choice of a certain proportion of disputed readings. Westcott and Hort suggested that there were four essential families (see later) but this is now abandoned.

Early church schools

Traditions of theology and church practice developed in the major urban centres of the Roman Empire; that much is to be expected. Over time, the major centres emerged as Antioch, Alexandria, Rome (a bit later) and some of lesser influence like Jerusalem. The dominant schools were Antioch and Alexandria, and these were opposed to each other.

Antioch opposed the Alexandrian school on interpretation, which had relied upon Plato's philosophy, while Antioch preferred the method of Aristotle, which was more literal and

historical. Alexandria depended much more on allegory, which sometimes ran to extremes, as well as mysticism. The Antiochans also favoured Nestorianism.²⁵

The Alexandrian school was founded by Pantaenus in the 2nd century, followed by Clement, who was followed by Origen. Clement and Origen sought to unite Biblical theology with Greek philosophy and adopted a mystical approach to Scripture, heavily using allegory. Many critics affirmed that its lofty theological, superspiritual idealism lost itself in arbitrary allegorical exegetical fancies. Without firm exegesis, theology has no foundation. For example, the mysticism of Alexandria led people into the heresy of Monophysitism²⁶ and Arianism,²⁷ which began with the Alexandrian priest Arius [c.250–c.336].

The defective Alexandrian school of theology and interpretation led to the texts that emerged as Alexandrian in character. Many also claim that Origen, a significant heretic though lauded as a church father by some, also authored what became known as the Septuagint 400 years after the legend says it was written.

Early textual families

The division of Greek texts into families has today narrowed itself down into two main streams:

- *The Alexandrian*, or the Critical Text or eclectic text, based on the older, fewer manuscripts which is the basis of all other modern versions after 1881.
- *The Byzantine*, or the Traditional Text, based upon the majority, younger manuscripts, which undergirds the KJV, the NKJV and the World English Bible.

The division of texts into two text-types, or families, was first suggested by Bengel [1687-1752] 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). 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 (see later).

Alexandrian family (text-type)

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

Foundational texts

- Alexandrinus (A). Titles: 'Codex A', '002'. Presented to Charles 1 by Cyril Lukan, patriarch of Constantinople in 1628 (too late to be used for the KJV). It contains the whole Bible in Greek, including the LXX plus part of the second letter of Clement to Corinth. Ten leaves are missing from the OT (Psalms), thirty from the NT (Mt, Jn, 2 Cor). It has two columns written in the 5thc. It is known to be defective in several places. It is kept in the British Museum.
- Aleph (Sinaiticus). Titles: 'Codex Sinaiticus', 'Codex Aleph', '01'. Differs from the Traditional Text in 8972 words. Found by German scholar Dr, Tischendorf in St Catherine's Convent at the foot of Mt. Sinai in May 1844, initially in a 'waste bin'. It was

²⁵ Against Alexandria, they sought to affirm the reality of Christ's human nature. While Nestorius himself may well have been orthodox, Nestorianism errs in emphasising that the Logos accompanied Christ's human nature to the point of almost affirming two persons in Christ. A failure to affirm the unity of Christ's humanity with the Logos.

²⁶ The claim that Christ had only one composite nature. Similar to the earlier Eutychianism.

²⁷ Arianism maintained that the Son of God was created by the Father and was therefore neither co-eternal nor consubstantial with the Father.

eventually secured with the Tsar of Russia's influence for the St Petersburg Library and was bought by the UK government in 1933 for £100,000. It is a copy of part of the LXX (Septuagint) and contains the complete NT. It has four columns 'written' in the 4thc. It is now in the British Museum.

- Vaticanus (B). This was known by 1475 when the Vatican library catalogued it but it was not readily accessible until 1889 when a photostatic copy was published. It differs from the Traditional Text in 7578 words. Sinaiticus differs from Vaticanus more than 3000 times in the Gospels alone. It has three columns.
- Ephraemi (C), the Paris palimpsest. Titles: 'Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus', 'Codex C', '004'. A palimpsest now in Paris. It has two columns.
- Codex Regius.
- Minuscule 33.
- Manuscripts of the Egyptian versions, the Ethiopic version and the texts used by Origen while he lived at Alexandria. These contain a large number of readings not found elsewhere and are not trustworthy.

Criticisms

The two chief manuscripts 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.'*²⁸

It is now claimed that Sinaiticus is a forgery, but one must question Vaticanus also. Why was it kept hidden in the depths of the Vatican for 1500 years? Was it because it was a faulty manuscript that was not consulted or copied by the more sensible older Catholics? Most likely. When Erasmus had access to it, he found so many errors that he decided not to use it. It is also covered in glosses noting its errors.

Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the foundation of Westcott's and Hort's theories and the development of the Critical Text. If one is a forgery and the other seriously defective and rejected, consigned to near oblivion for 1500 years, then modern textual criticism falls apart.

Only about 50 of the 5250 Greek manuscripts are Alexandrian (less than 1%).

We can summarise other problems of the Alexandrian family as:

- Vaticanus omits 2,877 words of the Gospels; Sinaiticus omits 3,455 words from the Gospels. The eclectic text is about ten pages shorter than the majority text.
- 'Jesus' is omitted 70 times; 'Christ' is omitted 29 times.
- It contradicts the Byzantine text in thousands of places.
- In dozens of places the eclectic text uses a word not found in any Greek text.
- 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 manuscripts which date from c. 300-400. These readings are found in manuscripts 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 manuscript of Mark's Gospel from 500 onwards. It is missing in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
- Wording in the text is sometimes difficult, abrupt or impossible.

²⁸ John Burgon, quoted in Anderson, p16.

- It omits many key passages found in the Byzantine text 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. (thus standardising Byzantine texts) 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.

Summary

The Alexandrian textual family was not used in Bible translations until the late 19th century, the time when the church began to be attacked by every sort of apostasy²⁹ and society degenerated.³⁰ It was when the global elite launched its major global attack on Christian principles.

It was based upon faulty mechanisms and theories, some of which have now been abandoned; yet it dominated the church and spawned nearly all modern translations of the Bible.

Today scholars depend less upon Sinaiticus and Vaticanus than WH did; this is sometimes called the 'eclectic text'. This is based on internal evidence, particularly what best fits the context or what they believe a copyist would be most likely to write; i.e. the eclectic method is based on choosing (guessing) individual readings rather than following a textual theory (as WH).

Supporters of the Alexandrian text

Surprisingly, BB Warfield; and J Gresham Machen; plus most modern textual scholars.

Byzantine family (text-type)

This represented in the Scrivener 1881 – Beza 1598 texts.

In common parlance, the Byzantine text-type = the Traditional Text = the Received Text (or Textus Receptus) = the Syrian Text (of Westcott – Hort) = the Majority Text.

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.
- Even some modern textual scholars now agree that the Majority (Traditional) Text is very early i.e. pre - Nicea (325 AD). Early papyri have been found with so-called 'late' readings.

²⁹ For instance, liberal theology, Dispensationalism, evolutionary theory, modernism, scientism, postmodernism, existentialism, rationalism, secularism, neo-orthodoxy, etc.

³⁰ Note: the rise of multiple revolutions, world wars, genocide, eugenics, corporatism, globalism, etc.

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

- Textual scholars have demonstrated that the Traditional Text is the base which Alexandrian copies tampered with.³²
- It has overwhelming support from the Lectionaries³³ 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 also 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; notably Ignatius, Polycarp, Tertullian and the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus).
- 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 and is now known to be a fraud.
- 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 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.
- 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).

³² H C Hoskier, quoted in WN Pickering, 'The identity of the NT Text', p60.

³³ Early church service books containing selected readings from the Gospels, Acts and Epistles

- 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.

The Majority Text

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

[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 'Majority Text' 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.

This is the text used by Greek speaking churches going back to antiquity. It is found in 80-95% of the MSS. It is similar to the text advocated by John Burgon and, except in Revelation, to the Textus Receptus. (In Revelation the MT is twice as likely to agree with the critical text than with the TR in variant readings.)

However in two places the Majority Text does not include words that are in the Textus Receptus, Acts 8:37 and 1 Jn 5:7, because these are a minority tradition.

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 later). 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

³⁴ Gromacki, p22.

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.

The Textus Receptus

There are at least six foundations for the TR; these are: Erasmus, Stephanus, Elzevir, Colineaus (1534), Beza and Scrivener. Each has several editions, making over 20 various texts in all. They are closely related but are not identical.

The World English Bible

The World English Bible is a free updated revision of the American Standard Bible (1901) available in electronic formats published by Rainbow Missions. It was completed on 2000 and is based upon the Byzantine Majority Text (Robinson and Pierpoint, 1991) text. It is a formal equivalence translation (i.e. literal).

Summary

The Byzantine family of text sources led to: the Received Text (TR) and the Majority Text. It is supported by the vast majority of Greek manuscripts that largely agree with each other. There are significant differences from the Alexandrian family.

Today, only the KJV and the NKV (plus the World English Bible) are based on Byzantine texts.

Byzantine family	Alexandrian family
Traditional Text, Received Text (Textus Receptus), Majority Text.	Egyptian Text, WH (Westcott-Hort text), Critical text, Eclectic Text.
Method: values the majority of younger Greek manuscripts, mostly from medieval times.	Method: values a very few supposedly ancient texts (earlier than 7 th c.) and discounts the majority.
The majority of later cursive texts.	Ancient uncial texts, especially Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
5250 manuscripts that are reasonably consistent.	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.
Used throughout church history.	Only appeared after the mid-19 th century.
Versions: King James Bible (AV), New King James Bible, World English Bible (on-line) and any version before 1881.	The basis for the United Bible Society (UBS) & the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament. All other modern Bible versions.
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 otherwise.] 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.

Supporters of the Byzantine text

Burgon; Scrivener; Hoskier; RL Dabney; most defenders of the KJV.

A short history of the early Greek text

This is important because it reveals some surprises.

The earliest text comes from the original autographs written by the apostles and their delegates (e.g. Luke, Mark).

Soon after the death of the apostles heresies began to arise. Severe heresies troubled the church for several hundred years requiring multiple church councils to defend the truth and authorise a certain position, such as the two natures of Christ. [It is entirely expected that Satan would attack the fledgling church doctrine.]

These errors came from a multiplicity of heretics and sects that arose even while the apostles were alive (Gnosticism, Judaising); for example, Arianism, Ebionism, Monophysitism, Monarchianism etc.

To bolster their position, heretics began to corrupt the NT text to suit their purposes from the start. Charges that teachers were corrupting the text appeared in print as early as the mid-2nd century.³⁵

The worst corruptions to which the NT has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed: that Irenaeus and the African Fathers and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by ... Erasmus or Stephen thirteen centuries later.³⁶

The text was damaged by a) heretics, b) defenders of the truth making mistakes, c) self-appointed critics between; 95-245 AD. Hort denied this but his denial is now refuted even by his own disciples. This means that old Alexandrian texts are not necessarily genuine because of their age.

The argument that the earliest Greek Church Fathers do not quote from the Traditional Text is answered by this: moist climate destroyed the papyrus manuscripts of Antiochans but preserved those that lived in dry climates (e.g. Clement of Alexandria and Origen). We don't have much evidence of the early eastern fathers; when it does appear, it supports the Traditional Text. Even so, Hippolytus' verbatim quotes from 1 Thess and 2 Thess both predate Aleph by a hundred years.³⁷ Although the earliest patristic citations is Alexandrian (Egyptian) the text used in Antioch was certainly the same text to which all the Greek Fathers, whose writings we possess, evidence.

The question is whether Egypt in the second and third centuries maintained the pure text. It did not. In fact even the main theologians (e.g. Origen) held serious heresies and were affected by Gnosticism, Platonism and mysticism. Thus the text was significantly corrupted, and this led to the Alexandrian tradition.

³⁵ Letter of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to Soter, bishop of Rome, (168-176AD). Eusebius 'Ecclesiastical History', 1:199-200.

³⁶ FHA Scrivener, 'Introduction to the Criticism of the NT', 2:264.

³⁷ Hoskier, in Pickering p65.

Papyrus fragments show that there were various text-types in Egypt at that time. They also show that some readings of the Traditional Text (rejected by modern critics due to their absence in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) are actually genuine readings. Thus some Byzantine readings critics said were 'late' are found in P46. Also note that no NT book was ever addressed to Egypt so Egyptians only had copies of copies and never had the autographs; however, many autographs were actually addressed to the Ancient Near East centred in Antioch.

All evangelical scholars agree that Origen was the prime source of Egyptian errors and apostasy. He also corrupted manuscripts and championed the LXX.

Observations

- The Traditional Text cannot be considered a late text (see later for more evidence).
- Ancient Alexandrian manuscripts manifest a local Egyptian text that was corrupt and had no support from eastern church witnesses.
- Young manuscripts can contain an ancient text, having been faithfully copied.
- The fact that the Traditional Text is absent as a text-type (not individual readings) from ancient Egypt proves nothing.

Sources for Post Reformation texts

In general, the main manuscript source for Bible versions was the Byzantine family text-type. Sometimes old versions like the Latin Vulgate translation would also be used but only as a fallback. In fact Erasmus, when he produced his first edition of the Greek NT, actually used the Vulgate for some portions in Revelation since he had no available Greek manuscript. This continued for many years and affected the original KJV.

Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, collected various manuscripts and his 1589/1598 edition of the Greek NT became the standard text up to modern times, being the essential basis behind Scrivener's 1881 text. This was a Byzantine-type text and was the basis of the KJV. There were others, such as that by Stephanus.

The Textus Receptus that was collated by the Elzevir family in Holland actually formally appeared after the publication of the KJV in 1611 under King James' patronage ('the Authorised Version').

This means that until the late 19th century when the Revised Version was published (1881-96), Byzantine texts were the only source of Bible translations and these were in general agreement. In fact, after the Puritan popularity for the Geneva Bible waned, the KJV was virtually the only Bible used in western Protestant churches.

The springs of change

Discovery of Sinaiticus

The papacy had long held a large codex of the Bible called 'B' or 'Vaticanus'. Its origins are shrouded in mystery but it is claimed to be from the 4th century, therefore very old. However, few people were allowed to get near it.

Then something very odd occurred. A codex that was very similar to Vaticanus was accidentally discovered in a 'rubbish tip' in a monastery at Sinai. Eventually most of it was

collected (stolen) by Tischendorf and this text was called 'Aleph' or 'Sinaiticus' and it was also concluded to be from the 4th century.

These texts were much older than the oldest Byzantine Greek manuscripts and this gave them a dubious authority.

The Westcott-Hort Greek text

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 English Revised Version was commissioned by the Anglican Church. Westcott and Hort were on the revision committee and they published their Greek text in 1881, the same year that the revision (Revised Version) was published.

Hort's theories

To overcome the fact that the Traditional Text had the vast support of most manuscripts Hort came up with a set of theoretical arguments:

- He claimed that the Traditional Text was the result of an official revision in Antioch in the 4th century by Lucian. The mass of manuscripts represent the generations (genealogical family) of official copying of this text. Thus the mass of manuscripts are not a majority at all but a minority, following one 4th century text.
- He claimed that the Traditional Text is not ancient but of a very late date since it differs from Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and its distinctive readings are not found in the fathers before the Council of Nicea in 325.
- He claimed that the Traditional Text was derived (secondary) because it evidenced a tendency to conflate because it combines different readings from other manuscripts into one reading, and because it reads more smoothly (he thought the harder readings were more accurate). In short, because it read well it was wrong.

For ten years Westcott and Hort led a propaganda war to promote Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in Great Britain and America, which became accepted. These arguments convinced scholars. It took two generations before scholars accepted that the theories of Westcott and Hort were without evidence.

Arguments against Hort's theories

- Hort was wrong in every detail of his claims; this is now largely accepted to be true (but too late).
- There was no Antiochan revision. There are lots of historical data on the Antioch school but not a shred of evidence to support a Lucianic revision. Lucian was an Arian. The great defender of the faith against Arianism was Athanasius, who supported the Traditional Text. The idea that Athanasius would give up his traditional text to accept one written by Lucian is preposterous. Church history would certainly have noted such an important revision. This alone destroys Hort's position.
- If the Traditional Text is derived, how do we explain its uniformity and universal dominance. The dominance is due to the fact that it was the representative of the original text. Hort could only find eight instances of conflation. In all of these there is good reason to consider that the Alexandrian texts omitted words and the Traditional Text is correct. Claims of conflation end up simply being prejudice and guesswork. Apart from that, Alexandrian text themselves show signs of conflation [D conflates in Jn 5:37; B in Col 1:12 and 2 Thess 3:4 etc.].
- The Traditional Text manuscripts show no evidence of them copying from one another; they differ in countless unimportant, trivial ways. Thus there was no collusion in

making them. They are not from a genealogical family based on a Lucianic text, copied consistently (as Hort claimed).

- Hort's idea of genealogy of manuscripts holds no water (see later 'families'). It is difficult to even argue for the claimed Alexandrian manuscripts being a consistent family since they differ thousands of times from each other. Burgon: '*It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two manuscripts differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree*'.³⁸ There are no genealogical families. The Byzantine family of manuscripts are simply accurate copies of the original autographs, and thus closely related.
- The Peshitta version is close to the Traditional Text and this is based on earlier manuscripts than Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
- I will later argue that the Vaticanus is faulty at best and Sinaiticus is not ancient but a 19th century copy. The W-H critical text has no support at all. The basis of all modern critical texts is a pack of lies.

Dean JW Burgon

The text of Westcott & Hort was attacked by John William Burgon, Dean of Chichester, and less passionately by others.³⁹ The chief criticism was the lack of historical evidence for their hypothesis of a 4th century Byzantine recension in Antioch by a character named Lucius.

Older is better?

Westcott and Hort, and their followers developed versions that seriously contradicted Byzantine versions. The ancient age of Aleph and B was claimed to make them superior to the majority of other manuscripts. This led to two different theories of valuation of manuscripts.

Westcott's and Hort's claim was that the oldest manuscripts are the most trustworthy. It matters nothing that a majority of Greek texts agree if Aleph and B differ. The latter are to be trusted. Traditional Bible translators claimed that age does not mean better at all. What is crucial is the common agreement of many manuscripts, the majority gives the best authority.

In fact, it is known that Bible text writers would replace an old manuscript with a new one when it got old, worn and torn because it could lead to misreading words. Old manuscripts were usually burned when a new one was written and checked. This is why so few very old manuscripts survive. In fact, an old manuscript is evidence of something wrong; it should have been burned but somehow escaped.

What is very worrying is the number of disagreements between Aleph and B against the majority texts. They are clearly different.

When Erasmus was collating his Greek NT text he actually consulted the Vaticanus; However, he eventually decided against using it because the more he studied it the more erratic it seemed to him. Erasmus did not trust the Vaticanus. Today, because of Aleph, which is similar to B, the Vaticanus with Aleph dominate the basis of modern eclectic translations.

W-H textual families

Westcott and Hort came up with a theory of four distinct textual families. These were:

³⁸ 'Revision Revised', p12.

³⁹ Scrivener and Miller 1894, volume 2, chapter 10; Miller 1897; and Hoskier 1914.

The Neutral text

The Neutral text was the most primitive and pure type. Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are supposedly relics of the Neutral type.

Alexandrian

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.

Nobody talks about the Neutral text anymore; it equates to the Alexandrian text-type.

The Western

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. It was characterised by a tendency to paraphrase or to modify the form of expression, and also to interpolate from parallel passages or from extraneous sources. It also includes texts from Syria. [This family group has now been abandoned.]

This text type is notoriously corrupt with peculiar readings and many additions (Acts is about 10% longer than all other manuscripts). It is headed by Codex D and some Alexandrian manuscripts (e.g. P66).

Syrian or Byzantine

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, it 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.

This is the Traditional Text that is found in 80-90% of all known manuscripts. For 1500 years it was the dominant and universally accepted Greek text. It is the basis of the Erasmus editions, the Stephanus editions and the Beza editions used for the KJV.

[There was originally a claim that there was an identifiable *Caesarean Text*, a mix of the Western and Alexandrian readings. This has now been abandoned by scholars.]

All this was pure speculation and it is now abandoned. Essentially there are two families, Byzantine (the majority of Greek texts) and Alexandrian (the supposedly oldest, but this is very questionable; see later). They are not really families at all. The Byzantine text is the evidence of the original text; the Alexandrian texts are faulty copies or frauds.

Thus Alexandrian texts form the basis of the modern eclectic text which is represented in the collations of UBS-4 / NA27; that is United Bible Society edition 4 which is much the same as the Nestle-Aland edition 27. These texts form the basis for every single modern printed NT with the exception of the KJV and the NKJV.

In essence, all these families show the same essential NT text. The variant readings only affect a tiny percentage of the text; there is about 90% agreement.

Yet there are important differences:

- Codex B (Vaticanus) omits over 2,877 words; adds 536; substitutes 935; transposes 2,098, and modifies 1,132; totalling 7,578 differences.

- Codex Aleph (Sinaiticus) omits 3,455 words; adds 839; substitutes 1,114; transposes 2,299 and modifies 1,265; totalling 8,972 differences.
- Codex D (Bezae) omits 3,704 words; adds 2,213; substitutes 2,121; transposes 3,471; modifies 1,772 totalling 13,281 variations from the Traditional Text.
- In addition these are not the same mistakes; they all disagree with each other thousands of times. Clearly these are all rogue, erroneous editions, yet Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the essential basis of all modern critical Greek texts and Bible versions (more later); no one would seriously trust Codex Bezae alone.

Basic problems with critical text theories

- The Westcott and Hort theory cannot be proved.
- Ten copies may stem from an erring parent manuscript, 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 manuscript 1000 years later and thus also is accurate, though recent.
- A variant that first appeared in a 4th c. manuscript, when hundreds of manuscripts reflecting the true reading of the original were in circulation, would not become the dominant reading.
- The readings found in the largest number of manuscripts are most likely to trace back to the earliest copies and autographs. These would have time to multiply the most and spread the furthest.

Translations taken from texts based upon the critical text of Westcott and Hort omit and change thousands of words, e.g. the following passages are either omitted or questioned in modern translations:

- 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).
- 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)
- And many more. The critical text departs from the Received Text in over 5000 places.

Although many of the differences are minor, some have big implications. Burgon has shown that if you remove the John 7:53-8:11 passage, you destroy its coherence. There is no relationship between Jn 7:52 and 8:12. The NIV recognises this and overcomes the problem by translating Jn 8:12 in a way that is not based upon the Greek: '*When Jesus spoke again to the people.*' The italic words are not in the text.

Sometimes doctrine is affected. In 1 Tim 3:16 W-H omits the word 'God' and substitutes '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 W-H.

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. It is illogical to change the reading.

It should be noted that the Received (Traditional) Text is supported by 80-90% of all the

manuscripts available today.

Sinaiticus is a forgery⁴⁰

Sinaiticus is claimed to be the oldest Bible in the world and is the prime authority for modern revisions of the traditional Bible. It was the discovery of Aleph by Tischendorf which led to the changes in the way the Bible is translated, starting with the Revised Version in 1881 and virtually every modern Bible thereafter. The romanticised story of Sinaiticus being found by accident in a tip in Sinai only added to its charm.

However, as well as strong questions arising as to why such a faulty text⁴¹ should be trusted over thousands of alternative better Byzantine manuscripts, we now know that Aleph is a fake. In essence, these are the reasons.

It was deliberately yellowed in part

It was originally stated to be white but later parts of it were stained yellow.

The text, in part, was deliberately darkened from its original white to stained yellow/brown (vellum). In 1884-1850 all known 694 pages were white. It was described as white and witnessed as white; people published this fact. In 1910⁴² and 1913 it was described as white;⁴³ but it was not since after 1859 it was actually described as yellowed as stated by Tischendorf (1862), Tregelles, and Scrivener (1864)⁴⁴ and others – thus two different things are being described.

Parts of the Sinaiticus were held in Saxony, Germany (the 43 leaves of Codex Frederico-Augustanus, or FHA)⁴⁵ and part in St Petersburg (the Tsar paid for Tischendorf's trip). The German part was white (and still is) at some point but the Russian part was yellowed. Tischendorf must have known this or stained it himself before giving it to the Tsar. You can see the difference between the white and yellowed pages in the digital published collated copies.

The vellum is too perfect

Sinaiticus is not oxidised. The copies of Magna Carta that are 800 years old are very fragile due to ageing; yet Sinaiticus is supposedly nearly twice that age and in good condition. This is not feasible.

Simonides claimed to have been the forger

In 1862 Constantine Simonides [1805-1867], a skilled calligrapher and manuscript expert, claimed that he had written Sinaiticus in 1839. He had absolutely nothing to gain and

⁴⁰ This relies on multiple on-line sources. I am indebted to David Daniels, Stephen Avery and many others.

⁴¹ Sinaiticus has readings that make Jesus a liar, for example.

⁴² Ernst von Dobschutz saw the white parchment manuscript in Leipzig.

⁴³ 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Bible and the church', described it as 'snow white parchment'.

⁴⁴ Scrivener, 'A full collation of the Codex Sinaiticus' (1864): 'The vellum leaves, now almost yellow in colour'.

⁴⁵ This was the original part (129 leaves) that Tischendorf found in a dustbin in St Catherine's Monastery in 1844. He was allowed to take only 43 leaves which were deposited in the Leipzig University library. In 1846 Captain CK MacDonald bought two codices from the monastery. In a later visit in 1859 Tischendorf found the rest of it (86 folios) which went to Russia. In 1933 the USSR sold Sinaiticus to the British Museum for \$100,000 (£6.5 million today). Some further leaves were discovered in the 20th century. Today portions of the Sinaiticus are in: Britain, Leipzig, St Catherine's Monastery and St Petersburg.

much to lose by saying this. While debating his claims with Henry Bradshaw (a British librarian who supported Tischendorf) Simonides conveniently died.

Tischendorf did not enamour himself with scholars who considered him flamboyant and questionable. Scrivener: *'Of Tischendorf's animus [hostility], we fear, the least said the better' ... Constantine Simonides was claiming to be the actual writer of Codex Aleph, and Tischendorf's strange silence was lending some plausibility*.⁴⁶

Supporters of Sinaiticus dismiss Simonides story and reject certain elements of it out of hand; however, researchers have proved all these very aspects to be true. In essence, the situation is as follows:

- Simonides was not a lowborn crook needing money but a well-educated son of a governor of a Greek speaking island under Turkish rule. He had beloved relatives who were senior monks in the Orthodox Church. He travelled Europe widely and clearly had financial security. At different times he lived in Greece, Turkey, England, France and Germany at a time when Middle Class Britons never left the country. He was a very skilled palaeographer, calligrapher and textual critic, capable of very speedy work. The picture painted by critics of a cheap criminal forger counterfeiting documents to make a quick buck are far from the truth.
- Mt Athos is an isolated peninsula facing the Aegean Sea and the area had long been pillaged by pirates from this direction. The other side of the peninsula faces the Gulf of the Holy Mountain, which is a very hazardous sea. In fact this treacherous sea had sunk a Persian fleet in 492BC. The monks of several monasteries in this area had learned to hide manuscripts and were very secretive about ancient texts, passing the secrets down through generations of monks. Thus the safest monastery was situated on the Gulf side for protection and manuscripts from various monasteries were kept safe there. This monastery is called Panteleimon in Greek and Russico in Russian.
- The first fact to assert is that Panteleimon monastery is a real place, despite slanders otherwise. Secondly, valuable ancient manuscripts had long been held in Panteleimon monastery and were kept hidden from public view. Occasionally a text would be utilised to make a printed copy, such as the Shepherd of Hermas in the Mt Athos edition. Those who say that Mt Athos would not have stored valuable manuscripts have not done their homework.
- The head monk of Mt Athos Panteleimon monastery was called Benedict, the great uncle of Simonides. Benedict had been a professor of the liberal Academy of Cydonia (aka Kydonies, Ayvalik) in 1784 retiring in 1819.⁴⁷ The city was originally granted independence by the Ottomans in 1773 with Muslims removed and it became a haven for Greeks and intellectuals; however, it was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks shortly after 1820.
- Benedict wanted to publish Alexandrian Biblical texts with textual commentaries (this was a radical departure from the Byzantine text)⁴⁸ as well as post apostolic works. After retirement Benedict first went to Esphigmenou monastery on Athos. He was a progressive seeking to infiltrate the Alexandrian text, based on manuscripts he had collected, into the Orthodox Church.
- When a person becomes an Orthodox monk he changes his name to that of a saint. It seems that Benedict's earlier name was Basileios or Bessarion or Vasarion,⁴⁹ but on

⁴⁶ Scrivener, 'Christian Remembrancer', The great Vatican Manuscript of the Holy Bible.

⁴⁷ In these days the three most important Greek Orthodox universities were in Turkey, under the ecclesiastic jurisdiction of either Constantinople in the north or Ephesus in south.

⁴⁸ The Greek Orthodox Church NT is very close to the Traditional Byzantine text.

⁴⁹ The Greek beta 'b' can become a 'v' in transliteration to English.

Athos he was 'Benedict'. There are historical references to a Vasarion at the Cydonia academy teaching theology for 35 years.

- Benedict's work collecting manuscripts and preparing for new editions was disturbed by the Greek revolutionary struggle for independence from the Turks. For safety he fled to the Island of Poros where he taught theology for many years. He returned to Athos at Panteleimon in the 1830s.
- The Panteleimon monastery had a number of hidden manuscripts which had been entrusted to Benedict by the monk Gregory. Benedict's great wish was that Simonides would copy the treasured ancient manuscripts by hand and make them ready for printed editions available for the Orthodox Church, without the manuscripts needing to leave the monastery. [Remember that at this time ancient manuscripts were in great demand with huge prices being paid for them.] By now, Benedict's age (over 70) meant that he was no longer able to complete the work of an Alexandrian text with an OT based on the Septuagint. Thus he asked his talented nephew; Simonides promised his venerable uncle to attempt this task.
- In addition, Benedict wanted to present his patron, Tsar Nicholas I, with a fresh copy of the Greek Bible (he hoped to get the money to buy a printing press).
- Simonides had the palaeographic knowledge and calligraphic expertise to do this job and was sent to the monastery. The main calligrapher at Mt Athos was called Dionysius but was old and had insufficient expertise to do the task. The ancient Athos manuscripts were made available to Simonides to check and copy.
- He began his work in about November 1839 using an old blank codex.
- [Simonides resided in Mt Athos from 1839-1943 and 1852. He was in England between 1853-1855, and then in France and Germany.]
- In March 1841 the monk Kallinikos worked with Simonides on a different project.
- In 1843 Kallinikos saw Simonides in Mt Athos working on Sinaiticus, probably on the Letter of Barnabas using various available texts.
- Simonides published an edition of Barnabas in 1843. This contained chapters (1:1-5:7a) that had been missing from every text and published edition before, which Simonides had discovered in his various searches. Later Tischendorf would write and claim that he was the first person to see these missing chapters, which found their way into Sinaiticus after 1844. This was because Simonides said that he made that copy of Sinaiticus and included it. In fact, Simonides published the missing chapters years before Tischendorf even saw them.
- Note: Simonides had information on Barnabas no one else had. He published that information before anyone saw the Sinaiticus. Simonides told the truth. Tischendorf lied.
- Benedict died and there was insufficient expensive parchment to complete the work. At some point the codex was given to a sister monastery, St Catherine's, near what many claim to be Mt Sinai, by the Patriarch Constantius for comparison with other texts performed by the monk Callistratus. Simonides was at this time (1843) in Smyrna to validate the Greek epistle of Barnabas. This explains why Sinaiticus has the original text covered in editor's notes and corrections. The plan was to gather the corrections and make another full bound text that was correct for the Tsar.
- Simonides later saw the codex whilst visiting St Catherine's monastery, which had been considerably altered and aged. When it was later published as a genuine text he was greatly disturbed. He said that he examined the manuscript and found it '*much altered,*

having a older appearance than it ought to have'. The dedication to Tsar Nicholas I had also been removed.⁵⁰

- The monk Kallinikos Hieromonarchos gave evidence in a letter to support Simonides, his colleague in Mt Athos. He called Tischendorf a liar and a thief (he stole part of Sinaiticus)⁵¹ and stated that he saw Tischendorf ageing the codex lettering with lemon juice.⁵² Again, despite slanders, Kallinikos is a genuine person. He is documented by historian Spyridon Paulon Lampros in his 1900 catalogue of *'The Greek Manuscripts of Mt Athos'*. He states that Kallinikos was working on a project with Simonides. So both Simonides and Kallinikos are documented as being in Mt Athos at the right time. Lampros also mentions Benedict a number of times. Thus Benedict is also a real person, despite critic's claims otherwise.
- A Russian Orthodox monk would not risk his eternal testimony to lie and slander someone. I would trust Kallinikos over Tischendorf any day of the week. Kallinikos' testimony does not exactly match that of Simonides, which is what one should expect. The slight differences can be reconciled but the differences add weight to it being true. It is a lie of detractors that the two testimonies match exactly and are thus a fabrication of Simonides. Kallinikos also knew many details about Sinaiticus that most would not know. He states that the Sinaiticus was darkened sometime between 1851 and 1859.
- On 13 September 1862, Simonides wrote in the Guardian newspaper that he was the real author of Sinaiticus and said that it was poor work of his youth. He had seen the Sinaiticus in Liverpool in 1860 and recognised it.
- This admission damaged his reputation. He had no reason at all to lie.
- *The Journal of Sacred Literature*, April 1863, from p210, debated this story in detail.
- During the course of debating with his critics to prove his honour, Simonides died in 1867.
- After this multiple scholars and authorities slandered and castigated Simonides in the sharpest terms. He was called a forger, a liar, unscholarly, and a slanderer. This has continued to this present day but no hard evidence whatsoever has been brought forward to prove these allegations. The driver of this is that to admit Simonides was correct means to admit that all the Bible textual scholars in the world have been fooled to trust in a fake manuscript that was not 4th century but was an intended 19th century presentation gift to the Tsar. It means that all the modern Bible versions are untrustworthy. It means that modern textual NT criticism is wrong. It means that all NT textual scholars should be sacked. And it means that the Traditional Text was right all along. Of course no one will defend Simonides from the textual criticism world.
- Note: ignore the Wikipedia⁵³ articles on Simonides, which include a number of outright lies. Note that we can prove that Tischendorf was an arrogant liar and a thief. There is no evidence that Simonides lied or that he was a criminal forger; his story gave evidence in dates, publications, names and places that can be verified. Note that by trusting Tischendorf and doubting Simonides, the text of the Bible was changed, assaults on Jesus' character and divinity were asserted by scholars, and the faith of many churchgoers was ruined.
- In summary: Sinaiticus is a modern copy. It was not exactly a forgery but was intended as a gift to the Tsar; a hand-written copy of available Greek texts. It is not a complete

⁵⁰ Journal of Sacred Literature, April 1863, p214.

⁵¹ In 1844 he stole what was later called the FHA in Leipzig, the white leaves. The later portion that was gained with the help of the Russian Consul, was only lent with a promise to return it – Tischendorf never took it back; so that was stolen as well.

⁵² Journal of Sacred Literature, April 1863, p212.

⁵³ This is a propaganda tool of the global elite.

ancient Bible at all. We know who wrote it, where it was written and why it was written. We also know who stole it and who artificially aged it. Sadly the whole Biblical academic world trusted the thief and liar.

Tischendorf's story of discovery is false

The essential points of this romanticised story are:

- He discovered the FHA in a large basket in the middle of the library that was used to gather manuscripts to be burned; a waste paper basket. This was a lie. It was how certain parchments manuscripts were stored; it was not a waste paper basket.
- Before this discovery, the contents of the basket had twice been thrown into a furnace. Lie. The monks did not throw parchments into the fire. Animal hides burn badly and smell. Parchment was also a valuable resource to be re-used after scraping and cleaning (a palimpsest).
- Tischendorf lied about what the librarian said to him. In fact the monastery librarian refutes Tischendorf's story. Tischendorf even lied to his own family and his wife.
- Even supportive works state that Tischendorf was '*confused*', '*misleading*', '*accidentally mistaken*', '*misunderstood what was told him*', '*this does not mean that his version is unquestionable*' and even that '*one cannot take what he states at face value*'.⁵⁴ These are supporters not opponents! The fact is that his story of the discovery is clearly not true.

Tischendorf's character is very suspect

We have seen that Scrivener was suspicious of him, though he did not refute his claims, and considered him to have hostile tendencies. Even Wikipedia (which supports him) states that he was a flamboyant and flighty character. We have also seen that he was a liar.

Philip Schaff mentioned his personal vanity and his over-fondness for his many accolades, such as honorary doctorates and a papal commendation, which were on display in his lounge.⁵⁵

Kallinikos Hieromonarchos wrote from Alexandria on 9 November 1861, '*That master and pupil of all guile, and all wickedness, the German Tischendorf.*'

In his own works he affirms that he set upon a plan to get rid of the KJV and the Traditional Text and put forward a new text based on Sinaiticus.

The mistakes are shocking (erroneous readings)

There are passages that jump huge amounts of text. For example, Sinaiticus jumps from 1 Chron 19:17 to the middle of a sentence in Ezra 9:9 on the same page in the same column. This was supposedly done by 'Scribe A'.

Scribe A also missed out the story of the adulterous woman in John 7:53 – 8:11.

Scribe A also missed out 'Joseph' from Lk 2:33 and added 'his father', making Joseph Jesus' father.

Sinaiticus takes away the words, 'Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him' in John 9:38, which demonstrates that Jesus is to be worshipped.

⁵⁴ 'Codex Sinaiticus: The story of the world's oldest Bible'; 'Codex Sinaiticus: New perspectives on the ancient Biblical manuscript'.

⁵⁵ Schaff, 'Companion to the Greek NT', (1883).

Mark 16:9-20 is removed. This was deliberately removed by Scribe D. [To accomplish this he put in a new leaf and constricted the lines of first chapter of Luke and spaced out the lines of chapters 15-16 of Mark.]

These mistakes (there are many more, thousands in fact) are too shocking to constitute a genuine textual source for Bible translation.

Significant doctrinal issues

Since Sinaiticus and Vaticanus don't include the last verses of Mark there is a problem. Textual critics claim that Mark is the first Gospel that was used as a foundation by both Matthew and Luke. If the end of Mk 16 is removed then Mark contains no references to the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus. Since this is the foundational, earliest Gospel, this places doubt on the resurrection. Critics can claim, and some do, that the doctrine of Christ's resurrection was a doctrine added later by the church.

The Sinaiticus does not have the ascension of Christ in the Gospel of Luke either; 'and was carried into heaven' is not in the original text of Luke 24:51 but is added by an editor at the top of the page later on. Thus the 1963-94 editions of the NASB omit these words. The Revised Version (1881-85) also did this. Without this there is no reference to the bodily ascension in any Gospels. Thus critics claim that the ascension is also a later addition of the church. However, the beginning of Acts explains that Luke's church history begins where his Gospel ended, with the ascension of Jesus ('taken up'; Acts 1:2). Text critics blindly followed Sinaiticus even though Alexandrinus and Vaticanus, and all other texts, included the words.

Since the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ are two of the most important cardinal doctrines of Christian theology, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus must be viewed as severe threats to Christianity.

Other serious problems are:

- Mk 1:1 – the words 'Son of God' were not in the original Sinaiticus but were added by an editor in the margin. In other words, Sinaiticus teaches Adoptionism; Jesus was a mere man who only became the Son of God at his baptism.
- Jn 9:35 – the word 'God' is missing and it is replaced with 'man'; Jesus was merely a man. 'Son of man' is found in the NASB, RSV, NRSV, BBE and other versions.
- Jn 9:38 - 'Lord I believe and he worshipped him' is omitted but is added in the margin.

Palaeography

Tischendorf used the principles of palaeography⁵⁶ developed by Roman Catholic Counter Reformation groups.⁵⁷ The principle was to undermine the Bible used by Protestants. As a result of, this Tischendorf was duped into accepting the longevity of Aleph, which was fake.

Dating

Sinaiticus is supposedly dated to the early 4th century (the 300s after 325). This is false.

The *Shepherd of Hermas* in Sinaiticus is in pieces. According to Porphyrius the Shepherd was complete in 1845. He also dated the Sinaiticus to later than the 4th century, no earlier than the middle of the 5th century due to the format (three columns not four with lots of space). This also means that Vaticanus is also post 450AD. This is the first problem for critics.

⁵⁶ The study of ancient writing systems and the deciphering and dating of historical manuscripts.

⁵⁷ Such as the Benedictine monk Mabillon.

The Greek manuscript of the Shepherd (*Codex Lipsiensis*) supposedly found by Simonides on Mt Athos was originally stated by Tischendorf to be fake, a medieval retranslation, but after finding Sinaiticus stated that it was actually genuine because they were very similar.

Others, e.g. James Donaldson, affirmed that it was fake and was back-translated from the Latin texts in medieval times. Text analysis has proved this to be true. In fact scholars have shown that the Latin text which was used to make the Greek translation was the Latin *Palatine Codex 150* held in the Vatican. Both the Simonides and the Sinaiticus text of the Shepherd are back-translated from the medieval *Palatine Codex 150*. This means that the Sinaiticus must also date from medieval times since its version of the Shepherd is substantially the same as the Simonides text following the same anomalies. Sinaiticus must date from later than 1350AD at best.

It is a medieval forgery at best. However, a strong case can be made that it was actually a forgery by Simonides in the early 19th century.

The testimony of Porphyrius

In 1845 Archimandrite⁵⁸ Porphyrius Uspensky visited the St Catherine's monastery and studied the texts available included the larger portion of the Sinaiticus which Tischendorf could not procure shortly before. His statements about this have not been translated into English until very recently.

He was not enamoured of Sinaiticus and stated that the best Greek manuscripts were stored in the prior's cells. There are only four of them and were valued for their accuracy, content and paintings.

The vellum has never been tested

Testing has been intended in the recent past but has been terminated for unknown reasons by authorities. This means that the veracity of the pages of vellum has never been scientifically tested; that is, has never been the subject of dating tests during the last 150 years. Why?

It contains heretical books

Sinaiticus includes the *Shepherd of Hermas* in its text, adding to Scripture (a sin).

Worse is that this document teaches the heresy of Arianism, claiming that Jesus was a mere man who was adopted by God to be his son for his virtue. How can we trust Sinaiticus if the writers thought this was a necessary part of Scripture?

It also includes the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which teaches baptismal regeneration.

There are multiple writers of the Sinaiticus text

There is not one translator but several; which one do we trust?

There are Scribe A (the main writer), Scribe D (the corrector), Scribe B1 (the Major Prophets), Scribe B2 (the Minor Prophets and the Shepherd). The text has multiple corrections on the text; which is correct? The text is a complete mess.

It omits huge portions of Scripture

It is missing the following parts:

- All of Exodus.

⁵⁸ An Eastern Orthodox abbot.

- All but three chapters of Leviticus.
- All but 12 chapters of Numbers.
- All but five chapters of Deuteronomy.
- All but three chapters of Joshua.
- All but seven chapters of Judges.
- All of Ruth.
- All of 1 and 2 Samuel.
- All of 1 and 2 Kings.
- All of Ezekiel.
- All of Daniel.
- All of Hosea.
- All of Amos.
- All of Micah.
- Plus various other chapters of books, such as eight chapters of Ezra and most of Lamentations.
- Plus it has parts of Chronicles twice.

Over a quarter of the Bible is missing but it includes all the Apocrypha.

Massive mistakes

There are thousands of mistakes in Sinaiticus and we have no space here to go through them all. Some mistakes are just inexplicable and stupid.

Matt 13:54: 'And when he was come into his own country'; (KJV). 'Country' = *patris*. Sinaiticus has 'Antipatris', which is a Samaritan town 46 miles away from Nazareth.

Acts 8:5: 'Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.' Every manuscript in the world has this except Sinaiticus which has 'Caesarea' 24 miles away on the coast.

2 Tim 4:10: '...Crescens for Galatia'. All manuscripts have this except for Sinaiticus, four minuscules (81, 104, 326, 436) and *Codex Ephraemi*, having 'Gallia', which is Gaul (France), 1200 miles away. 81 had been examined by Tischendorf, and Ephraemi had just been deciphered by Tischendorf in 1840-43. Coincidence?

This is enough for our purposes.

A Constantine edition?

Supporters of the Sinaiticus have said that it was one of the fifty copies of the Bible commissioned by Constantine in the early 300s. This is clearly false for these reasons.

- The editions were to have beautifully wrought leather decorative bindings. Sinaiticus has no binding at all.
- It was to be easy to read; but Sinaiticus is not at all easy to read since it is covered in corrections and alternative readings.
- It was to be portable, but the original pages of Sinaiticus are huge and not portable at all. [Many of the facsimiles of Sinaiticus are reduced in size.]
- It was to be produced by craftsmen and scholars to produce accuracy. Sinaiticus is neither beautiful, ordered or the work of craftsmen. It is riddled with scrapings out, replaced leaves, corrections in the margins, corrections on rubbed out verses and so on.

It even states that there are superfluous sections of text in the text. It would not have been presentable to an emperor.

Recent criticism

The development of a rigorous analysis and criticism of the Sinaiticus is recent because it was only released in photographed digital form after July 2009. Before that, printed editions were taken on trust. Most textual scholars, professors, teachers, pastors and students had never ever seen the original and took Tischendorf's printed editions on trust, with the exception of single photographed page of Jn 21. Tischendorf's printed edition was not a photographic copy of the original but typeset text made up at the printer's to represent what the public was told Sinaiticus said. This is why early copies of this in textbooks are so neat and tidy when Sinaiticus is far from this.

Printed translations have mistakes in them and the reality of the text itself is hidden. Only by looking at the actual leaves of the Aleph text can one begin to see all the problems associated with it in detail: the corrections, scrubbing out, scraping, additions and so on. The electronic editions and the recent large printed photographed edition of the original text are proving to be its undoing because independent scholars can actually check it.

What was stated about Sinaiticus in textbooks was a lie. It was not written by '*scribes of the highest order*'. It was not an ancient document. It was not the most complete Bible text (it's missing 25%).

Shockingly, the Sinaiticus website [www.codexsinaiticus.org] underwent a major change in 2016. Previously scholars could examine the text in fine detail, zooming in on lines, words, and letters, of all the pages. After 2016 this was changed and is no longer possible. In fact many pages are not available in the complete form. Obviously, the strict examination of the problems of Sinaiticus had to be stopped or the bubble would burst. It is no longer accessible.

Codex 2427

A very small minuscule text (lower-case) dated to the 14th century that only includes the Gospel of Mark, plus some illustrations. Despite this late date it was identified as category 1 (most important) Greek text because it very closely resembles Sinaiticus (and Vaticanus). It was considered to be an archaic text; the primitive Marcan text. This text is very different from the other Byzantine versions.

The editors of the eclectic text (the basis of modern Bibles) used 2427 continually, making changes to Bible verses on the basis of it. Footnotes in printed Nestle Greek editions showed a constant referral to 2427 as a prime authority to change Byzantine readings.

The problem with 2427 is that it is a fake. The writing of the 2427 text is sloppy and poor and confused palaeographic scholars. In 1989 a chemistry professor noticed that 2427 had a lot of Prussian Blue in the illustrations, which was not available until 1704, and not for sale until the 1720s.

No one could prove its provenance. Margaret Mitchell produced a high definition edition of the text enabling scholars to study it. The text was also subjected to rigorous technological analysis. This found that the Prussian Blue was not a retouch job but was original; thus it was produced after 1704. They also found synthetic Ultramarine Blue, which was not available as a pigment until the 1820s. The white was zinc, making it after 1825. Another colour used was not available until 1874. So the text was not 14th century but 19th century.

What was 2427 a copy of? In 2006 Stephan Carlson studied Mitchell's digital edition and found a number of words missing in one line of text. He searched multiple texts to see if he could find a similar text. 2427 was copied from Philipp Buttmann's text of 1860, which was based on Cardinal Mai's edition of Vaticanus. He followed Buttmann in 81 out of 85 places where Buttmann made a mistake. He also omitted three lines where Buttmann erred. Sometime between 1874-1917 someone forged 2427. Multiple modern Bible versions have been affected by this.

Conclusion

It is clear that Sinaiticus cannot be trusted in any manner and it has no provenance. It is not only erroneous but it is a forgery and brought to the world by a proven liar.

This means that all the modern Bible versions that rely upon Aleph cannot be trusted either. All the cherished modern versions used in churches are not only wrong, due to trusting the wrong textual sources, but they were deliberately falsified by a conspiracy of the global elite⁵⁹ over 150 years.

Without a particle of doubt ... Aleph, B and D are three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant – exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: -have become by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of the truth, -which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.⁶⁰

History of early English versions

Early church versions

The early church developed new translations as new language groups submitted to the Gospel; thus we have the Syrian (Aramaic) texts, the Coptic text and so on. In the 4th century Ulphilas, the bishop of Antioch, translated the Bible into Gothic after a successful outreach to these people. Portions of this were then translated into Saxon and other European languages.

The Vulgate

Over time the common Bible version became the new 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).

Early English transitions

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 English⁶¹ and the full

⁵⁹ A cabal of globalist Luciferians, Satanists, Talmudists and Freemasons that control banking, world corporations, financial systems, education and world politics. These are intent on creating a totalitarian world government ruling over a race of serfs.

⁶⁰ Burgon, 'Revision Revised', p16.

⁶¹ 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.

translation of Wycliffe / Nicholas of Hereford / Purvey (1388, 1395).⁶² 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 manuscripts 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 in 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527 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.

Luther's Bible

Luther produced his German Bible by 1534. This was the first complete Bible vernacular translation for a nation based upon the original texts (the NT recently published by Erasmus).

Early English Bibles

William Tyndale produced an English Bible: New Testament 1525, Old Testament 1535, translated from the original languages. It became the basis of subsequent English versions including the KJV.

Then followed the *Coverdale Bible* (1535); this was the first royal⁶³ sanctioned Bible printed in English. Then *Matthew's Bible*, i.e. John Rogers, (1537); it was Tyndale's NT, some of Tyndale's OT and the rest Coverdale's OT; plus provocative Protestant notes. Then *Cranmer's Bible* (1539), a revision of Matthew's Bible. Then the *Geneva Bible*, popular with the Puritans, (by 1560). Then the *Bishop's Bible* (by 1572). Then the Rheims-Douay (Catholic) by 1609. Followed by the *Authorised Version* or *King James Version* of 1611. This was a revision of the Bishop's Bible; a compromise between the Bishop's Bible (hated by the Puritans) and the Geneva Bible (hated by the king).

The KJV survived as the only English Bible in proper use until 1881.

The major publications of the NT Greek text

Erasmus

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.

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.

⁶² 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.

⁶³ Henry VIII.

His first edition was rushed for the publisher and used readings based on unspecified Greek texts; Kenyon says that it, ‘*swarms with errors*’.⁶⁴ Quotes from the Fathers were also authoritative for his choice of readings, despite lack of support from Greek texts.

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 (Stephen or Stephanus) 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.

The Complutensian Polyglot 1552.

A good Greek text printed at Alcala under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes of Spain. This was known as the Complutensian - the Latin place name of Alcala. It was the first printed Greek text (1514) but it was not offered to the public until 1522. It utilised manuscripts from the Vatican library.

Stephen's Text (Stephanus)

Stephen's Text (Stephanus), i.e. Robert Estienne [1503-1559]. *Novum Testamentum Græce*. Lutetia: ex officina Roberti Stephani Typographi, Typis Regiis; 1546. Plus editions in 1549; 1550 - this can be said to be essentially the *Textus Receptus* as later published by the Elzevir family. It was mainly based upon Erasmus' fourth or fifth edition.

First numbered verses

In 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.

Beza – the basic modern Byzantine text

Beza [1519-1605] was Calvin's successor in Geneva and a prominent theologian and scholar. *Novum Testamentum, cum versione Latina veteri, et nova Theodori Bezae*. Geneva, 1565 (folio). Other editions in 1582, 1589, 1598 plus some octavo editions.

The basis of Beza's text was Estienne (Stephanus) 1551 with less than a hundred changes. 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 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. It is not based upon a single homogenous text known as the *Textus Receptus*.

The Elzevir texts

The Elzevirs were a famous Dutch family of printers, of Flemish ancestry, most notably for their accurate editions of the Greek New Testament. Isaac published the 1624 edition. His

⁶⁴ Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How it Came to Us*, c 2.

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.

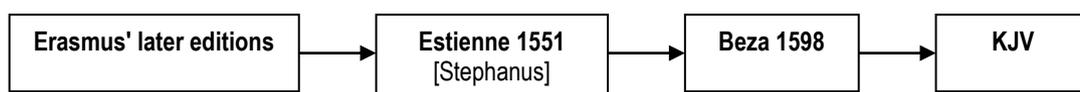
Novum Testamentum Græce. Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden]: Ex officina Elzeviriana, 1624. This text is practically a reprint of the text of Beza 1565, with about fifty minor differences.

Further edition: 1633; this 1633 edition became known as the '*Textus Receptus*' ['received text'] because of an advertisement in the preface that said, '*Therefore you have the text now received by all [textus receptus] in which we give nothing altered or corrupt.*'

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 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.

Summary so far



Bengel

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

First mention of Byzantine and Alexandrian families

Bengel split the textual families into two groups, which he called 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 manuscripts accepted by most people today.

Later edition: 1734. He also established important rules for critical work.

Johann Jakob Wetstein

2 folios, Amsterdam, 1751-52. '*He 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.*'⁶⁵

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].

Johann Jacob Griesbach

Johann Jacob Griesbach; Griesbach, 1774. *Libri Historici Novi Testamenti, Graece, Pars I. sistens Synopsin Evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci, et Lucae. Textum ad fidem Codd.*

⁶⁵ Kenyon, c2:3.

Versionum et Patrum emendavit et lectionis varietatem adjecit. Jo. Jac. Griesbach. Later editions: 1775, 1777, 1796, 1805.

Lachmann

Karl Konrad Friedrich Wilhelm Lachmann; *Novum Testamentum Græce, ex recensione Caroli Lachmanni.* Berolini, 1831. Later edition: 1842.

Scrivener – the current Byzantine edition

F.H.A. (Frederick Henry Ambrose) 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.* Later edition: 1881.

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, Tischendorffii, Tregellesii, Wescott-Hortii, Versionis Anglicanae Emendatorum. Accedunt parallela s. Scripturae loca.*

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.

Tischendorf

Lobegott Friedrich Konstantin von 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, Matthaeanae, Griesbachianae, praemisit Aenotheus.*

Later editions: 1843, 1849, 1852, 1856, 1862, presented the text of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which he discovered in a Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai.

1863, 1865, 1867 - the Vatican New Testament, 1869-72, Tischendorf's eighth edition is still the standard scholarly source for comprehensive information concerning the various readings of manuscripts.

Tregelles

Samuel Prideaux 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.* Later edition: 1857.

Westcott and Hort

Brooke Foss Westcott [1825-1901] and Fenton John Anthony Hort [1828-1892]. 1881. *The New Testament in the Original Greek.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

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. The oldest known Greek copies, *Codex Vaticanus* [B] and *Codex Sinaiticus* [Aleph] were elevated to a class called 'Neutral', and virtually identified with the original manuscripts. Their theory of four text-types is discussed elsewhere.

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.

Nestle

Eberhard Nestle; 1898. *Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critico ex editionibus et libris manuscriptis collecto*. 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, 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. It was the basis of the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible.

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.

The Nestle text was the standard used until recent times. 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).

Metzger

Bruce M. Metzger; 1964. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. 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. 1975. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. London: United Bible Societies. Metzger has been closely associated with the Alands and Jesuit Carlo Maria Martini in editing the UBS texts.

Aland

Kurt Aland; 1963. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum, Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitis*. 1963 b. *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*. 2nd edition revised and enlarged, 1994. This was the standard reference for Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikren, 1966. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikren, *The Greek New Testament*.

UBS

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). 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. Nestle-Aland 26 (same text as the 27th edition) is the most widely used academic edition today. UBS4 equals the Nestle Aland 27. The modern Greek text for eclectic versions is usually termed 'UBS4-NA27'. Recently, a new edition (NA28) appeared.

Problems with eclecticism

Two methods

There are only two ways to determine the true text of the NT. The first is objective: that is to judge the vast majority of manuscripts and establish the true reading. The second is subjective: to develop arbitrary rules for criticism and then choose the best readings. The first is the Traditional Text, the second is the eclectic (or critical) text.

Eclecticism

Eclectic scholars all develop their own subjective rules for determining the true text (apparatus). Over time these rules are overturned in favour of others. At any one time different scholars will have conflicting rules. Also eclectic scholars include non-evangelicals in their committees to determine the text, such as Roman Catholics.

Even when critics employ the same rules, different scholars come to different conclusions about the true reading. Clearly this subjective method is deeply flawed.

In addition, by making the oldest manuscripts automatically the most genuine, critics have fallen foul of manuscripts that were thought to be old, and then changed Bible words, only to find later that the manuscript was a forgery.

Typical rules for modern eclectic critics are:

- The shorter reading is best.
- The more difficult reading is best (why?).
- The reading that fits the context is best.
- The reading that follows the writer's style is best (internal evidence).
- The reading that best explains the origin of various readings should be used (external evidence).

These rules often cancel each other out, leaving it up to guesswork. Eclecticism is characterised by uncertainty. It says that we cannot know for sure what God's word really is.

The eclectic UBS text is a consensus text based on the mere opinion of five scholars: Aland, Black, Martini (Catholic), Metzger and Wikgren. They admit that many readings were chosen by majority vote. These have already been proved to be wrong on numerous occasions due to following a forgery, this is to say nothing about following Sinaiticus.

Comparison: the Byzantine Traditional Text

In comparison, the method of establishing the Byzantine Traditional text was to choose the widest spectrum of ancient witnesses; collating the actual manuscript and other evidence. This is the text that prevailed from the early church in various locations throughout

antiquity. This text is reflected in the editions of Beza, Erasmus, Stephanus and the Elzevirs. Critics who say that the KJV was translated from ‘*a few inferior manuscripts*’ lie.

Burgon’s rules of objective criticism can be simplified as:

- Antiquity: not depending on a single ancient manuscript but looking at the whole body of ancient witnesses. He took antiquity to be up to the 17th century. Eclectic critics claim that age is superior, even if only a few examples are available. But age is often subjective (e.g. forgeries) but there are also ancient manuscripts that are faulty and corrupt (e.g. P66, P75, B in many places etc.).
- Consent of witnesses: when the majority of manuscripts, from various geographic locations, testify to a reading (when the remainder differ among themselves) it is preferred as accurate.
- Variety of evidence: the witness from different countries where there was no collusion, including citations, lectionaries and versions, establishes the correct reading.
- Respectability of the witnesses: how credible are the witnesses? If a manuscript is full of errors, contradictions and corruptions, it is a false document (such as Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus).
- Unbroken tradition: genuine readings leave traces throughout church history. If a reading suddenly appears in later history, it should be dismissed.
- Context: any reading that contradicts the context is not genuine.
- Internal evidence: (not the ‘intrinsic probability’ of Hort) this regards readings that are grammatically, logically, geographically or scientifically impossible. E.g. when B and other Alexandrian texts say ‘Bethsaida’ instead of ‘Bethesda’ in John 5:2 – these are plain wrong.

All of these rules should be applied at the same time.

Differences between the Traditional NT Text and the Alexandrian critical NT text

- The Alexandrian texts omit (or enclose in brackets to indicate serious doubt) 45 entire verses.
- The Alexandrian texts remove significant portions of 134 verses.
- The Alexandrian texts omit or bracket one of the Persons of the Trinity in nearly 200 places.
- The Alexandrian texts have omissions that give a noticeable difference in translation in 400 places.

Differences between the Traditional NT Text and the Textus Receptus

Pickering stated that he believed that the TR differed from the original text in about 1,000 places being very minor details but the critical text differed in 5,000 places.⁶⁶

If one compares the TR with the Majority Text of Hodges and Farstad edition the number of variants is nearly 1,500. Half of these are in Revelation and mostly comprise of minor issues, such as case endings and word order. Since Hodges and Farstad applied the W-H rule of genealogy in Revelation, we can say that the Traditional Text (Majority Text) is not finally established in Revelation. Burgon’s rules need to be followed; then we may find that the differences between the TR and the Majority Text in Revelation are fewer.

Yet all critics admit that the scope of variation is very small. Only three verses are found in the TR that are omitted in the Majority Text. In 24 other places the Majority Text omits

⁶⁶ Pickering, op. cit. p177.

parts of a verse. That is 27 differences out of 8,000 NT verses. We can therefore say that the TR and the Majority Text are very similar and both constitute the Byzantine text tradition.

Following good critical rules we can also say that the following should not be in the TR: Luke 17:36 (which is in Matthew 24:40 anyway) and Acts 8:37 and 1 Jn 5:7 (known as the *Johannine Comma*). Many have tried to defend including 1 Jn 5:7, such as T Holland and RL Dabney,⁶⁷ mainly based on the repeated appearance in Latin texts and internal evidence. However, even Burgon could not defend including these verses. But we can't be eclectic if we attack eclecticism. If our key argument is the vast majority of Greek manuscript agreement, then these three must be omitted. The reading cannot be found in any Greek manuscript before the 16th century.

Some parts of Acts 9:5 in the Majority Text omits 'It is hard for you to kick against the goads ... and the Lord said unto him' But these words are in 26:14 and 22:10. It seems some copyist added (interpolated) them but there is a lack of textual support for these words.

The divine promise

The words of the LORD *are* pure words, *Like* silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever. Ps 12:6-7

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Ps 119:89

The entirety of Your word *is* truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever. Ps 119:160

Every word of God *is* pure. Prov 30:5

He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"'. Matt 4:4

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matt 5:18

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Matt 24:35

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

The word of the LORD endures forever. 1 Pt 1:25

Why the Traditional Text was perverted in the 19th century

Satan was released from bondage to begin his work of cementing humanity into the fulness of the man of sin in the mid-19th century.⁶⁸ This was when the great apostasy and syncretism of the western church began in earnest and when all the traditional Christian moral values of western society (formed by the Reformation) began to be reversed. It was also when Luciferian, psychotic people began to accelerate their slow coup to capture national governments through a variety of conspiracies.

⁶⁷ Holland is an on-line paper; Dabney, 'Discourses Evangelical and Theological', 1:377. Cardinal Wiseman [1802-65] showed that the reading dated to the mid-2nd c. at least.

⁶⁸ See my papers 'The Antichrist', 'The binding of Satan'.

Since the Bible was held in great esteem even in secular forums (e.g. swearing on it in court or being the basis of Common Law), in order to change society into satanic perversions it was necessary to first pervert the Bible text to sow confusion, syncretism, questioning and disavowal of Scripture in the churches. This required a multiplicity of bad translations held by many with no certain fundamental Bible version in authority. This first required perverting the texts upon which translations are made to enable multiple bad translations and no certain authority (an eclectic text).

Before 1881 there had been virtually one Bible in the west since 1611,⁶⁹ plus other single versions in other languages. All these rested on the Traditional Byzantine Text, despite their minor differences, which went back to the apostles and which had manuscript support going back to the 2nd century. After 1881 the world opened up for multiple translations, followed by paraphrase translations rather than literal translations. Many Bibles omitted very famous passages of the NT and twisted many important verses. For example 1 Tim 3:16:

God was manifest in the flesh. KVV Byzantine text.

God was manifested in the flesh. NKJV Byzantine text.

He who was manifested in the flesh. ASV Alexandrian text.

He who was revealed in the flesh. NASB Alexandrian text.

He was manifested in the flesh. RSV Alexandrian text.

He was revealed in flesh. NRSV Alexandrian text.

This is based on the deliberate change from *theos* ('God') to *os* ('he'). This is one of the basic doctrines of salvation and one of the early attacks on doctrine in the early church controversies – that Christ is God come in the flesh.

The last few verses of Mark's Gospel appear in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts but are missing from Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. On this basis all modern versions either omit these verses or have a bold note saying that they are untrustworthy.

Today, the Bible has been under such sustained attack that churches have gone from using multiple translations with no clear voice to many people failing to even bring a Bible to church at all and not reading it seriously.

In the same period the social mores of the west have collapsed into the legalising of sin and parading of perversions openly without restraint. In fact, Christians are now being imprisoned for reading the Bible in the streets, and outside churches, for 'hate speech'.

The destruction of the popular authority of the Bible was fundamental to the destruction of societal morals.

Note:

To make things right **we** will have to undo much that is cherished error. The problem of revising the Bible shows how difficult it is to do this. For the last hundred years **we** have been trying to get out an edition of the Bible that was reasonably correct but nobody wants it. What is wanted is the good old King James Version, every jot and tittle of it because most people are convinced that God dictated the Bible to King James in English.

⁶⁹ The Geneva Bible held sway with the Puritans in England for a time.

... In the next ten years **we** will have rebuild a world civilisation. I hope for some psychologists and even philosophers to be among those appointed to administer this problem. **We** are thinking now of a world police force. **We** will first perhaps try to make a great world plan, **We** will sit at a council table and figure out how to iron out the troubles on the earth.

... The way of that conditioning would be the one used in Central Europe to condition Nazi minds. There the circulation of an ideology began in the public schools, began with a small child, which is where **we** will have to begin and educate not only our own people but the peoples of the world and **we** will have to have five generations of the consciousness concept of democratic co-operation before **we** can create a world capable of mental and emotional tolerance.

Occultist and Mason Manly P Hall, 'Asia in the balance of the scales', *Horizon Magazine*, (1944).⁷⁰

This is clearly a reference to a secret cabal of powerful people with a satanic agenda for a new world order. The fifth generation of public conditioning is in full swing, today is the fourth generation since this was written. The next generation (which teenagers claim to want to call 'The founder generation') is about to commence.

Perverting the Traditional Text is a fundamental part of this process. Manly P Hall strongly favoured the Sinaiticus and hated the KJV.

The Codex Sinaiticus is a manuscript of the 4th century, about the same date as the Codex Vaticanus. This manuscript is one of the great books of the world.

... It is sufficiently important to justify considerable revision of our popular conception of the Scriptural writing.

Manly P Hall, 'Asia in the balance of the scales', *Horizon Magazine*, (1944).

Of importance to students of occultism is the fact that the Codex Sinaiticus contains many passages suppressed from the published Gospels. The passages in many places greatly alter the significance of the text.

Manly P Hall, *Monthly Letter*, 1 April 1935, New York.

But what does this mean to the average Bible student? This enthusiastic jot and tittle Bible worshipper will insist that the words of the King James Version are the very words of God himself.

Manly P Hall, *Students Monthly Letter*, 4th Year, No 5.

The King James Version of the Holy Bible: this translation teems with errors and is hopelessly unreliable from the scholastic viewpoint. Yet Popular acceptance of this miss-version of Holy writ to come to be recognised as infallible. So that the religious public would now reject a correct translation. In fact it has already shown its attitude in the matter by refusing the Revised Edition. For over 300 years erroneous theological notions have been circulating deriving their authority from the KJV of the Bible.

Manly P Hall, *Monthly Letter*, 1 November 1934.

The goal of the elite is to finally produce a one-world Bible to facilitate a one-world religious system. This will be the religion masterminded by the False Prophet of Revelation.

⁷⁰ Quotes from a video by David Daniels.

Key Early Textual Sources

The four great (Alexandrian) uncials

- *Codex Alexandrinus* (A) 5th century with two columns. The Bible in Greek plus part of Clement. It is very defective. Some leaves of the Psalms and some NT passages are missing.
- *Codex Sinaiticus* (Aleph) 4th century (but fake) with four columns. Also contains the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. 25% of the Bible is missing.
- *Codex Vaticanus* (B): The oldest manuscript, 4th century with three columns. A faulty manuscript that was not used and kept hidden away in the depths of the Vatican for 1500 years. A trusted manuscript would have been in permanent use for copying.
- *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (C) 5th century with two columns.

Codex Bezae (D) 5thc. uncial NT.

Codex Bezae ('Codex D', '05') is a 5thc. manuscript of the Gospels and Acts in Greek and Latin in one column. It has been in Cambridge since 1581. It is a maverick text with unusual readings.

I believe that all the above should be dismissed as true sources of the Greek NT text.

Peshitta

The ancient Syriac version of the Bible, formally used in Syriac-speaking Christian countries from the early 5th century and still the official Bible of the Syrian Christian Churches. Composed about 2nd century. The OT was translated into Syriac from the Hebrew text and the NT from the Greek. 'Peshitta' means, 'simple (or common or straight) version'. The Peshitta is an early example of the Traditional Text in Aramaic (Syrian); indeed the Syrian church claims that it was translated by the Gospel writer Mark himself.

Diatessaron

Dates from about 160-175AD. It was a harmony of the Gospels produced by the Syrian father Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr. Tends to follow the Peshitta rather than the LXX.

Chester Beatty Papyri

These are papyrus manuscripts dated to around the 3rd century containing seven manuscripts of OT portions plus three portions of the NT (Gregory-Aland P45, P46, P47), plus the Book of Enoch. They are partly located in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and partly in the University of Michigan and a few other places. They were originally found in jars in a Coptic graveyard.

Rylands Greek 457 (P52)

A tiny fragment of a part of John's Gospel chapter 18. Critics claim that it is Alexandrian from the late 1st century AD (100-125 AD). It is the earliest manuscript of the NT. However, printed versions of this have bracketed additions of what the critics presume should be there. In fact the text could easily be Byzantine (Majority Text) if you ignore the critic's guesswork additions. It is held in the John Rylands University Library Manchester.

Coptic texts

There have been many Coptic versions of the whole Bible including several versions for the early church in all four major Coptic dialects. E.g. the *Crosby-Schoyen Codex*, a papyrus manuscript of 52 leaves containing Jonah and 1 Peter dated to the 3rd or 4th centuries. The *British Library MS. Oriental 7594* contains Deuteronomy, Jonah, and Acts dated to the 3rd or early 4th century.

Old Latin (Itala)

Old Latin is Latin before about 100BC. It is the name of the earliest Latin Bible translation, which was very faulty – hence the need for the Vulgate. The earliest Latin versions did not survive. Eventually there were a number of competing Latin versions by the 4th century which all differed from each other. Augustine (Jerome’s contemporary) complained of ‘a crowd of Latin translators’. The Latin versions were not made in Roman churches, Greek was spoken there until the 3rd century; the Latin literature emanated from North Africa. Examples include *Codex Bobbiensis* (k), a fragment of Mark and Matthew; *Codex Floriacensis* (h), a palimpsest fragment of Revelation and Acts. Old Latin was the Bible of Cyprian and Tertullian. By the 4th century a second type of Latin text emerged called ‘European’. Hort claimed that a third type was the ‘Italic’.

The Vulgate

[New Latin]. The principal Latin version of the Bible, prepared mainly by Jerome in the late 4th century, and revised in 1592 to be adopted as the official text for the Roman Catholic Church. Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus in c.383.

Ulfilas’ Gothic version

Ulfilas (also Wulfila) [c.311–c.381] was a bishop and translator, believed to be of Cappadocian descent who became bishop of the Visigoths in 341. His translation of the Bible from Greek into Gothic (of which fragments survive) is the earliest known translation of the Bible into a Germanic language. Ulfilas is traditionally held to have invented the Gothic alphabet, based on Latin and Greek characters.

Summary of textual issues regarding the certainty of our Bible text

- Due to the work of the best textual scholars (such as the Masoretes, Beza, Stephanus, Erasmus, Scrivener, Bengel and others) we can be certain that we possess the closest text to the original autographs possible.
- The Bible has been subjected to the deepest investigation of any ancient text and there is far more evidence to support the genuineness of the Bible than any classical or earlier document, such as Homer, Hesiod,⁷¹ Plato, Thucydides,⁷² Aristotle, Tacitus⁷³ or Ovid.⁷⁴
- The genuineness of the text is determined by following the majority of available Greek manuscripts. [Not by following the supposed oldest manuscripts, which is the method of the Alexandrian Critical Text or Eclectic Text.]
- Over 90% of the Byzantine NT text is beyond dispute down to the smallest detail.
- Of the remaining 10%, 85% of the manuscripts agree to a common text. This is supported by other witnesses, such as ancient writers, Bible versions and liturgies. It is

⁷¹ Hesiod (c.700 BC) was a Greek poet. One of the earliest known Greek poets, he wrote the Theogony, a hexametric poem on the genealogies of the gods, and Works and Days, which gave moral and practical advice and was the chief model for later ancient didactic poetry.

⁷² Thucydides (c.455–c.400 BC) was a Greek historian. He is remembered for his History of the Peloponnesian War, which analyses the origins and course of the war.

⁷³ Tacitus (c.56–c.120 AD) was a Roman historian; full name Publius, or Gaius, Cornelius Tacitus. His Annals (covering the years 14–68) and Histories (69–96) are major works on the history of the Roman Empire.

⁷⁴ Ovid (43 BC–c.17 AD) was a Roman poet; full name Publius Ovidius Naso. He is particularly known for his elegiac love poems (such as the Amores and the Ars Amatoria) and for the Metamorphoses, a hexametric epic which retells Greek and Roman myths.

the sure text. Only a tiny fraction is disputed, and even this regards trivial words and not important doctrines.

- The Alexandrian text, however, is constantly changing (eclectic) and the Nestle-Aland Greek text is now in its 28th edition. This text, based heavily on Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and Vaticanus (which are seriously faulty), does comprise changes to the Byzantine text that affect doctrine and omits large sections.

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 shocking 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. Christians 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; at worst they are ignorant of the details. Good people taught the church by using an NASB for example. I myself used an RSV for the first 20 years of my Christian life. Both of these versions are literal translations (which is good), but are based on Alexandrian texts (which is not).
3. Regarding salvation, we are able to gain the correct information from Bibles based upon both the Alexandrian and the Byzantine text at this point in time. 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 doctrinal 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.
6. 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. There are also many wrong additions.
7. The architects of the Alexandrian critical / eclectic text are less innocent, however, and we have not yet seen the end of the process of attacking the Traditional Text. There is evidence of a conspiracy going back 150 years to pervert the Traditional Text and this needs to be exposed.
8. The only true Bible text is that where the majority of sound texts agree – the Majority Text.

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 manuscripts (i.e. the Majority Text) we should be confident that the TR, or Traditional Text of the Byzantine family, is essentially accurate.

You may be surprised to know that since 1966 Bible translation societies, such as Wycliffe, have demanded that translators must not use the KJV, nor the Traditional Text that underlies it, but must use the UBS Alexandrian text alone. This was agreed by all the main Protestant denominations (including the US Baptists) and the Roman Catholic Church so that there was one agreed text. Sadly, it is the wrong text. All modern translations of the Bible into foreign languages are based on the Alexandrian eclectic text.

The Alexandrian critical text industry is now a huge profit making business enterprise that relies upon constant new editions of the Greek text which continuously changes according to the whims of the eclectic method. In comparison the Traditional Text is static, the majority of manuscripts already agree on the content and this has not significantly changed in two thousand of years.

As well as the global elite objectives to undermine faith in God's word casting doubt on what God really said, like many elite enterprises, the changing eclectic text also makes huge amounts of money. There are the hordes of translators, philologists, support, staff, printers, editors, and so on that produce the Greek texts. There are the Bible schools and universities that train and develop these translators. Then there are the Bible teachers, writers, speakers and pastors that lecture on the eclectic text, writing new books on recent changes every year. There are the printing houses that produce several new Bibles every year in various languages and in English. In short, there are cohorts of people that rely upon the continuing changes to the Greek text to earn a living; they don't want this to change and won't face the truth because it is too costly. The eclectic text is a giant industry.

It is also a giant con.

Get yourself a KJV or NKJV to study Scripture. Only use other versions for comparison and not for reliability.

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. Usually a folio copy.

Conflation

The fusion of two or more variant readings to produce a new reading.

Conjectural emendation

This refers to the Eclectic Text. It is where modern critical scholars judge that the available NT manuscripts, in certain cases, do not have the original reading. So they emend the text by guesswork; they insert what they presume the original writer should have written, not what the majority of texts actually state.

Critical

When applied to textual scholarship, it refers to the analysis of the merits and faults of a manuscript.

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.]

Derived text

This is a secondary text, derived from editing older texts to produce a new collated one.

Eclectic text

(Also 'eclecticism'). The process of textual criticism by selecting what is supposedly 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 is inevitably subjective and varies from person to person (as the history of the text demonstrates). It is choosing reading on the basis of a scholar's opinion alone.

These opinions have repeatedly been shown to be wrong, such as when critics chose readings from a manuscript later found to be a forgery.

Edition

A printed Greek text. The Textus Receptus is an edition and is the Majority Text.

Emendation

The correction of a manuscript text by adopting a 'better' reading.

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, *recto*, and back, *verso*).

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 [capital] 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.⁷⁵

Parchment

Made from sheep and goatskins, it 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.

⁷⁵ Bible Translation magazine.

Recension

A critical, ancient, thoroughgoing revision of a text. The theory of texts being based upon certain families or text-types. The recension produces a text-type. 'Critical revision' means that scholars examined the available manuscripts and evaluated claims of their variant readings to a place in the text.

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 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). Manuscripts that exhibit a common text.

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. A variation in content or wording of a portion of the Greek 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].

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Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version
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Understanding Ministries

<http://www.understanding-ministries.com>

Appendix One

The Textual Roots of Modern Bibles

There are two principal sources for the texts that form the foundation of the New Testament in Bible versions. While this is somewhat simplistic, it is the best way for the non-specialist to understand the textual roots of the English Bible. This diagram seeks to explain those roots in diagram form. **Paul Fahy** © 2008/18.

