Introduction

The Byzantine Text Version

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 basically counted (or discounted) the overwhelming majority of Byzantine manuscripts as originating from one manuscript, removing them from the equation, so that they could give preference to a small handful of manuscripts, particularly Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (א). Although the assumption of a fourth century recension has now largely been discredited due to an utter 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. As a result, many 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, there are some readings that have very little support in Greek manuscripts, the most famous of which is the Johannine comma in 1 John 5:7-8. And so, while the Textus Receptus is preferable to modern critical texts, it does not consistently follow the vast majority of Greek manuscripts.

Due to the shortcomings of both the modern critical texts and the Textus Receptus, the Byzantine Text Version has been translated from the The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2018 by
Robinson and Pierpont. The readings adopted by Robinson and Pierpont very often have the support of at least ninety-five percent of Greek manuscripts, and even when they do not, it is rare that their readings are supported by less than eighty percent of Greek manuscripts. These Byzantine manuscripts, which number in the thousands, represent many, many separate streams of transmission. And while they are generally later in date, they must surely have been 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 (א). Thus the Byzantine textform is ancient, well attested, and highly uniform, even while existing in many, many separate streams of transmission. Thus it has the strongest claim to being the original text of the New Testament. Those seeking further information are invited to read Robinson's essay in full.

Translation Philosophy

The Byzantine Text Version follows a “formal equivalence” philosophy of translation that employs a traditional literary style of English. Within the framework of a “formal equivalence” philosophy, it is usually possible to achieve a clear and natural translation while following a literal, word-for-word approach. Consequently, Greek expressions and manners of speech that are uncommon yet readily understandable in English are translated literally. For example, it is common in the New Testament to begin a sentence with “And.” Although this is not common in literary English, it is readily understandable without being overly awkward. Similarly, expressions such as “answered and said” are common in the Greek New Testament and can be expressed in English without detracting much from the literary style.
There are occasions, however, when a “formal equivalence” philosophy would result in renderings that are unclear, unnatural, confusing, or misleading. In such instances the Byzantine Text Version employs a slightly more dynamic approach, usually by adding words in English that are not present in Greek, or by leaving minor words untranslated from the Greek, or, in rare instances, by favoring a thought-for-thought approach to translation. For example, a literal rendering of Romans 14:22 would read, “Do you have faith? Have it privately before God.” This translation is clear and natural English, but it potentially misleads the reader into thinking that a person should not share his or her faith with others. As a result, Romans 14:22 has been rendered, “Do you have a firm belief about these things? Have it privately before God.” Another example is 1 Timothy 4:13, in which Paul literally tells Timothy to “give heed to reading.” A literal translation makes it sound like Paul is advising Timothy to read more books, but actually he is advising him not to neglect the public reading of Scripture. As a result, the Greek has been rendered, “give heed to the public reading of Scripture.”

Matters of Orthography

The translation of 1 Timothy 4:13 serves as a good example that it is sometimes necessary to add words in English that are not present in the Greek. In adding such words in the Byzantine Text Version, every effort has been made to avoid introducing a high degree of interpretation into the text, focusing instead on smoothing out the English and avoiding renderings that would confuse or mislead the reader. The practice of italicizing words that are added in English to give clarity to the Greek has not been employed in this translation. While there are some advantages to italicizing (or otherwise marking) words that have been added in English, there are some disadvantages as well. First, no English translation carries out this practice consistently; in particular, many
articles are not italicized when they are added in English translation. Furthermore, if this practice were to be carried out thoroughly and consistently, the resultant text would be littered with italicized words, creating a visual distraction. Second, there is no practical way of indicating what Greek words have been left un translated, leaving the impression that, although some words have been added in English, no words have been left untranslated, which is not the case for any English translation. Third, in modern English the use of italics implies emphasis, and it is awkward when words that are often relatively minor seem to be emphasized. It would make more sense to put such words in brackets, but that would be quite distracting visually. Consequently, words that have been added in English are not marked in the Byzantine Text Version.

Although words that have been added in English are not marked, the difference between second person singular and second person plural is marked. One of the greatest advantages of archaic translations like the King James Version is the ability to differentiate between second person singular and second person plural by the use of archaic pronouns such as thou and ye. In order to maintain these distinctions, the Byzantine Text Version differentiates between second person singular and second person plural by using an alternate letter (ʋ) in second person singular pronouns. Consequently, the words you, your, and yours indicate second person singular, while the words you, your, and yours indicate second person plural. The casual reader will barely notice the difference, while the careful reader will be able to discern whether the pronoun is singular or plural.
Translation of Certain Key Terms

There are a few key terms in the Byzantine Text Version that require explanation. In many modern English translations the word euaggelion is translated as gospel. The word gospel is from the Old English word godspel, which literally means good news. Yet in modern usage the word gospel has lost some of its association with good news and has come to mean “the message concerning Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.” And while that is certainly the focus of the good news in the New Testament, the meaning of the Greek word itself is more general. Therefore the word euaggelion is translated in the Byzantine Text Version as good news. Similarly, the related verb euaggelizo is translated as preach, bring, or tell [the] good news.

The earliest translations of the New Testament in English all used the word hell to translate three different Greek words, namely, Gehenna, Hades, and Tartarus. This has led to a confusion of these concepts that endures to this day. To avoid this confusion, the Byzantine Text Version simply transliterates these terms. Gehenna is literally “the Valley of Hinnom,” which is where King Ahaz, King Manasseh, and the sons of Judah burned their sons and daughters as offerings to Molech, and also where, according to Jeremiah, they would endure God's wrath. As such, it became an image of the fiery judgment to come after death. In Greek mythology, Hades is the name both of the underworld and the god of the underworld. In the Septuagint, it is the primary translation of the Hebrew word Sheol, which is the abode of the dead. The word Tartarus is also taken from Greek mythology and refers to a dark abyss far beneath Hades where the Titans (that is, the children of the primordial deities Uranus and Gaea) were imprisoned. This term is used only 2 Peter 2:4, where it refers to the place where angels who sinned against God would be imprisoned until the time of judgment.
The term *bondservant* has been consistently used to translate the Greek word *doulos*. This Greek word is more commonly translated either as *slave* or *servant*. In American English, however, the word *slave* evokes images of slavery in America prior to the Civil War, which was a far more brutal and dehumanizing institution than what existed in the Roman world. The word *servant*, however, implies a state of liberty that a *doulos* in the Roman world did not enjoy. The word *bondservant*, although uncommon in modern English, avoids the potential misunderstandings that would arise from the use of either *slave* or *servant*.

The Greek noun *aion* has been translated either as *age*, *eternity*, or *eternity past*. This decision is driven, in part, by the “formal equivalence” philosophy of translation, which seeks to render nouns as nouns, verbs as verbs, and so on. As a result, the *Byzantine Text Version* employs renderings such as *for eternity* instead of *forever* and *for the ages of the ages* instead of *forever and ever*. The corresponding adjective *aionion* is translated as *eternal*. It should be noted, however, that these two Greek words focus more on the *quality* of life in the age to come than the *duration* of life. In other words, *eternal life* is about more than just living forever. It is about participating in the new life of the age that is to come. In that age, life exists outside of time as we know it. Consequently, it is not quite fitting to think of time in eternity as lasting forever in a linear sense. Another way to translate *eternal life* would be *the life of the coming age*, but such a translation would be a bit cumbersome in practical usage.

English translations have typically not made a distinction between the Greek words *naos* and *ieros*, translating them both with the word *temple*. The word *naos*, however, refers to the actual sanctuary itself, while the word *ieros* refers to the entire temple complex, including the outer courts. The choice not to distinguish these words can lead to some confusion as the reader may envision Jesus, for example, teaching in the
actual sanctuary itself rather than in the courts of the temple complex. Consequently, in the *Byzantine Text Version* the word *naos* is translated as *sanctuary*, and the word *ieros* is translated as *temple*.

Finally, the Greek word that is traditionally rendered as *betray* has been rendered more literally as *deliver up*. While betrayal was certainly a component of what Judas did to Jesus, the Greek word is focused more on the action of handing him over to the authorities and is therefore more accurately translated as *deliver up*.

**Gender Language**

The problem of gender in language is primarily a linguistic one. Both Greek and English lack a third person singular pronoun that is neutral with reference to the gender of a person. The closest that English has is the word *they* (which the *Byzantine Text Version* employs in 1 Corinthians 7:15 in the form *them*), but this term is generally awkward as a third person singular pronoun, often implying plurality. When a third person singular pronoun refers to a specific individual, it can often be translated in a more specific way, such as *the man, the woman, the child, or the one*. (The latter is preferred when referring to God.) However, such renderings become more difficult when referring in general to any person. Traditionally, both Greek and English have used the third person singular masculine pronoun to refer to a person in general (whether male or female). Because the *Byzantine Text Version* employs a traditional literary style, this practice is continued in the present translation when it is not feasible or natural to use a more specific translation.

In contrast, the Greek word *anthropos* often refers to a *human being or person*, rather than to a *male person*. Consequently, the word *anthropos* is generally translated as *human or person* unless it clearly refers to a male, in which case it is translated as *man*. Similarly, masculine adjectives that
refer to a type of person in general are translated with *person* rather than *man*, for example, *a righteous person* rather than *a righteous man*. But if the adjective is clearly describing a male, the word *man* is used instead of *person*.

The Greek term *adelphoi* presents another challenge in English translation as it can refer either specifically to *brothers* or more generally to *brothers and sisters*. Here the book of Acts is helpful as the term *andres adelphoi* is used thirteen times. This term literally means *men brothers*, and it seems to favor interpreting *adelphoi* as referring primarily to *brothers* rather than to *brothers and sisters*. While modern English-speaking cultures may frown upon the exclusion of women in the terms of address used by the apostles, the task of translation should not superimpose modern cultural norms on ancient texts. Thus the *Byzantine Text Version* translates *adelphoi* as *brothers*. Nevertheless, the reader should keep in mind that, from a purely grammatical perspective, *brothers* can also be translated as *brothers and sisters*.

The translation of the word *uioi* as *sons*, even when it refers to a group of men and women, also requires some explanation. In biblical cultures, it was primarily the sons who had the rights of inheritance. Thus when the New Testament refers to Christian believers as *sons*, it carries the connotation that they are heirs who shall receive an inheritance (see Galatians 4:7). So when females are referred to as *sons*, they are designated as fellow recipients of the inheritance. Thus it is actually a progressive notion, which elevates the status of women as heirs of the promises of God. To translate the Greek as *children* instead of *sons* would detract from that point. Consequently, the *Byzantine Text Version* almost always translates the Greek word *uioi* as *sons*. One notable exception is Luke 20:34, where it would be awkward to translate *uioi* as *sons* because *sons* are not “given in marriage.” As a result, the word *uioi* is translated as *people* in Luke 20:34.
The Text-Critical English New Testament

*The Text-Critical English New Testament* is an edition of the *Byzantine Text Version* that documents every translatable difference found in the following editions of the Greek New Testament:

- **CT** Critical Text (This designation is used when NA, SBL, and TH are all in agreement. In Mark, Acts, and the Catholic Epistles, this designation is used when ECM, NA, SBL, and TH are all in agreement)
- **ECM*** This designation is used when ECM employs a split guiding line, which indicates that the ECM editors have left open the decision as to which of the variants they believe might be the initial text. If ECM* is listed only once, it means that the other variant in the split guiding line supports the main Byzantine reading.
- **EL** Elzevirs' Textus Receptus, 1st edition (1624)
- **FS** Frederick Scrivener's Textus Receptus (1894)

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*In Acts 9:43; 13:46; 17:3; and 21:13, three variants appear on the split guiding line, but in none of those cases are there more than two translatable differences.*

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Each of these editions provides a unique text-critical perspective. While it is common to refer to the Textus Receptus as a single entity, in reality there are various editions of the Textus Receptus, which all differ from one another. While Erasmus was the first to publish what became known as the Textus Receptus, it was the edition of Robert Estienne (Stephanus) that came to shape the text as we know it today. In fact, there are far more variations between the editions of Erasmus and Stephanus than there are between Stephanus and the editions of Beza,

\[b\]In 2021 Robinson revised his electronic text for the alternate Byzantine readings in Rev. 3:2 and Rev. 9:10. Those revised readings are followed in the footnotes of *The Text-Critical English New Testament.*
the Elzevirs, and Scrivener. Beza's edition was the one that was most often followed by the translators of the King James Version. The editions of the Elzevirs follow Beza's text closely and are most notable for introducing the term Textus Receptus (which means, ‘received text’) in the 1633 edition. Scrivener's edition is derived from Beza's fourth edition. However, Scrivener did not start with the Greek text, but with the English text of the King James Version. He then modified Beza's fourth edition by piecing together a Greek text from various editions of the Textus Receptus to match as much as possible the English translation found in the King James Version. As a result, Scrivener's text has great value when it comes to studying the King James Version, but it stands outside the mainstream of traditional Textus Receptus editions, at times adopting readings not well attested in the Textus Receptus tradition. In fact, Scrivener documents multiple readings in the King James Version that are translated from the Latin Vulgate rather than from any prior edition of the Greek New Testament.

Following in the footsteps of Westcott and Hort, the Nestle-Aland editions ultimately displaced the Textus Receptus and have now 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, and the Catholic Epistles. 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 generally 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 more frequently selects variants that have very little support among Greek manuscripts, providing an
interesting 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. The Tyndale House edition adopts more Byzantine readings than the Nestle-Aland and SBL editions.

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') 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. However, the readings of Family 35 at times represent as little as 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 one of the largest families within the Byzantine text tradition. If the Textus Receptus had been produced in the Byzantine Empire in the Late Middle Ages, it would have looked very similar to Family 35.

In addition to the Textus Receptus and Family 35, the present volume also documents translatable differences found in *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, which was edited by Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad. The edition of Hodges and Farstad differs very little from that of Robinson and Pierpont with the exception of the *Pericope Adulterae* and the book of Revelation, where it follows a
stemmatic approach for determining the original Greek text. This stemmatic approach hypothesizes family trees to show the relationship of various manuscript families and then makes text-critical decisions based on those hypothetical family trees. It provides an alternate perspective to the main Byzantine textform.

The Greek New Testament of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople provides one further witness to the Byzantine text family. Although not formally a part of the Textus Receptus tradition, the Patriarchal Text is more similar to the Textus Receptus than to other Byzantine subfamilies. At times it includes readings with very little support among Greek manuscripts, just as the Textus Receptus does. The Patriarchal Text is used in the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches.

In addition to documenting translatable differences found in the editions described above, The Text-Critical English New Testament also documents translatable differences found in Robinson and Pierpont's alternate Byzantine readings. For the bulk of the New Testament, Robinson and Pierpont follow Von Soden's family Kx. When Kx is nearly evenly divided, Robinson and Pierpont generally follow K', while footnoting the alternate Byzantine reading. (Sometimes K' variants are footnoted even when Kx is generally united.) In the Pericope Adulterae (John 7:53—8:11), Robinson and Pierpont follow Ki, while footnoting the alternate Byzantine readings found in Kx and K'. In Revelation, Robinson and Pierpont generally follow the main Koine tradition (known as Q), but when a significant number of Q manuscripts align with the manuscripts associated with the commentary on Revelation by Andreas of Caesarea (known as Av), that reading is followed instead. In either case, when two or more variants have nearly equal levels of support, the alternate Byzantine readings are footnoted. (See the table below for more detailed information regarding the Pericope Adulterae and Revelation.)
For each translatable difference found in the aforementioned editions of the Greek New Testament and in Robinson and Pierpont's alternate Byzantine readings, the approximate percentage of Greek manuscripts supporting both the text and the variants is listed with each footnote. These percentages are derived from Wilbur Pickering's third edition of *The New Testament According to Family 35*. Percentages appearing in parentheses are those that Pickering derived from the *Text und Textwert* volumes and are assumed to be quite accurate. Percentages not appearing in parentheses are Pickering's own estimates based on a variety of sources. These percentages have a greater margin of error but are still relatively accurate. The percentages listed in the footnotes do not always add up to one hundred percent because only the variants that appear in the aforementioned Greek New Testaments are listed. Variants that support a reading but introduce other translatable differences are not included when calculating the manuscript percentages. When alternate spellings clearly and unambiguously support a particular reading they are included in the calculation of manuscripts percentages. Variant spellings of proper names are generally not footnoted unless a particular name is obscure and there is no consensus as to how it should be spelled in English. Variants that lack a word or words in the Greek that must be supplied in English for the translation to make sense are not recorded since there is ultimately no translatable difference. When variants are listed without manuscript percentages, it is because Pickering does not list the percentages for those particular variants in his apparatus. 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 utter dominance of a particular text type.

Because the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53—8:11) and the book of Revelation have been fully collated and manuscript families have been
empirically determined, Pickering does not list the manuscript percentages in those sections, preferring to list the manuscript families instead. While Pickering documents seven families in the *Pericope Adulterae* and nine families in the book of Revelation, such detail is beyond the scope of this volume. As a result, this volume documents only the three main families in the *Pericope Adulterae* and the five main families in the book of Revelation (as listed in the table below). The families are documented only when they support one of the variants of the Greek New Testaments that are compared in this volume. In the rare instances where no manuscript family data is available for a particular variant in Revelation, the manuscript families are not cited.

\( \mathfrak{m}^5 \) Family of approximately 280 Byzantine manuscripts in the *Pericope Adulterae*, which corresponds to the family known as K\(^i\). This family is followed by Robinson and Pierpont.

\( \mathfrak{m}^6 \) Family of approximately 250 Byzantine manuscripts in the *Pericope Adulterae*, which corresponds to the family known as K\(^x\). This family is followed by Hodges and Farstad.

\( \mathfrak{m}^7 \) Family of approximately 260 Byzantine manuscripts in the *Pericope Adulterae*, which corresponds to the family known as K\(^r\) (also known as Family 35). With one exception, the readings of \( \mathfrak{m}^7 \) are always in alignment with either \( \mathfrak{m}^5 \) or \( \mathfrak{m}^6 \). This family is followed by Pickering.

\( \mathfrak{m}^a \) Manuscripts associated with the main Koine tradition in Revelation (comprised of uncial 046 along with 73 disparate minuscules), also known as Q. Robinson and Pierpont usually follow this manuscript family. Hodges and Farstad follow this
manuscript family even more closely, especially when it has at least some support from $\mathfrak{b}$.

$\mathfrak{b}$ A small but important family of 10 minuscules in Revelation that often supports $\mathfrak{a}$. This family consists of two well-defined subfamilies.

$\mathfrak{c}$ A family of 29 minuscules in Revelation that contain a mixture of readings, some of which support $\mathfrak{a}$ and some of which support $\mathfrak{d}$ and $\mathfrak{e}$. The manuscripts in this family correspond to $K'$ (also known as Family 35) and are relatively uniform. This family is followed by Pickering.

$\mathfrak{d}$ A family of 13 minuscules associated with the commentary on Revelation by Andreas of Caesarea, which together with $\mathfrak{e}$ form an important line of transmission (known as $\text{Av}'$) that is distinct from the main Koine tradition found in $\mathfrak{a}$.

$\mathfrak{e}$ A family of 24 minuscules associated with the commentary on Revelation by Andreas of Caesarea, which together with $\mathfrak{d}$ form an important line of transmission (known as $\text{Av}'$) that is distinct from the main Koine tradition found in $\mathfrak{a}$. $\mathfrak{e}$ is frequently split in support of different readings. $\mathfrak{e}$ is probably closer to the text of Andreas than $\mathfrak{d}$.

$\mathfrak{f}$ Indicates the unity of $\mathfrak{5}$, $\mathfrak{6}$, and $\mathfrak{7}$ in the Pericope Adulterae and the unity of $\mathfrak{a}$, $\mathfrak{b}$, $\mathfrak{c}$, $\mathfrak{d}$, and $\mathfrak{e}$ in Revelation.

* Indicates part of a manuscript family. For example, $\mathfrak{6}^*$ indicates part of the $\mathfrak{6}$ family, and $\mathfrak{e}^*$ indicates part of the $\mathfrak{e}$ family.