

INTRODUCTION

The Byzantine Text

The Byzantine text is the historically dominant form of the Greek New Testament. As a result, it was the Textus Receptus, a close relative of the Byzantine text compiled from a small number of manuscripts, that was the dominant form of the printed Greek New Testament from the early sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century. In 1881, however, the Textus Receptus was effectively supplanted by Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament, particularly in academic circles. Westcott and Hort prepared their Greek text on the assumption that there was a recension of the Byzantine text in the fourth century that became the basis for all subsequent Byzantine manuscripts. Based on this assumption, Westcott and Hort counted (or discounted) the overwhelming majority of Byzantine manuscripts as originating from a single formal recension source, removing them from the equation, so that they could give preference to a small handful of manuscripts, particularly Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲱ). Although the assumption of a fourth century recension has now largely been discredited due to a complete lack of evidence, Westcott and Hort's preference for a small handful of manuscripts has endured, and the modern critical editions of Nestle-Aland and UBS have become the standard Greek text accepted in academic circles today.

Yet there are critical flaws in the underlying methodology of the reasoned eclecticism that is practiced in the editions of Nestle-Aland and UBS. In his essay "The Case for Byzantine Priority," Dr. Maurice Robinson makes the following observation:

Modern eclecticism creates a text which, within repeated short sequences, rapidly degenerates into one possessing no support among manuscript, versional, or patristic witnesses. The problem deteriorates further as the scope of sequential variation increases.

In other words, when the text-critical decisions of the editors of Nestle-Aland and UBS are considered over the course of a few verses (and sometimes over the course of only one verse), it is often the case that the resulting text as a whole has no support in any Greek manuscript, ancient translation, or quotation from the church fathers; rather, it is a conjectural text. This critical flaw of the modern eclectic approach has never been adequately addressed by its proponents. For this reason and others, some prefer the Byzantine text, which is based on the overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts.

The Byzantine text is not quite the same as the Textus Receptus, which is the textual basis of the New Testament in the King James Version and the New King James Version. While the Textus Receptus is within the Byzantine family of texts, the first edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament was produced from only seven manuscripts. Although those manuscripts were

from the Byzantine family, they contained some readings that have very little support among Greek manuscripts (especially in the book of Revelation).

On average,* when there are variants among Greek manuscripts, the Byzantine text is supported by 96% of the Greek manuscripts in the Gospels and 90% of the Greek manuscripts in Acts and the Epistles.† These Byzantine manuscripts, which number in the low thousands, represent many individual streams of transmission. And while they are generally later in date, they were all copied from earlier manuscripts of the same text type. Even Westcott and Hort acknowledge that the Byzantine text dates at least as far back as the fourth century, which is contemporaneous with Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲱ). Thus the Byzantine textform is ancient, highly uniform, and well attested by a variety of independent streams of transmission. Therefore it has a strong claim toward being the original text of the New Testament. Those seeking further information are encouraged to read Robinson's essay in full.

Colophons

Many Greek manuscripts include interesting scribal notes in the colophons of the Gospels and Pauline epistles. In the Gospels these notes give

* : Here the word *average* refers to the median rather than the mean. † : The *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11) and the book of Revelation are special cases in which the Byzantine Greek manuscripts are divided.

the date of publication. In the Pauline epistles they give details about the place of authorship, who delivered the epistle, and, in the pastoral epistles, details about the recipient. Because these are scribal notes and not the sacred text itself, they should not be considered infallible. However, most readers do not even realize that these notes exist, especially in the Gospels. Consequently, the colophons are included as footnotes in this edition to allow readers to easily access and evaluate them.

Editions of the Greek New Testament Compared in this Volume

The Text-Critical Greek New Testament is a new edition of the Greek New Testament that documents every difference found in the following editions and manuscript families of the Greek New Testament.‡

‡ : Differences between movable *nu* and movable *sigma* are ignored. In the footnotes movable *nu* and movable *sigma* are removed when they occur before a consonant. Differences between meaningless word breaks are also ignored (see Appendix E). For the purposes of comparison, typographical errors in the compared editions have been corrected. See Appendix B for a list of corrections.

ANT	Greek New Testament of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
CT	Critical Text (This designation is used when NA, SBL
ECM	Editio Critica Maior for Mark, Acts, and the Catholic
ECM [†]	This designation is used to mark the variants that ap
HF	Hodges and Farstad, The Greek New Testament Accord
MSS	Manuscripts (This designation is used to cite reading
NA	Nestle-Aland (This designation is used when NA ²⁷ a
NA ²⁷	Nestle-Aland, 27 th edition (1993)
NA ²⁸	Nestle-Aland, 28 th edition (2012)
PCK	Wilbur Pickering, The Greek New Testament Accord
RP	Robinson and Pierpont, The New Testament in the C
SBL	SBL Greek New Testament (2010)
SCR	Scrivener's Textus Receptus (1894)
ST	Stephanus' Textus Receptus, 3 rd edition (1550)
TH	The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale Hou
TR	Textus Receptus (This designation is used when SCR
WH	Westcott-Hort (1881)
ℳ ^{pt}	This designation marks significant alternate reading

In addition to the editions listed above, the following manuscript families are documented for the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11).*

* : See Appendix C for more information about manuscript families in the *Pericope Adulterae*.

μ ¹	A very late family of approximately 12 manuscripts
μ ²	An early family of approximately 47 manuscripts that
μ ³	A somewhat early family of approximately 37 manuscr
μ ⁴	An early family of approximately 36 manuscripts that
μ ⁵	An early family of approximately 298 manuscripts that
μ ⁶	A somewhat early family of approximately 204 manus
μ ⁷	A late family of approximately 261 manuscripts that is
λ ¹	A somewhat early family of approximately 224 lectiona
λ ²	An early family of approximately 40 lectionary manus

The following manuscript families are documented for the book of Revelation.[†]

ℳ ^A	A family of approximately 57 manuscripts of Revelati
ℳ ^C	A family of approximately 34 manuscripts of Revelati
ℳ ^K	The main Koine tradition in Revelation comprised of a

The symbols below are used both in the *Pericope Adulterae* and in the book of Revelation.

⁺	A marker indicating the variant(s) with the most manus
⁻	A marker indicating the variant(s) with less manuscript

The Textus Receptus

While it is common to refer to the Textus Receptus as a single entity, in reality there are

[†] : See Appendix D for more information about manuscript families in Revelation.

various editions of the Textus Receptus, which all differ from one another. Although Erasmus was the first to publish what became known as the Textus Receptus, it was Robert Estienne (Stephanus) who came to shape the text as we know it today. Stephanus' third edition (published in 1550 and known as *Editio Regia* or the "Royal Edition") is a splendid masterpiece of typographical skill. It was also the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament to include text-critical notes in the margins. Modifying Stephanus' text, Theodore Beza published five editions of the Textus Receptus. His fifth edition (published in 1598) was one of the primary source texts of the Greek New Testament used by the translators of the King James Version. At times, however, the King James Version deviates from Beza's fifth edition. Seeking to recreate the Greek text underlying the New Testament translation of the King James Version, Scrivener modified Beza's fifth edition with readings from various editions of the Textus Receptus that the King James translators would have had at their disposal. Scrivener published his modification of Beza's fifth edition in 1881. When people think about the Textus Receptus today, they think primarily of Stephanus' 1550 edition and/or Scrivener's 1881 edition.

Editions of the Critical Text

Westcott and Hort published their Greek New Testament in 1881, basing their text-critical decisions on the *possibility* that a majority of manuscripts could descend from a single formal

recension source and thus should not *necessarily* be preferred as correct. Although they never proved this *possibility* from the actual manuscript evidence, their theory paved the way for future editions of the critical text. Following in the footsteps of Westcott and Hort, the Nestle-Aland editions have become the standard Greek text in most academic circles today. Closely aligned with the Nestle-Aland editions is the *Editio Critica Maior*, which thus far has only published Mark, Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation. The *Editio Critica Maior* is unique in the sense that it uses a split guiding line for hundreds of readings. This means that, in many instances, there is no single base text. When compared to the twenty-seventh edition of Nestle-Aland, the changes introduced in the *Editio Critica Maior* at times move in the direction of the Byzantine Text. Another modern critical text that presents slightly different readings is the *SBL Greek New Testament*, edited by Michael Holmes. Following the same general methodology as the editors of Nestle-Aland, Holmes differs from Nestle-Aland in over six hundred places, providing an alternate perspective within the eclectic tradition. A fourth critical text that presents slightly different readings is *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*, which its editors say is rooted in the earliest manuscripts and relies upon the study of scribal habits to inform text-critical decisions.

Modern Editions of the Byzantine Text

Although the Byzantine text is quite stable for the vast majority of the New Testament, in the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11) and the book of Revelation the degree of variation among Byzantine manuscripts increases significantly. Partly in response to this high degree of variation in the *Pericope Adulterae* and the book of Revelation, Wilbur Pickering published *The Greek New Testament according to Family 35*. Family 35 (also known as **K^r**) is a large family of highly uniform manuscripts within the Byzantine text tradition. It is the only family of manuscripts that has a demonstrable archetype for every book of the New Testament. This means that, even in the *Pericope Adulterae* and the book of Revelation, there is little question as to the reading of Family 35. Many, however, argue that the high level of uniformity among manuscripts in Family 35 is the result of a systematic recension. Whatever the case may be, the readings of Family 35 at times represent fewer than 20% of extant Greek manuscripts, and there are no extant manuscripts for this family prior to the eleventh century. Nevertheless, Pickering's edition provides important documentation of a large but late family within the Byzantine text tradition.

In addition to the Textus Receptus and Family 35, the present volume also documents variants found in *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, edited by Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad. With the exception of the *Pericope Adulterae*, the Hodges and Farstad

text differs very little from *The Text-Critical Greek New Testament*. The main difference is that Hodges and Farstad use a stemmatic approach, hypothesizing family trees to show the relationships of various manuscript families. They then make text-critical decisions based on those hypothetical family trees.

The Greek New Testament of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, edited by Basileios Antoniades, provides one further witness to the Byzantine text family. This edition relies more heavily on readings found in Greek lectionaries than any other edition of the Greek New Testament. At times it includes readings with very little support among Greek manuscripts. Many of these readings are printed in small type in the 1904 and 1912 editions to indicate doubt on the part of the editor as to their originality. This text, also known as the Patriarchal Text, is used in the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches.

Text-Critical Footnotes

For the purpose of simplicity, the text-critical footnotes of this volume generally ignore punctuation, capitalization, accents, and breathing marks. However, capitalization, accents, and breathing marks are written in the footnotes when necessary to differentiate meaning. Text-critical signs such as brackets, diamonds, double angle brackets, and small type are also generally ignored because of the level of complexity this would add to the footnotes. Nevertheless, the use of double brackets is at times documented

in the text-critical notes, particularly when used by ECM and/or NA.

Manuscript Percentages

For sets of variants that have been fully collated in the *Text und Textwert* volumes, the manuscript percentages supporting the exact Greek text for each variant are listed. It should be noted that, while manuscript percentages are not the sole factor to be considered in the task of textual criticism, they should not be ignored either, particularly when they demonstrate the dominance of a particular text type. (See Appendix A for details about the calculation of manuscript percentages.)

In John 7:53–8:11, percentages have been calculated from a 2024 draft of Maurice Robinson's collation. In John 18, percentages have been calculated from Michael Morrill's collation. In the book of Philemon, the percentages for variants not collated in *Text und Textwert* have been calculated from Matthew Solomon's collation. In the book of Jude, the percentages for variants not collated in *Text und Textwert* have been calculated from Joey McCollum's tabulations of Tommy Wasserman's collation. In the book of Revelation the percentages for variants not collated in *Text und Textwert* have been calculated from the *Editio Critica Maior* supplemented by Hoskier's collation.[†] Percentages derived from sources other than *Text und Textwert* are displayed in brackets.

[†] : The combined collations of the *Editio Critica Maior* and Hoskier document 83% of the manuscripts of Revelation.

An analysis of the *Text und Textwert* data yields the manuscript percentage averages listed in the tables below. The RP percentages are based on every variant unit presented in *Text und Textwert*.[‡] The percentages for all the other editions apply only when the editions *differ* from the RP text. Due to the presence of outliers in the data, the median is presented along with the mean, as the median may very well provide a truer picture of the “average” manuscript percentages. Using the tables below, the reader can make a general estimate of the percentage of manuscripts supporting any given reading that is not documented in *Text und Textwert*. However, the reader should be aware that any given variant may deviate greatly from the averages presented below.

Gospels

[‡] : The *Text und Textwert* volumes present a total of 1,043 variant units. However, the collations for five of those units are incorrect. Those five variant units are therefore excluded from the percentage of manuscript calculations. In 166 variant units all the editions compared in this volume agree. (See Appendix A for more information.) Solomon's and Wasserman's collations are not considered in the calculation of these averages.

Edition	Mean	Median
RP	91.9%	95.8%
PCK	28.6%	28.6%
ST	18.5%	16.2%
SCR	18.3%	16.4%
TR	17.7%	15.3%
ANT	13.7%	7.7%
TH	3.2%	1.0%
CT	2.9%	1.0%
SBL	2.9%	1.0%
WH	2.8%	1.0%
NA ²⁷	2.7%	1.0%
HF	—	—§

Acts & Epistles

Edition	Mean	Median
RP	86.1%	89.7%
HF	32.3%	40.6%
PCK	28.7%	25.9%
ANT	16.1%	13.6%
TR	15.7%	8.1%
ST	15.2%	8.1%
SCR	14.6%	9.2%
TH	6.6%	4.4%
CT	6.5%	4.4%
SBL	6.3%	4.3%
NA ²⁷	6.2%	4.3%
WH	6.0%	4.1%

Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη

The New Testament in Ancient Greek with critical text notes

Public Domain

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