The Greek Text of New Testament

Chapter 6 of the
AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Leland M. Haines

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Preface

Thus study consists of the largest chapter of the *Authority of Scripture* book. It deals with the need for translations and the Greek Text-Type of the New Testament. The confusion among many about which is the best Greek text made it necessary to cover this subject in greater detail. Today's Greek New Testament Text by Westcott and Hort has become the "Received Text." Among the vast majority of scholars and translators, there is no question about it being the best. I believe this book, however, will show that this issue should not be treated as closed since there is a vast array of evidence that the Alexandrian text is not the best. Many of Westcott and Hort's criteria are not as strong as claimed or supposed, and even these were not followed.

First, there is no logical support that the "more difficult reading" and "shorted reading" principles can determine the best text. The Apostles and their associates surely wrote in a clear, literate manner. Second, the age of the manuscript support is also unreliable. The early papyri and manuscripts come from a dry, desert climate region, which allowed them to survive. Since no evidence survives from northern areas, it is not logical to claim that the Alexandrian text is best because of its age. That older manuscripts are necessarily best carries little weight since their survival is a matter of climate conditions.

In light of the fact that the W-H hypotheses have little foundation, it is time to review the evidence for both the Alexandrian and the Byzantine Text-Types. In doing this, I would encourage the readers to put aside their present opinions and stereotypes, and look again at the evidence.

Today there is a need for a revised King James Version based on current English and an improved "Received" Greek text. Such a translation will strengthen a large area of the English-speaking church, which will surely glorify the Lord.

I wish to thank Richard Polcyn for his editing, Dr. Maurice A. Robinson for permission to make extensive use of his "Two Passages in Mark: A Critical Test for the Byzantine-Priority Hypothesis" study, and others who read the book and gave suggestions.

My prayer is that this book will encourage the reader that we have a sure and trustworthy word from the Lord. As Jesus Christ taught:

"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

Leland M. Haines
Goshen, Indiana
September 2000

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Introduction

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language and the New Testament in the Greek. Must we therefore study the Scriptures in their original languages to understand them or can translations accurately convey the meaning of the Old and New Testament Scriptures?

The answer to this perplexing question can be found in Christ and the apostles' use of Scripture. Eighty percent of the Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) Old Testament translation (which is far from a word-to-word translation), not from the Hebrew text. These Septuagint quotations were treated as Scripture and were accepted as trustworthy. Today our translations stand in a similar place as the LXX did in the first century.

The New Testament was written in the common, ordinary language of its day so people could understand the gospel and thus believe in Christ. Paul said, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:14, 17). Preaching and hearing the gospel means the Bible must be in the hearer's language; there must be translations.

In summary, people must be able to understand Scripture, and to do so they must have it in their own language.

Translations

Of the many translations available, how can we know which one to use? There are some general facts to consider when choosing a version of the Bible.

1. Modern English translations have value since words become obsolete, ambiguous, misleading, etc., due to language changes.

2. Newer translations are based on more thoroughly researched Greek texts than the older ones, but this is no guarantee that their Greek texts are better. (This will be discussed later.)

3. More than one version should be used, especially when studying difficult passages.

4. Some versions are mainly paraphrases (not following the original wording very closely but interpreting it), and their use should be limited.

King James Version

Before giving further guidelines on translations, let us first review the history of the King James Version (KJV) and then review the Greek Bible texts. The KJV is based on a Greek text (Robert Stephanus's third edition published in 1550) known as the Received Text (the translation of the Latin term *Textus Receptus* [TR]). This text is a Byzantine type; that is, it represents a family of manuscripts that are mostly associated with the Constantinople area of modern Turkey. This text represents the majority of the existing Greek manuscripts. Its precise origin is unknown, but surely it was the text used to make the fifty Bibles Emperor Constantine ordered in A.D. 331. "Constantine also, committed to Eusebius, since he knew him to be most skillful in Biblical knowledge, the care and superintendence of transcribing copies of the Scriptures, which he wanted for the accommodation of the churches he had built at Constantinople.[1]

The Greek manuscript basis for the TR is younger than the other text types. This does not necessarily mean the text itself is younger. The TR has some of the characteristics of what would be expected of New Testament writings: the text is smooth and complete, but not so smooth between the Gospels that it appears to have been harmonized. The TR generally has longer passages than the other text types in many places, but not always. Generally the TR is easier to read than some of the older manuscripts found in Egypt, where the dry climate and non-use helped to preserve them. The Greek text will be discussed later in more detail.

The KJV is the descendant of several earlier translations. John Wycliffe (1320-84), an Oxford scholar, was the first person to

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[1] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966, p. xvi.

translate the Bible into English. Since he was unable to complete the translation before his death, others completed it. His translation is a literal rendering of the Latin Vulgate, which is largely an Alexandrian and Western text-type (these terms will be discussed later). The Wycliffe translation did not have much influence on later translations because of its Vulgate basis and Late Middle English dialect. His translation is rather poor, and today's reader would find it very difficult to read. For example, the story of the prodigal son reads: "A manne had twei sones; and the yonger of hem seide to the fadir, Fadir gyve me the porciound of cattle, that fallith to me. And he departide to hem the catel."

William Tyndale, coming at the start of a renewed interest in Greek, was the first to translate the Greek New Testament into English (1525). A Greek grammar was published in 1476 and a Greek lexicon in 1492. Greek language studies were also added to university curriculums. These tools and new studies in Greek made it possible for a Greek-based translation. Tyndale made a major contribution to the English Bible by his outstanding translation of the Greek into English idiom. His translation had a lasting influence on other English translations. His goal was to make it possible for the plowboy to know more of the Scriptures than the pope, and Tyndale went a long way in meeting this goal.

Miles Coverdale revised Tyndale's translation with the help of the German Bible in 1535. One contribution he made was to place the Apocrypha in a separate section. His translation was the first whole Bible to be printed in English. It was printed several times between 1535 and 1553.

Thomas Matthew (a pen name) combined Coverdale's and Tyndale's works together to form another translation in 1537. Coverdale then revised Matthew's Bible and printed the *Great Bible* in 1539, so named because of its great size, being 13 by 7½ inches. It further removed the Apocrypha, calling it "holy writing." This Bible was the first "Authorized Version." King Henry VIII placed copies in every church and proclaimed that the clergy should read it in services and "expressly provoke, stir, and exhort every person to read the same."[2] This translation was widely accepted.

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[2] H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, Houghton: Word-Bearer, 1937, 1960, p. 350.

Because of the persecutions of Queen Mary in England, Bible translating moved to the continent of Europe. John Knox and a group of other English exiles produced a new revision of Tyndale's Bible in Geneva in 1560, which became known as the *Geneva Bible*. It contained lengthy marginal "annotation" with a strong "Calvinist" flavor. This Bible became the commonly accepted English translation in the late 1500s. It went through some 140 editions. It was the Bible of the Puritans and the common people until finally the KJV replaced it around 1640.

The *Bishops' Bible* (1568), named because the committee included several Anglican bishops, was a revision of the Great Bible. It was the second Authorized Version. This Bible omitted "bitter" marginal notes because of the belief that the Bible should not contain lengthy denominational commentary. It labeled genealogies and other "non-edifying" passages so the reader could jump over them. Since it was the "Bishop's Bible," it quickly replaced the Great Bible for use in churches and remained so until the KJV replaced it. It went through twenty editions between 1568 and 1606, yet it never became the Bible of the people.

At the close of the 16th century, there were two main English Bibles in use: the Geneva by the Puritans and common people, and the Bishops' in the churches. At the suggestion of Puritan John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, King James I of England commissioned a new translation in 1604. This work was assigned to a committee of 54 translators from Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge universities, but only 47 did the work. This committee approach differed from the earlier works. Although this was to be a new translation, it was about 80 percent Tyndale's work (90 percent in the New Testament); thus it was the fifth revision of Tyndale's Bible. This new version officially was called the *Authorized Version*, but it was really the third one and is commonly known as the *King James Version.* Many consider the KJV as *The* Authorized Version, resulting in it being the "Bible" of most English-speaking Christians until recently, even though it was never "authorized" or a "version" (the title page states it was "Newly Translated out of the Originall Tongues"). It has served the church well through the years.

Don't Change the Bible

There has been a tendency in the church not to change versions once they are accepted; this was so with the KJV when it was first introduced. To help understand this, let us review the KJV's Reader's Introduction from the 1611 edition.

First, the Reader's Introduction recognizes "that whosoeuer attemptheth any thing for the publike (specially if it pertaine to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself vpon a stage to be glouted vpon euery euil eye, yea, he caseth himselfe headlong vpon pikes, to be gored by euery sharpe tongue. For he that medleth with mens Religion in any part, medleth with their custome, with their freehold; and though they finde no content in that which they haue, yet they cannot abide to hearde of altering." Some things have not changed; today some men cannot even think about updating the KJV's language again, as some couldn't think of bringing out a new Bible translation in 1611.

Secondly, the KJV translators knew it was still important to bring the best translation to the people in the church. "But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot vnderstand? How shall they vnderstand that which is kept close in an vnknown tongue?" Later they wrote, "It is necessary to have translators in a readinesse. Translation it is that openth the window, to let in the light." They believed the Bible must be readable in the common language of the people so its light can enter their hearts.

Is the KJV still readable so the light can enter men's hearts? To those who have learned Elizabethan English and know the current English meaning of some of its obsolete and obscure words, it is readable. But to others—especially the young—its Elizabethan English prose puts a veil over God's Word that the KJV translators did not want in their day. They above all people certainly would stand up and object to their translation being used today.

The reader may not realize it, but the KJV used today is not the 1611 translation but one that has undergone extensive revisions. It was revised in 1629, 1638, 1653, 1701, and lastly the Cambridge edition was made by Dr. Paris of Trinity College in 1762 and the Oxford edition was made Dr. Blayney of Oxford in 1769. This 1769 revision is the King James we know today, and it has at least 75,000 changes from the 1611 edition. "The object of these private revisions was to restore the text of 1611, to modernize the spelling, to weed out references to passages not parallel and to introduce fresh ones, to make clear the allusions in Hebrew proper names by adding their English equivalents in the margin, to rectify the use of italics, and to reform punctuation."[3] The Greek text behind the translation remained unchanged. The English of the Reader's Introduction quoted earlier is not the familiar KJV English the reader may be familiar with, but it is from the 1611 edition.

Today the KJV is held in high honor. Why is it honored above other translations? The answer may be that many have such great respect and honor for God's Word and tie the KJV and the Word so closely together that they believe it is more trustworthy than all translations. It is a good translation for those who know Elizabethan English, but it may not be a good one for others. But does it put God's Word in the common language of the people? This was the goal of the King James translators, and it must be ours today. Trying to hold onto an English style of the past is not a virtue if it puts a veil over God's words.

The Greek New Testament

Another reason the KJV is held in high honor is because it is based on the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (a Latin term translated *Received Text*). All major translations since 1881, except the New King James Version, are based on the Alexandrian Greek text first published in 1881-82. This text is modified slightly by each group of translators. This change in the Greek text has created some variations between the King James and the newer translations. Some think this is changing the Word, which causes them to place higher honor on the KJV.

The term used to describe the effort to obtain the best Greek text, that is, the text closest to the original autograms, is "textual criticism." This is not necessary a good term to use since we often think of "criticism" as "finding fault." Since it is the term that is used in connection with the literary works, we ought try to understand its meaning. In connection with the Greek text, it means "the act of making judgment, analysis of qualities and evaluation of comparative worth, esp., the critical consideration and judgment of literary . . . work" (*Webster's New World Dictionary*). This effort is an important and worthwhile work, and we must be careful not to use it

[3] Miller, op. cit., p. 367.

in a slanderous or misrepresentative way in relation to the Greek text.

Before we discuss the Greek text, let us consider the form in which the Greek New Testament has come down to us. There are over 5,300 Greek New Testament manuscripts, and they vary in length from a couple of verses to complete manuscripts. They may be classified according to the type of material they are written on. There are 25 ostraca, which are pieces of pottery inscribed with scriptural quotations; 274 "uncial" manuscripts written in capital letters, dating before the 10th century (some date as early as the 2d century); 2,795 minuscules written in a flowing cursive hand dating after the 10th century; and 2,209 lectionary manuscripts containing Scriptures for use in worship services.[4] Besides these Greek manuscripts, there are several old translations such as the Old Latin (a northern Africa translation—Rome used Greek—dating from before A.D. 200) and the Old Syriac (only the Gospel section survives). Even though these versions were subject to transmission errors, they still are a witness to the New Testament text. In addition to these manuscripts, the New Testament is quoted by many early church writers. Almost every verse can be found in their writings. Although these early leaders often quoted freely from memory and did not intend to quote verbatim, their writings can still witness to the original text when it involves larger text details.

The differences found in the Greek manuscripts are not great and do not in anyway affect the Bible's message. Although there are over 5,000 differences (not including spelling variants) in the Greek texts, these mainly involve a few words and phrases, sentence structures, etc. Only occasionally is a whole verse or more involved. Schaff wrote that "only about 400 of the . . . variations materially affect the sense. Of these, again, not more than about fifty are really important for some reason or other; and even of these fifty not one affects an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teachings."[5] Robertson wrote that "the real conflict in the textual criticism of the New Testament is concerning

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[4] *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible.*

[5] Philip Schaff, *A Companion to The Greek Testament and The English Version*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1888, p. 177.

this 'thousandth part of the entire text.'"[6] Metzger stated that out of the 20,000 lines of the New Testament, only 40 lines or 400 words are uncertain and have no significant effect on the meaning.[7] Only the Received Text's I John 5:7 is acknowledged as incorrect by all. Some of the 40 lines involve lines found in the King James generally acknowledged as being incorrect by the "Egypt" or Alexandria text-type supporters. The two largest texts of this group are Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. It is now acknowledged that the John passage has very early support; there is evidence it may have been in this gospel as early as the second century, or at least by the third.[8] These differences, and other minor wording or word-order changes, have affected modern translations and caused much controversy. Let us examine the text issue in more detail, starting with the first Greek text.

The Printed Greek Text

The *Received Text* finds its beginning in Desiderius Erasmus's editing work. He was a Dutch scholar who taught at Cambridge University. He sold the first published Greek New Testament in 1516. His Greek text was prepared for the well-known publisher Johann Froben of Basel, who wanted it to be the first on the market. Cardinal Ximenes was the first to print a Greek New Testament, but Pope Leo X did not approve of its sale until March 1520.[9]

Erasmus's first edition was based on six Greek manuscripts, and he relied mainly on a tenth- and a twelfth-century manuscript for the Gospels, a thirteenth-century one for Acts and Paul's letters, and a twelfth-century manuscript for Revelation. Since his Revelation manuscript was defective, he confessed to translating the last six verses of the Latin Vulgate into Greek. As might be

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[6] A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Nashville: Broadman, 1925, p. 21.
[7] Bruce M. Metzger, *Chapters in The History of The New Testament Criticism*, p. 144, as referenced by Geisler and Nix, p. 366.
[8] Frederik Wisse, "The Nature and Purpose of Redactional Changes in Early Christian Texts: The Canonical Gospels," Barbara Aland and others, ed., *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century,* Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame, 1989, p. 48.
[9] Geisler and Nix, op. cit., p. 383.

expected, this first edition contained misprints and other errors. Most were corrected in his four later editions, printed between 1519 and 1535. He used a couple more manuscripts in these later editions.

Erasmus's text was opposed because it did not contain every verse found in the Latin Vulgate. As Wenger wrote,

> People also attacked the 1516 printed Greek Testament of Erasmus for not printing in Greek certain verses which they were familiar with in the Vulgate: especially I John 5:7. This verse reads: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Erasmus of course did not print them for good reason. They were not found in the Greek manuscripts. So he felt free to make a rather rash promise: he said he would add them to the next edition of his Greek Testament if they could be found in a single Greek manuscript. Sure enough, such a manuscript was "found" in time to be incorporated in the third edition of the Erasmus New Testament, 1522. (It is now thought likely that this manuscript was actually prepared, rather than found, in order to force Erasmus to keep his word, which he did.) In subsequent editions, after further study, Erasmus deleted this addition.[10]

The second editor who worked on the Greek New Testament was Robert Estienne (Stephanus) who published several editions in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551. The 1550 edition became the dominant text in England and is the basis of the 1611 KJV translation. The 1551 edition was the first to use verse divisions. They were prepared while he was on a horseback journey from Paris to Lyons, and it has been suggested that some of its poor verse divisions must have resulted from an uneven horseback ride that shook his pen.

The third editor, Theodore Beza, the successor to John Calvin, produced nine Greek texts between 1565 and 1604. His work was based mainly on the Erasmus 1516-35 text and Stephanus's edition. Beza followed the Erasmus second edition when he included the I John 5:7 passage. Beza's Greek text had a great influence on the KJV. Beza had a fifth- and a sixth-century manuscript, but because they differed from the others, he made only limited use of them.

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[10] John C. Wenger, *God's Word Written*, Scottdale, Penna.: Herald Press, 1968, p. 115.

Two Dutch printers, Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir, printed seven editions of the Greek New Testament based on the Beza and Stephanus editions between 1624 and 1678.

Although only a few Greek manuscripts were used in the above New Testaments, these manuscripts were in general agreement with one another. There were some basic weaknesses in them as mentioned earlier, but these few manuscripts were fairly representative of what is now known as the Byzantine Text. Robertson wrote, “The *Textus Receptus* is not a bad text. It is not a heretical text. It is substantially correct.”[11]

Some today refer to the TR as the “Majority Text” since it represents the majority of the existing Greek manuscripts. Others prefer using the term “Traditional Text” to avoid the impression that this text is based solely on “number” and “counting.” This text was used by the Greek-speaking Christians in the Constantinople area of modern Turkey. This area continued to use Greek after other areas of the church changed. This is the area where most of the New Testament books were sent, which means it had an advantage within the church to produce accurate copies of these books. The copies could be checked against the originals or “certified” accurate copies of the originals. The oldest Byzantine texts of the Gospels are found in the Codex Alexandrinus (A) (c. 450); the rest of this codex is an Alexandrian text.

The Search for a Better Greek Text

The printing of the first Greek New Testament created renewed interest in the Greek text and resulted in a continuing effort to improve it. As mentioned earlier, Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza made successive improvements to the text between 1519 and 1535. These efforts were culminated with the two Elzevir brothers printing seven editions between 1624 and 1678. The second edition (1633) claimed it was the Greek text “now received by all, in which nothing [is] changed or corrupted.” This comment gave the church the *Textus Receptus*, a Latin term meaning “Received Text” in English.

Work on improving the text then almost stopped until it was renewed in the nineteenth century. There were several individuals

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[11] A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Nashville: Broadman, 1925, p. 21.

who quietly continued to work on the text, but their work did not find popular support.

One of the first textual editors was John Mill (1645-1707), a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, England. He collected variant readings obtained from nearly 100 Greek manuscripts, early versions, patristic citations of the early church fathers, and thirty-two published Greek New Testaments. He published them in an edition of the Greek New Testament that also contained lengthy preliminary remarks (i.e., a prolegomena) dealing with the canon and transmission of the New Testament. The index of the verses contain 3,041 entries discussed in the prolegomena. His text listed some 30,000 variant readings. He did not use his study of variants to develop a new Greek text; he reprinted Stephanus's 1550 text.[12]

Edward Wells (1667-1727), a mathematician and theologian, published a Greek New Testament that was the first to abandon the Elzevirs' Textus Receptus, making 210 changes. Many of these changes agree with the late nineteenth-century developed text. His text was ignored by the church.[13]

While a student at Tubingen, Johann A. Bengel (1687-1752), disturbed by the 30,000 variants found in Mill's Greek New Testament, made a study of the Greek text's transmission. "He came to the conclusion that the variant readings were fewer in number than might have been expected, and that they did not shake any article of evangelic doctrine."[14] He proposed classifying manuscripts by "families, tribes, and nations" and was the first to see the two great nations (now known as text-types), the "Alexandrian" and Byzantine. He said the manuscripts should not be counted but "weighed" to evaluate them, and by such a procedure he claimed the Byzantine was an inferior text. He also stated that the harder reading should be favored.

J. J. Griesbach (1745-1812) is the one who really began the modern period of textual study. He collated many manuscripts and investigated their transmission. The end result of his work was to group them into three families (i.e., text-types): the Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine. He also believed no one manuscript preserved any one of the text-types, thereby they could be

[12] Robertson, op. cit., pp. 107, 108.
[13] Ibid., p. 109.
[14] Ibid., p. 112.

recovered only by examining all the manuscripts of a given type. He preferred shorter readings, believing "scribes were much more prone to add than to omit." In evaluation of his work, Metzger wrote, "The importance of Griesbach for New Testament textual criticism can scarcely be overestimated. For the first time in Germany a scholar ventured to abandon the Textus Receptus at many places."[15]

The before-mentioned work, along with other efforts, opened the door for Carolus Lachmann (1793-1851) to completely break away from the TR. The first edition of his Greek New Testament was published in 1831 and the second in 1842-50. It was based on textual criticism principles he first used to recover ancient classical manuscripts. His aim was not to recover the original New Testament texts but to reproduce the text used in the late fourth century. His central thought was that the "best" text comes from the oldest witness; thus he boldly disregarded the "late" Byzantine manuscripts. This statement may or may not be true depending on the quality of the witness, but his work did begin "what may be called the recension and rejection of the *Textus Receptus*."[16]

J. M. A. Scholz (1794-1852) published a Greek Testament in 1830-36 that was based on the TR. Later, in 1845, "Scholz retracted his preference for the Byzantine text, and declared that, if a new edition of his Greek Testament were called for, he would receive into the text most of the Alexandrian readings which he formerly placed in the margin."[17]

Samuel P. Tregelles (1813-75), while in his early twenties, became dissatisfied with the TR after seeing how Griesbach kept with it and how Scholz rejected early manuscript evidence, and he planned to work on a new Greek text based only on early manuscripts. The result of his work was the publication of only one Greek New Testament late in his life. He did not publish his work until he considered it "mature."[18]

Henry Alford's (1810-71) main works were his commentaries that contained a Greek text he considered the earliest and "best"

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[15] Ibid., pp. 119-21.

[16] Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, New York: Harper & Row, 1956, p. 207.

[17] Metzger, *The Text*, p. 124.

[18] Ibid., p. 127.

Greek Text. He also published a Greek New Testament with various readings. His early works used the TR, but for his sixth edition (1868) he used Tishendorf, Tregelles, and made much use of the Codex Sinaiticus. Alford shows his support for a new Greek text when he commented on Lachmann's work: "His real service to the cause of sacred criticism has been, the bold and uncompromising demolition of that unworthy and pedantic reverence for the received text, which stood in the way of all chance of discovering the genuine work of God."[19] Later Alford writes that the real progress of textual criticism "has been made in all those places where the ancient MSS. are unanimous against our received text."[20]

L. F. Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-74) made a major contribution to the Greek New Testament by finding over twenty uncials, including the great Codex Sinaiticus (known by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, א [*Aleph*]) he discovered in the St. Catharine Monastery library located near Mount Sinai. The discovery of this text is an interesting story. In 1844, Tischendorf, while searching for old manuscripts at St. Catharine, by chance found part of an old manuscript in a wastepaper basket holding papers being used to light fires. He was not allowed to spend much time studying it because of the excitement he showed towards it. In 1859, when he returned again to try to study this old manuscript, he gave the steward of the monastery a copy of his recently published Septuagint. The steward responded with a remark that he had a copy of it and showed it to him. What he was shown was not only a copy of the Septuagint but a copy of the complete Greek New Testament, the Sinaiticus uncial.[21]

Tischendorf's contributions also include efforts to bring the Codex Vaticanus (B) to the church. This manuscript was known as early as 1448 but was kept from Protestant scholars until Napoleon brought it to Paris in 1810. It was returned to Rome in 1815, and scholars were kept from studying it for many years. Only later in 1843 was Tischendorf allowed to examine it for six hours. Finally in 1857 it was published in five volumes, but the printed copy contained many errors that took away from its value. In 1866 Tischen-

[19] Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament, with a critically revised Text . . .*, new ed., New York, 1881, p. 76.
[20] Ibid., p. 94.
[21] Metzger, *The Text*, pp. 42-44.

dorf finally received permission to study it in more detail. He then published an improved edition that was soon followed by other editions, and the Codex Vaticanus was opened to the whole church.

Tischendorf also produced a widely used edition of the Greek New Testament. It was first printed in an eleven-volume set starting in 1864 and reprinted in two volumes in 1869-72. His collation was composed of the 64 uncials (the Vaticanus became available too late to be used) and a few miniscularles known to him. The high place his Greek text held is shown by its use in preparing the Nestle text and its reprinting in 1965, one hundred years after being first published.

Miller's description of Tischendorf's various Greek Texts is given below:

> The first 3 editions (1841, 42, 42) are of no critical value. The 4th (1849) has a preface of 69 pages and a fairly full critical apparatus. The 5th (1850) was printed together with the Hebrew Old Testament text, with the Elzevir readings below the text. It was reprinted in 1862, with a new preface, and in 1873 with the insertion of the 8th edition text and the readings of the Sinaitic manuscripts. The 6th (1854), the 4th slightly revised, was published first as a triglot, with a Latin and a German text; then alone (1855). The 7th was issued at Leipsic in 13 parts (1859-9), and is, up to that time, by far the most important. It consists of a larger critical edition and a smaller edition with a much shorten critical apparatus. It is said to differ from the 3rd edition in 1,296 readings. He had been studying the minuscules, and this edition leans more strongly to the Textual Receptus. Between the 7th and 8th editions he had found the Sinaitic manuscript (1859), and his 8th edition, issued in 11 parts (1869-72), is based largely, and too largely, upon this manuscript. Here he swung back from the Receptus to the critical text, and his 8th edition differs from the 7th in 3,359 places. The Sinaitic, supported by one or two authorities of any kind, or even unsupported, outweighted, to his mind, all other witnesses, whether manuscripts, version, or Fathers. [22]

There were several attempts to replace Tischendorf's text by collations containing more recently found manuscripts, but these never received the acceptance Tischendorf's works had. One of his work's weaknesses was its over reliance on Sinaiticus (א). As Aland points out, this "text with numerous singular readings (and

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[22] Miller, op. cit., p 299.

careless errors) was highly overrated by Tischendorf."[23] The Vaticanus (B) became available too late to be used in his collation.

The text of F. H. A. Scrivener (1813-91) stands in contrast to many of the other recently published Greek texts. His work (published in 1887) contained the Stephanus text with variations shown from Beza, Elzevir, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort's Greek texts. He edited the Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D^{ea}) and Augiensis (F^{p}) codices and collated around 70 Greek manuscripts. He was one of the 1870-81 English Version revisers. Scrivener's two-volume book, *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*[24] (four editions were published in 1871, 1874, 1883, and 1894—the latter one, published after his death, was edited by Edward Miller) is a valuable study of the minuscule manuscripts and is a defender of the TR.

As shown there was a whole line of men who worked to undermine and replace the TR. But it was Westcott and Hort who caused it to fall in the eyes of the scholars and translators.

Westcott and Hort

Two divinity professors at Cambridge, Bishop Brooke Fost Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-92), had a major influence on the Greek New Testament. They published their completely new Vaticanus-Sinaiticus based Greek text under the title *The New Testament in the Original Greek*[25] and *Introduction to The New Testament in the Original Greek*,[26] which described their critical principles and efforts. Their text was the one behind the English Version published in 1881-85. Westcott and Hort's presence on the revision committee influenced the selection of their new Greek text. This selection, along with Eberhard Nestle's publication of an inexpensive version of their Greek text in 1898, helped to establish the Westcott-Hort text as *The Greek Text*. Those who advocated staying with the TR had little long-term influence against the concentrated efforts of these two professors and the scholars that followed them.

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[23] Aland, op cit., p. 107.
[24] London: George Bell.
[25] London: Macmillian, 1881.
[26] New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882.

Many scholars seemed to have developed a personal animosity against the TR. Earlier we mentioned Tregelles planned a new text when in his early twenties. Hort did the same thing. This can be seen in a letter he wrote at the age of 23 to a friend about the "villainous" and "vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late MSS; it is a blessing there are such early ones."[27] Westcott and Hort worked long and hard against the TR, spending nearly thirty years to construct a theory that answered many of the objections that could be raised against their case and text. As Colwell wrote,

> Westcott and Hort wrote with two things constantly in mind: the Textus Receptus and the codex Vaticanus. But they did not hold them in mind with that passive objectivity which romanticists ascribe to the scientific mind. . . . The sound analogy is that of a theologian who writes on many doctrines but never forgets Total Depravity and the Unconditional Election of the Saints. As in theology, so in Hort's theory, the majority of individuals walk through the broad gate and are lost souls; only a few are the elect. Westcott and Hort preferred the text supported by a minority, by codex Vaticanus and a few friends; they rejected the readings supported by the majority of witnesses.[28]

Colwell summarizes Hort's work in a short statement: "Hort organized his entire argument to dispose the *Textus Receptus*."[29] Pickering wrote that Hort "deliberately set out to construct a theory that would vindicate his preconceived animosity for the Received Text."[30] Knowing they had predetermined results in mind, one cannot have high confidence in Westcott and Hort's results unless they are closely reexamined.

In *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, George Salmon gave some valuable insights into Westcott and Hort's textual criticism and on the whole English Revision Bible project. The reason for his book, Salmon writes, was that he knew Westcott and Hort had a predominating influence on the Revised Version Committee choice of various

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[27] Pickering, op. cit., pp. 23, 93.
[28] Colwell, op. cit., p. 64.
[29] E. C. Colwell, "Hort Redivisus: A Plea and a Program," *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969, p. 158.
[30] Pickering, op. cit., p. 32.

Greek text readings. Since more than half of the Committee had given little interest in the Greek text, they could not evaluate Westcott and Hort's views so they gave little dissent. Salmon writes that Hort "held his opinions with an intensity of conviction which he could not fail to communicate to those who came in contact with him, while his singular skill as an advocate enabled him with small difficulty to dissipate all objections to his views."[31]

Salmon writes that he was hesitant in following Hort's understanding because of his "exaggeration of judgment. When he has satisfied himself that of two alternative views one is much more probable that the other, he dismisses the less probable as absolutely unworthy of consideration." This enabled him to imply that his theories were building a firm foundation and prevented others from getting a foothold.[32] In doing this, Salmon thought that when Hort's probable propositions where combined, "the resulting conclusion has but a lower degree of probability." Salmon knew expert conclusion would not always bear-up when examined by another following strict rules of logic. He also knew that an expert who has confidence in certain conclusions, "when he tries to give an account to an outsider," they may fall far "short of logical proof." Because of this, Hort's conclusions cannot be "overthrown until they have been tested by another expert who shall have devoted to the study an equal amount of skill."[33]

The results of Hort's approach was that Salmon had "never been able to feel that [Hort's] work was final, and I [Salmon] disliked the servility with which his history of the text has been accepted, and even his nomenclature adopted, as if now the last word had been said on the subject of New Testament criticism."[34] Salmon's opinion was that Westcott and Hort's "work has been too readily accepted as final, and that students have been too willing to accept as their motto, 'Rest and be thankful.' There is no such enemy to progress

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[31] George Salmon, *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, London: John Murray, 1897, p. 12.
[32] Ibid., p. 35.
[33] Ibid., pp. 35, 36.
[34] Ibid., p. 33.

as the belief that perfection has been already attained."[35] Salmon was right—Westcott and Hort have slowed progress to an improved Greek text, and their influence is still felt over 125 years after their "great" work.

The revision Committee was "privately supplied with installments of Westcott and Hort's Greek text as their work required them. But that text did not come into the hands of the public until" after the Revised English New Testament appeared.[36] When Westcott and Hort's "original" Greek text did appear, it lacked critical notes, so readers could not easily evaluate it. Salmon wrote that Westcott and Hort's "system [is] buried out of sight of ordinary readers of their work."[37] Salmon writes about the two authors' theories being based on "immense induction . . . enormous labour . . . tabulated comparative lists of the peculiarities of MSS., or groups of MSS. These tables no doubt have been preserved, and will probably be available for use by any competent person."[38]

These "tables," i.e., collations, never existed. Westcott and Hort never "collated a single manuscript but worked completely from published material, i.e., critical editions (viz. Tischendorf)."[39] Since detailed critical notes on their work never became available, a critical evaluation of their work has been slow in coming. Through the years bits-and-pieces of their work has been evaluated and the weaknesses of the Westcott-Hort text has come to light. But among many, Hort's "singular skill as an advocate" has caused their text to be still accepted by many today.

Are there other reasons why Westcott and Hort's work was quickly accepted? Yes, the times were right for a new Greek text. There were other factors that had a major effect on the acceptance of the Westcott-Hort text. Many wanted improvements in the biblical text. The nineteenth century was a period of change—scientific and engineering advances, along with new historical discoveries, scholarship, politics, and economic changes and invocations, etc., all had an effect on the Bible. These factors were changing the lifestyle of man and resulted in a mind set for progress that

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[35] Ibid., p. 38.
[36] Ibid., p. 15.
[37] Ibid., p. 36.
[38] Ibid., pp. 36, 37.
[39] Aland, op. cit., p. 18.

spread over into religion in general and to the biblical text in particular.

The Westcott-Hort text was not based on their original criteria but on their modification of criteria developed by earlier scholars. Bengel, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, et al. laid the ground foundation that Westcott and Hort built upon. Some of these criteria are briefly described below.

External Evidence

There are two general types of evidence used to find the best text: external and internal. We will begin by looking at external evidence. This type of evidence exists separate from the text itself. It generally involves the study of text history. This is a simple group of evidence but a very difficult one to apply. General principles of this are given below.

1. Early manuscripts

The text-type behind the older manuscripts—and not necessarily the manuscripts—is considered the best. The oldest text-types can be determined by genealogy, that is, family relationship.

2. Wide early support

The readings with the widest circulation, that is, geographical, translation, etc., support are considered the best.

3. Early Church Father witness

The best text-type would have been used by the early church fathers, so their quotations should be helpful in identifying the early text.

4. Best readings explain the variations

The best reading will explain the origination or cause of other manuscripts and/or text-type variations.

We will discuss the Westcott-Hort's application of external evidence, but let's first consider text-types.

Text Types

There are some 5,000 Greek New Testament manuscripts, and since it would be a hopeless task to look at them individually, they are grouped according to their general text-types. As other earlier textual scholars had done, Westcott and Hort's method begins too by grouping the various New Testament manuscripts. The number of manuscripts available to them was much less than available today. They wrote about "the wealth of documentary evidence now accessible," but their table lists only 19.[40] This includes the great uncials—א, A, B, C, D—and other fragmented ones. They had the Gospels available in nineteen MSS, Acts in nine, Catholic Epistles in seven, Pauline Epistles in nine, and the Apocalypse in five. א and B, the oldest, date to the mid-fourth century. Westcott and Hort believed their available uncials were all that was needed. They asserted these were "a true representation of uncial evidence."[41]

Hort mentioned 800 to 1000 cursive MSS available from the ninth to nineteen centuries,[42] but they had available only about 150 of these, and they were generally ignored.[43] Hort wrote about the "present ignorance respecting contents of cursives is much to be lamented. Valuable texts may lie hidden among them." Westcott and Hort were not concerned about this because they thought "nothing can well be less probable than the discovery of cursive evidence sufficiently important to affect present conclusions in more than a handful of passages, much less to alter present interpretations of the relations between existing documents." They were confident they understood the evidence, yet we will see they were so wrong.

The text-type classification of the biblical manuscripts is based on a company of errors or differences. This is necessary since 90 percent plus of the Greek text is the same for all text-types. Westcott and Hort's four text-types, according to their view the descending order of value, are the Neutral, the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Syrian (now known as the Byzantine). Today the Neutral and Alexandrian texts are grouped together and are known by the latter name (it was just too much to call one of the types a "Neutral" text). Let us look at Hort's description of these text-types.

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[40] Hort, op. cit., pp. 14, 15.
[41] Ibid., p. 77.
[42] Ibid., p. 76.
[43] Ibid., p. 77.

Westcott and Hort believed the Neutral text was the oldest and best text. They asserted this text was associated with the early Christian center of learning located in Alexandria, Egypt. There is no evidence these manuscripts were ever associated with Alexandria. Since they were found in a dry desert area located in the upper Nile, far from this city, it is more likely they were inperfect copies used by individuals or smaller churches. The main representative of this text is Vaticanus (c. A.D. 325-350), and a close relative is the Sinaiticus (A.D. 340). Vaticanus is considered the best text, although it lacks text after Hebrews 9:14. Sinaiticus is the only complete Greek uncial, but it is not as "pure" since it contains some Western mixture.

Salmon writes that Westcott and Hort used "question-begging nomenclature. A scientific nomenclature ought to be neutral; it ought to aim at simply representing the facts without assuming the truth of any theory about them."[44] Westcott and Hort used the term "neutral" since they considered it dishonoring to the Vaticanus text to give it a geographical name, and the term carried the notation of "originality" too. Hort writes about the neutral text: "Not only were these readings not confined to Alexandria, but a local name suggests erroneous associations when applied to a text which owes its comparative isolation to the degeneracy of its neighbours."[45] Thus the neutral name slanted any discussion associated with this text and the Syrian or Western text-type. The Syrian name too tended to create an erroneous view of the Byzantine text, but this was what Westcott and Hort wanted because it fitted into their goals of downgrading this text-type. Salmon was right; scientific nomenclature should simply represent the facts associated with a text-type without stereotyping it.

Westcott and Hort considered the Alexandrian text-type to be those early Non-Western and Pre-Syrian uncial manuscripts that preserved the text used by Origen, Cyril of Alexandria, and a few other Alexandrian Fathers, and the two Egyptian Versions used in Lower Egypt. They considered its chief representative to be the Vaticanus manuscript.

Westcott and Hort considered the Western to be an early text and the most widely used in the anti-Nicene period. The term came from

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[44] Salmon, op. cit., p. 43.

[45] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction . . ., op. cit.*, pp. 129, 130.

its main representative being a Greek-Latin “bilingual” manuscript. Since Latin was used in northern Africa and Greek in Rome, it should not be thought of having a western/Rome origin. They write, “The chief and most constant characteristic of the Western readings is a love of paraphrase. Words, clauses, and even whole sentences were changed, omitted, and inserted with astonishing freedom, wherever it seemed that the meaning could be brought out with greater force and definiteness. They often exhibit a certain rapid vigour and fluency which can hardly be called a rebellion against the calm and reticent strength of the apostolic speech.”[46] Another feature is harmonizing changes. But these generalizations are not always true. As Hoskier writes, “Upon many occasions this “Western” text is the one which furnishes the shortest text (against B).”[47] The Western text’s chief representative is the Bezae (D) manuscript.

Westcott and Hort considered “the Syrian [Byzantine] . . . [a] chief monument of a new period of textual history. . . . The three great lines were brought together [to form a new text]. . . . The Syrian text must in fact be the result of a ‘recension’ in the proper sense of the word, a work of attempted criticism, performed deliberately by editors.”[48] “The qualities which authors of the Syrian text seem to have most desired to impress on it are lucidity and completeness.”[49] Note that Hort uses “authors” here to downplay its value.

In summary, Westcott and Hort consider only one text-type “the original”; it was the Neutral text. Most of the above are observations and assertions given without supporting evidence. Let us now examine some of the external evidence Westcott and Hort used to retrieve their “original” text. External evidence will be discussed under different names than given in the earlier outline—genealogy, conflation, papyri and text-types age, early church fathers—and then the text-type issue will be discussed again in light of this data.

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[46] Ibid., p. 122.

[47] H. C. Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914, p. 8.

[48] Ibid. pp. 132, 133.

[49] Ibid. p. 134.

Genealogy

The number one criteria to "recover" the original New Testament text, according to Westcott and Hort, was the genealogy or family-tree method. They claimed to have applied it to recover the original text. Hort defined this approach:

> The proper method of Genealogy consists . . . in the more or less complete recovery of the texts of successive ancestors by analysis and comparison of the varying texts of their respective descendants, each ancestral text so recovered being in its turn used, in conjunction with other similar texts, for the recovery of the text of a yet earlier common ancestor.[50]

Although Westcott and Hort placed great emphasis on the genealogical principle, the result of their work was not the construction of a family tree showing successive ancestors leading back to the original New Testament text. There is no family tree with identified Greek texts in their *Introduction to The New Testament in The Original Greek*. The use of this principle is open to question when applied to the Greek New Testament, despite Westcott and Hort's claim.

Two early critics of Westcott and Hort pointed this out. Burgon writes that Hort implied "*if we did but know* the genealogy of MSS, we should be in a position to reason more confidently concerning their Texts," and Hort himself writes, "All trustworthy restoration of corrupted Texts is found on the study of their History." Burgon points out that "Dr. Hort produces *no* instance. He merely proceeds to 'suppose' a case (§ 50), which he confesses (§ 53) does not exist. . . . He furnishes us *with no evidence at all*."[51]

Scrivener makes the same point: "Dr. Hort's system, therefore, is entirely destitute of historical foundation. He does not so much as make a show of pretending to it: but then he would persuade us, as he has persuaded himself, that its substantial truth is proved by results. He does not so much as make a show of pretending to

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[50] Westcott, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, op. cit., p. 57.

[51] John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, London: John Murray, 1883, pp. 253-55. §-number represents a paragraph in Hort's *Introduction. . .* book.

it: but he would persuade us, as he has persuaded himself. . . ."[52] Later Scrivener concludes, "With all our reverence for his genius, and gratitude for much that we have learnt from him in the course of our studies, we are compelled to repeat as emphatically as ever our strong conviction that the hypothesis to whose proof he has devoted so many laborious years, is destitute not only of a historical foundation, but of all probability resulting from the internal goodness of the text which its adoption would force upon us."[53]

Later textual critics picked up on the same lack of evidence. Ernest Colwell, a leading North American New Testament textual authority at the University of Chicago in the 1950-60s, wrote that Hort

> presented a carefully reasoned account of textual criticism that was comprehensive in its discussion of method, in its reconstruction of the history of the manuscript tradition of method, and in its appraisal of Text-types. He did not try to be comprehensive in his discussion of the *materials* of textual criticism. He published no catalogue of manuscripts. He cited no manuscript evidence in a critical apparatus.[54]

In other words, Hort wrote only an *Introduction* to textual criticism without a sequential book showing its use.

Colwell wrote:

> Since Westcott and Hort, the genealogical method has been the canonical method for restoring the original text of the books of the New Testament. It dominates the handbooks. . . . Yet genealogical method as defined by Westcott and Hort was not applied by them or by any of their followers to the manuscripts of the New Testament. Moreover, sixty years of study since Westcott and Hort indicate that it is doubtful if it can be applied to the New Testament manuscripts in such a way as to advance our knowledge of the original text of the New Testament.[55]

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[52] F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, London: George Bell, 1894, 4th edition, col. II, p. 291.
[53] Ibid., p. 296.
[54] Colwell, op. cit., p. 148.
[55] Ernest Cadman Coldwell, *Studies in Methodolgy in Textual Criticism of The New Testament*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969, p. 63.

After discussing Westcott-Hort's definition of genealogy and their examples of it, Colwell wrote:

> [that] Westcott and Hort did not apply this method to the manuscripts of the New Testament is obvious. Where are the charts which start with the majority of the late manuscripts and climb back through diminishing generations of ancestors to the Neutral and Western texts? The answer is that they are nowhere. Look again at the first diagram, and you will see that a, b, c, etc. are not actual manuscripts of the New Testament, but hypothetical manuscripts. The demonstrations or illustrations of the genealogical method as applied to New Testament manuscripts by the followers of Hort, the "Horticuli" as Lake called them, likewise use hypothetical manuscripts, not actual codices. Note for example, the diagrams and discussions in Kenyon's most popular work on textural criticism, including the most recent edition. All the manuscripts referred to are imaginary manuscripts, and the later of the charts was printed sixty years after Hort.[56]

Since the genealogy principle is so important for the case against the TR, why didn't Westcott and Hort apply it? The answer to this question is simple: they couldn't use genealogy. There are several reasons they couldn't.

First, the genealogy method could not be applied since only a limited number of copies of the 5,000 plus Greek New Testament texts have an early date, and Westcott and Hort had none of them. There are only a few papyri earlier than the fourth-century Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts, and these have been discovered after Westcott and Hort's time. Most of these papyri are very fragmented. The two main groups were acquired by Chester Beatty in 1930-31 and by M. Martin Bodmer in 1955-56. The largest Beatty papyri (P^{45}) containing the Gospels dates from the first half of the third century and the one (P^{46}) dates from about 200. Beatty's P^{66} is a codex of John and dates from around 200; it is a mixed Alexandrian and Western text. The Bodmer P^{75} papyrus is a single codex of Luke and John and dates from 175 to 225. There are also a few other smaller fragments.

EARLY PAPYRUS

Papyri	Date	Text coverage	Comments

[56] Ibid., pp. 65, 66.

number			
P^{52}	125	John 18:31-33, 37-38	oldest
P^{90}	2^{nd}	John 18:36-19:7	
P^{32}	~200	Titus 1:11-15; 2:3-8	
P^{46}	~200	Paul's letters ex. 2 Th., Philem.	much irregularity
P^{64}+P^{67}	~200	Parts of Matthew	
P^{66}	~200	John 1:1 - 14:30	sewing intact
P^{77}	2^{nd}- 3^{rd}	Matt. 20:30-39	
P^{75}	early 3^{rd}	Parts of Luke and John	undamaged pages
P^{45}	3^{rd}	Matt 20:24 to Acts 17:17	
P^{72}	3^{rd} - 4^{th}	Jude, 1-2 Peter	bound
P^{47}	3^{rd} - 4^{th}	Revelation	

These papyri represent only a small minority of the manuscripts that were once in use, and little is known about their age and almost nothing about their history except they were found in Egypt. There are many generations between the autograms and the papyrus, and between the papyrus and the earliest uncial codices.

Second, genealogy is limited by the time span of the manuscripts being examined. Colwell concluded that

> it can chart the history of transmission in an area narrowly limited in time and space. Within that area it sheds a bright light. But in the larger realm where the larger questions are settled, it still has to demonstrate its value for the reconstruction of the original text of the Greek New Testament.[57]

A third limit to this method is that only one manuscript has been found with known parents; therefore one cannot construct a family tree. This lack of genealogy relations between the few old texts has been noted by researchers. Pickering wrote that "scholars have so far isolated only one parent-child set among all 5,000 plus manuscripts. How then did Hort go plotting the genealogical descent of the extant MSS? M. M. Parvis answers: 'Westcott and Hort never applied the genealogical method to the NT MSS'."[58]

The few existing papyri leave such large gaps in the family tree that it is impossible to establish relationships between them, and therefore it is impossible to make genealogical descent back to the

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[57] Ibid, p. 82.

[58] Pickering, op. cit., p. 44. Cf. Merrill M. Parvis, "Text, NT," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* 4 vols. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 611.

autograms. Colwell writes, "It is clear that in a field where no manuscripts have parents, where centuries and continents separate witnesses, the genealogical method is not of primary importance."[59]

Kirsopp Lake, R. P. Blake, and Silva (Lake) New, writing about the Caesarean Gospel of Mark manuscripts found at Mt. Sinai, Patmos, and the Partriarchal Library, and the collection of St. Saba at Jerusalem, stated:

> This collation covers three of the great ancient collections of MSS; and these are not modern conglomerations, brought together from all directions. Many of the MSS now at Sinai, Patmos, and Jerusalem must be codices written in the scriptoria of these monasteries. We expected to find that a collation covering all the MSS in each library would show many cases of direct copying. But there are practically no such cases.
>
> Taking this fact [the lack of direct genealogy] into consideration along with the negative results of our collation of MSS at Sinai, Patmos, and Jerusalem, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they had copied the sacred book.[60]

The fourth reason the genealogical concept cannot be applied is the presence of much mixture between the old texts; mixture makes it difficult to know family lines and clear-cut family relations. Thus mixture makes it nearly impossible to build family trees. Price wrote that

> the extreme mixture in its [the New Testament's] later history led to considerable doubt of Hort's emphasis on the possibility of traveling back nearly to the autograph by the reconstruction of a family or genealogical tree. There were—to change the figure a bit—too many missing links. The method actually worked out in very limited areas and Hort himself made very little use of it, neglecting the history of the text in favor of an extreme reliance upon Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. . . . It became increasing clear that the term 'Neutral,' not to mention the title, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, was at least presumptive, if not erroneous.[61]

Metzger wrote after giving a simple example of genealogy:

> A disturbing element enters when mixture has occurred, that is, when a copyist has had two or more manuscripts before him and

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[59] Colwell, op. cit., pp. 82, 83.

[60] Kirsopp Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Text," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXI: 4, October 1928, pp. 348-49.

[61] Price, op. cit., pp. 212-13.

> has followed sometimes one, sometimes the other; or, as sometimes happened, when a scribe copied a manuscript from one exemplar and corrected it against another. To the extent that manuscripts have a 'mixed' ancestry, the genealogical relations among them become progressively more complex and obscure to the investigator.[62]

Another weakness of genealogy is that it cannot identify the parent when the family tree has two branches. Colwell wrote that the "genealogical method can trace the tree down to the last two branches, but it can never unite these last two in the main trunk—it can never take the last step."[63] He then quoted Westcott and Hort to support his statement: "Where the two ultimate witnesses differ, the genealogical method ceases to be applicable, and a comparison of the intrinsic general character of these two texts becomes the only resource."[64]

In summary, the application of genealogy to the New Testament manuscripts is open to serious question because of the limited number and wide time-space between the text-types and the autograms, the lack of parents among manuscripts, and because of mixture between the text-types. Today most acknowledge that genealogy was not used and speak of its rejection. Fee sums up current opinion of the method when he writes about "the rejection of Hort's genealogical method."[65]

Even with the general rejection of genealogy, some still hold on to it. As recently as 1992 Metzger, a defender of Westcott and Hort's work, still uses its "broad features" to reject the Byzantine text:

> Despite the presence of a large amount of mixture . . . it will be advantageous for the textual critic to search out the broad features of more or less closely related groups of manuscripts. Such a process discloses that in general the Koine (or Byzantine) text of the New Testament is secondary, being characterized by the features which Hort delineated with classic vividness."[66]

Conflation

[62] Metzger, op. cit., p. 159.
[63] Colwell, op. cit., p. 66.
[64] Ibid., p. 67.
[65] Eldon J. Epp and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textural Criticism*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, p. 15.
[66] Metzger, *The Text*, p. 161.

Another method to determine age relations of the text-types is conflation. Conflation is a special type of mixture. It is produced when a scribe or editor combines readings of two manuscripts to form a third. The goal of conflation is the same as genealogy, that is to rank manuscripts into text-types, thus identifying the better manuscripts to base the Greek text on.

The last verse in Luke is considered an example of conflation of the Alexandrian and Western text to form the Byzantine text, as shown below:

Alexandrian: “blessing God”
Western: “praising God”
Byzantine: “praising and blessing God”

Hort pointed out that such text as the “conflated” Byzantine must be younger than the Alexandrian and Western manuscripts it comes from, which is correct. This is not necessary a truism since, as we will see, the Alexandrian’s and Western’s wording could be due to dropping out words.

After thirty years of study, Hort was able to give eight examples from Mark (6:33; 8:26; 9:38, 39) and Luke (9:10; 11:54; 12:18; 24:53) to show that the Byzantine text had combined Neutral and Western readings. He claimed that the other Neutral and Western text-types never combined the Syrian text, thus proving the Syrian was the youngest.

Hort’s eight examples are from Mark and Luke. Others have said more could have been given, but only a few, such as Matthew 27:41, John 18:40, Acts 20:28, and Romans 6:12, have been added to the lists.[67] This is a very short list considering all the mixture that exists in the Greek text.

Burgon challenged such lack of evidence for such far-reaching conclusions. He said, for instance, that the last chapter of Luke has 837 words, and 121, or one out of seven words, are omitted by codex D (i.e., Bezae, the principle Western manuscript). With this is mind, he asks, “What possible significance therefore can be supposed to attach to its omission of the clause και ευλογουτες [‘and blessing’ in Luke 24:53]? . . . The same remarks apply to the 6 remaining cases,—(for one, viz. The [7th], is clearly an oversight,)—. . . we reject the assumed ‘conflation’ unconditionally.”[68]

[67] Pickering, op. cit., p. 59.
[68] John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 264.

With this in mind, is the above "praising and blessing God" example a conflation, or did the Western drop out "and blessing" and the Alexandrian drop out "praising and"? As mentioned earlier, the reason the Alexandrian text is generally a shorter text may be due to omissions.

Salmon could not follow Hort's conclusion without misgivings. He writes: "We ought to have evidence that the supposed revisers had the material to mix; and, in [this case], there is no evidence that the reading ['praising God'] by itself was ever known in the East, the witnesses to it all being Latin." His second remark was: "The true solution is that which will account for all variations. In the case of a supposed conflation, if the full reading be the right one, the two defective forms are at once explained. . . . due to accidental omissions by different scribes. But if [praising] be right, how came any one to write [blessing and]?"[69] Salmon speculates at the end of a book the copyists might have been tempted to omit words to get everything on the page.[70]

Pickering in his Appendix D, titled "Conflation or Confusion," allotted 29 pages to this question, giving 103 examples showing conflation of Syrian with Western and Alexandrian texts. At the end of the first 39 examples, those showing clear true or simple "conflation," he wrote:

> six of the "Byzantine" instances . . . now have early papyrus attestation. It follows that although modern editors continue to reject these readings, it can no longer be argued that they are late. If they are conflations then they happened in the second century. It is significant that in fully 28 of the 39 examples given . . . , the "Byzantine" text is being conflated by other witnesses, not vice versa.
>
> It is evident that all "text-types" have possible conflations and that "Western" and "Alexandrian" witnesses have actual conflations.[71]

At the end of giving the rest of the 103 examples, those "complicated by substitution, transposition, moderate internal changes, or omissions," he wrote:

> None of the Alexandrian "conflations" (including those of B and Aleph) has early papyrus support. . . .

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69 Salmon, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
70 Ibid., p. 100.
71 Pickering, op. cit., pp. 171-182.

> Ten of the Byzantine "conflations'" have early papyrus attestation (and in only five of the instances do any of the other readings have such support), so they may not be used to argue for a late "Byzantine" text-type.[72]

Pickering's overall conclusion was:

> The evidence presented in this appendix justifies the following statements: "Western" witnesses have clear, undoubted conflations; "Alexandrian" witnesses have clear, undoubted conflations; many putative conflations build upon "Byzantine" readings; numerous readings that were once thought to be late "Syrian" now have early papyrus attestation. It follows that Hort's statement and use of "conflation" are erroneous.
>
> It has been customary to refer to the "Byzantine" text as "the later, conflated text,"[73] as if "conflation" were a pervading characteristic of this text. The evidence presented above scarcely supports such a characterization since in fully sixty percent of the examples the "Byzantine" text is being built upon and not vice versa. [74]

A more recent book by Harry Sturz contains another major study of conflation. Sturz writes:

> the evidence available now shows that such [conflate] readings are neither a result or proof of late editing, but actually go back into the second century. If this is true even for some conflate and longer readings, then it should be apparent that the procedure of using a few examples of long or conflate readings in order to prove a late and dependent editing process for the whole text is invalid.[75]

Sturz makes seven points to support this conclusion. They are summarized below.

1. "Some Byzantine 'conflates' and 'longer readings' are now demonstrably early." John 10:19 is as clear an example of conflation as Hort's eight examples, but P^{66} gives it early papyri support. John 10:31 is another example of Western and Alexandrian conflation. The "conflate" reading has early P^{66} support and the shorter Caesarean reading has P^{45} support. "While it may be true that conflation has taken place in one or more of these instances, it is not logical to continue to hold

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[72] Ibid., p. 199.

[73] Metzler, op. cit., p. 136.

[74] Pickering, op. cit., p. 199.

[75] Harry A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Texual Criticism*, Nashville: Nelson, 1984, p. 83.

that such readings are a proof of lateness. These readings were in existence before the end of the second—before the earliest manuscripts we process. Though these ‘conflate’ readings were unsupported by early patristic evidence, their early existence has been accurately attested all the while by the Byzantine text.”[76]

2. Conflations are also found in non-Byzantine texts. Sturz gives examples found in John 5:15; 11:41; and Colossians 3:17.
3. Conflations are found in the Vaticanus. Colwell notes that “Codex Vaticanus lacks the conflate readings of the ‘Syrian text,’ but it has it own conflate readings.”[77] Examples of these are Mark 1:28; Luke 10:41, 42; John 7:39; Philippians 1:14; Colossians 1:12. Neither Westcott-Hort, Nestle, nor the USB texts give any indications of these Alexandrian text conflates.
4. Conflations do not appear in the Byzantine text where it would have been a natural tendency for scribes to make them.
5. Papyrus-supported longer Byzantine readings show their early age. The Byzantine text also has readings shorter than the Alexandrian text. “Instead of finding (as was anticipated) the greater number of papyrus-confirmed variants in K where the Byzantine reading was the shortest, the greater proportion was of longer papyrus-supported Byzantine readings. This underscores the danger of making it a rule ‘to prefer the shorter reading . . . .’ long readings are old and short readings are old. Both are attested by manuscript evidence that places them deep in the second century. The criteria for judging between them must be something other than their respective lengths. Since ‘long’ readings are so early attested, and since such readings are not confined to K but also include H, WH’s basic argument from conflation would appear to be disannulled.”[78]

Some scholars have challenged Sturz’s findings. Fee reduced Sturz’s finding by claiming (1) it involved a questionable use of "distinctively Byzantine”; (2) some variants are textual trivia—“stylistic idiosyncrasies of [scribe’s] own, not relationships with the Byzantine text-type”; (3) “few genuinely genetically significant

[76] Ibid, p. 84.
[77] Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*, op. cit., p 70.
[78] Sturz, op. cit., p. 89.

readings" are found.[79] After reviewing Sturz's study and Fee's review, Wisselink[80] writes "Sturz has collected exactly those readings in his list, that are distinctively *Byzantine according to Hort*." Wisselink agrees with Fee that some of Sturz's readings have "minimum differents," but finds Fee's second and third point more an "excuse than to [be] an argument." Wisselink write, "If these points are handled consistently, what then is the value, for instance, of the investigation published" by Fee ("Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John: A Contribution to Methodology on Establishing Textual Relations," *New Testament Studies, 15*, 1968-69). After this Wisselink writes, "Not a single Byzantine reading for which support can be found in the early papyri, can be rejected any longer as being young. In that respect it is of no importance if the support is casual or not." Wisselink did conclude that Fee might make the Sturz's number of readings with early papyri support shorter, but he cannot eliminate them. Sturz did find distinctive Byzantine readings with third century papyri support. "This conclusion is shared by a great many textual critices of divergent signatures."[81] He gives Fee's findings that P^{66} is "not recension of a kind that produced the Neutral texttype, but rather of a kind that culminates at a later date in the process of transmission called the Byzantine texttype." Hurtado writes, "in P^{45}, a papyrus too early (third century) to have been revised by a Byzantine standard text, scholars found numerous readings previously regarded as Byzantine readings." Wisse writes, "P^{66} serves as a warning here for it contains some variants which had been considered late and thus secondary." Aland concluded that papyri cannot be fixed into text-types. From these, Wisselink concludes, "It is clear from all these quotations that the way in which Hort divided the manuscripts, does not satisfy any longer since the discovery of the papyri."[82]

In summary, conflation is not the most important tool in establishing the age and value of the New Testament. Metzger's conclusion that "the clearest evidence in tracing the genealogy of

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[79] Gordon D. Fee, Book review, Journal of the Evangelical Society, Vol. 28, pp. 239-242, June 1985.

[80] Willem F. Wisselink, *Assimilation as a Criterion for the Establishment of the Text*, Kampen: J. H. Kob, 1989, pp. 33-34.

[81] All following quotations are from Wisselink, pp. 34-35.

[82] Ibid., p. 35.

witness is the presence of conflate readings" may be wrong in many instances.[83] The presence of Hort's eight conflate readings in the Byzantine text is not enough to establish it is a conflated text-type. Pickering gave evidence that six of these have early papyrus support, many examples of the Byzantine being conflated by others. As Sturz has shown, conflation is not as strong a case against the Byzantine text as Hort once thought. Since conflate does not support Westcott-Hort's text as claimed, this has a major undermining effect on their text as being the genuine one.

Papyrus Shows all Text Types Are Old

Our understanding of the early New Testament text has greatly improved in the twentieth century, making many of Westcott and Hort's ideas obsolete. Gregory's third volume of his Prolegomena published in 1884 mentions only one papyrus (Q) containing fragments of I Corinthians,[84] so it is understandable why Westcott and Hort made no mention of any papyrus. The time of papyri was still in the future. The papyri discovered since the 1890's are the Oxyrhynchus papyri in 1896ff., Chester Beatty papyri in 1930-31, and Bodmer papyri in 1956ff. They represent a 600 percent increase,[85] and 31 are pre-300 A.D.[86] The more important ones (P^{45}, P^{46}, P^{47}, P^{66}, P^{72}, and P^{75}—these are equivalent to one-third B text and represent every New Testament book except 1 and 2 Timothy)[87] represent a several thousand percent increase as far as their importance. They give important evidence that was not available to Westcott and Hort. Actually, they never mentioned papyri in their *Introduction* book. In summarizing the importance of these papyri, Colwell wrote in 1961:

> The Chester Beatty Papyri and Bodmer Papyri—to mention—takes us at least a full century closer to the originals than the previous oldest copies did. [These papyri] while not complete, are

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[83] Metzger, *The Text*, op. cit. p. 130.
[84] Kurt Aland, "New Testament Textual Research Since Westcott and Hort," Hyatt, op. cit., p. 326.
[85] Epp and Fee, op. cit., p. 84.
[86] Ibid., p. 92.
[87] Ibid., p. 95, reference to Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri . . . ," pp. 325-46.

> extensive enough to establish the text-type they represent for these parts of the New Testament. In date they are close together—all but one from the late second to early third century, which is significantly earlier than the great parchment codices, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, from the fourth century.
>
> These documents have revolutionized our understanding of the early history of the manuscript tradition of the Greek New Testament. Present day concepts of the great text-types differ markedly from those held before the publication and study of these documents. The words "Caesarean," "Alexandrian," "Western"—and even "Byzantine" or "Syrian"—have changed their significance as labels for groups of manuscripts in the last twenty-five years.[88]

The finding of many early papyri New Testament texts in the twentieth century has shown that the Byzantine, the text behind the *Textus Receptus,* has very early support. Colwell wrote:

> All the text-types *began* earlier than we had assumed. The Bodmer John (P^{66}) and even more Bodmer Luke-John (P^{75}) are essentially witnesses to the Beta text-type (Hort's "Neutral"), but are far from being in agreement with the consensus of the later witnesses to this text-type.
>
> But the Bodmer John (P^{66}) is also a witness to the early existence of many of the readings found in the Alpha text-type (Hort's "Syrian"). Strangely enough (according to our previous ideas), the contemporary corrections in the papyrus frequently change an Alpha-type of reading to a Beta-type of reading (Hort's "Neutral"). This indicates that at this early period readings of both kinds were known.[89]

Zuntz also found P^{46} to be a witness to the existence of Byzantine readings in the second century. Zuntz wrote:

> To sum up. A number of Byzantine readings, most of them genuine, which previously were discarded as "late," are anticipated by P^{46} [footnote: The same is true of the sister-manuscript P^{45}]. Our inquiry has confirmed what was anyhow probable enough: the Byzantines did not hit upon these readings by conjecture or independent error. They reproduced an older tradition. The existence of this tradition was in several cases borne out by some versions or patristic quotations; but where such evidence is not forthcoming, the inference proved no less

[88] Colwell, op. cit., p. 45.
[89] Ibid., pp. 47, 48.

> certain. How then—so one is tempted to go on asking—where no Chester Beatty papyrus happen to vouch for the early existence of a Byzantine reading? Are all Byzantine readings ancient? In the cognate case of the Homeric tradition G. Pasquali[90] answers the same question in the affirmative; and, indeed, ***it seems to me unlikely that the Byzantine editors ever altered the text without manuscript evidence.*** They left so many hopelessly difficult places unassailed! Their method, I submit, was selection rather that conjecture.[91] (italics added).

Later Zuntz writes:

> Purely Byzantine readings, as we saw before, *may* be ancient. We can now add: Byzantine readings which recur in Western witness *must* be ancient. They go back to the time before the Chester Beatty papyrus was written; the time before the emergence of separate Eastern and Western traditions; in short, they reach back deep into the second century."[92]

Zuntz is not a defender of the TR but still writes:

> Were it not for the deserved authority of the admirable Griesbach, one might well wonder how the other view—namely that they were added later—could ever be held. Scholars apparently never paused to think of the historical implications. Could a Byzantine patriarch in the eighth or ninth century be supposed to have sent envoys to some Greek monastery in Sicily or south Italy in order thence to procure some obsolete manuscripts and from them to intrude a number of Western readings into the sacred text which his authority made prevail among Orthodox?[93]

Zuntz concludes his study of the epistle's text by stating that after around 150 B.C. the oldest papyri "rather suddenly . . . give a text which substantially agrees with that of the extant Byzantine manuscripts."[94] Thus Zuntz acknowledges that the Byzantine readings "are far older than the manuscripts which attest them."

Pickering[95] discussed the papyrus evidence, stating there was no entire papyrus for either the Western or Alexandrian text-types; they

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[90] G. Pasquali, *Storia del Tradizione*, p. 241.

[91] Gunther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, London: Oxford, 1953, p. 55.

[92] Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[93] Ibid., p. 151.

[94] Ibid., p. 281.

[95] Pickering, op. cit., pp. 55, 56.

may share peculiarities, but there are still substantial differences. He gave data showing that P^{66} and P^{75}, which are generally considered Alexandrian, agree more often with the Traditional Text than with Aleph or B. He then quoted Birdsall:

> In these third-century manuscripts, whose evidence takes us back into the mid-second century at least, we find no pristine purity, no unsullied ancestors of Vaticanus, but marred and fallen representatives of the original text. Features of all the main texts isolated by Hort or von Soden are here found—very differently 'mingled' in P^{66} and P^{45}.[96]

Colwell noted that different scholars tried to avoid giving certain text-types a date-of-origin, making it appear they date back close to the New Testament autograms. He wrote:

> Hort's assumption (now held to be invalid) that the Neutral text-type is an unedited preservation of the original placed its origin at the beginning.[97]

As mentioned earlier, text-types began earlier than first assumed and the Bodmer Luke-John (P^{75}) and John (P^{66}) have many readings that witness to the Byzantine text. It is true that P^{66} is not a fully Byzantine text, yet it is true it is not fully Alexandrian or Western either.[98] All three of the text-types existed side-by-side in the papyrus. Epp also finds support for the Byzantine text in later papyri (P^{84} 6th century; P^{68}, P^{74}? 7th; P^{42} 7th/8th).[99] One should not be surprised at a full Byzantine text was not found in Egypt if a local text was widely used there. Others, in contradiction to Epp, have found support for the Byzantine text in early papyri.

Sturz's List I shows 150 "distinctively Byzantine readings . . . those supported by the bulk of the later manuscripts but which at the same time are opposed (or not supported) by the principle

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[96] J. N. Birdsall, *The Bodmer Papyrus of the Gospel of John*, London, 1960, p. 17, quoted by Pickering, p. 56.

[97] Colwell, op. cit., p. 47.

[98] Philip Wesley Comfort, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, p. 14.

[99] Eldon Epp, "The Significance of the Papyri for Determining the Nature of the New Testament Text in the Second Century: A Dynamic View of Textual Transmission," in William M. Peterson, ed., *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century*, Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Press, 1989, p. 100.

manuscripts and witnesses to the Alexandrian and Western text"[100] that have early papyri support. He emphasizes that these papyri are from the second century, preceding the time of Lucian (the "acknowledged" editor of the Byzantine text) by one hundred years, and thus they are not a fourth-century recension. "It is startling from the standpoint of the WH theory to find that so-called 'Byzantine' readings not only existed early but were present in Egypt before the end of the second century." Sturz makes a third point that "the Old Uncials have not preserved a complete picture of the second century. . . . have not retained all of the second-century tradition. . . . [This] is underscored further when P^{45}, P^{66}, P^{72}, and P^{75} are also seen to confirm early and wide-spread existence of [Byzantine] readings which are neither Alexandrian nor Western." Sturz concludes that Westcott and Hort were "mistaken in regard to their insistence that all the pre-Syrian evidence for readings was to be found in the Alexandrian, Neutral, and Western texts, i.e., that these three text-types and their chief witnesses preserved the complete second-century picture of the textual tradition on which the Syrian editor(s) built. . . . The Byzantine text-type has preserved second-century tradition not preserved by the other text-types."[101]

The early papyri Byzantine readings give additional evidence that Hort's conclusion that the Syrian text was a revision is wrong. Pickering stressed this when he wrote:

> Hort's notion of a Lucianic revision has now been abandoned by all scholars (as far as I know). . . . Scholars now generally recognize that the "Byzantine text-type" must date back at least into the second century. But what chance would the original "Byzantine" document, the archetype, have of gaining currency when appeal to the Autographs was still possible?
>
> Candidly, there is only one reasonable explanation for the Majority Text that has so far been advanced—it is the result of an essentially normal process of transmission and the common source for its consensus in the Autographs. Down through the centuries of copying, the original text has always been reflected with a high degree of accuracy in the manuscript tradition as a whole.[102]

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[100] Sturz, op. cit., pp. 61, 62.
[101] Ibid., pp. 62-64.
[102] Pickering, op. cit., p. 119.

Colwell quoted Zuntz to support that.

> The Alexandrian work in the text of Scripture (in the Epistles) was a long process rather than a single act. Its beginnings were inconspicuous, and roughly 150 years passed before it culminated in the Euthalian' edition. . . . they resulted in the emergence of a type of text (as distinct from a definite edition) which served as a norm for the correctors in provincial Egyptian scriptoria. This final result was the survival of a text far superior to that of the second century, even though the revisers, being fallible humans, rejected some of its correct readings and introduced some faults of their own.[103]

Birdsall in the conclusion of his study "An Eclectic Study of the Texts of Acts" wrote:

> We have not sought to decide for one or another kind of text as a whole but have tried to consider each reading on its merits. Where readings remain unclassified we have found that no one text has a monopoly of error or of truth. The same is true for kinds of variation. . . . No manuscript or type of text is uniformly right or wrong.
>
> This conclusion applies as much to the Byzantine text, represented by HLPS and many minuscules, as to the Western text and the Old Uncials. The outright condemnation of the Byzantine text and Westcott and Hort was one of the main errors in practice of their work.[104]

When one considers that there are only a minority of the various text-types that vary, they all must have a common ancestor. Thus those who reject the Byzantine text do not have an easy task to prove their position. Their position is much more difficult than Hort thought.

Actually, early papyri evidence indicates that the common text-types did not exist very early. Aland writes, "The text of the early period prior to the third/fourth century was, then, in effect, a text not yet channeled into types, because until the beginning of the fourth century the church still lacked institutional organization required to

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[103] Colwell, op. cit., p. 48.

[104] J. Neville Birdsall and Robert W. Thompson, *Biblical and Patristic Studies*, New York: Herder, 1963, p. 76.

produce one."[105] Only one of the papyri, P^{75}, with a third-century date, closely transmits the Vaticanus (i.e., Alexandrian) text.[106] This suggests that the early papyri do not give full support to any text-types, even those types found in Egypt, unless they come from the same time period, then they may give *close* support. Thus papyri should not be labeled as an Alexandrian, Byzantine, or Western type. They may be *proto*-Alexandrian (i.e, *pre*-). If *full* papyri support is not found for an Alexandrian text-type in Egypt, one cannot necessary expect to find Byzantine-papyri support there.

Colwell proposed the following "sharp" statements for discussion in the 1960s. Some of these statements have found general support today. Let us use brief summaries of four of his ten statements as a summary of text-types:

> 1. A text type is a process, not the work of one hand. . . .
>
> 3. The Greek vulgate—the Byzantine or Alpha text-type—had in its origin no such single focus as the Latin had in Jerome. Like Jerome's Vulgate, it had several revised editions. . . .
>
> 6. The Beta text-type (Hort's "Neutral") is a "made" text, probably Alexandrian in origin, produced in part by the selection of relatively "good old mss," but more importantly by the philological editorial know-how of Alexandrians. . . .
>
> 10. As in dating documents, so in dating text-types. What is needed is a datable witness to the type, not only to some of its readings, for the overwhelming majority of readings were created before the year 200. But very few, if any, text-types were established by that time.[107]

In our studies so far, we have found that both geneology and conflation failed to identify clearly the best Greek text. Let us look at another external evidence, the Church Fathers, to see if they can help.

Byzantine and the Early Church Fathers

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[105] Aland, op. cit., p. 64. Aland believes major text-types were due to the demand caused by Diocletianic persecution and to it being fulfilled in Constantine's times. See p. 65.
[106] Ibid., p. 57.
[107] Colwell, op. cit., pp. 53, 54.

Hort, in order to get rid of the Byzantine text, sought to show it was dated after the middle of the third century by claiming no Church Father used it before John Chrysostom (345-407), a native of Antioch and later bishop of Constantinople. If this is true, it would be important evidence against the Byzantine text.

Before we discuss the Early Church Fathers' witness to the Greek text, let us first comment about the use of their writings. There is a long list of problems associated with this. These involve first, the author's use of the New Testament Scripture and, second, the transmission of the Father's texts to us.

When we read in the Fathers, we are not sure if they are quoting a passage directly from the New Testament, or by memory, or paraphrasing it, or if it is just an allusion. If the quote is from a gospel, we are often uncertain which gospel is being quoted if parallel passages exist.

These problems do not exist if the Church Father's work is a commentary with the Scripture text at the top of the page. This at least eliminates the uncertainty of the text being a quote, which gospel is being quoted, etc. But we cannot be certain that the text we have was written by the author. It may have been changed during translation; scribes may have updated it to the text they use. The uncertainty of transmission can create problems even if, for instance, the text is an exact match to the Vaticanus. Did the author quote from the Vaticanus or did a scribe correct the text to it? We know scribal revision of the text may be done unevenly since there is a large amount of mixture in these texts.

The care involved in the transmission of the Fathers' quotes generally would be much less than that given to the Greek text. The Church Fathers' writings were not considered Scripture and thus were not as carefully copied, so the Scripture citations may have been updated to the local text, etc. When we consider the variation existing in some scriptural manuscripts, we recognize we cannot have high confidence in the Church Fathers' writings. We should therefore be very careful in drawing textual conclusions from their works.

Let us now look at what we can learn about the Greek text from Chrysostom's writings. Before we begin, we should recognize that Westcott and Hort had no critical edition of his writings; therefore we should carefully examine the weighty conclusion they place on Chrysostom's writings.

As Kenyon writes about the text-types, "The crux of the controversy lay in the testimony of the ancient Fathers. . . . Before [A.D. 350] we find characteristically 'Neutral' and 'Western' readings, but never 'Syrian.' This argument is in fact decisive; and no subsequent discovery of new witness, and no further examination of the old, has invalidated it."[108] This was written in 1932, and before this date Kenyon writes, "Little has been done to rectify this by the critical study of the best manuscripts of the Fathers." Hort's argument was decisively answered the same year Kenyon wrote.

Geerlings and New's study of "Chrysostom's Text of the Gospel of Mark" concludes, "The number of variants from the Textus Receptus is not appreciably smaller than the number of variants from Westcott and Hort's text. This proves that it [Chrysostom's text] is no more a typical representative of the late text (von Soden's K [Byzantine]) than it is of the Neutral text. . . . With reference to the subdivisions of K-text, there is no evidence for either von Soden's K^x-text (EFGH etc.) or his K^1-text (ΩV etc.), nor are there any readings peculiar to the K^a-text."[109]

Birdsall also writes about Chrysostom:

> More recent examination of [Chrysostom's] quotations from Mark and Matthew has revealed a complex text-form in these gospels, which cannot be identified with any type specifically Byzantine or other,[110] and a like state of affairs seems to exist in the Pauline epistles used by him. The notorious uncertainly of the text of Chrysostom's works only increases the difficulties attendant upon the establishing of the New Testament text known to him and used by him."[111]

Let us give a proof from early Church Fathers showing the Byzantine text-type is very old. The Byzantine text of Matthew 27:34 uses the Greek term οξο translated *vinegar*: "They gave him

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[108] Kenyon, op. cit., p. 8.

[109] Jacob Geerlings and Silva New, "Chrysostom's Text of the Gospel of Mark," *Harvard Theological Review*, 1932, 24:141.

[110] Ibid, pp. 121-42; and C. D. Dicks, "The Matthaean Text of Chrysostom in his Homilies on Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, New York, 1948, LXVII:365-76.

[111] J. N. Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 320.

vinegar to drink mingled with *gall*: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink." The Alexandrian text uses the term οινον translated *wine*, in this passage. The parallel passage found in Mark 15:23 uses ονον and the near v. 36 passage uses οξος; Luke uses οξος in the near 23:36 passage; and John uses οξους in the near 19:29 passage. Because of these uses some critics claim the Church Father quotations using οξους (vinegar) may not come from Matthew but one of the other Gospels. But as Pickering and Robinson have pointed out, the term *gall* makes it possible to identify the Church Fathers' quotations as coming from Matthew 27:34 since *gall* is used in only one other New Testament Scripture (Acts 8:23).[112] Therefore we can have confidence these Church Father quotations come from Matthew, even though the Fathers made no statement to this affect. Following is a list of Church Fathers who use *vinegar* and *gall* in these same "quotation."

> Barnabas, *Barnabas*, 100 A.D.: "had given him to drink vinegar and gall" (7:5).
>
> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, c. 130-202: "He should have vinegar and gall given Him to drink" (Book IV:XXXIII:12; cf. XXXV:3).
>
> *Revelation of Esdras*: "Vinegar and gall did they give me to drink."
>
> *Apostolic Constitutions*, late 200s: "they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall" (V:3:14).
>
> Tertullian, *Reply to Marcion*, d. 220: "and gall is mixed with vinegar" (*Appendix*, V:232).
>
> *Gospel of Nicodemus*, 4th century: "and gave him also to drink gall with vinegar" (Part II, 4).
> Gregory of Nyssa, d. 394: "χολν τεκαι οξει διξβροξ" (*Orat.* X:989:6).

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[112] Wilbur N. Pickering, "The Majority Text and the Original Text: A Response to Gordon D. Fee." pp. 33-35; and research of Maurice A. Robinson.

> Gregory Nazianzus, d. 396, "Taste gall for the taste's sake; drink vinegar" (*Oratio* XXXVIII:18).

The above shows the Byzantine text of the Gospel of Matthew existed very early, even in the first century.

There is another factor to consider about the Hort claim. Sturz writes that those making such a claim "customarily neglect to mention that there are no earlier Antiochian Fathers than Chrysostom whose literature remains are extensive enough so that their New Testament quotations may be analyzed as to the type of text they support."[113]

The lack of Byzantine quotation before Chrysostom may also be in part due to the northern, damp climate causing decomposition of early northern Church Fathers' writings. Most early Church Fathers' writings are from areas outside the Byzantine and other northern areas. Souter wrote,

> The nature of papyrus being such that a damp climate reduces it to pulp, the vast quantity of papyrus which must have existed in other countries of the Roman world has all perished, and it is . . . the dry climate of Egypt . . . that we are indebted for the paprus rolls that survive.[114]

Aland sheds further light on this climate, writing,

> Asia Minor and Greece, the centers of early Christianity, undoubtedly exercised a substantive if not critical influence on the development of the New Testament text, but it is impossible to demonstrate because the climate in these regions has been unfavorable to the preservation of any papyri from the early period.[115]

The change from uncial (writings only in capital letters) to minuscule (a flowing cursive handwriting dating after the 10th century) writing is another factor that caused the loss of early Byzantine manuscripts. As readers became accustom to the minuscule they put aside the uncial manuscripts and they were discarded. The latter factor not only accounts for the few early Byzantine manuscripts, but also for the few Byzantine ones that exist today dating before the ninth century.

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[113] Sturz, op. cit., p. 80.

[114] Alexandre Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, London: Duckworth, 1913, p. 6.

[115] Aland, op. cit., p. 67.

Early Church Fathers' quotations do not support Westcott-Hort's text either. This is even recognized by those who do not support the TR. Price, who does not support the TR, when writing about recent progress in textual criticism, said, "The Westcott-Hort 'Neutral' text was found to be practically without support in the earliest fathers."[116] The Coptic versions (the Egyptian versions) and Clement and Origen (early Alexandrian church leaders), as can be expected, do support the Alexandrian texts.

In summary, Hort's often repeated statement about no Byzantine text-type being found in Church Fathers' writings before Chrysostom proves nothing except that support for the Alexandrian text comes from dry climate areas.

Revisiting the Text-Types Issue

As we have seen, Westcott and Hort thought the descending order of value of the text-types were the Neutral, the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Syrian (now known as the Byzantine). They believed the Neutral text was the oldest and best text and the Byzantine a later edited text. But as we have seen, neither genealogy or conflation show the Byzantine text to be younger that the Alexandrian, and the Byzantine does have some early Church Father support.

We should respect Westcott and Hort's desire to find the best text. It is a worthy goal, but we need not accept their conclusion that they found the "Neutral" text. And as Scrivener wrote, "let us be so illogical as to conclude, because א and B are sometimes right, that therefore they never are in the wrong."[117]

Fifty years after Westcott and Hort's new Greek text, Kenyon wrote three important observations about their work:

> The criticism of the last fifty years has, however, greatly blurred the edges of these clear-cut [i.e., "Codex Vaticanus (B) stands out pre-eminently, containing a text which has the internal marks of purity and originality."] results. The absolute authority of B (though not its general excellence) has been questioned, and the

[116] Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, New York: Harper & Row, 1956, p. 212.

[117] Scrivener, op. cit.,p. II: 282.

> authority of its principle supporter, ℵ, has been still more challenged. It has been shown that texts circulated extensively in Egypt which did not conform to the "Neutral" pattern.[118]
>
> It is clear that some abatement must be made from Hort's claims. Although this type of text is obviously Egyptian in origin and home, it is not possible to maintain that Egypt had preserved an uncorrupted form of text, of which B is a characteristic example. The papyri of earlier date than B, fragmentary as they are, suffice to show that the B text did not prevail universally in Egypt; and the Sahidic version, though it has strong affinities with B, tells the same story. It is evident that in Egypt, as in other parts of the world, texts existed in the third century which were not of the B type.[119]
>
> Egypt, like other countries, had a variety of texts; and if the text of B is the result of faithful transmission alone, its ancestors must have lived a singularly sheltered life. It is not as if Egypt were the original home of the New Testament books, so that the pure uncorrupted fount was found there.[120]

Aland writes:

> Codex Vaticanus was [Westcott and Hort's] touchstone. They believed that they had discovered in it a representation of the "Neutral text" which came far closer to the original text than the three forms recognized as Alexandrian, Byzantine, and Western, especially when it stood in agreement with ℵ. Acturally there is no such thing as a "neutral" text of the New Testament. Even P^{75},[121] which is textually so close to Codex Vaticanus . . . cannot be called "neutral," although it is more than a hundred and fifty years older. . . . Again, the fact that Codex Vaticanus (like Codex Sinaiticus) is from the second half of the fourth century raises the

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[118] Kenyon, op. cit., p. 64.
[119] Ibid., p. 68.
[120] Ibid.
[121] This is confirmed by Fee's study where he found in John 4 P^{75} agreed 85% with B and 46% with $ℵ^{c}$, and 51% with TR. In 320 variation-unit in John 1-8 he found P^{75} agreed 81% with B and 42% with $ℵ^{c}$, and 57% with TR. In John 9 the numbers were 78%, 57%, and 47%. Epp, *Studies*, 1993, pp. 228, 233, 234.

> question how Westcott and Hort could describe their edition so confidently as the New Testament “in the original Greek.” [122]

Metzger also states that “most scholars have abandoned Hort’s optimistic view that Vaticanus (B) contains the original text almost unchanged except for slips of the pen.”[123] Thus today the “neutual” is rejected, and, as we will see, apparently this is the second time this has happened.

Apparently the “neutral” text was rejected by early Christians because it existed mainly in Egypt from around 350 to 500. It did not received wide circulation; if it had, it would have become the majority text. The early Christians treated the New Testament books as Scripture and would have naturally copied and passed on the purest copies; they would have gotten rid of poor copies. As Pickering pointed out, “Many of the first believers had been devout Jews who had an ingrained reverence and care for the Old Testament Scriptures which extended to the very jots and tittles. This reverence and care would naturally be extended to the New Testament Scriptures.”[124] The early believers who lived in Asia Minor (the region where the Byzantine text existed), and were thus close to many of the original manuscripts, surely would have been careful to make good copies of the New Testament books. Thus the lack of transmission of the Alexandrian text shows lack of respect for it through the whole church.

Some hold such high opinion of these two texts that they believe they are two of the fifty Bibles Emperor Constantine authorized Eusebius to produce. There is no evidence to support this view, and their inclusion of non-biblical books suggests otherwise. It makes more sense to believe these fifty Bibles had a Byzantine text-type since Constantinople was the capital the Byzantine Empire, and the Byzantine text became the dominant text of the area. Bruce’s “guess” supports this conclusion. He writes, “If a guess may be hazarded, it is more likely that the fifty copies exhibited the text of

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[122] Aland, op. cit., p. 14.
[123] Metzger, *The Text*, p. 216.
[124] Pickering, op. cit., p. 106.

the . . .[125] Byzantine or 'majority' text. If they did, this would help to explain the popularity of this form of the text in Constantinople."[126]

Although many hold a high view of the Alexandrian text, it should be mentioned that the quality of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus codices is far from perfect. These two texts are similar, but Hoskier points out they do differ in well over 3,000 places just in the Gospels (not including spelling and synonym differences).[127] Since these two manuscripts do not give a united witness, and since many of their differences are serious, they are not as good witnesses to the Greek New Testament as was once claimed.

Only a few Alexandrian manuscripts survived, and they are older than the Byzantine manuscripts. As mentioned earlier, their survival is due to (1) the Egyptian dry desert climate, which slowed their decomposition, (2) the Egyptian church dropping the Greek language and therefore not wearing out these manuscripts, and (3) the Muslims wiping out much of Christianity in Egypt, causing these Greek manuscripts to be set aside. The early Byzantine manuscripts probably wore out quicker because of more use, and the Byzantine region's damper climate no doubt speeded up their decomposition. And, as mentioned earlier, it is impossible to demonstrate Asia Minor and Greece influence on the New Testament text "because the climate in these regions has been unfavorable to the preservation of any papyri from the early period."[128]

The question that should be asked is, Does the chance preservation of these manuscripts caused by their being located in Egypt make them the best texts? Although we have followed the current name practice and used the "Alexandrian" term, there is no evidence the great Uncials or papyrus were ever associated with the learning center and libraries at Alexandria. Since they were found in dry desert areas located in the upper Niles, far from this city, it

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[125] The following words were omitted: "recent edition of Lucian of Antioch (martyred in 312), the ancestor of the" since there is no historical proof to support such a statement.

[126] F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, p. 204.

[127] H. C. Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914, I:vi.

[128] Aland, op. cit., p. 67.

is more likely they were copies used by individuals or in smaller churches.

Pickering asked, "But what are Egypt's claims upon our confidence? And how wise is it to follow the witness of only one locale?"[129] We should also remember as Van Bruggen writes, "Egypt was not the most flouishing part of the Church at that time [2nd-3rd centuries]. Centers like Syria, Asia-Minor, Greece, Italy have left us no Greek manuscripts from these centuries."[130]

In writing about Egypt and papyri, Epp also asks several questions:

> Can we really be satisfied with so limited a view of that early history? Can we really be content with Egypt as the exclusive locale for this glimpse into the earliest textual history? Was any NT book written there, and does not Egypt therefore clearly represent only a secondary and derivative stage in textual history? Is the accident of circumstance—that papyrus survives almost exclusively in the hot climate and dry sands of Egypt—to dominate and determine how we ultimately write our textual history? Can we proceed with any assurance that these forty randomly surviving earliest MSS are in any real sense representative of the entire earliest history of the text?[131]

Epp's implied answers to these questions weaken the case for the Alexandrian text-type being the best Greek text. Two years later Epp tried to weaken the importance of the Egyptian connection. He claimed that rapid movement of people, merchants, and non-Christian papyrus between Greco-Roman world and Egypt meant the Alexandrian text-type might not be a local text after all, but *the* text-type that existed throughout the Mediterranean region.[132]

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[129] Pickering, op. cit., pp. 122, 123.

[130] Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, Winnipeg: Premier, 1976, p. 25.

[131] Eldon Jay Epp, "A Continuing Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism?" *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, p 119.

[132] Eldon Jay Epp, "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament," in Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Homes, editors, *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, p. 9.

This conjecture is an assertion given without supporting facts. Epp admits this when he writes, "This analysis [of movement of non-Christian commerce], moreover, permits *another assertion*—though *one that cannot be proved*. . . . in contrast to the common view that the papyri represented ‘only’ the text of ‘provincial Egypt,’ is much more likely that they represent an extensive if not the full textual spectrum of earliest Christianity."[133]

There are several reason to question his assertion. First, the movement of papyri of respected Roman citizens and merchants, and persecuted Christians can hardly be compared. The Romans had much freer movement throughout the empire than the persecuted Christians. Second, since papyri were produced in Egypt, would the Byzantine Christians buy expensive Egypt papyri and make many copies of Scripture to send back to them? Would it not be much more logical for them to send only a few copies and let the Egyptians make their own copies for their brethren and churches? Third, it would be more likely that Egyptians would make copies of Scripture and send them north, yet there is no evidence the Alexandrian text was in the Byzantine area. This doesn’t mean their Alexandrian manuscripts were not there; just as early Byzantine copies disappeared because of the damp climate, so would have the Alexandrian ones disappeared.

Contrary to Epp’s assertion, we should continue to consider the Alexandrian text-type an Egyptian one until it can be proven otherwise. We do not need to stack another unproven assertion on top of that monotonously repeated one that Lucian was the "editor" of the Byzantine text-type. Surely the best text-type does not need to rest upon such unproven conjectures.

The likely lack of northern papyri movement to Egypt means that the papyri found there bears little witness to the text-type in existence throughout the world; it only indicates the distribution of the Greek text-types in Egypt. This plus the low numbers of papyri now known, with all three main text-types, indicated the text-type found in Egypt is a statistically insignificant witness to the question of Alexandrian-Byzantine text-types. Therefore Wallace’s claim that “the Majority text did not exist in the first four centuries” and that the Byzantine text did not become the

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[133] Ibid.

majority text until the ninth century is based on statistically flawed data.[134]

Text-types are not always clear and distinctive identities. There is variation in all of them, even in the Byzantine text. Hort claimed there is "but few and unimportant modifications of the Antiochian text by the influence of other ancient texts."[135] But Pickering quoted several sources to show this is not true. He quoted Clark, stating, "The main conclusion regarding the Byzantine text is that it was extremely fluid. Any single manuscript may be expected to show a score of shifting affinities."[136] He wrote that Lake found the "Byzantine" text was not homogeneous. He wrote that the Byzantine text of Mark 9 found in the Sinai, Patmos, and Jerusalem libraries had "somewhat less variation 'within the family' than would be found in a similar treatment of the Neutral [Alexandrian] or Caesarean texts. . . . There is extraordinarily little evidence of close family relation between MSS even in the same library. They have essentially the same text with a large amount of sporadic variation."[137]
Burgon wrote,

> Now those many MSS were executed demonstrably at different times in different countries. . . . hardly any have been copied from any of the rest. On the contrary, they are discovered to differ among themselves in countless unimportant particulars; and even here and there single copies exhibit idiosyncrasies which are startling and extraordinary. There has therefore demonstrably been no collusion—no wholesale fraud.[138]

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[134] Daniel B. Wallace, "The Majority Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique," Ibid, p. 311.
[135] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, p. 142.
[136] K. W. Clark, "The Manuscripts of the Greek New Testament," *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, eds. M. M. Parvis and A. P. Wikgren, Chicago: U. of Chicago, 1950, p. 12, cited by Pickering, op. cit., p. 51, p. 217, footnote 46.
[137] Kirsopp Lake, "EXCURSUS I – The Ecclesiastical Text" (this follows Kirsopp Lake, R. P. Black, and Silva New's "The Caearean Text of the Gospel of Mark" study), Harvard Theological Review, XXI, 1928, pp. 341.
[138] J. W. Burgon, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, arranged, completed, and edited by

Today some have gone so far as to even question the existence of text-types.[139] There is so much variation in the Western and the Caearean that these can hardly be considered text-types.

The Western is considered the common man's Bible, and this is the reason there is much reaction against it. But this view may be in part due to Hort prejudicing many textual critics against the Western text with such statements as:

> The chief and most constant characteristic of the Western readings is a love of paraphrase. Words, clauses, and even whole sentences were charged, omitted, and inserted with astonishing freedom, wherever it seemed that the meaning could be brought out with greater force. They often exhibit a certain rapid vigour and fluency which can hardly be called a rebellion against the calm and reticent strength of the apostolic speech. . . . Another equally important characteristic is a disposition to enrich the text at the cost of its purity by alterations or additions taken from traditional and perhaps from apocryphal or other non-biblical sources."[140]

Today the Western is held in higher respect than it once was. Hort admitted "the earliest readings which can be fixed chronologically belong to it."[141] Klijn believed it existed in Egypt alongside the Alexandrian type.[142] Sturz writes, "Many textual critic's dismissal of the Western text is unjustified, some even holding the Western is closer to the original that the Alexandrian."[143]

The uniformity of the Alexandrian and Byzantine types is much less than once seen. Early papyri have shown it might be anachronistic to group early MSS in groups determined by their own char-

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Edward Miller, London: George Bell, 1896, pp. 46-47, cited by Pickering, op. cit., pp. 52, 53.

139 Epp and Fee, op. cit., p. 37.

140 Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, pp. 122, 123.

141 Ibid., p. 120.

142 A. F. J. Klijn, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts: Part Two 1949-1969*, Supplements to Novum Testament 21, Leiden: Brill, 1969, pp. 39-40. Reference is made to his article "Papyrus Bodmer II (John I-XIV) and the Text of Egypt," in *NTS* 3 1956/67, pp. 327-34.

143 Sturz, op. cit., p. 20.

acteristics.[144] Aland wrote that only the Alexandrian and Byzantine are certain after the fourth century, and "It is impossible to fit the papyri, from the time prior to the fourth century, into two text-types. . . . The simple fact that all these papyri . . . did exist side by side . . . is the best argument against the existence of any text-types, including the Alexandrian and the [Byzantine]."[145]

In summary, there is a lack of proof (genealogy, conflation, and Chrysostom being the first to use Byzantine text-type) that the Byzantine text-type is younger than the other text-types. If the scholars continue to view the Byzantine text as a fourth-century conflated and edited text, they will miss a valuably witness to the Greek New Testament, and perhaps the best text. Let us examine the Byzantine text in more detail.

Byzantine Text

As mentioned, Westcott and Hort believed the Byzantine text was an edited text that represented a new period of textual history. They wrote:

> Now however the three great lines were brought together, and made to contribute to the formation of a new text different from all. . . . But the complexity of the Syrian text as derived from three distinct sources simultaneously, the elaborate manner in which they are laid under contribution, and the interfusion of adjustments of existing materials with a distinctly innovation process, shown partly in verbal transformation of adopted readings, partly in assimilative or other interpolations of fresh matter, belong to a manner of change differing as widely from changes of either the Western or the Alexandrian type as even Western changes from ordinary careless transcription. The Syrian text must in fact be the result of a 'recension' in the proper sense of the word, a work of attempted criticism, performed deliberately by editors and not merely by scribes.[146]

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[144] Epp and Fee, op. cit., p. 37.

[145] Kurt Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri for Progress in New Testament Research," pp. 325-46, in J. Philip Hyatt, ed., *The Bible in Modern Scholarship: Papers Read at the 100th Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature*, December 28-30, 1964, Nashville: Abingdon. Quoted in Epp and Fee, op. cit., p. 37.

[146] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, p. 133.

Some of the obvious features of the Byzantine texts are their similarities and their smooth and good grammar. The Gospels show a greater degree of harmony than the other text-types. Westcott and Hort's explanation is that this text was edited and standardized in the fourth century. They considered the other texts as being older and showing more diversity, and thus were unedited, prestandardized texts.

Byzantine a Lucian Recension or an Original?

Where is Westcott-Hort's proof that the Byzantine was an edited text? The academic world has accepted the editing of the Byzantine text by Lucian of Antioch as a "truism" without Westcott or Hort or anyone giving historical evidence to support this assertion. Records tell that Lucian produced "an edition of the Septuagint, and if he also produced an edition of the New Testament it is extremely unlikely that this should not have been recorded."[147] The reason for this is simple: There is apparently no evidence it was edited. Records of such a major accomplishment would surely had been preserved in historical records. As Birdsdall writes, "[The Byzantine] original recension . . . is frequently ascribed to Lucian of Antioch, and the ascription is turned to fact by frequent repetition, but as we shall see there is no direct evidence of any philological work by him upon the New Testament text."[148] And as Scrivener wrote, "The scribes of the fourth and fifth centuries began their happy task, as simple and honest copyists of the older records placed before them. Let their testimony be received with attention at all times; let it be accepted as conclusive whensoever there are no grave reasons to the contrary, but let not their paramount authority shut out all other considerations external and internal, which might guide us to the true reading of a passage."[149]

Let us give some points that support a good assessment of the Byzantine text.

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[147] Frederic G. Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, London: Oxford, 1933, p. 66.
[148] J. N. Birdsall, "The New Testament Text," in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1:320.
[149] Scrivener, op. cit., p. II: 282.

First, would not one expect the apostles and their associates to write in a clear, easy-to-read style? Surely they were not crude writers who used short and hard-to-understand language. One would expect the style of apostolic writings to be the calm and reticent style found in the Byzantine text and not that found in the Alexandrian.

Second, even if this text was an edited one, were not the early church leaders in a better position to examine and study early manuscripts? Today we have only a handful of papyri that are older than the great codices. They surely had many, many more copies than we have 1,500 years later and an oral tradition to support the written word.

If the Byzantine text was edited, the editor or editors did a poor job. As mentioned earlier, Pasquali wrote, "It seems to me unlikely that the Byzantine editors ever altered the text without manuscript evidence. They left so many hopelessly difficult places unassailed!"[150] Hort's claim that the editor removed "all stumbling blocks out of the way of the ordinary reader" is not true.[151] As Hoskier said, "It is inconceivable that Lucian II or anyone else removed what are concidered such *good* readings in ℵB," and then lists 16 of these the Byzantine text removed from the "good" ℵB good readings.[152]

Third, the Byzantine text was not as uniform as Hort claimed: "With rare exceptions they run smoothly and easily in form, and yield at once to even a careless reader a passable sense, free from surprises and seemingly transparent."[153] Zuntz wrote that "the great bulk of Byzantine manuscripts defies all attempts to group them."[154] As Lake, Blake, and New found, "the 'Byzantine' text was not homogeneous, that there was an absence of close relationship between MSS but that there was less variation 'with the family' than would be found in a similar treatment of 'Neutral' or 'Caesarean'

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[150] G. Pasquali, *Storia del tradizione*, 1934, p. 55, cited by Colwell, op. cit., p. 49.

[151] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, p. 134.

[152] Hoskier, op. cit., p. iv, cf. p. ii.

[153] Ibid., pp. 115, 116.

[154] Gunther Zuntz, "The Byzantine Text in New Testament Criticism," *The Journal of Theological Studies* XLIII (1942): 25, cited by Pickering, op. cit., p. 51.

texts."[155] As mentioned earlier, they found that the MSS from Sinai, Patmos, and Jerusalem's libraries showed little signs of direct copying and genealogy. Lake wrote that "the manuscripts which we have are almost all orphan children without brothers or sisters."[156]

Fourth, who is to say that the apostles did not produce various editions? It is well known that authors often revise their works when they are reprinted. Similarly, variations may have arisen when the apostles had their Gospels and Epistles recopied to send out to churches in different localities.

Fifth, does not the Alexandrinus Codex's inclusion of the Byzantine Gospels with an Alexandrian text-type for the rest of the New Testament show that the Byzantine text was considered good? Would a scribe mix a bad text-type with a good one? Metzger wrote concerning the Alexandrinus Codex, "It ranks along with B and א [aleph] as representative of the Alexandrian type of text,"[157] showing the scribes that produced it were learned men. If you accept Metzger's assessment, these learned scribes are a witness to the acceptability of the Byzantine text.

Today most scholars think the Alexandrian text- is the best and the Byzantine the poorest. Ewert wrote:

> This was found to be too simple an approach, and while the Textus Receptus, that is, the Byzantine family, is a later text-type generally, and the Alexandrian represents an earlier tradition, today each reading, regardless of family, is treated with respect.[158]

Why was Westcott and Hort's genealogical approach so successful against the TR? Colwell wrote:

> The *a priori* demonstration is logically irrefutable. It was supported in the minds of the readers of Westcott and Hort by their knowledge that it worked (as Hort claimed) when applied to the manuscripts of the classics. It sounded convincing against the

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[155] Pickering, op. cit., p. 52.

[156] Kirsopp Lake, R. P. Blake, and Silva New, "The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXI (1928): 348-49, quoted by Pickering, op. cit., p. 52.

[157] Metzger, *The Text*, p. 47.

[158] David Ewert, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations*, Grand Rapids: Academia Books, 1983, p. 160.

> appeal of Burgon and Scrivener to the majority of the witnesses.[159]

If Westcott-Hort had not been so successful in selling their text to the English revision committee, time would have generated a more complete review of their method before it became entrenched, and it may never have received wide acceptance.

Colwell wrote that the Westcott-Hort method has been called a failure by Kirsopp Lake ("'a failure, though a splendid one' as long ago as 1904").[160] Yet Westcott-Hort got rid of the Alexandrian text's two rivals, the Byzantine and Western texts. How long will their views hold up? Colwell wrote that "Ernst von Dobschutz felt its vogue was over when he published his introduction. But the crowd has not yet followed these pioneers—von Soden, Streeter, and Sanders worked in Hort's framework. Nor did these men themselves make a systematic replacement for the Hortain theory." Because of this, Colwell stated, "A new theory and method is needed. . . . Our dilemma seems to be that we know to much to believe the old; we do not yet know enough to create the new."[161] Through the years a new theory has been slowly developing, and it will be accepted in part because of the lack of external evidence for Westcott-Hort's Greek text.

Internal Evidence

If genealogy and conflation did not lead Westcott and Hort to recovery of the autograms, what other means did they use to develop their Greek text? They turned to internal evidence, which became their primary means.[162]

This method is generally given in the form of several rules or guidelines that are considered useful when considering variant readings. These are not to be considered hard and fast procedures

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[159] Colwell, op. cit., p. 75.
[160] Kirsopp Lake, *The Influence of Textual Criticism on the Exegesis of the New Testament*, Oxford, 1904, p. 3, cited by Colwell, *Studies*, p. 83.
[161] Colwell, op. cit., p. 83.
[162] Colwell, op. cit., pp. 66, 71.

but ones that must be used with common sense. But as you will see later, some of these rules do not make sense.

These rules are divided into two groups: scribal transcriptional probabilities and intrinsic probabilities.

I. Scribal Transcriptional Probabilities

This first set of rules involve the type of errors a scribe is likely to make.

1. The shorter reading is generally preferred since scribes would have a tendency to add words to smooth out and clarify the text.

2. The harder reading is preferred because scribes would have the tendency to improve the text “reading” where it was hard or difficult to understand.

3. The reading that shows less harmony with parallel or doublets is preferred since scribes would tend to harmonize the text.

4. The least refined grammar, wording, smoothness, etc., reading is preferred since scribes tended to smooth out the text.

II. Intrinsic Probabilities

This group of rules involves what the author most likely would have written.

1. The wordings that best fit the writer’s style are preferred.

2. The words that best fit the immediate context are perferred.

3. The reading that uses first-century Koine Greek is preferred. A scribe would tend to correct or make mistakes using words familiar to him.

Some of the four scribal transciptional rules fit nicely into Hort’s view of the Byzantine text’s value. As Colwell stated, Westcott and Hort

> wrote with two things constantly in mind: the Textus Receptus and the codex Vaticanus. But they did not hold them in mind with that passive objectivity which romanticists ascribe to the scientific mind. That is to say, they did not hold them in mind as a chemist might hold two elements in the focus of his attention. The sound analogy is that of a theologian who writes on many doctrines but never forgets Total Depravity and the Unconditional Election of the Saints. As in theology, so in Hort's theory, the majority of individuals walk through the broad gate and are lost souls; only a few are the elect. Westcott and Hort preferred the text supported by a minority, by codex Vaticanus and a few friends; they rejected the reading supported by the vast majority of witnesses."[163]

Were these rules made to get rid of the TR? Were the scribes really as bad copiers as these rules imply? Several questions need to be asked about these rules.

Should Shorter and Harder Readings Be Preferred?

Are the shorter and harder readings really the preferred method to establish the text? Are these sound reasons for the selection of "good readings"? Wide use of the shorter readings would not allow scribes to make accidental omissions and use of harder readings could result in many instances of unintelligible texts. Therefore it is obvious these rules cannot be applied without the use of common sense.

Would not one expect the apostles and their associates to write in a clear, easy-to-read style? Surely they were not clumsy and unrefined writers who used short and hard-to-understand language. This raises the question, Were deliberate changes made to improve their text? Does the Byzantine text show evidence of added words?

Clark was one of the first to challenge the "shorter readings" concept after studying Cicero's oration. "The evidence yielded by such researches is not favourable to the hypothesis of extensive interpolation."[164] This study showed accidental omissions were

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[163] Ibid., p. 64.

[164] Albert C. Clark, *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914, p. 10. See also pp. 20, 21.

much more common than scribal interpolation, and sometimes whole lines were omitted.

Clark then examined the shortest texts found in several B and ℵ passages. "Number of character" for the Matthew 20:28; Luke 5:14; John 5:4; 7:53-8:11; Mark 16:9-20 passages showed "that the passages defend each other, and that the theory of interpolation is less likely than that of accidental omission." In these cases, he believes whole column(s) or page(s) in an archetype were omitted.[165] He also gives data for a suspected Luke 23:34 and 38 passage to show that 42 letters or two lines were omitted.[166]

Clark's second study again showed scribes often omitted one or more lines.[167] When he applied his "Longer Reading" to the Gospels and Acts, he concluded the Western text was better than Westcott and Hort's Alexandrian text.[168]

Pickering wrote that

> Actually, a look at a good apparatus or at collations of MSS reveals that the "Byzantine" text-type is frequently shorter than its rivals. Sturz offers charts which show that where the "Byzantine" text with early papyrus support stands against both the "Western" and "Alexandrian" it adds 42 words and omits 36 words in comparison to them. The "Byzantine" comes out somewhat longer but the picture is not lopsided. Among the added words are 9 conjunctions and 5 articles but among the omitted are 11 conjunctions and 6 articles, which would make the "Byzantine" less smooth than its rivals.[169]

The shorter reading principle has been questioned more recently by Royce.[170] He found the textual "critic is free to choose that reading which 'seems' best, and thus to introduce what often appear

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[165] Ibid., pp. 25-26.
[166] Ibid., p. 27.
[167] Albert C. Clark, *The Descent of Manuscripts*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
[168] Albert C. Clark, *The Primitive Text of the Gospels and Acts*, Oxford, 1914.
[169] Pickering, op. cit., p. 222.
[170] James R. Royce, "Scribal Habits in the Transmission of New Testament Texts," pp. 139-61, in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, ed., *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*, Berkeley, Cal.: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, Graduate Theological Union, 1979.

arbitrary choices of one reading instead of another."[171] He summarizes, "Such findings raise serious questions about the truth of the principle that the shorter reading is to be preferred, and at the very least suggest that the simple statement of principle (even with the noting of certain exceptions) is an inadequate guide to the earliest period of the transmission of the New Testament text."[172]

Colwell wrote in "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P^{45}, P^{66}, P^{75}"[173] that the habits of each scribe in a singular reading was to make certain types of errors. "Colwell found that all three scribes of the early papyri had a marked tendency to omit words."[174] He wrote that

> as an editor the scribe of P^{45} wielded a sharp axe. The most striking aspect of his style is its conciseness. The dispensable word is dispensed with. He omits adverbs, adjectives, nouns, participles, verbs, personal pronouns—without any compensating habit of addition. He frequently omits phrases and clauses. He prefers the simple to the compound word. In short, he favors brevity. He shortens the text in at least fifty places in *singular readings alone*. But he does not drop syllables or letters. His shortened text is readable.[175]

Colwell wrote that "a half dozen times" the scribe of P^{75}:

> chooses brevity. . . . The best example is John 12:38 where instead of "the word which he said" the redundant "which is said" is omitted. . . . One of his habits is to omit personal pronouns; he drops more than a dozen and adds one.[176]

In general Colwell found the scribe of P^{66} wild in copying. This often led to shorting the text. Colwell summarized the P^{66} scribe's habits: "He has an inclination towards omissions, it is not 'according to knowledge,' but is whimsical and careless, often leading to nothing but nonsense."[177]

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[171] Ibid., p. 145,
[172] Ibid., p. 155.
[173] Ernest C. Colwell, *Studies in Methodolgy in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969, p. 112. Referred to by Royce in O'Flaherty, op. cit., p. 154.
[174] Royce, op. cit., p. 154
[175] *Studies*, op. cit., pp. 118, 119.
[176] Ibid., p. 121.
[177] Ibid., p. 123.

What mechanism would account for a shortening of the text? Colwell answers this:

> The leap from the same to the same is a familiar phenomenon to all students of manuscripts. It is really the case of the misplaced scribe. The scribe loses his place, looks around and finds the same word, or at least the same syllable or letter, and starts from there. If he looks ahead to find his place, the result is a gap in the text. . . .
> P^{66} has 54 leaps forward, and 22 backwards. . . .
> P^{75} has 27 leaps forward, and 10 backwards,
> P^{46} has 16 leaps forward, and 2 backwards.
> From this it is clear that the scribe looking for his lost place looked ahead three times as often as he looked back. In other words, the loss of position usually resulted in a loss of text, an omission.[178]

Colwell and Tune commented about the work of correctors in a study of John 11:

> The largest single cause of the singulars in our set of readings is the omission or the contraction of words (about 65 per cent of the instances). In order, the other causes are: spelling or inflectional differences, substitution of other words, and addition of other words (seldom).[179]

The corrector's work shows the scribes often made omissions; that is, they made the text shorter but seldom longer.

Kilpatrick writes:

> When we consider the statement, "the shorter reading is preferable," can we see any reason, apart from repetition and tradition, why it should be right or wrong? We can produce reasons for thinking sometimes that the longer text is right and sometimes that the shorter text is right, but that will not demonstate our maxim.[180]

The most that can be said about the "shorter reading" theory is that scribes often deleted words. As Royce wrote:

> Such findings raise serious questions about the truth of the principle that the shorter reading is to be preferred, and at the very least suggest that the simple statement of the principle

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[178] Ibid., p. 112.
[179] Ibid., p. 62.
[180] G. D. Kilpatrick, "Griesbach and the Development of Text Criticism," a paper given at Griesbach Bicentennial Colloquium, Munster, July 26-31, 1976, p. 6.

> (even with noting of certain exceptions) is an inadequate guide to the earliest period of the transmission of the New Testament text. What one has are shorter texts and longer texts, and one must have some justification for making the claim that scribes have lengthen the shorter one rather than shorten the longer one.[181]

Royce gives examples of the text being shortened with “no good reason.”

The implication of scribes’ shortening a text has major implications on acceptance of the *generally* shorter Alexandrian text. We write “generally” shorter because it would be unfair to call it *the* shorter text. Wallace notes that out of the 6,577 differences between the *Majority Text*[182] (the Byzantine text) and the Alexandrian text (UBS^3, NA^{26}), in places the Alexandrian text is longer and 1,589 where it is shorter,[183] or 29% of the time it is shorter. Wallace writes, “One might, with some justification, wonder why the textual critics responsible for UBS^3 seem to suspend this canon [shorter text is the best] almost exactly as many times as the Byzantine text had shorter readings (i.e., if the Western readings are not in the purview of the discussion).”[184] This observation shows their prejudices against the Byzantine text.

The question may be asked, Were many of the Alexandrian shorter readings due to scribal errors? Also, it may indicate the middle of the road Byzantine text is better than the shorter Alexandrian and the longer Western texts.

There may be another explanation for the differences in text length. Did the authors make different editions of the manuscripts? We know that modern authors often revise their books. The New Testament authors may likewise have made revisions. It is highly unlikely there would be so few text-types if they were caused by scribal correction. Scribal correction surely would have

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181 Royse, op. cit., 1979, p. 155.

182 Zane C. Hodge and Arthur L. Farstad, editors, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985.

183 Daniel B. Wallace, Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text, Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary and Galaxie Software, 1997, p. 277.

184 Ibid., footnote 33.

caused hundreds and hundreds of text-types. Blass has suggested that Luke brought out two editions of his Gospel in order to account for the Western text to be 8.5 percent longer than the Alexandrian.

Hort wrote, as mentioned earlier, the Byzantine texts "run smoothly and easily in form.”[185] Instead of this being a mark against the Byzantine text, isn’t this what would be expected of the apostles’ writings? Few would think that their writings would be rough and hard-to-read. Salmon wrote that Hort's harder readings “as a note of genuineness is a reading implies error on the part of a sacred writer.”[186] It would be more natural to expect harder reading to come about though scribes dropping out words. Thus the two chief “shorter” and “harder” criteria go together as signs of scribal errors instead of as a sign of originality.

In summary, these rules at best must be applied very carefully to individual texts and are not sound principles to accept or reject certain text-types. Westcott and Hort’s use of them to choose the best text-type is inappropriate.

Harmonization

Hort claimed in the Syrian (i.e., Byzantine) text-type, “New omissions are rare. . . . New interpolations on the other hand are abundant, most of them being due to harmonistic or other assimilations.”[187] This is another Westcott-Hort assertion given without significant statistical analysis.

Conclusions about harmonization can only be arrived at after extensive statistical studies of the text-types are made. These studies are time consuming and are difficult to do because the original autograms surely contain similar wording.

There are good reasons to expect harmonization in the apostles’—or their close associates’—writings. The apostles spent three years with the Master Teacher and would have been able to recall Jesus’ homespun teachings from memory. Today we take notes to remember things, but two thousand years ago people relied more on their memories than we do today, and recalling

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[185] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction,* pp. 115-16.
[186] Salmon, op. cit., p. 26.
[187] Hort, op. cit., p. 135.

was easier for them. Thus remembering Jesus' teachings word for word was not an extraordinary matter for the apostles. In fact, we should expect them to record the same events in generally harmonized words, but as we know verbatim recording was not a common practice when the New Testament was written. The above suggests it would be absurd to expect the harmony in the Gospels to be the result of later scribal corrections and editing.

The Alexandrian text-type supporters believe that textual improvements and harmonization in the Byzantine text came about through scribal editing before the New Testament books became accepted as Scripture. But as we have seen earlier, the New Testament books were recognized as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16) very early. This, in combination with the Christians being familiar with the Jew's attitude towards Scripture, scribes would hardly have made changes to improve the text. They knew if such changes were discovered their work would be destroyed.

The difference between the major text-types could not have come about by the accumulative effect of individual scribal changes. If this was the case, surely more text-types would have developed in various local areas.

Wisselink

To better understand harmonization, let us look at Wisselink's extensive studies of harmonization.[188] He studied the following parallel texts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew	Mark	Luke
4:1-5:16	1:12-3:30	4:1-6:49
7:1-12:45	4:35-6:13	10:1-11:54
19:16-22	10:17-22	18:18-23
21:1-27	11:1-33	19:28-20:8
27:57-28:8	15:42-16:8	23:50-24:12

[188] Willem F. Wisselink, *Assimilation* as a criterion for the establishment of the text. A comparative study on the basis of passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke, Kampen: Kok, 1989.

The best representatives of each text-type were studied. [189] These are list in the following table.

Manuscripts	Text-type	Aland's Category
S and B	Alexandrian	I
S^c (corrected)	Alexandrian	
33	Alexandrian	II
Θ	Caesarean	II
W	Various	III
D	Western	IV
A	Byzantine	III but should be V
Ω	Byzantine	V
Hodges and Farstad (i.e. minuscules)	Byzantine	V
TR	Byzantine	V

The percent assimilations Wisselink found in the studied scriptures are compared to Aland and Nestle findings below:[190]

Investigator	Ave.	S^*	S^c	B	Θ	33	W	D	A	Ω	Hod	TR
Wisselink	37.9	34	36	31	40	41	37	43	38	40	40	40
Aland-13	5.6	4	3	1	7	6	7	11	7	6	6	6
Nestle-26	4.3	3	2	1	5	4	4	9	5	5	5	5

Aland-13 and Nestle-26 show that D had the most assimilation, and B and S the least. A, Ω, Hodges, and TR were in-between. Note the Alexandrian 33 harmonization is close to the Byzantine manuscripts.

Aland and Nestle's found just over 10 percent of what Wisselink found. The difference is due to how they are counted (large additions vs. significant wording vs. minor additions [add/omit a pronoun]). It may also be due in part to an unconscious effort not to admit there are harmonizations in the Alexandrian text. Con-

[189] Ibid., p. 64.
[190] Idid., p. 77.

clusions of Aland-Nestle text-type are below, at, and above the averages.

As noted above, 37.9 percent was average for assimilations found in all verses. Some of Wisselink's conclusions are:

1. All manuscripts had assimilations. The Vaticanus (B) had the smallest number, yet it was a significant 31 percent. Bezae (D) had the greatest number, 43 percent. The others (P^{45}, P^{75}, Koridethianus (Θ), 33, Washingtonianus (W), Alexandrinus (A), TR) were in-between the two. Note that the highly acclaimed Alexandrian 33 has more than the Byzantine has.
2. The greatest number of assimilations occurred in Matthew (45 percent), with Mark and Luke slightly lower (35 percent).
3. Nothing about age or value of any text-type can be concluded from assimilation. It "is methodologically not based on sound foundations"[191] to call the Byzantine text inferior.

It is apparent from Wisselink's investigation that assimilation cannot be used to throw out the Byzantine text.

Sound scholarship would not try to generalize characteristics of a text-type by giving a few examples. Scholars can easily find harmonization in both the Byzantine texts and the Alexandrian texts, but citing a few of such examples proves little. Conclusions of Wisselink's more thorough study should be more convincing.

These conclusions support Zuntz's statement that "it seems to me unlikely that the Byzantine editors ever altered the text without manuscript evidence. They left so many hopelessly difficult places unassailed! Their method, I submit, was selection rather that conjecture."[192] Thus such editorial revising should not be expected, but it should not be surprising that scribes dropped out text when copying and took one of these poor manuscripts to far off Egypt.

As mentioned, the Byzantine text-type has more harmonization between the Gospels than the Alexandrian text-type, but not a significant amount. Studies of classics show that harmonized text is generally a sign of later editing, but what applies to the classics manuscripts does not necessarily apply to Scripture. It is a different

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[191] Ibid., pp. 92, 93.
[192] Gunther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, London: Oxford, 1953, p. 55.

type of writing and covers a shorter time period, with many more manuscripts. Secondly, the authors of the Gospels were generally writing about a common understanding of Jesus' ministry under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They surely would have not consciously sought to revise His words. As a matter of fact, increased harmony should be a sign of manuscript accuracy.[193]

In summary, the Byzantine's greater harmonization should be considered a proof of its originality and not a weakness of the text-type.

Examples of Harmonization Studies

Fee challenged anyone to show that two test passages in Mark (1:2 and 13:14) were not "Matthew/Mark harmonizations," and that the "harder" Alexandrian reading was not the best text-type.[194] We would like to review Robinson's response to this challenge.[195] His study shows the Byzantine harmonization can be defended.

Before looking at Fee's arguments, let us mention the significant manuscript support for both text-types. The UBS states that the "Isaiah" reading is supported by fourth century ℵ, B; fifth D; eighth L; ninth Δ and θ Uncials; is found in f^1, 33, 205, 565, 700, 892, 1071, 1241, 1243, 2427 minuscules; in the P^{53} papyrus. The UBS states that the Byzantine text is supported by the fifth century A, W; sixth P, ∑, E; and ninth F, G, H Uncials; f^{13}, 28, 180, 579, 597, 1006, 1010, 1292, 1342, 1424, 1505 minuscules.

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[193] Note that this is often done with the differences found in Christ's sermons recorded in Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6:20-49. Those doing so overlook the fact these are two different sermons. The first is described as occurring on a mountain (Matt. 5:1) and the second on a plain (Luke 6:17).

[194] Gordon D. Fee, "The Majority Text and the Original Text of the New Testament," Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of the New Testament Textural Criticism*, Studies and Documents 45, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, pp. 182-208.

[195] Maurice A. Robinson, "Two Passages in Mark: A Critical Test for the Byzantine-Priority Hypothesis," Wake Forest, Ga.: *Faith & Mission*, Spring 1996, pp. 66-111.

The important support is really Byzantine's A, W, P, ∑, E, and Irenaeus (2 of 3 places) against ℵ, B, D, and P^{53}. There are insignificant time differences between these MSS; their age difference may be as little as fifty years. This small time difference does not really count; what is important is the age of the manuscripts' text. Since nothing is known about the generations between either text-type and the originals, neither phrase can claim to be the best due to manuscript support. And any age advantage for the Alexandrian is more than offset by the Egyptian favorable climate effect on the history of the text.

Fee's Arguments Addressed

Fee's gives his argument for the Alexandrian Mark 1:2 "in Isaiah the prophet" reading against the Byzantine "in the prophets" reading in five points. Let us take a closer look at these issues. In doing this we will first list his point, followed by a discussion:

(1) "This [the Isaiah reading] is found in all the Church Fathers before Photius (d. 895), except for one citation in Irenaeus."[196]

Let us review the Church Fathers' support. The UBS states Church Father support for Byzantine's "in the prophets" is found in second century Irenaeus (Latin 2 of 3) and Origen (Latin). Support for the Alexandrian's "Isaiah" in found in Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202; Greek 1 place, Latin 1 of 3 places) and Origen (3 of 4 places), Serapion, Epiphanius, Severian, Hesychius, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine; other Church Fathers also quoted it.[197]

As far as Photius goes, Birdsall writes, "The text of the gospels used by Photius in the ninth century is Caesarean rather than the Byzantine type."[198] As a side point, Wisselink estimated Photius' text in Acts and the epistles to be less than 70 percent Byzantine, suggesting this text-type was not in unanimous use in Constantinople.

Fee believed that it is highly unlikely Irenaeus' "in the prophets" is due to later scribal correction since Irenaeus used it to support his point. For instance, after quoting from Mark, Irenaeus writes,

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[196] Fee, p. 197.

[197] Ibid., pp. 197-98.

[198] J. Neville Birdsall, "The text of the Gospels in Photius," *Journal of Theology Studies*, 7, 1956, pp. 42-55, 190-98, quoted by Wisselink, *Assimulation*, p. 23.

"Plainly does the commencement of the Gospel quote the words *of the holy prophets*, and point out Him . . . whom *they* confessed as God and Lord" (*Against Heresies*, 3.10.5; cf. 3.16.3; 3.11.4). If scribes changed Mark's "in the prophets," they would have to also rewrite Irenaeus' commentary.[199]

The one place (*Against Heresies*, 3.11.18) where Irenaeus has the "Isaiah" reading, he does not use the name "Isaiah" in his commentary. Thus a scribe may have changed the Byzantine text to identify the obvious verbatim Isaiah 40:3 quotation. The scribe was surely familiar with this source since the same quotation appears in Matthew 3:3 and Luke 3:4.[200] Mark used "Isaiah" only once (7:6), and there it is imbedded in Jesus' speech. When Mark quotes Isaiah in Mark 4:12, 11:17, 12:32, he does not identify the source as being Isaiah. He made about ten other allusions to Isaiah, and in none of these did he name the source. Thus his style does not support him writing "Isaiah the prophet" in 1:2.[201] Mark's style stands in sharp contrast to the other Gospels. Matthew quotes "Isaiah" six times, John four, and Luke two. The important link is that each uses "Isaiah" to identify the Isaiah 40:3 quotation once. Thus it would be easy for scribes to harmonize the less used Mark 1:2 to these other "more used" Gospels by adding "in Isaiah the prophet."[202]

Jeremiah in Matthew 27:9

We can learn more about correcting "mistakes" in identifying Old Testament sources by looking at Matthew 27:9. This verse identifies Matthew's quotation as from "Jeremiah" when it appears to be from "Zechariah." This "mistake" was widely known, and very few scribes "corrected" it. The few that corrected it did not identify it correctly themselves. Thirteen changed the source to "by the prophets," eight to "Zechariah," and two to "Isaiah."[203] Augustine knew of this difficulty, and he was "not satisfied with it [correcting the source]; and the reason is, that a majority of codices contained the name Jeremiah, and that those critics who have studied the Gospel with more than usual care in the Greek

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[199] Robinson, p. 71.
[200] Ibid., p. 71.
[201] Ibid., p. 75.
[202] Ibid., pp. 74-75.
[203] Ibid., p. 77.

copies, report that they have found it stand so in more ancient Greek exemplars."[204] Thus we see this early church leader would not make a wording change without studying old manuscripts and choosing the majority reading. He knew of the "harder" rule and favoring the reading that best explains the origin of all other reading, but he would not allow these to overrule the majority of older manuscript sources.

If it were proper for scribes to make corrections, they would have corrected this source identification. Since they did not change the text, we suspect they did not change the Mark 1:2 source identification. Scribes respected God's Word and were not in the habit of changing it without manuscript support. Applying what we learned from Matthew to Mark 1:2, we should expect scribes to correct its minor "difficulty."

In case an Alexandrian supporter is prone to claim Matthew 27:9 was overlooked, it is doubtful since this passage is found in the most widely used Gospel. Since this Byzantine text was not "corrected" to make a harder text easier, why should we conclude the "harder" Mark 1:2 passage was changed to the easier Byzantine "in the prophets" reading? There is no reason anyone would make the change.

Irenaeus

The above observations show the easy change for scribes to make was to harmonize Mark to the other Gospels. This second century quotation by Irenaeus gives significant and weighty evidence for the early existence of the Byzantine text.

Another factor in the lack of Byzantine readings in the Church Fathers is that the damp climate caused the papyrus on which they wrote to deteriorate. Also, early persecution destroyed many of their writing.

Versions

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[204] Augustine, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Ser. 1, ed. Philip Schaff; Vol. 6, *St. Augustine*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Reprinted Ed., 1974, p. 191.

The “Isaiah” reading “is the reading of all the early versions (Latin, Coptic, most Syrian, Gothic, Georgian), except the Harklean Syriac (ca. 615) and the Armenian (ca. 405).”[205]

Let us look at the "version" support in more detail. The UBS 4th edition[206] states the Byzantine “in the prophets” reading is supported by Syriac (h) (7th century), Coptic (4th-5th century), Vulgate, versions, and marginal reading in the Bohairic MS, Ethiopic, and Slavic versions, and many Lectionaries. The "Isaiah" reading is supported by the Armenian, Georgian, most Old Latin MSS, the Vulgate, the Peshitto, and Palestinian Syrica, versions, and in the margin of the Haklean Syriac versions.

Isaiah is “the reading of the earliest MSS East (Aleph ℵ, B) and West (D, OL), as well as several others.” “The earliest Greek evidence for [“in the prophets”] reading is the Codex Alexandrian (A) and the Codex Washington (W), both fifth century; thereafter it is found in several MSS of the ninth century.”[207]

Earlier we mentioned the manuscript support for either text-type is significantly greater. The important support is really Byzantine’s A, W, P, ∑, E, and Irenaeus (2 or 3 places) against the Alexandrian ℵ, B, D, and P^{53}.

Difficult Reading

The “Isaiah" reading is clearly an illustration of “the most difficult reading being preferred as original.”[208]

The case for Fee’s assertion that the Alexandrian text is correct since the Byzantine “in the prophets” represents an easy improvement to the text is not as simple as he would make it. If one makes an in-depth study of the passage, he will find the Byzantine reading is clearly the more difficult reading.

The reason for this is that Mark 1:2b is more an allusion to Malachi 3:1 than a quotation. When Mark’s “before your face who shall prepare your way before you” statement is compared to Malachi 3:1

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[205] Fee, p. 198.

[206] Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavdopoulos, Carlo M. Martin, and Bruce M. Metzger, editors, *The Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, Fourth Revised Edition, 1983.

[207] Robinson, p. 69.

[208] Ibid., p. 69.

LXX's "he will carefully seek out a way before me," it is easy to see how the scribe(s) responsible for the "Isaiah" reading missed this Malachi allusion. This is clearly feasible since Malachi is never mentioned by name in New Testament, so it is easy to see how scribes would not think of Malachi.[209]

A scribal change to "Isaiah the prophet" could have easily occurred since Isaiah 40:3 is a nearly verbatim quotation of the LXX, the Bible of the apostles and early church. Since "Isaiah" is used elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Luke 3:4), it would be easy for them to identify the quotations as being only from Isaiah. Thus the Alexandrian "Isaiah" statement is the easiest reading.

Malachi 3:1 is also alluded to in Matthew 11:10 and Luke 7:27 in the same "NT format" as used in Mark 1:2b. Because of this, if the Byzantine text's "in the prophets" was original, a perceptive and alert scribe(s) may have easily overlooked the Malachi source. Thinking only one verbatim quotation was present, the scribe(s) appears to have yielded to temptation to identify the source only as "Isaiah the prophet," thinking this was more accurate and gave more detail.

"Isaiah the prophet" identification also followed the practice of identifying Isaiah 40:3 in Matthew 3:3 ("For this is that which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying . . ."); Luke 3:4 ("As it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet, saying . . ."); and John 1:23 ("Just as Isaiah the prophet said . . ."). "The Eusebian canons also provided a quick and easy references to these parallel passages. This would especially facilitate the task of post-Nicene scribes who possessed a true 'harmonistic bent.'"[210]

Another significant "style" consideration is "Isaiah" is almost a non-Markan term since Mark quoted Isaiah by name only once (Mark 7:6), and three other times (4:12; 17:17; 12:32) and in ten allusions the name is not mentioned. Therefore it is easy to believe Mark did not use it in 1:3. In contrast to Mark, Isaiah's name was mentioned six times in Matthew, four times in John, and twice in Luke.

In summary, there is good reason to believe the Byzantine text was changed to the Alexandrian format by scribe(s) identifying the

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[209] Ibid., p. 73.

[210] Ibid., p. 74.

source. The use of Isaiah's name in these three passages suggests, and reasonability, this is possible. And even if some scribe(s) recognized a textual change, he could accept it as an accurate statement because of the practice of naming the most important source, in this case "Isaiah." Thus there is no need to assume that the Byzantine text of Mark 1:2 was harmonized to the other Gospels. The reverse was more likely. Robinson writes, "The Byzantine reading alone, in face of the obvious harmonistic opportunities to parallel passages coupled with the allusive citation of Malachi, becomes in actuality the reading more difficult to maintain."[211]

Fee believed someone changed the text to "in the prophets" to bring attention to the dual authorship of the quotation, and this became the majority reading. Robinson responds to this assertion by writing:

> A historical non sequitur accompanies such a line of reasoning, however; such a "corrective" change—by whoever, whenever, and wherever such originally occurred—at some point in history became regarded as so appealing that it spread like wildfire to all subsequent scribes, and eventually so dominated other competitors (even if competing readings had the "history-of-use" and claims of "autograph authenticity" on their side) that the "original" reading of "Isaiah" rapidly died out in the course of manuscript transmission. Such a process cuts directly against the grain of traditional conservation in regard to the preservation of sacred texts (especially after the early establishment of gospel canonicity). The presumed reconstruction simply cannot correspond to the known facts of history.[212]

Robinson then pointed out that scribes were intent on preserving the accuracy of the Gospel, and therefore would not perpetuate such a change in the text. We know if scribes accepted such changes, the "harmonization" difficulties would have disappeared from the Gospels.

Matthew 27:9 is an example of a difficulty not "corrected." This text reads "spoken through Jeremiah the prophet" when the quotation seems to come from Zechariah 11:13. Here no "correcting" scribe(s) changed the harder text to the easier "Zechariah" one.[213] This example shows scribes did not habitually

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[211] Ibid., p. 75.
[212] Ibid., p. 76.
[213] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

correct texts to "easier" reading ones. The few manuscripts that were changed were not consistently changed. "By the prophets" revision is found in Φ 33 157 (1579) l$^{1074\text{-}1/2}$ it$^{a,\ b}$ sy$^{a\ p}$ vg^{ms} bo^{ms} slav^{mss} Diatessaron MSS$^{acc\ to\ Augustine}$; the "Zechariah" revision is found in 22 l$^{858\text{-}1/2}$ sy$^{h\ mg}$ arm^{mss} Origen$^{1st\text{-}com}$ Jerome^{com} Augustine^{com}; and the "Isaiah" revision is found in 21 it^{1}.

Augustine's comments on Matthew 27:9 give additional light on how these "problems" were handled. He wrote:

> Let [us] first take notice of the fact that this ascription of the passage to Jeremiah is not contained in all the codices of the Gospel, and that some of them state simply that it was spoken "by the prophet." It is possible, therefore, to affirm that those codices deserve rather to be followed which do not contain the same Jeremiah. For these words were certainly spoken by a prophet, only that prophet was Zechariah.[214]

Augustine

Robinson notes the above comment surely fits Fee's mindset of the "typical" Byzantine scribe, and it was true even in Augustine's days (A.D. 354-430). These corrections to easier readings were available, yet the Byzantine scribes were not interested in them and did not make any effort to correct their manuscripts to "easy" readings; they were rejected. Why were they rejected? As mentioned earlier, Augustine accepted the text with "a majority of codies" and with "the more ancient Greek exemplars" support.[215] He supported the "difficult reading" only after he found it in the *majority* of the manuscripts. He does not suggest outright acceptance of the "more difficult reading," the Mark 1:2 reading, without considering the majority support. Augustine also favored accepting the reading that best explains the origin of the other readings: "there was no reason why this name should had been added, and a corruption thus created; whereas there was certainly an intelligible reason for erasing the name from so many of the codices."[216]

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[214] Cited in Robinson, p. 77.
[215] Cited in Robinson, p. 78.
[216] Ibid., p. 78.

As we seen, the Byzantine scribes did not correct an "obvious" mistake in their favorite Gospel, nor did they propagate the few corrections that were made. When this is applied to Mark 1:2, Robinson writes:

> There is thus less reason to accept Fee's 'more difficult' explanation in the case of Mark 1:2. It is easier in both cases to simply accept the Byzantine reading as original, since a number of plausible reasons exit to explain subsequent alternation by the framer(s) of the Alexandrian and/or Western texttypes. If "harmonization" indeed occurred in the case of Mark 1:2 because the Malachi "quotation" was either not recognized or was perceived by some as no more than an allusion, then what Fee has urged as "more difficult" is actually seen to be the "easier" reading.[217]

In conclusion, there are adequate reasons to believe the Alexandrian is an easy harmonization to make, and there is no reason to believe a "sharp-eyed" scribe recognized the Mark 1:2 allusion coming from Malachi and changed the "Israel" reading to "the prophets."

"Spoken of through the prophet Daniel" Mark 13:14

In the second test passage, Mark 13:14, the Byzantine text phrase "spoken of through the prophet Daniel" is missing in the Alexandrian text. Fee believes this is an example of harmonization. He supports this by the following assertions:

1. The Gospel of Matthew was the most cited and used of the Synoptic Gospels.
2. Mark's text has almost twice as many variants involving harmonization as does Matthew or Luke, probably because Mark was the least used of the Gospels.[218] The textual support of the shorter reading is: ℵ B D L W Ψ 33 565 700 892 1542 $sy^{s[c]}$ it vg cop^{sa} $cop^{bo\text{-}pt}$ cop arm $Augustine^{1st}$ Hippolytus. The longer reading finds support in: A X Y Γ Δ Θ Π Σ Φ 0104 f^{1} f^{13} 22 28 157 543 579 1071 Byz l^{184} vg^{mss} sy^{p} sy^{h} (it^{k}) it^{sur} it^{c}

[217] Ibid., pp. 78-79.
[218] Ibid., p. 80.

> it^{f} it^{l} it^{n2} it^{q} eth $cop^{bo\text{-}pt}$. There is little dispute about this support.[219]

Fee understated the significance of the versions by writing that some of the words of the longer Byzantine are missing “in most of the Latin evidence (c k are the only exceptions).”[220] The parenthetical mention of c and k appears to make them unimportant, and the 12th-century c may not be a weighty witness. Robinson points out that Fee did not mention two Old Latin manuscripts (5th century it^{a} and 7-8th century it^{l}) that give more weighty support to the longer Byzantine reading. The parenthetically mentioned k, the Codex Bobbiensis, is a highly significant 4th-5th century witness. Metzger writes that it^{k}, “the most important witness to the African Old Latin. . . . agrees very closely with the quotations made by St. Cyprian of Carthage (about A.D. 250). According to E. A. Lowe, k shows paleographical marks of having been copied from a *second-century* papyrus.”[221]

This second century witness to k as a Byzantine text, Robinson points out, is similar to Irenaeus’ secondary support of Mark 1:2. This deflates Fee’s statement that Augustine is “the only early Church Father to mention the Markan passage . . . who explicitly says these words are missing in Mark.”[222] If the Byzantine has a second century witness, the issue of Church Fathers’ not mentioning the Byzantine "Daniel" reading in the *least*-used Gospel is an unimportant point. Let us now turn to internal evidence for alleged Byzantine harmonization of Mark’s "Daniel" reading. Two terms are used to describe importation of words from another Gospel. They are "harmonization" and "assimilation." Robinson first clarified “harmonization.” He writes that it “implies a scribal procedure to place parallel passages in logical agreement by removing presumed difficulties and/or apparent contradictions from the text. The creation of an identity of wording by the direct importation of words from one gospel into another is more properly termed ‘assimilation.’[223] The present case specifically involves a matter of

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[219] Ibid., p. 81.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Metzger, *Text*, p.73.
[222] Robinson, p. 81.
[223] Ibid., p. 82.

alleged identical phraseology created or favored by the Byzantine era scribes. First, lets review Fee's claim that all known witnesses in Matthew read "spoken of through the prophet Daniel" and "in Mark . . . *these words* are missing."[224] "These words" implies he is writing about assimilation, that is, Mark's wording would be identical to Matthew's. The Greek shows that the wording of the Byzantine Matthew/Mark parallels is different. Matthew has "spoken of *through* (δια) the prophet Daniel" and Mark has "spoken of *by* (υπο) the prophet Daniel." This single-word difference shows that the passage is not an assimilation of Matthew. It is difficult to believe scribes who sought to assimilate Matthew's words into Mark would change this one word in a borrowed phrase for no apparent reason.[225]

There is no justification to think the Byzantine scribe(s) "harmonizators" made a deliberate change in Matthew's parallel passage to "by" (υπο) to agree with Mark's style. Mark never used spoken "by" a prophet, or for that matter "through," in any quotations or allusions to Old Testament prophets. Therefore such a change could never have been made for style reasons. "Through" is almost without exception a Matthean style. Matthew uses the term eleven times and "by" twice.[226] Mark's "by" is also not from Luke or John since they have no parallel passages.[227] Thus this one-word difference indicates no one assimilated or harmonized Mark to Matthew. It is interesting that this Matthew/Mark disharmony was harmonized in a few manuscripts. Some contain harmonization of Matthew's "through" to Mark's "by," and some in reverse changed Mark's "by" to "through." These did not involve any significant number of Byzantine manuscripts, and, as we know, it never had an influence on the majority. As Robinson writes, "The significance of their 'independence' in the present instance is clearly to illustrate the relative *lack* of wholesale textual assimilation as a 'normal' scribal characteristic."[228]

There is no apparent reason for anyone to *dis*harmonize the Matthean reading after importing it into Mark. It is easier to believe some Alexandrian scribes dropped the original phrase from Mark's

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[224] Ibid., p. 83.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid. p. 83, fn. 43.
[227] Ibid., p. 84.
[228] Ibid., p. 84.

Gospel because it offended them than to believe "the bent of the early church" was to harmonize.[229] This "harmonization tendency" is not common to the scribes of any era or texttype. The Mark 13:14 pericope shows that the Byzantine scribes did not harmonize manuscripts. Some of the non-Byzantine manuscripts show sporadic attempts to harmonize and precisely assimilate these Gospels. These attempts may not be textually significant, but they do show a "harmonization bent" among non-Byzantine scribes.

The alleged Mark/Matthew harmonization under discussion must be examined in light of the pericope. There are several Byzantine/UBS differences in the pericope. Robinson found twelve variants, and only three are possible “Byzantine harmonizations.” The lack of harmonization is this pericope shows the scribes did not “harmonize” the Byzantine text.

First there are possibly three Byzantine "harmonizations." Verse 14 Matthew’s εστως in Mark, against the Alexandrian εστηκοτα. Mark’s v. 18 reads the same as Matthew’s η φυγη υμων against the Alexandrian and Western omission.[230]

Robinson gives three examples of blatant harmonization among Alexandrean, Caesarean, and Western manuscripts with only limited support in Byzantine manuscripts. Where it was possible for the Byzantine scribes to make an easy harmonization, they almost unitedly resisted such an urge. In the pericope there are three cases where some Western and Caesarean manuscripts harmonized Matthew to Mark. In verse 15 Matthew’s τα; was changed to τιϖ to agree with Mark. Verse 19 Matthew’s ουφδ= was changed to Mark’s καις in MS 1574, and the reverse occurs in D, F, G, Θ, Σ, f^1, f^{13}, and 565.[231]

The leading Alexandrian witnesses did the same thing in three cases. $\aleph^c$, L, and 157 changed Matthew’s ου|ν in verse 14 to agree with Mark’s δε℘. MS 1574 did the reverse. Matthew’s verse 16 was changed to Mark’s by omitting δες in B, F, H 440, it^c, ss, bo, al. And Matthew’s verse 18 added Mark’s ε=ις τας in MSS N, Σ, Θ, 33, 517, and 700. In reverse Mark’s εις τα is omitted to agree with Mark in ℵ, D, 0235, 579, vg, al. This shows Alexandrian

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229 Ibid., p. 84.
230 Ibid., p. 87.
231 Ibid., pp. 88-89.

harmonization by assimilation is a frequent occurrence, and harmonization is common to all text-types.[232]

It needs to be emphasized that the above assimilation found only minimal support when it occurred, indicating that harmonizations were generally isolated occurrences and were not taken serious. Neither the Byzantine text nor the USB/Nestles accepted any of the above mentioned changes.

Robinson gives other examples of Alexandrian/Western text-type harmonizations where the Byzantine preserves *non*harmonizing text. These will be very briefly summarized here. In Mark 13:15, B, D, and many other Alexander supporters[233] changed Matthew's =επις to Mark's εις∀.[234] ℵ, B, D, etc., change Matthew 24:16's τα; ιϑμαςτια to Mark's το; ιϑμαςτιον. ℵ, B, D, etc., omits Mark 13:16's ω[ν to agree with Matthew.[235]

In this pericope there are four clear Alexandrian harmonizations against two hypothetical Byzantine ones. These Alexandrian harmonization changes were accepted by UBS over against the non-harmonization Byzantine readings. "Daniel" and other-mentioned Alexandrian harmonization shows the modern eclecticism changes of "Byzantine-harmonization" have little validity. The UBS's acceptance of Alexandrian harmonization may be due to these editors', as Westcott and Hort's, presumption that the Byzantine text-type was "late" and "secondary." Colwell's observation that "Hort has put genealogical binders on our eyes" can be seen again at work here.[236]

The above changes may be isolated cases, but the continual widespread acceptance of the Byzantine non-harmonization text argues strongly that they have their source in the original autographs. The disappearance of Alexandrian and Western text-types harmonization, during the flourishing advancement of the Byzantine text, seems to argue that the Alexandrian unique

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232 Ibid., p. 89.

233 Δ, Θ, Σ, f^1, 28, 517, 892, 1424, it^a, it^c, it^{f2}, vg, arm, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom

234 Robinson, p. 89.

235 Ibid., p. 90.

236 Ibid., p. 91.

readings came after the autographs. The Byzantine did not follow the Alexandrian text.[237]

Why did scribes refuse to perpetuate *new*-harmonization? The answer is simple. Robinson writes:

> Although some scribes engaged in such practices at varying times with varying degrees of involvement, the greater part of the scribes were careful not to alter deliberately the text of their exemplars as they copied. By cross-checking their copy against another exemplar or exemplars, the scribes would slowly but systematically eliminate the vagaries of divergent readings left to them in individual MSS by their fraternal predecessors.[238]

Robinson demonstrated that most assimilation and harmonization practices were not generally perpetuated, and that many Alexandrian harmonizations were not perpetuated in the Byzantine text. It appears harmonization by any one group of scribes is immaterial inasmuch as this practice was not accepted on a large scale. Scribes just were not blind perpetuators of harmonization.

> The evidence suggests that the "alleged harmonizations" charged against the Byzantine Textform appears not to be harmonization at all, but readings in lineal descent from the autographs. "Harmonization" created at a later date could hardly have been perpetuated by the aggregate of MSS when all the evidence here examined argues directly to the contrary. The Byzantine mass of MSS instead preserves a vast number of non-harmonizing readings over against the harmonizings readings present in the Alexandrian and Western text types.[239]

The majority text thus continued to be copied from generation to generation. Sporadic harmonization could not gain ground and would die out because scribes refused to tinker with the text. As more and more manuscripts became available to the scribes, they had a larger data base to check their exemplar against, and the few disharmonies were gradually worked out of the text-types; the majority text wiped out the inferior minority texts.

The preceding Matthew and Mark passages both have the same "let the reader understand." But in the phrase following the Daniel one, the Byzantine text for Matthew has "in the holy place" where Mark has "where we ought not."

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[237] Ibid., p. 92.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.

Fee's Questions

Textual critics look for reasons a text might have been changed. Thus Fee asked two questions that need to be dealt with. The first is: "Why did some early copyists choose to omit this phrase in Mark?"[240]

So is there an explanation why scribes may have omitted the Daniel passage? First, as Robinson has shown, the Daniel passage is not an harmonization. Fee's question thus relates to recessional activities of the Alexandrian and/or Western scribal omission of the "Daniel the prophet" phrase.[241]

There are differences between Mark's and Matthew's wording that may have caused scribes to omit the "Daniel the prophet" phase. The immediate text suggests a reason. Both the Alexandrian and Byzantine texts agree on Matthew and Mark's "abomination of Desolation" quotation from the Septuagint version of Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11, but the Alexandrian omits the "Daniel" reference. And both texts agree on the parenthetical admonition, "Let the reader understand." This statement, when taken in context, appears to be Jesus' own words. But there are differences in the immediate text. Matthew states the Abomination will stand "in the holy place," whereas Mark states "where he ought not." This disparity of where the Abomination would stand may have caused scribes to omit the "Daniel" phrase.[242] The Septuagint translation of Daniel 9:27 reads "and upon the temple an abomination of desolation." The "temple" here can be easy identified as the "holy place" (εν τοπω αγιω) from in Matthew. There is no passage in the Book of Daniel that says the abomination would stand "where he ought not" (οπου ου δει).The Alexandrian scribes who recognized that this phrase was not from Daniel may have been motivated to drop "spoken by the prophet Daniel" in order to preserve the integrity and credibility of Jesus, Mark, and Daniel. In contrast, the scribes handling the Byzantine text, as all scribes should have done, faithfully copied the wording without making changes. We have seen earlier how these scribes copied the difficult "Jeremiah" reading of Matthew 27:9 without change.

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[240] Fee, p. 199.
[241] Robinson, p. 93.
[242] Ibid.

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that manuscripts 544 and 1241 in Mark omitted "Daniel" and changed the "where he ought not" to Matthew's "in the holy place." Also, 1010 and sy[a] manuscripts omitted Matthew's "standing in the Holy Place" to avoid an "inaccuracy" charge being placed against Mark. These minority readings indicate that scribes sometimes made changes to protect the text. The Alexandrian scribes did to their text-type what a few scribes did to their manuscripts.

In summary, this explanation of the omission of "Daniel the prophet" in Mark is stronger than any alleged "harmonization" in the Byzantine text since there is no Daniel and Mark correlation in the context.[243]

Fee's Second Question

Fee's second question is: "And why [omit the "Daniel" phrase] only in Mark, but never in the more frequently used Matthew?" This question involves differences in the Synoptic Gospels. Let us review some of the differences in Matthean and Markan word order within the pericope were are studying.

Following are several observations involving the "Daniel" phrase. While there is little difference between the parallels in the pericope before us, there is far less uniformity in the preceding one. Mark's "Daniel" passage is preceded by "He that endures to the end, that one shall be saved." Matthew adds "and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness . . . and then shall the end come." Mark's "shall be preached" passage is placed earlier (13:10), but it omits the phrase "and then shall the end come." Mark also omits the closing "and then the end comes." Daniel (9:27 LXX), however, states "the Abomination of Desolation will exist until the end." It appears the two author's redaction purposes influenced their material. There is a close link between Matthew and Daniel due to Matthew's connecting "and then shall the end come" with the "abomination of Desolation" passage in the next verse. Thus his mention of "spoken by the prophet Daniel" and the location of the Abomination is quite appropriate.

In Mark there is no such close connection to Daniel. Mark's imprecise location, "stand where it ought not," could easily have caused some scribes to drop the "Daniel" identification from Mark's Gospel.

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[243] Ibid., p. 95

When one compares Matthew's and Mark's gospels, one needs to examine the textual rewording and textual relocation variations. This should involve seeing how the Alexandrian text reads in contrast to the Byzantine. Only when this is done can one have a more precise answer to the changes between these two Gospels. In the passage before us, we see Mark's less-specific details may have, as mentioned, caused some scribes to omit the "Daniel" passage in the Alexandrian Mark text. Thus it is plausible for a scribe to have changed Mark's text.

The Byzantine-priority Hypothesis

It should be noted that the Byzantine-priority hypothesis does not depend on precise answers to every individual variant, but on its theory of textual transmission. The Byzantine theory of harmonization gives a convincing account for its dominance and explains the divergent text-types. The Byzantine text has many *non*harmonization, *non*conflate, and "more difficult" readings that the eclectic hypothesis says should have disappeared a long time ago. This, along with the many harmonizations and easier readings found in the Alexandrian text, should also been carried over into the Byzantine text according to the eclectic hypotheses. The lack of these strongly suggests the Byzantine transmission hypothesis is correct. In summary, Robinson has provided significant information to show the viability of a pro-Byzantine hypothesis compared to modern eclecticism. There is no reason for scholars to reject the Byzantine text out of hand unless a convincing and consistent hypothesis is developed to replace the strong Byzantine one. Although Westcott and Hort's efforts needs to recognized,

> The steady disintegration, however, of many of their hypothetical assertions has weakened the impact of their basic theory and should properly call into question their textual conclusions. The paradox is the modern eclectic scholars retain Westcott and Hort's conclusions—especially regarding the supposed "late and inferior" nature of the Byzantine Textform—while abandoning Westcott and Hort's carefully constructed premises for nothing more certain than the shifting sand of subjective eclectic opinion. . . . Modern eclecticism is at best a "holding action." It has no firm destination and no certain end in sight regarding the recovery and restoration of the autograph text. In contrast, the Byzantine-priority position offers a greater degree of textual

> certainty—both in its premises and in its basic theory—than does any electric alternative.[244]

Eclectic Method

Since genealogy and other external evidences cannot recover the text, or even the text-type, the trend today is to direct attention to internal evidence. This method is called eclecticism "because the textual critic pays less attention to questions of date and families of manuscripts than to internal or contextual considerations. Consequently the editor of a text follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what one deemed to be the author's style or exigencies of transcriptional hazards."[245]

This method has been used by the RSV, NEB, NIV, and other translators. The text critics have applied it mainly to the Westcott-Hort text. It must be used with this text-type since there are so few supporting manuscripts and too much variation among those that do exist. Textual critics normally do not use the eclectic method over a wide range of texts, although these translators have occasionally done so.

This method has real limitations. Authors are not mechanical machines that write in one style. They can often change styles depending on the subject matter and also to improve readability. The text may have also been affected by the scribes' habits.

Another weakness of the way internal evidence is being used today is that it allows textual critics to stray from the Greek text, resulting in their determining the wording of God's Word. Thus internal evidence must be used very carefully, and it should not be used without the support of external evidence. Both exterior and internal evidence must be used together to prevent man's prejudices from influencing the Word.

In summary, the eclectic method pays more attention to internal considerations than to dates and text-types. This can be dangerous since it allows textual critics much free choice of wording without reference to the over 500 Greek manuscripts. This leaves man in authority and not the Holy Spirit. There has to be a better system than that now accepted by the scholars. There is a need to have

[244] Ibid., p. 98.
[245] Metzger, *The Text*, p. 175.

one that can gain the confidence of Christians because there is a need for a new English translation based on a Greek text acceptable to all.

Opposition

The KJV introduction states that whoever seeks to “opening and clearing of the word” is open to sharp criticism because men cannot abide to hearing of altering the Bible. Just as in 1600s, opposition quickly developed against the Westcott-Hort text when it came out.

Early opposition to the Westcott-Hort Greek text was lead by John W. Burgon (1813-88), Dean of Chichester in England. A contemporary of Tischendorf, he wrote *The Revision Revised* in 1883 and *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established* and *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospel*, both of which were published after his death in 1896. He could not understand how God would allow the text inspired by the Holy Spirit to be lost for some 1500 years. He preferred the text supported by the majority of the Greek manuscripts. His opponents did not accept his conservatism, and the “vehemence of his advocacy somewhat impacted”[246] his defense of the *Textus Receptus*. Yet his defense is much stronger and reasoned than pictured by his opponents, and well worth reading.

Another opponent of Westcott-Hort’s text, F. H. A. Scrivener, was widely respected for his scholarship. He objected to Westcott-Hort’s one-sided use the codex Vaticanus and codex Sinaiticus and their total rejection of the Syrian text.[247]

George Salmon was also critical of Westcott-Hort; he thought the Western text should have received more weight.[248]

After Burgon’s and Scrivener’s deaths, opposition almost ceased, and the Westcott-Hort text became accepted among scholars. During the twentieth century, the Westcott-Hort work has also received opposition. This time the opposition is wider, but most opponents are not seeking to restore the Textus Receptus. Why has this oppo-

[246] Ibid., p. 135.
[247] F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction in the Criticism of the New Testament*, 4th ed., ii, London: George Bell and Sons, 1894, p. 287f.
[248] George Salmon, *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, London, 1897, pp. 128f.

sition developed? Following is a review of both sides, starting with the early opposition.

Harry A. Sturz, a defender of the Byzantine text, believes it is neither the original nor a secondary text but an early "independent text that deserves as much attention and respect as the Alexandrian and 'Western' text-types." Sturz's study shows some 150 Byzantine readings that are supported by one or more early papyri. In relation to the Byzantine being an early text, Metzger asked, "Why do patristic writers prior to Chrysostom and Asterius show no acquaintance with the Byzantine text?" (The answer to this question, as mention earlier [page 120], is that we have no extensive writings from an early Church Father from the Antioch/Byzantine area.) This same question is asked of the Alexandrian text: "Why didn't the Greek church fathers use the Alexandrian text?" Metzger also wrote, "One must also ask whether the evidence of this or that Byzantine *reading* among the early papyri demonstrates the existence of the Byzantine *text-type*." So the arguments go back and forth. Everyone seeks to build their case, and the other side asks questions and rejects the other's view.[249]

The reader may wish to read Wilbur N. Pickering's *The Identity of the King James Text* and D. A. Carson's *The King James Version Debate* to better understand both sides of the text issue.

In conclusion, all the texts have value and none should be rejected and put aside. Metzger wrote, "By way of conclusion, let it be emphasized again that no single manuscript and no one group of manuscripts exists which the textual critic may follow mechanically. All known witnesses of the New Testament are to a greater-or-lesser extent mixed texts, and even the earliest manuscripts are not free from egregious errors."[250]

The text should not be considered a serious problem because all the Greek texts support the same doctrines, and most of the differences are minor. Concerning the struggle between the TR and the "critical" texts, Geisler and Nix wrote, "It should be pointed out that there is no substantial difference between it [TR] and the critical text. Their differences are merely technical, not doctrinal, for the variants are doctrinally inconsequential. . . . both texts convey

[249] Metzger, pp. 292-93.
[250] Metzger, p. 246.

the content of the autographs, even though they are separately garnished with their own minor scribal and technical differences."[251]

The Best Text According to the Scholars

First, let us state there were only limited "changes" introduced in the Greek New Testament text because there are only four text-types (some say only three because the Western is only the common man's copy). Which of these text-types is the best? Is the one based on the older Egyptian manuscripts better than the traditional Byzantine text (the TR is a version of this text)?

Today most scholars prefer the Alexandrian text (it is a significantly modified version of text published by Westcott and Hort in 1881-82) over the Byzantine text. Westcott and Hort claimed it was the *neutral* text, the nearly recovered Greek text. They won the battle for a new text—at least among scholars and Bible translation companies. But as Zuntz has pointed out, the textual critics agreement upon the Alexandrian text

> does not mean we have recovered the original text. It is due to the simple fact that [it] . . . follows one narrow section of the evidence, namely, the non-Western Old Uncials. . . . The modern criticism, by its disregard for the Western evidence, robs itself of one of the means for elucidating history. . . . The rejection en bloc of the "Byzantine text" similarly tends to rob us of a most helpful instrument.[252]

This Alexandrian win was helped by the selection of the text for the English Version published in 1881-85, which undoubtedly was influenced by Westcott and Hort, who served on the committee. It was also helped by the Nestles Greek New Testament switching to this text. Both of these factors helped establish the Alexandrian text as the "20th century *Textus Receptus."*

Wenger wrote that "modern textual critics agree almost to a man that to construct the most accurate text of the original New Testament which we possibly can, we need to study the pre-Byzantine readings and by comparing them discover what the original readings were."[253] Regardless of their claim, there are many issues that raise

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[251] Geisler and Nix, pp. 392-93.
[252] Zuntz, pp. 8-9.
[253] Wenger, p. 114.

questions about how close the textual critics came to the original text.

The Westcott-Hort text is built too much on two Egyptian manuscripts, Vaticanius and Sinaiticus. Although these two contain mainly the same omissions, there are important differences. For instance, the book order is different. Not only is the book order different, but the books themselves are different. Sinaiticus contains the Shepherd of Hermas and the Letter of Barnabas. The two books also show that Sinaiticus was not in the main stream of the Christian canon.

Today the Alexandrian type text is published in one text or wording but in two formats, one by Nestle-Aland, the other by the United Bible Society.

The first of these was made by Eberhard Nestle. "He compared the texts of Tischendorf (Gebhardt's stereotype edition of 1895) and of Westcott-Hort. When the two differed, he consulted a third edition for a deciding vote (at first Richard Francis Weymouth's second edition of 1892, and after 1901, Bernhard Weiss' 1894-1900 edition)."[254] Aland later notes, "This purely mechanical system of a majority text summarized the results of nineenth-century textual scholarship. It eliminated the extremes of Tischendorf (due to his partiality to ℵ) and of Westcott and Hort (with their partiality to B), especially after Weiss' edition was adopted. It produced a text that not only lasted seventy years, but on the whole truly represented the state of knowledge of the time."[255]

The Nestle text has developed through the years. Its 13th edition of 1927 was revised by Erwin Nestle and brought into greater conformity to the above mentioned majority principle. Earlier the Wurttemberg Bible Society permitted Eberhard Nestle only to make the most important changes required by Weiss' text.

Since 1950 Kurt Aland had responsibility for the Nestle text. Later, in 1955, he became apart of the GNT project to produce a new Greek text. After the first edition of the GNT was published in 1966, Aland, who was working on a Nestle-Aland revision, brought many of his ideas to the GNT committee and many were accepted. The editorial committee soon accepted Aland's suggestion to abandon the

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[254] Kurt and Barabara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, p. 19.

[255] Ibid., pp. 20, 21.

Westcott-Hort theories. “This finally cleared the way for coordinating the two editions. . . . [The] two quite independent editions, approached a close degree of unity with regard to their text—or more precisely, their wording.”[256] So today we have one widely accepted Greek Text that has in effect become a new “Textus Receptus.”

Translators and students now use this one Greek text in their work, but they do not follow this text slavishly. They follow it where they consider it certain and use their own judgment where they are doubtful it is correct.

Today the two most widely published Greek New Testaments are the Nestle-Aland 27th edition text and *The Greek New Testament* (GNT) 4th edition text. They have different notes, punctuation, capitalization; different ways to identify quotations from the Old Testament (the GNT uses bold type and the Nestle-Aland italic), chapter headings (the Nestle-Aland has them; the GNT has none). The Nestle-Aland text is available from the Deutsche Bibelgesellshaft (German Bible Society) of Stuttgart, Germany. *The Greek New Testament* is available from the United Bible Societies in its Fourth Revised Edition. The Nestle text has been widely accepted since it came out 100 years ago, in part because of its compact size.

The use of this new Greek text has essentially eliminated the use of the traditional Byzantine Greek text world wide in academic and translation circles. In this latter area, this is bound to create unnecessary confusion among many new Christians and churches who deeply desire to follow the Bible. The elimination of the tradition text is unnecessary. As Zane C. Hodges pointed out, “Under normal circumstances the older the type of text is than its rivals, the greater are its chances to survive in a plurality or a majority of the texts extant at any subsequent period. . . . a majority of texts will be far more likely to represent correctly the character of the original than a small minority of texts.”[257] If the transmission was normal, the Traditional Text may be closer to the original than the older Alexandrian text and work is needed to reconsider its place. Arthur L. Farstad and Zane C. Hodges published *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (1982), but it receives little recognition and use in academic circles and translation work. Maybe their

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[256] Ibid., p. 33.
[257] Pickering, p. 99.

approach of counting textual variations was a little extreme, but a new Byzantine text based on more acceptable textual criticism criteria still should be made. Applying the genealogy method should make it possible to "weigh" the various Byzantine manuscripts. But there is strong opposition against any effort to use the traditional Byzantine text, and this closed mind-set may have caused a modern corruption of the Greek text.

The Best Translation

Earlier some general considerations for a translation were given. It is difficult to go beyond these and say that only one translation should be used. There has been a proliferation of English translations of the Bible in the last 100 years. Even the beloved KJV has undergone numerous revisions. The King James revisions are as follows:

1. The *Revised Version* was published in 1881 and 1885. The goal of the revisers was to modernize the King James's English with limited changes. The revision went beyond this, and the old familiar wording was gone. It was a word-for-word translation, and it was not very readable. Therefore, it did not replace the familiar KJV. Even though this Bible was easier to understand, removing the familiar wording along with the paragraph arrangement caused many to be dissatisfied with it. Too many were not yet ready to replace the King James Bible.

2. The *American Standard Version* published in 1901 was a more readable revision of the Revised Version. It did not receive wide use because its use of *Jehovah* for *Lord* was unacceptable to most readers.

3. The *Revised Standard Version*, published in 1946-52, is a revision of the American Standard Version. It was an improvement from a readability standpoint, but this version was strongly opposed by many conservatives because it did not contain every verse and phrase found in the KJV. The reason for this, as mentioned earlier, is that the RSV was not based on the Greek *Received Text*. Uninformed individuals therefore thought the Word was being changed and opposed it. This reaction was not

altogether different from the opposition the KJV received when it came out. There was a special Catholic version brought out in 1966, and a "common Bible" for Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox use was released in 1973.

4. The *New American Standard*, published in 1963-71, is an improved American Standard Version and is more acceptable because of its return to the use of *Lord* instead of *Jehovah*. It regressed by abandoning the paragraph format and returning to a verse-by-verse format, and it evidences some tampering to make it more acceptable to nominal American Protestantism (for instance, *veil* was changed to *covering* in I Corinthians 11). Many conservatives have high regard for this translation.

5. The *New King James Version*, published in 1979 and 1982, contains every verse of the original King James translation but removes much of the old and obsolete Elizabethan language. It is not as readable as the Revised Standard Version, but those who think that translations should be based on the *Received Text* should consider this translation. Some changes were made from the *Received Text* where it was obviously not correct.

The above five versions are all a part of the King James Version family. This family constituted until recently the most popular Bibles. Recently the New International Version (NIV), however, is presently outselling all other translations, so it will be briefly mentioned.

The NIV grew out of the desire of some member of the Christian Reformed Church to find a Bible without the archaic KJV language. They started the project by appointing a committee to find a suitable translation for their churches. Not finding a suitable Bible they approached the National Association of Evangelicals for help to make a new translation in 1961. Representatives from various evangelical churches were brought together in 1965 and agreed there was a need for a new contemporary English Bible and sought help to bring it about. They obtained financial help for the project from the New York Bible Society.

A self-governing committee of fifteen, the Committee on Bible Translation, from various colleges, universities, and seminaries, was formed. Over one hundred Bible scholars from over twenty denominations joined the team. The wide range of members was to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias, but half were from the Reformed church. Originally the project was American, but soon other scholars from Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand joined the project. Because of international support, this translation took on the New International Version name.

The project was very costly and almost bankrupted the New York Bible Society, so the publisher (Zondervan) advanced funds to keep the project afloat. The New Testament was published in 1973 and the Old Testament in 1978. The Bible was promoted in one denomination at a time until profitable sales were made, and the sales effort moved among the supporting churches mainly one at a time. In 1986 NIV sales passed the KJV to become the best-selling Bible translation. Over 100 million NIV's are in print.

It is impossible in this book to give a short evaluation of the various other English translations, or, for that matter, even the King James's family of translations mentioned above.

The King James Is Losing Out

What is tragic is that none of the King James revisions have found widespread acceptance among English-speaking Christians; there is no reason not to update the 1769 King James Version's language. Over 300 words used in it today have obscure or different meanings.

Those who wish to hold to the Received Text or Majority Text and the King James should be willing to update the English. There are various reasons for some not wanting to update the King James, some good and some weak. But perhaps the biggest is that the revisers have refused to do what the King James translators did in their day, that is, to listen to suggestions and to make minor corrections to their translation. After the first edition came out, it was revised several times in the following years. It was revised so often that the translators had to answer the objections of "altering and amending our Translation so oft."

The reader may wonder why the 1769 updating of the KJV was accepted. The reason is that the publishers stopped printing the 1611 version and the people had no choice but to change.

What is the answer? Which translation should we use? The author of this book believes that a revision of the KJV has much to offer and would like to see Christians remain with this basic translation. It would make for an easier transition between the 1769 KJV and a new translation.

One way to revise the KJV would be to have a theologically conservative committee make a Byzantine text edition of the RSV. The KJV has served the English-speaking people well, but as mentioned, it needs updating. It may still be a good one to use in public reading in some areas of the church, but it would not be right to force the young and new converts to use it. The Bible needs to be in the current language of the people. If such a revision is not made, this version is going to completely lose out.

Regardless of what happens in the area of translations, let us always remember that we should not rely only on one version in our Bible study but should use others, too.

Desirable Features

What other features should a Christian look for in choosing a Bible? The most important feature is to print a Bible in the same format as other books. This would mean that features of many Bibles—the red type, verse-paragraph divisions, extensive commentaries, etc.—should be left out.

The reason to reject the red type is that all the Bible is God's Word, and printing Jesus Christ's words in red causes some to place lesser value on other words.

Second, the reasons to reject verse divisions are that they break up the text and interrupt the Word's thought-flow. Also, if the verses are treated as paragraphs, the reader may fail to see it in the context of the paragraph. A. T. Robertson stated it was "a device that on the whole has done more harm than good."[258]

It is not known when the New Testament text was broken into paragraphs. Paragraph divisions known as the old Greek paragraphs date back to the 4th century. Today's paragraph divisions are much newer, being made by Stephen Langton (c. 1227) in the 13th century. The Wycliffe Bible (1382) used these. Verse divisions are much newer; they were started by Robert Stephanus who used

[258] Robertson, p. 20.

them in his 1551 Greek New Testament and were first used in the Geneva Bible in 1560. Verses are valuable aids in locating passages, but they should be printed within the paragraph text. There is no need to break up the paragraphs. When using Bibles with paragraphs, one must always remember the paragraph divisions are subjective, too.

The Bible is the Word of God, and extensive footnotes and commentary written by uninspired men should not be in it. These can interfere with the interpretation of the Word when readers uncritically accept men's interpretations as truth.

Another practice of some translations is the use of italicized words to show where the English idiom required more words to convey the Greek thought. The Geneva Bible was the first to use this practice. Today italicized words are found mainly in the KJV. This practice is debatable because the reader may think the italicized words are added words and therefore can be ignored. Since word-for-word translation frequently cannot convey the writer's thoughts, additional words are often required and are therefore generally acceptable.

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