Compass Life Adult Sunday School Jeff Gordon

**“Tischendorf and the Codex Sinaiticus”**  May 12, 2019

**I. NT Text Development and the idea of Criticism**

The NT autographs written on scrolls. But Christian scribes were early adopters of the codex (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) format, and nearly all existent MSS are codices (whether papyrus, parchment or later paper). Early MSS are *majuscules* (upper case), later (9th C.) *minuscule* (lower case). The Diocletian persecution (303-313) destroyed many copies of Scripture. But per Eusebius, Constantine commissioned 50 Bibles (c. 331). Jerome revised the Old Latin NT (c.405) using “best Greek manuscripts”. His Vulgate version prevailed in the West up to the Reformation, the LXX and Byzantine NT Greek text in Constantinople to 1453. Until Gutenberg (Bible: 1455), scribes copied by hand and thus made \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Any \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ difference between two copies represents a *variant* reading. Hundreds of thousands of copied pages yield large numbers of variants. Only a small number of these (<<1%) are both viable (reasonably \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and meaningful (having \_\_\_effect on meaning). Textual criticism seeks to identify the “best” reading. Main rule: which reading would most likely explain the other(s). Manuscripts can be grouped based on \_\_\_\_\_\_ variants into text-types, which allow for certain groups (e.g., \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) to be given more weight in judging a variant. Text-type provides “external” evidence for the quality of a text (better manuscript 🡪 better reading); scribal practices, author’s distinctives, errors, etc., “internal” evidence.

**II. Pre-Critical “TR” Printed Editions of the Greek NT (1514-1633)**

Cardinal Francisco Ximenes, with a team in Alcala, Spain, produced requisite Greek type (≈ \_\_\_\_ letters) and completed a printed Greek NT in 1514 (1st, v5 of 6-vol Complutensian Polyglot), but it could not be published until sanctioned by Pope Leo X (1520/22). Meanwhile, Erasmus sought to publish \_\_\_\_\_\_. He borrowed \_\_ NT MSS – mostly covering separate parts of the NT, his only Revelation MS missing 22:16-21 which he back-translated from the Vulgate (creating \_\_\_\_ variants). 4/5 editions:

1. May 1516 – “worst-edited book”; no “*Comma Johanneum*” since not in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MS
2. 1519 – Replaced parallel Vulgate with his own “elegant Latin” version; used by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. 1522 – Grudgingly added *Comma* to please Rome (made-to-order Gk MS from Oxford)
4. 1527 – Definitive edition, re-added Vulgate in 3rd column, referenced Complutensian Polyglot

Robert Estienne (Stephanus) published 4 versions (1546,49,50,51); the 3rd was folio size (8.5 x 13”) and contained a critical apparatus (referencing readings from 14 codices, and the C. P.), and became a popular “received text” edition. Theodore Beza (1519-1605) produced at least 9 editions (1565-1604). His 1598 edition was used by the translators of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Beza had two older codices – *Bezae*(D/05) and *Claromontanus*(Dp/06) – but he chose not to use them because they had too many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from his existing text. *Elzevir Publishers* of Holland produced a compact edition in 1633 with this blurb in the preface: “you have the *text* now *received* by all…” – “received text” , in Latin, “*Texus Receptus*” (TR).

**III. Early Critical Period**

Brian Walton produced a 6-volume London Polyglot (1655-57). The NT volume contains Greek (Stephanus), Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and some Persian, with parallel Latin literal translations. He listed variants from *Codex Alexandrinus* (A/02) which the Patriarch of Constantinople had sent Charles I in 1627. John Mill, fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford spent \_\_\_ years assembling variants (citing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) from some 100 Greek MSS, early versions, and many citations from Church Fathers. He died in 1707, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after his work was published. Richard Bentley (1662-1742) defended Mill’s work against conservatives and skeptics. Evangelical Johann Albrecht Bengel published an edition at Tubingen (1734) with apparatus and was first to propose formal text-types to weigh manuscripts, grading from α(original) to ε(ignore). He concluded that no variant shook any evangelical doctrine. Johann Jacob Griesbach (1745-1812) refined the text-types to three: Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine, formulated 15 “canons” of textual criticism, and published the first *eclectic* text. Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) felt he could produce an *\_\_\_\_\_\_* text, using only majuscules, versions and fathers. “Down with the late text of the Textus Receptus, and back to the text of the early fourth-century church.”

**IV. Tischendorf and the Codex Sinaiticus**

*Lobegott Friedrich Konstantin Tischendorf* was born 18 Jan 1815, near Leipzig, Germany (city of Leibniz, Bach). He entered its University Easter, 1834 to study theology with professors like Georg Winer, author of one of the first grammars of the Greek NT. Tischendorf won prizes for theological essays on the satisfaction theory of Christ’s death, and the dispute with religious leaders in John 6:51-59. In need of funds, he worked as a private tutor in 1838-39, meeting the pastor’s daughter he would later marry (1845). He also started working on a critical edition of the Greek NT and became concerned about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ theology expressed by teachers like F. C. Baur (who saw Christianity as developing over centuries, and dated John’s gospel c.180). Tischendorf traveled, hoping to find \_\_\_\_\_ manuscripts to get much closer to the autographs. He wanted to see and use *Codex Vaticanus*(B/03) but was not allowed (until 1867). Even before making any finds, he published his first critical GNT in 1841, having submitted its *prolegomena* to qualify as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at Leipzig. (He also received an honorary doctorate from University of Breslau in 1843). He went to Paris in Oct 1840 and was first to successfully transcribe the palimpsest *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus*(C/04) (using some chemicals, and \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ of meticulous labor). He continued to acquire and collate manuscripts in Europe, then left for the Near East, where he journeyed 12 days on foot from Cairo to St Catherine’s Monastery in May 1844. Here, as he told it, he saw some LXX leaves in a basket, and was told that papers like this would be burned. They gave him 43/129 sheets, which he took back to Leipzig & published. On the trip he acquired 50 more MSS. He returned home to marry, and spent the next 8 years near home, still extensively publishing and researching MSS. He returned to St Catherine’s in 1853 but didn’t see the additional leaves (only a fragment of Genesis being used as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). He did acquire more MSS in Cairo, Jerusalem, and elsewhere. In 1858, Tischendorf reached an agreement with the Tsar of Russia to sponsor another visit, which he made in Jan, 1859. This time, a monk casually showed him, not just the missing leaves, but much more of the LXX, and the complete NT (*Codex Sinaiticus*(ﬡ/01) is the *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*). He forced himself to act restrained, and eventually was allowed to take the MS to Cairo, spending a couple months in the heat working to transcribe it. Tischendorf suggested that the monks might donate the MS to the Tsar as protector, but church politics delayed this, so he asked instead to borrow it to finish copying in St. Petersburg, writing a receipt promising to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it on demand. He identified 4 scribes and some 12,000 corrections in the MS. He completed a 4-volume facsimile in 3 years (1863), making 367 copies (2 given to St. Catherine’s). In 1869, agreement was reached (maybe under Russian pressure) to make the loan a permanent donation to the Tsar. Tischendorf died from a stroke in 1874 at the age of 59.

In 1933, the Soviet Union sold Sinaiticus to Britain for £\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (more than half from private donations). It’s still (mostly) in the British Library. In 1975, a genizah was discovered at St. Catherine’s including several leaves of *Sinaiticus* (suggesting pages were buried or repurposed, never burned).

**IV. Critical and Modern Editions**

Tischendorf completed 8 editions of the Greek NT, the last of which (1869/72) remains a valuable resource.

Samuel Tregelles (1813–1875), evangelical, top English textual critic, collated MSS, amassed data, and produced a high-quality 2-volume Greek NT in fascicles between 1857-1872.

B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort worked for 28 years to produce their “New Testament in the Original Greek” with a detailed Intro and Appendix (containing apparatus). They did not work to collate more sources but sought to more rigorously apply Griesbach’s canons to the significant data already available. They placed more emphasis on external evidence, favoring the “neutral text” of *Sinaiticus* and particularly *Vaticanus*. Their version largely became the basis of all subsequent versions, and the beginnings of modern translations.

* Eberhard Nestle (1898) – Tischendorf/WH/Weiss
* Erwin Nestle (1927, v13) – added von Soden, used majority among sources
* Nestle/Aland(from v.25 1963, now v.28), UBS(1966-now v.5), unified text (NU) from v26/v3 (1975/79)
* Byzantine/Majority Text - Hodges/Farstad(1985); Robinson/Pierpont(2005) – variants from NU
* SBLGNT(2010,Holmes/Logos) – WH,Treg,NIV,RP; Tyndale House GNT(2017,Crossway - esv.org/gnt)
* *Editio Critica Maior* (Coherence Based Genealogical Method), ongoing (1 page/verse in Acts)

**V. Summary Points**

* The many variants *confirm*, rather than deny, access to originals in every way that matters (the trajectory points to validated stability, not some “yet undetected” divergence). We can be highly confident that “corruption” of individual copies does not effect corruption of the *text*
* Inspiration and inerrancy neither imply nor demand *forensic* precision. Scripture reveals the Person of Christ as/by *eyewitness testimony*.
* Scripture is revealed in “*holographic*” form (so to speak)
* We have the *Word*, and the *words*, of God (even in translation!)