

New Testament Translation Preface

By Tim Warner

SETTLING THE GREEK TEXT

The very first question facing anyone attempting a translation of the New Testament concerns which Greek text to follow. There are more than five thousand ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (or parts of it) known to exist today, not to mention over eight thousand Latin, and quite a few copies in other languages. But, no translator follows a single manuscript, because all of them have some variations.

Textual Criticism seeks to settle the text by comparing many manuscripts and seeking to trace variant readings back to a source. There are two major schools of thought regarding the theories of textual criticism, and how best to determine the causes of variant readings. And these theoretical differences have divided the field of textual criticism into two major camps, one producing what is called the "Critical Text" and the other producing the "Majority Text."

The Critical Text theory seeks to reconstruct the text using the oldest known copies from Alexandria, Egypt, a handful of manuscripts dating from around the fourth century. The problem with these few very old copies is that they are filled with widely variant readings in many thousands of places. Many of the variant readings are contained in no other copy in existence. How does one decide the true reading under these circumstances? The textual critics from this camp seek to reconstruct the text by attempting to figure out which reading in a given verse most likely led to the other different readings. The problem is, a lot of this is pure guesswork. The resulting printed Greek text remains very uncertain, and always subject to being updated as new evidence emerges.

The Majority Text theory seeks to weed out the manuscripts that differ wildly from the vast bulk of evidence, and settle the text based on what the majority of manuscripts say in any particular verse. The theory is simple and requires little guesswork. All things being equal, the majority reading in any given verse will best represent the original because the oldest reading has been copied the most over time. The original autographs began to be copied in the first century. In time, as copies multiplied, mistakes and alterations began to appear in a few copies. As these copies were copied again, the mistakes began to multiply. At the same time, the genuine readings were multiplying at a much faster rate because they

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predate all corruptions. The corrupted readings can never catch up to the original readings in number because the original began to be copied earlier, and has the advantage of multiplying in numbers before any single error was introduced. Consequently, unless there was a major disruption in the multiplication process that only affected the best copies, the majority reading in any given verse will always be the original reading.

This is an over simplification of the process. Other factors must also be taken into account, including what other language versions say, early quotes of Scripture by the early Church Fathers, and internal considerations. But, as a general rule, this is what divides the two camps of textual scholars. And this division has produced widely different printed New Testaments. Most modern versions belong to the Critical Text camp. All of the older English versions (before 1881), the New King James Version (NKJV) and English Majority Text Version (EMTV) belong to the Majority Text camp.

The "Majority Text" is also referred to as the "Byzantine Text." It is represented by over 90% of the Greek manuscripts known to exist today, with fairly slight variations among the bulk of the evidence. This is the text preserved by the Greek speaking church (Greek Orthodox). Its best known printed version is the Textus Receptus which was the basis for the 1611 KJV.

The many "Critical Text" printed editions are not representative of any known historical manuscript. Each one is a "patch quilt" of variant readings from a handful of widely differing, but very old, manuscripts. Printed Critical Texts include the Westcott Hort 1881 edition, twenty-seven different editions of Nestle's text, and three editions from the United Bible Society.

The Greek text chosen for our translation is the Textus Receptus published by Scrivener in 1891, and reprinted by the Trinitarian Bible Society. In the following paragraphs, we will defend our choice.

OUR OBJECTIONS TO THE CRITICAL TEXT

Briefly stated, our objections to the Critical Text theory are as follows:

- The failure to consider God's providence in overseeing the multiplication of His Word. God promised to care of His Word beyond the original autographs (Psalm 138:2, Isaiah. 55:11, Matt. 24:35, etc.). The Critical Text theory takes God out of the equation when explaining the textual evidence in the same way evolutionary theory takes Him out of the equation when explaining the biological evidence.

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- Too much faith is placed in human scholarship, and determining variant reading by pure speculation.
- The failure to recognize or accept the textual criticism work done by Christians in early times, who had many more ancient manuscripts at their disposal, virtually all of which predate all manuscripts still in existence today.
- The dismissal of a great deal of patristic quotes that support the Byzantine readings.
- The failure to account for intentional corruption of the text by Gnostics, Arians, and others.
- The failure to produce a shred of historically verifiable evidence for the presumed disruption of the copying process which is foundational to their theory.
- The result of the Critical Text process leaves the text unsettled and uncertain, and always open to major revisions in the future. It therefore undermines the credibility of the entire New Testament.

OUR DEFENSE OF THE BYZANTINE TEXT

Let's face it. There are many thousands of variant readings in all the manuscript evidence. To sort through and determine how each occurred based on internal evidence alone is utterly impossible. We do not possess any history for these thousands of manuscripts. But, the task of settling the text of the NT is not as complicated as it may seem at first. More than 90% of the NT is agreed upon by all sides. Of the portions in dispute, the vast majority of "variant readings" are inconsequential, having absolutely no bearing on the meaning of the verse in question. These include variations in spelling, some variations of word order, and occasional omissions of insignificant words. These have no real impact on translation. Dean Burgon (professor of Divinity, Oxford University) writes, "*Whereas, nine divergences out of ten are of no matter of significance and are entitled to no manner of consideration.*"¹ These kinds of variants are almost certainly accidental, and need no further investigation. In such cases, the original reading can usually be easily discovered, or else does not matter. Our task is greatly simplified by focusing on those variant readings that involve alterations to the meaning of the text.

1. The Patristic Evidence Favors the Byzantine Text

The writings of the Ante Nicene Church fathers are extremely helpful in settling many variant readings. These writers lived prior to the oldest surviving manuscripts of the New Testament in our possession. Their extensive quotes of the New Testament help greatly in determining whether a particular variant reading existed in the earliest times, and therefore could be original. What makes their testimony significant is that

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they usually quote the readings in the Majority Text against those in the Critical Text in those places where the differences are important.

The most important of the Alexandrian manuscripts on which the Critical Text relies, is called "Codex Vaticanus" or designated "codex B." Dean John Burgon counted 7578 significant variations of "B" from the Textus Receptus in the Gospels alone.² When significant variants are compared to the patristic quotes, the majority of patristic quotations support the readings in the Byzantine ("Majority") Text. Essentially, this fact means the readings in the Byzantine Text are older than the earliest copy we have of the variant readings. This essentially nullifies the age advantage of the Alexandrian manuscripts themselves. Consequently, there is no longer any reason to suppose they are more accurate than later manuscripts that contain the Byzantine readings.

2. The State of the Byzantine Text is Vastly Superior to the Alexandrian Text

The Alexandrian manuscripts are a handful in number and are extremely varied, with each having hundreds (sometimes thousands) of readings unique to one manuscript alone. Many more unique readings are found in two or more Alexandrian manuscripts. Critical text proponents argue that the condition of the Alexandrian manuscripts is due to mixture, and to natural mistakes. No doubt, mixture and scribal errors account for most of the variant readings in the Alexandrian manuscripts. But, what cannot be explained satisfactorily is why the character of the "Byzantine" text is so vastly more uniform than the Alexandrian. Why has the "Byzantine" text not shown similar characteristics of "mixture" and scribal errata throughout its transmission history which is much longer? "Mixture" is due to different text types coming into contact with each other as people traveled with their manuscripts throughout the empire. Why has "mixture" seriously compromised the Alexandrian text type yet barely touched the "Byzantine?" Why are the Alexandrian manuscripts so filled with scribal errata yet the quality of the "Byzantine" is in a league of its own? Did people stop traveling? Did scribes suddenly stop making mistakes?

The relative uniformity and quality of the Byzantine text points to a common single source, virtually without mixture, and copied with great care throughout its transmission history. Its strong resistance to "mixture" and its vast numerical superiority means that the early Greek speaking Christians held this text to be representative of the original autographs, and viewed Alexandrian texts with suspicion. They simply did not mix the "Byzantine" text with other texts. The vast majority of copyists did not have the attitude of the Alexandrian scribes, who felt free to "mix" readings from widely varying sources, each according to his own opinion. Instead, the Christians responsible for the majority of Greek manuscripts faithfully

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copied their exemplars, producing a very uniform result over a huge geographical area, and an entire millennium!

This vast difference in the overall condition of the manuscript text types proves that something more was at work among the Alexandrian manuscripts than normal scribal errors. The Alexandrian manuscripts do not display “normal” scribal errata found in textual transmission from a common source, where the manuscripts are held in high regard. Many scholars have commented on the low quality of the Alexandrian manuscripts, with regard to sloppy mistakes. These characteristics can only mean one thing. The scribe was not careful because he had a lower opinion of the text he was copying than did the Byzantine scribes. If what is observed in the Alexandrian manuscripts is “normal,” one must conclude that the consistency and stability of the thousands of manuscripts from the Byzantine Text is nothing short of miraculous! Something rather dramatic has interrupted the Alexandrian text stream that has not similarly affected the Byzantine Text stream.

The Byzantine Text is without question unique, and of a much higher quality overall than all others. To solve the mystery, one must discover the source of the Byzantine Text. The essential question before the reader is this: Is the source of the “Byzantine” text the original autographs? Or, is it a 4th century fabricated text that had the weight of the Christian emperor behind it ensuring its stability, and its displacement of all other local texts by the end of the 4th century? This is the theory promoted by Critical Text scholars in order to explain away this evidence. Yet, they have failed to produce historically verifiable evidence for this premise.

3. Intentional Corruption of the Text by Gnostic Heretics

Tertullian, presbyter of Carthage (AD 145-220), and Caius, Presbyter of Rome (AD180-217), described the systematic mutilation of the text by Gnostic heretics claiming to have “corrected” them. They described the condition of these texts as widely varying from one another.³ Their descriptions of the general condition of corrupted New Testament manuscripts is precisely the condition we observe in the Alexandrian manuscripts. Incidentally, Alexandria was home to some of the most prominent Gnostic groups and leaders. Many ancient Gnostic texts from this period and location have been uncovered, some containing the variant readings in the Alexandrian manuscripts. We have ably demonstrated how Gnostic corruptions entered the text in our article on John 1:18. www.pfrs.org/commentary/john1_18.html

Even bishops of churches founded by Paul knew well that Gnostic heretics were out to corrupt the text of Scripture. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth

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(AD170) complained to the church at Rome, *“For I wrote letters when the brethren requested me to write. And these letters the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, taking away some things and adding others, for whom a woe is in store. It is not wonderful [surprising], then, if some have attempted to adulterate the Lord’s writings, when they have formed designs against those which are not such.”*⁴ The “apostles of the devil” mentioned by Dionysius were the same Gnostic heretics mentioned by Jesus in His seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor.⁵ Even Paul himself had to deal with the falsifying of his own writings, warning the Thessalonians of this fact⁶, and taking special measures to counter it⁷.

We are not suggesting that the extant Alexandrian manuscripts are themselves Gnostic creations. Ancient Gnostic corruptions found their way into the Alexandrian manuscripts because of the eclectic nature (mixture) of the Alexandrian manuscripts. The “Byzantine” text has been very resistant to “mixture” and consequently to Gnostic corruptions.

The most important criteria of the early Christian apologists, for determining the true readings of Scripture, involved two things: the uniformity of the text among many copies (consistency), and a traceable history among the churches within the cradle of Apostolic ministry. On both counts, the Alexandrian manuscripts would not be considered good witnesses to the true readings by the early Fathers above. And a “reconstructed” text from widely varying sources would be utterly useless in the disputes with heretics because it would lack Apostolic authority (the same problem that plagues most modern versions based on the eclectic approach to textual criticism).

Critical Text proponents refuse to acknowledge that the kinds of intentional corruption mentioned by Dionysius, Caius, and Tertullian had any real impact on the variant readings we see in the Alexandrian manuscripts. This blatant disregard for part of the evidence undermines any attempt at reconstructing the text based on internal evidence alone. Likewise, consistency, or lack thereof, means absolutely nothing to them in judging which text type likely originated from the Apostolic source.

4. Our Basic Theory of Early Textual Transmission

The area of the Empire evangelized by Paul, which was the ultimate destination of the original autographs, was from Rome in the west to Antioch in the east. At the heart of this geographical area was Asia Minor. John supervised the Pauline churches of this area after Paul’s death until his own death at Ephesus around AD100. It was from Rome to Antioch that copies of the New Testament books first multiplied freely and saturated

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the Christian communities in the first century. This area can be considered the “cradle” of the New Testament.

From earliest times, the churches founded by the Apostles included public readings of the “memoirs of the Apostles” (New Testament manuscripts) in their Sunday gatherings. Justin Martyr (AD110-165) explains:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.”⁸

Copies in the possession of members of every church were thoroughly and repeatedly compared to the original autographs (or early “official” copies) through these repeated public readings. Significant scribal errors in privately owned manuscripts would quickly be identified and corrected as this process continued. The overlapping of the original autographs with several generations of copies ensured that copies remained consistent with the original documents over a considerable period of time within the cradle of the New Testament, from Rome to Antioch. This process was the counterweight to natural contamination of scribal errors, and served to purify the copies in use by Christians on a continual basis.

In the second century, missionary activity from this region made inroads to more distant parts of the Empire. Naturally, manuscripts began to be copied in remote places, outside the stabilizing influence provided by the public readings in the Apostolic churches. The more isolated from the Apostolic cradle of the sacred text, and from the process of continuous reexamination and revision of later copies through the above named process, the more likely mistakes would go unnoticed and be recopied into later manuscripts. Yet, despite the degrading of the text in more remote places, the area from Rome to Antioch would theoretically always remain the cradle of the best text of the New Testament.

This theory is not original. It was the theory of the early Christian writers who had to defend the text of Scripture against Gnostic corrupters⁹. For the early Christian apologists, the ultimate arbiter of any variant reading must be the text used in the local churches to which the original autographs were first delivered.

Critical Text proponents claim that the text of this area was essentially lost before the 4th century, due to persecution, natural disasters, wars, etc. What evidence do they have that these things drastically disrupted the

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text in this area? None! They simply declare it to be so because they wish it to be so. Never mind that many Christians accepted martyrdom in order to preserve manuscripts. Never mind that there were many thousands of faithful Christians living in this area, many of which had access to very old copies. Not only is this assumption by Critical Text proponents without any historical evidence, it is also self-serving. This one assumption provides the basis for overturning the entire Byzantine Text, the only Greek New Testament in continuous use from earliest times until the nineteenth century. They have substituted their own "reconstructed" text in its place, a text that Christianity has not known until less than 150 years ago! Let the reader beware. The Critical Text proponents have never, and can never produce a Greek New Testament that resembles even one extant Greek manuscript. Therefore, there can never be any real level of confidence in their work as actually being "historical," or having any kind of a transmission history.

The "Byzantine Text" is the preserved text of the area from Rome to Antioch. Its consistency stems from its faithfulness to a common source, the original autographs, and the high regard faithful Christians had for this text when copying it. The Apostolic churches were successful in preserving a very stable text over an extended period of time. That is the crux of our theory.

We have adopted Tertullian's argument, that the authoritative texts were those in use in the Apostolic churches, because, (a) it is logical, and (b) we have witnesses for it from the period in question. To add concrete support for this theory, we shall appeal to hard evidence from the "cradle" and timeframe. Unfortunately, we do not possess any New Testament Greek manuscripts from this area prior to the 4th century. The climate was simply not conducive to the preservation of papyrus. Unless preserved in an extremely dry environment and left undisturbed, papyrus documents would not usually last more than a couple of centuries. And if used frequently, their lifespan could be much shorter. But, we are not without ancient witnesses to the text of the New Testament from the "cradle" of Apostolic labor. There are a few early Christian Fathers from this area whose writings, containing quotations of Scripture, have survived.

5. The Patristic Evidence Decisively Supports Our Theory

It is axiomatic, based upon our above premise, that the Ante Nicene Fathers, who lived in (or had direct connections to) the Apostolic churches of this area, would be the most likely to follow the alleged "purer text" in their quotations of Scripture. Conversely, those Fathers located in more remote places, such as Europe, North Africa, Palestine, or Egypt, would tend to follow the local text of those areas.

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The earliest Christian writer, who left us quotations of the NT from within the "cradle" of Apostolic ministry, was Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna). Polycarp was a personal disciple and friend of John. Polycarp quoted the Byzantine Text 100% of the time. He quoted Rom. 14:10 as it appears in the Byzantine Text, *"We must all appear at the judgment seat of Christ..."*¹⁰ The Alexandrian manuscripts have "judgment seat of God." He quoted an excerpt of 1 John 4:3 as it appears in the Byzantine Text, "...confessing Jesus Christ in flesh having come."¹¹ The Alexandrian manuscript, "Aleph." has "Lord" instead of "Christ." "B" and "A" omit the entire clause, "Christ in flesh having come."

Another early writer from the western edge of this area was Hippolytus of Rome (AD170-236). His testimony is less valuable in one sense because of his location. Rome was the hub of commerce for the entire empire, where no doubt many different manuscripts from all over the empire might be known. On the other hand, He wrote quite a bit more than Polycarp, and has many more quotations of Scripture for us to compare. Here are some significant examples. John 3:13 reads in the Byzantine Text as follows: *"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."* The Alexandrian manuscripts omit the clause, "who is in heaven." Hippolytus quoted the passage as it stands in the Byzantine Text.¹² John 1:18 in the Byzantine Text reads *"only begotten Son."* But the Alexandrian manuscripts read, "only begotten God." This particular corruption has profound implications regarding the "doctrine of Christ," and is friendly to Gnostic interpretations. In fact, the phrase itself, "only begotten God" was used in Gnostic literature of the period, but is absent from orthodox Christian writings. Hippolytus' copy of John read like the Byzantine Text.¹³ 1 Cor. 15:47 reads *"The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven."* The Alexandrian manuscripts omit "the Lord." Again Hippolytus quotes the passage as it appears in the Byzantine Text.¹⁴

The reader should keep in mind that in the above (and other similar) examples, the Byzantine Text readings were being used to refute contemporary Gnostic heresies. The very words we find missing or altered in Alexandrian manuscripts, written much later, were used against the Gnostic heretics by early Christian apologists.

Hippolytus also quotes the much disputed Byzantine Text rendering of Rev. 5:9, *"you have redeemed US to God."*¹⁵

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

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Our third witness, Methodius (AD260-312), was bishop of Olympus and Patara in Lycia (southern Asia Minor). His testimony is critical because of the proximity of his time to the period just before Critical Text proponents claim a new "Lucian recension" began to supersede the local text of Asia Minor. (The claimed "Lucian Recension" is the hypothetical parent of the Byzantine Text proposed by Critical Text scholars in order to explain the origin of the Byzantine Text). As we shall show, Methodius had "Byzantine Text" manuscripts before him. According to my own examination of all of his NT quotes, he followed the Byzantine Text in every variant quotation but one, (1 Cor. 7:5, where he omits the word "fasting"). His quotations involve very significant readings that are in dispute between the Byzantine Text and Alexandrian manuscripts.

One of the most important quotes by Methodius is his citation of Eph. 5:30. The Alexandrian manuscripts omit the clause, "*of his flesh and of his bones.*" Methodius quotes the verse as it stands in the Byzantine Text.¹⁶ This is another of those passages that directly confronts Gnostic ideas. Paul wrote that He was speaking "*concerning Christ and the church,*" (v. 32), and refers to our union with Christ's "flesh" and "bones." Gnostics denied that "Christ" (a spiritual being) had "flesh and bones."

Methodius quotes the Byzantine Text reading of Matt. 25:6, "*Behold the bridegroom comes.*"¹⁷ He quotes the Byzantine Text reading of Eph. 3:14, where the Alexandrian manuscripts omit "*of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"¹⁸ He quotes the Byzantine Text rendering of Rom. 14:9, "*For to this end Christ both died and rose...*"¹⁹ The words "and rose" are omitted from the Alexandrian manuscripts. He also quotes the Byzantine Text rendering of Luke 2:14, "*good will toward men.*"²⁰

Irenaeus provides secondary evidence from this area. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp in Asia Minor in his youth. Therefore, he had close contact with the local manuscript tradition from childhood. Later, he was sent to Gaul in the west and became the famous bishop of Lyons. Irenaeus no doubt had contact with the early local Latin translations, as well as having his own Greek manuscripts. Irenaeus provides a great deal of support for the Byzantine Text in his numerous quotations of Scripture, particularly variants that have theological significance. Occasionally he seems to defer to the local Latin text. Given his circumstance, this is precisely what we might expect assuming our theory to be true.

Our conclusion from all the available evidence is that the Christian writers from the cradle of Apostolic ministry had before them New Testament manuscripts that very closely resembled the Byzantine Text and were far different from the Alexandrian manuscripts that appeared later,

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particularly where theologically significant variants occur. That these earliest Christian writers bear witness to the Byzantine Text within this area strongly supports the connection between our Byzantine Text, the local text of Apostolic labor, and the original autographs. The testimony of Methodius is probably the most important because of his close proximity to Constantinople and Nicomedia, the birthplace of the hypothetical “authorized version” of the 4th century which allegedly became the Byzantine Text. Methodius’ earlier quotes demonstrate that the local text of Asia Minor was solidly in the “Byzantine” camp several decades before Lucian’s supposed recension allegedly overtook the local text of Asia Minor according to the Critical Text theory. The “Lucian Recension,” if it existed at all, could not have been the text that became the Byzantine (Majority) Text, because the Byzantine Text is proven to be older.

6. The “Lucian Recension” Theory Lacks Historical Support

In order for the Critical Text proponents to advance their theory, they must first tear down the simple idea that the Greek Church has guarded and reproduced the best text in every century since the original autographs. That basic scenario easily accounts for the numerical superiority of the Byzantine Text as well as the consistency and stability of this text over many centuries. But, in order for the Critical Text proponents to construct their own Greek New Testament, it is necessary for them to claim that the genuine New Testament was lost among many divergent readings, and not contained substantially in ANY manuscript or text type that has survived or was still in the majority in the Greek churches in the fourth century. They attempt to portray the entire manuscript population of the period as mixed up just like the Alexandrian manuscripts. Or, if there was a common manuscript tradition that reflected the original autographs, it has been mysteriously lost. In short, there is no faithful text stream according to their theory. We therefore need modern eclectics to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Their attempt to explain the existence of the Byzantine Text as a 4th century fabricated text (revision), rather than a relatively faithful, uncontrolled, continuous stream, is without any historical mention. The patristic evidence cited above proves it false in our opinion.

Critical Text proponents put forward “possibilities” based on certain inferences, and portray them as “facts.” But they have yet to produce any historical mention of the key points of their theory, that (a) persecution or other calamities within the area from Rome to Antioch created a serious shortage of New Testament manuscripts, that (b) a “critical text” was actually produced in the area to allegedly fill the need for new manuscripts, that (c) any alleged “recension” received some sort

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of official or ecclesiastical support (which would be absolutely essential to overtake the already widespread manuscript base), or (d) provided convincing reasons why such a new and different version would not be met with widespread objection from those familiar with older manuscripts.

We assert that the attempt to explain away the vast numerical advantage, consistency, and stability of the Byzantine Text using the “Lucian Recension” theory falls flat. It lacks historical mention. And, it runs counter to the patristic evidence from the cradle of Apostolic ministry. Furthermore, it fails to explain why an “authorized version” backed by the emperor, the consent of Church councils, or respected writers would completely overturn the local text from Rome to Antioch, yet have almost no effect on the local texts of other regions of Greek speaking Christians under the same Roman system. The Alexandrian text remained in Alexandria long after the supposed rise of the Byzantine text. Had this rise been the result of the extreme pressure necessary to completely replace the local text of the cradle of Apostolic labor, it also would have exerted itself as forcefully in Alexandria and elsewhere the domination of the empire and Greek church existed.

OUR CHOICE OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS OVER THE PRINTED “MAJORITY TEXT”

Even though the Textus Receptus belongs to the Byzantine (Majority) family of manuscript evidence, it is not identical to the printed “Majority Text” Greek New Testament of Hodges and Farstad. The Textus Receptus (Scrivener’s 1891) is the result of the textual criticism work of the translators of the KJV using printed Byzantine Greek texts of their day. Yet, they also used other evidence including patristic quotations, Latin copies, and other ancient sources. The difference between the Textus Receptus and the printed “Majority Text” can best be summarized by saying that the “Majority Text” is limited exclusively to surviving Greek manuscript copies, while the Textus Receptus sometimes supplements this with other ancient evidence. We have found, through our own comparison of the Textus Receptus and Majority Text to the early Patristic evidence, that the Textus Receptus’ readings often find very solid support in the early Christians’ quotes of the New Testament. A significant case in point is the omission of the Ethiopian Eunuch’s profession of faith in both the Alexandrian manuscripts and the majority of Byzantine manuscripts. The Textus Receptus includes it because it was widely known and referenced by Christian writers as far back as Irenaeus’ time (2nd century)²¹, long before any known manuscripts omit the verse. Because of the patristic support for the Textus Receptus, we are convinced that it is indeed the best New Testament text in existence. Scrivener’s 1891 edition of the Textus Receptus is the one text that represents in full the textual criticism work of the KJV translators, and is the exact representation of the text they settled

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on when producing the KJV. It is also used today as the basis of the New King James Version.

Notes:

1. Burgon, John, Causes of Corruption of the Byzantine Text, p. 15
2. *ibid*
3. Tertullian, Against Marcion, Bk. IV, iii-v, Caius of Rome, Frag. II
4. Dionysius, To the Roman Church, IV
5. Rev. 2:2
6. 2 Thess. 2:2
7. 2 Thess. 3:16-17
8. Justin, First Apology, LXVII
9. Tertullian, Against Marcion, Bk. IV, iii. 5
10. Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians, vi
11. *ibid*, vii
12. Hippolytus, Against Noetus, iv
13. *ibid*, v
14. Hippolytus, Fragments of Commentaries, Gen. XLIX. 21-26
15. Hippolytus, Frag. On Daniel, II, xx
16. Methodius, Banquet of the Ten Virgins, III, i
17. *ibid*, VI, iv
18. *ibid*, VIII, viii
19. Methodius, Discourse on the Resurrection, xx
20. Methodius, Oration Concerning Simeon and Anna, v
21. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. III, xii.8 "But again: Whom did Philip preach to the eunuch of the queen of the Ethiopians, returning from Jerusalem, and reading Esaias the prophet, when he and this man were alone together? Was it not He of whom the prophet spoke: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb dumb before the shearer, so He opened not the mouth?' 'But who shall declare His nativity? for His life shall be taken away from the earth.' [Philip declared] that this was Jesus, and that the Scripture was fulfilled in Him; as did also the believing eunuch himself: and, immediately requesting to be baptized, he said, 'I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God'."