



Printing of the Greek New Testament: 1516 to 1633

The First Printed Greek New Testament: 1514 AD

This was the second Elzevir edition. Printed in Complutum, Spain by Cardinal Zimenes. This has a Latin translation with it. Not much is known concerning the manuscripts used.

The First Published Greek New Testament:

Froben, a Swiss, hired Erasmus, the first Greek scholar of the day, to prepare a Greek text for the public. Erasmus completed the Greek text on March 1, 1516 and it was issued from the press as the first Greek text. He had seven (7) manuscripts, one minuscule was good, but different. He produced four (4) other later editions.

The Received Text or the Textus Receptus.

Produced by Robert Stephanus in 1546. His materials were Erasmus' 5th edition, the Complutensian and 15 manuscripts. In 1550, he produced a revised text and marginal variants from the Complutensian and Beza manuscripts. This was the first edition to have the critical apparatus. This became with slight changes our Received Text.

The Development of the Improved Greek Text.

Men and their contributions listed below include collection and some publishing.

Brian Walton: 1600-61 - added to the Greek text the readings of Codex A in 1657.

John Fell; 1625-86 - published a Greek text from Elzevir's 1633 text and claimed to add various readings from 100 manuscripts.

John Mil: 1645-1707 - used the Stephanus text with 78 new manuscript readings including A.B.D.D2, included readings from the Peshitta Syriac, the Old Latin, and the Vulgate. He made an excellent apparatus.

Richard Bentley; 1662-1742 - he was a "rare Greek and Latin scholar." His major contribution was collection of manuscripts.

J. Bengel: 1687-1752 - produced an important edition of the Greek text in 1734. He used mainly the Textus Receptus. He had five classes of marginal information: the genuine readings, those better than the text, those just as good as the text, those not as good, and those to be rejected.

J. Wettstein: 1693-1754 - published a Greek New Testament in 1751-52. He used the Elzevir text, but printed other readings. He was first to use modern methods of manuscript notation. He claimed the older and more ancient manuscripts were contaminated by Latin.

J. Semler: 1725-91 - assisted in classifying variant readings. Developed a three-fold class system: the Alexandrian, Eastern, and Western groups.

J. Griesbach: 1745-1812 - published a Greek New Testament in 1774-77 with an excellent critical apparatus and advanced a theory of textual criticism, which challenged the Textus Receptus.

C. Matthaei: 1744-1811 - collected some 70 manuscripts and added them to the available list. In 1782-88, he published a New Testament in 12 parts with Greek and Latin. He held to the more recent manuscripts over the older ones.



F. Alter: 1749-1804 - was Professor of Greek at Vienna, Austria, He published in full a text of a minuscule manuscript found in the Imperial Library of Vienna.

Andrew Birch: 1758-1829 - he published at Copenhagen, Denmark an edition of the Greek New Testament from the 1550 Stephanus text.

J. Scholz: 1794-1852 - collected and examined many manuscripts and published a Greek Testament in 2 volumes in 1830 and 1836. He held that the ancient manuscripts survived because of error, therefore used them little.

Summary: Through this period the Textus Receptus held sway. But, as has been seen, it had begun to be challenged, although seemingly silently.

The Revision of the Text: 1831-1881:

Karl Lachmann: 1793-1851. He boldly cast aside the Textus Receptus and constructed a new text from the most ancient manuscript, versions, fathers, etc. The Sinaitic had not yet been found. The Vatican had not been edited. He used the Vatican somewhat. He used the Alexandrian manuscripts (Alexandrian group). He published his text in 1842-50. He added variant readings from the received text.

Constantin Tischendorf: 1815-74. Discovered, edited, and published the Sinaitic manuscript. He rendered a more accurate edition of the Vatican. He deciphered and edited the Ephraem. He edited some 18-20 more manuscripts. He edited four editions of the Septuagint Old Testament. He published eight (8) editions of the Greek New Testament. Between the 7th and 8th, he discovered the Sinaitic. Therefore, he broke with the Textus Receptus and changed to the Revised Text, thus continuing the trail from the Textus Receptus to the Revised Text.

S. Tregelles: 1813-75 - He ignored the Received Text and started over with the most ancient manuscripts. He examined all extant Uncial manuscripts available. He valued text age, not by the age of the manuscript but by the age of the text, determined by comparing many texts for similarity and duplication. This is called Comparative Criticism.

Henry Alford: 1810-71 - Published a Greek New Testament in 1849-61. His first attention was to that of the Textus Receptus, but later in his 6th edition gave heed to Tischendorf and Tregelles and the Sinaitic manuscript.

F. Scrivener: 1813-91 - Published several editions of the Stephanus text with readings from Elzevir, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles and Wescott and Hort. He basically defended the Textus Receptus.

B. Westcott: 1825-1901 and F. Hort: 1828-92. In 1881, they produced their edition of the Greek Text called, "The New Testament in the Original Greek." They based this Neutral Text on the chief authority of the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts, the Bohairic version, and Origen. Thus, the controversy between the Neutral Text of Westcott and Hort and the Textus Receptus began.

Palmer: 1881 - Published the Revisers' Greek Text in 1881. This contained substantially the Westcott and Hort text, but differing some.

Scrivener: 1881-4 - Cambridge Greek Testament gives the Textus Receptus with the Revised readings, including a critical apparatus showing readings of Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, and the Revised Version.

Oxford Greek Testament: Receptus and good critical apparatus, 1889, 10.

Weymouth's Resultant Greek Testament, 1836 gives a text to which the majority of modern editors



agree. He used 10 different texts and six more for comparison.

Weiss' Text: 1894-1905 - differs little from Westcott and Hort.

Nestle's Text: (15 editions, 1898 - 1932) gives a Resultant Text based on the agreement of Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, and Weymouth or any 2 of the 3. From 3rd edition on, Weiss has been substituted for Weymouth. Includes an apparatus, which gives the variant readings from the Textus Receptus and Revisers' Text,

Souter Text: added a critical apparatus to the Revisers' Text, using all the Uncials, 11 papyri, 202 minuscules, all versions and fathers.

Summary statement of interest: The King James Version is based generally on the Textus Receptus and the Nestle's Greek text is based on the Resultant Greek Text from the older Uncial manuscripts.