

Acts 9:5-6

The Longer Reading: Original or Unoriginal?

There are some textual variants in the Bible that are famous because the evidence for and against them is somewhat divided. It is hard in such cases to say for sure whether the passage is original or not, so they rise to prominence. There are also some textual variants that gain notoriety because of their length (that is, John 7:53-8:11 and Mark 16:9-20). Then there are textual variants that make a name for themselves because some perceive them to have theological significance (I John 5:7 for example). The textual problem of Acts 9:5-6 does not fit into any of those categories. It is a well known textual issue. But it is not well known because there is debate about which reading is original. The evidence is in fact quite definitive. In fact, since textual criticism typically concerns itself with variant readings among the Greek manuscripts, this is almost not even a textual variant, at least as far as the Greek tradition goes. Further, it is not in any way a “significant” textual variant. It doesn’t change the meaning or exegesis of the passage at all, and, like all textual variants, doesn’t affect the doctrine of the Bible in any way. Rather, as we will see, this passage is well known because of its historical significance from Erasmus through the KJV. What is the textual issue? The TR/KJV of Acts 9:5-6 reads;

1. εἶπε δέ, Τίς εἶ, Κύριε; ὁ δὲ (And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the)
2. Κύριος εἶπεν, (Lord said,)
3. Ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις· (I am Jesus whom thou persecutest)
4. σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν. [*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*]
τρέμων τε καὶ θαμβῶν εἶπε, [And he trembling and astonished said,]
Κύριε, τί με θέλεις ποιῆσαι; [Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?]
καὶ ὁ Κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν, [And the Lord *said* unto him,]
5. Ἀνάστηθι καὶ εἵσελθε εἰς τὴν πόλιν, (Arise, and go into the city,)
καὶ λαληθήσεται σοι τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν. (and it shall be told thee what thou must do.)

But in the NA 28, (and almost all modern English versions) sections 2 and 4 are not present, so that the text simply reads,

εἶπεν δέ· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δέ· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις· ἀλλ’ ἀνάστηθι καὶ εἵσελθε εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ λαληθήσεται σοι ὃ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν.

(And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.")

Thus, the KJV/TR adds “*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him*” in the middle of the statement of Jesus to Paul. This interrupts the speech of Jesus with a section of brief narrative and further discourse. What is the manuscript evidence for or against the longer reading?

The Ancient Versions, Harmonization, and Embellishment

Scribal embellishment is what happens when the text of the Bible “grows” in some way from the original. Most of the time, this happens quite accidentally. The most common way this happens is that information is recorded in a marginal gloss, which then accidentally gets copied into the text by a scribe who thought that the marginal gloss was originally meant to be a part of the text. This phenomenon is much more common in the ancient versions than in the Greek witnesses. The reason for this is that these versions are translations. Translation, today, as then, can be more literal or less literal. It can be similar to what we know today as formal equivalence, or it can be similar to what we now know as dynamic equivalence, being very interpretive of the text and “adding” elements. When an ancient translation was produced, it often evidenced such “embellishments,” to greater and lesser extents.¹ This is especially so in the so-called “Western text.” This text is well known for its harmonization and embellishments. In fact, if one were to take all of the material that the “Western text” adds to the book of Acts, the book would grow around 10% larger than it is in the KJV.

Harmonization is what happens when the text of one passage of Scripture is made to conform to a similar parallel passage. Anytime there are parallel accounts in Scripture which evidence verbal differences, one is almost certain to find a scribe at some time, in some language, who has harmonized them. This can happen basically two different ways. First, it can happen intentionally. The thought process is pretty easy to understand. There is no malice intended. Quite the opposite in fact – harmonization only occurs as an outflow of a high view of Scripture. A scribe sees a slight difference between the wording of two separate biblical texts, and his assumption is something like, “Well, the original couldn’t have had these differences. Some scribe before me has clearly made an error and created a difference where there wasn’t one originally. I will fix his error, and thus protect Scripture from such mistakes.” Scribes harmonized accounts between Kings/Chronicles. More commonly, scribes regularly and repeatedly harmonized accounts in the four gospels, changing one or the other so that its wording in a particular text now matches the wording in the other. A scribe harmonizing an account is not trying to create a new text or create a problem. He is trying to fix what he perceives to be one. But in his attempt to fix a problem, he usually creates one. The one exception is the rare case in which the differences between the accounts in his exemplar truly were the result of scribal blunder, in which case he could actually end up restoring by conjecture the original reading. This may happen occasionally.

Secondly, and more commonly, scribal harmonization can happen quite on accident. If a scribe is familiar with a parallel account, he can quite accidentally import that parallel into the account he is copying, without even realizing he is doing so. For example, if you were asked to copy out John 3 from the KJV, one could easily understand if when you got to verse 16, instead of looking back at each letter of your exemplar, you partially wrote from what was in your memory. If someone had slyly given you a copy of John 3 where the wording of verse 16 had been slightly altered, you might still end up copying by accident the exact wording of the KJV without even realizing that your exemplar didn’t contain those

¹ Even a much later translation like the KJV does this on occasion, in much more minor ways, as all translations do. For example, in II Tim. 3:16, there occurs one word, “θεόπνευστος,” an adjective which combines the forms for “God” and “Breathed.” Literally, and simply, this would be translated, “God-breathed.” There is no verb in the clause however, so the Greek reader must supply one. Thus, “is God-breathed” or “was God-breathed” are both accurate literal translations. “Is inspired” or “Was inspired” are also acceptable. The KJV translators, however, chose to interpret the statement (I think accurately) as a reference to the original *giving* of scripture, and wanted to emphasize this original inspiration as distinct, so they somewhat dynamically translated it as, “given by inspiration of God.” They took one Greek word, that could have been literally translated by two, or at most three, English words, and translated it with five English words, which say a little more than the original language actually says. Oddly, I have occasionally heard some emphasize that “It says IS inspired, not WAS.” The original language text says neither.

words. The point is, accidental or intentional, harmonization almost always occurs at some point when we have parallel accounts.

Fortunately, we have so much manuscript data, from so many parts of the world, and from such diverse time periods, that such harmonizations are almost always easy to spot. The reason this is so is that while some or even many scribes might harmonize parallel accounts, not every scribe will do so, and certainly not in every language. And of those that do, not all of them will do so in exactly the same way. (This is especially true when a scribe is harmonizing from memory). Thus, when we find what appear to be harmonizations, we look to see if there is manuscript evidence of variation in the harmonized section of text, and we look to see if there are manuscripts that do not contain the harmonized section at all. Even if most manuscripts share some kind of diverse harmonization, when we have early attestation of manuscripts that do not contain the longer reading at all, it becomes quite clear that the longer section is a scribal addition due to harmonization. This is all the more so when there is variation between those that do have the longer reading. It becomes obvious in such cases that the longer reading is a harmonization from a parallel.

The text of Acts 9:5-6, interestingly enough, has several such parallels, each within the book of Acts itself. Luke recounts the conversion of Saul himself in Acts 9 (probably recounting it there exactly as Paul had first shared it with him when they journeyed together). But he also twice records Paul himself sharing the story with others (probably accurately recording what Paul had said on those occasions). If you have ever shared your salvation testimony with more than one person, you understand the incredible unlikelihood that you would use the exact same words each time, or tell the story in exactly the same way. This is simply not how we tell stories, either our own or those of others. Thus, the same account, in slightly different form, is found in Acts 9, Acts 22 and Acts 26. Here is the KJV of each. I have italicized the relevant portions.

Acts 9:1-9 (KJV)

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,² And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.³ And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. ⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵ *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*⁶ *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.⁸ And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Acts 22:4-11 (KJV)

And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.⁵ As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.⁶ And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.⁷ And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?⁸ *And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*⁹ And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.¹⁰ And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to

do.¹¹ And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

Acts 26:11-18 (KJV)

And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.¹² Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,¹³ At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.¹⁴ And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*¹⁵ And I said, *Who art thou, Lord?* And he said, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*¹⁶ But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;¹⁷ Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,¹⁸ To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

When we look at each of these texts in the Versional witnesses, we find a variety of Old Latin, many Latin Vulgate, the Coptic Sahidic, and several Syriac manuscripts which add parts of Acts 26 to the account in Acts 22.² We likewise find a variety of Old Latin, many Latin Vulgate, and several Syriac manuscripts which add elements from Acts 22 to the account in Acts 26.³ Note that these “additions” are not part of the TR at those points, so that even if one believes the TR to be verbally perfect, he must admit the existence of these harmonizations in those passages. In other words, while we can debate as to whether a particular reading was or was not originally a harmonization, it is indisputable that these Versional witnesses evidence some harmonization. Thus, it is no surprise when we come to the text of Acts 9 to find that some scribes, in some of the ancient versions, have added parts of the text of Acts 26 or Acts 22 to the account in Acts 9. In fact, it would be quite surprising if we didn’t find this.

Thus, in Acts 9:5, The Old Latin manuscripts *h*, *p*, and *t*, a variety of Latin Vulgate manuscripts, and the Syriac peshitta and Syriac *h* manuscripts have all added “of Nazareth” to “Jesus” in order to harmonize the account to Acts 22:8, so that both now read “Jesus of Nazareth.” The Syriac Peshitta, Syriac *h*, and the Middle Egyptian version have all added “how hard it is for thee to kick against the pricks” to the end of verse 4 (not where it is in the TR), harmonizing it to Acts 26:14. The Old Latin *gig* and a variety of Latin Vulgate manuscripts add “how hard it is for thee to kick against the pricks” not at verse 4, but at the end of verse 5 (where it is in the TR) but then don’t add the longer section of verse 6, and thus have the shorter reading for the rest of the text (very unlike the TR).

Having noted already a variety of harmonization in the Versional witnesses (undeniable as such even to one advocating a perfectly preserved TR or KJV) to the accounts in Acts 22 and 26, we can now look at the evidence the Versional witnesses offer for the longer reading of verses 5-6, the portion we are talking about in this essay, “*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished*

² Specifically, from our highlighted section, the Old Latin *gig*, a variety of Latin Vulgate manuscripts, the Sahidic translation, and the Syriac manuscripts *h*, *m*, and *g* all add “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” to 22:7 from Acts 26, which is absent here from the TR and all printed Greek texts. There are a variety of other harmonizations from other parts of the account as well.

³ Specifically, from our highlighted section, the Old Latin *gig*, a variety of Latin Vulgate manuscripts, and the Syriac Peshitta and Syriac *h* add “of Nazareth” from Acts 22:8 into the text of 26:15, so that they both now read, “Jesus of Nazareth.” This addition is different from the text of the TR, and every Greek text I know of. There are also other harmonizations from other parts of the account as well.

said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him.” The longer reading clearly is a harmonization of the elements in Acts 26:14, 16, and Acts 22:8,10, with slight scribal embellishment.⁴ This scribal addition is found in Old Latin manuscript *p*, a variety of Latin Vulgate manuscripts (obviously, not all of them). The longer reading, with part of the harmonization, but without the “how hard it is for thee to kick against the pricks” is found in old Latin manuscripts *h* and *t*, and the Syriac *h*, and the middle Egyptian version (some of these have added that phrase at verse 4). Note that every single one of these so called “witnesses to the longer reading,” as some KJV only literature calls them, have all been shown already to evidence harmonization between the accounts in Acts, and in a variety of other ways as well. When a reading is a harmonization, we expect to find it in some but not all witnesses. This is obviously the case here. When a reading is a harmonization, we also expect to find witnesses that do not have the reading at all. This is also exactly what we find in the other ancient versions. All of the manuscripts of the Boharic version, all of the manuscripts of the Armenian translation, all of the Georgian manuscripts, and all of the Slavonic manuscripts know nothing of the longer reading. They all have the shorter reading of modern Greek texts and modern English translations. The phrase “trembling and astonished” is the only part that isn’t clearly a parallel to the other passages, and this phrase is clearly an embellishment. Most of the Versional witnesses that have the phrase are part of the Western text, which, as mentioned, is well-known for such embellishments.

Just think through what this means. If all the evidence you had was the Latin manuscripts, you would have a mixture of manuscripts that didn’t have the longer reading, manuscripts that did have the longer reading, and manuscripts that had part of the reading in a variety of different forms. Noting the common propensity of these Latin manuscripts to harmonize among these parallel passages in Acts, even in this very passage, it would be obvious to any impartial observer that the Latin tradition establishes that the longer reading was a scribal addition. And yet the longer reading is almost completely unknown outside of the Latin tradition. If you added the rest of the Versional evidence, most languages having only the shorter reading, and those few witnesses that have the longer reading already evidencing clear tendencies to harmonize and embellish this very passage, it would become all the more obvious that the longer section of verses 5-6 was not original, and was in fact a scribal addition through harmonization. I intentionally shared the versional evidence first, because the versional support is clearly revealed to be evidence against the KJV reading, but it is, ironically, also the only evidence that can be adduced for it! This is because the reading of the KJV/TR is essentially unknown in the Greek manuscripts.

Greek Witnesses

No need for a detailed chart with this one. The words of the longer reading are not found at this point in Acts in the text of any known Greek manuscript in existence. We have over 607 manuscripts that contain all or parts of the book of Acts. We have manuscripts from practically every period of time, from as early as the 4th century, in every major locale. We have Greek manuscripts which predate all of the Versional data we mentioned above, in some cases by several centuries. We have multiple, widespread, unanimous testimony, in every single Greek manuscript of the passage that has ever been found, that Luke did not write the longer reading in this passage. While there are a few minor variants in other parts of the passage,⁵ of those manuscripts that have the text of Acts 9:5-6,⁶ the shorter reading is unanimously

⁴ The scribal embellishment would be the phrase “trembling and astonished.” But Metzger notes that basically this phrase (ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκότι αὐτῷ) is added to this passage after “astonished” in each of these Versional witnesses except the Vulgate, so that they read, “and he, trembling and becoming astonished,” which could just as likely be a harmonization from 3:10. (Metzger, “Text,” pg. 363).

⁵ Most notably, in the phrase ὁ δὲ Κύριος εἶπεν “and the Lord said” from verse 5. Most of the early manuscripts have simply ὁ δὲ (“and he”), which picks up the previous use of the verb, thus becoming “and he said.” The majority of the later manuscripts add the phrase “Κύριος εἶπεν,” (what we have called section #2 above) thus becoming, “and the Lord said.” I’m inclined to think the shorter reading original, but it is irrelevant to the longer reading (what we have called section #4 above). Also, a half dozen or so

found in the text of;

Papyri Manuscript – P74 (VII);

Uncial Manuscripts – 01 (IV), 02 (V), 03 (IV), 04 (V), 08 (VI), 014 (IX), 044 (IX), 049 (IX), 056 (IX), 057 (IX), 095 (VIII), 0123 (IX), 0142 (IX).

As we have noted in previous posts, these early manuscripts are typically regarded as the most important ones for establishing the text, and the ones textual critics most rely on. It is just good common sense that the manuscripts closest to the originals in date, when in agreement, will most likely represent the original autographs. Thus, these early manuscripts are given the highest “weight” in text-critical discussions. And they all have the shorter reading. But we also have many later manuscripts of Acts. And they all likewise have the shorter reading. For example;

Miniscule Manuscripts - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 18, 22, 33, 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 51, 57, 61, 62, 69, 76, 81, 82, 88, 90, 91, 93, 94, 103, 104, 105, 110, 122, 131, 141, 149, 180, 181, 206, 218, 228, 250, 254, 307, 319, 321, 323, 326, 330, 365, 367, 378, 383, 385, 386, 390, 393, 394, 398, 400, 404, 421, 424, 425, 429, 431, 432, 436, 437, 440, 441, 444, 450, 453, 456, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 479, 480, 483, 489, 491, 496, 498, 506, 517, 522, 536, 547, 567, 582, 592, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 616, 617, 618, 619, 621, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 641, 642, 644, 656, 664, 665, 676, 680, 699, 712, 757, 794, 796, 801, 808, 823, 824, 876, 886, 901, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 919, 920, 921, 922, 927, 928, 935, 941, 945, 956, 959, 986, 996, 997, 999, 1003, 1022, 1040, 1058, 1066, 1067, 1069, 1070, 1072, 1073, 1075, 1094, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1115, 1127, 1140, 1149, 1162, 1175, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1250, 1251, 1270, 1277, 1287, 1292, 1297, 1311, 1315, 1319, 1352, 1354, 1359, 1360, 1367, 1382, 1384, 1398, 1400, 1404, 1405, 1409, 1424, 1425, 1433, 1448, 1456, 1482, 1490, 1501, 1503, 1508, 1509, 1521, 1524, 1525, 1526, 1548, 1563, 1573, 1594, 1595, 1597, 1598, 1599, 1609, 1611, 1617, 1618, 1619, 1622, 1626, 1628, 1636, 1637, 1642, 1643, 1646, 1649, 1652, 1656, 1661, 1668, 1673, 1678, 1702, 1704, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1724, 1725, 1726, 1727, 1728, 1729, 1730, 1731, 1732, 1733, 1734, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1739, 1740, 1741, 1742, 1743, 1744, 1745, 1746, 1747, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753, 1754, 1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1760, 1760, 1761, 1762, 1763, 1764, 1765, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1780, 1785, 1795, 1796, 1799, 1809, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1880, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1902, 1903, 1904, 2005, 2009, 2080, 2085, 2086, 2088, 2093, 2115, 2125, 2127, 2131, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2143, 2147, 2175, 2180, 2191, 2194, 2200, 2201, 2218, 2221, 2225, 2233, 2242, 2243, 2249, 2255, 2261, 2279, 2288, 2289, 2298, 2303, 2306, 2344, 2352, 2356, 2374, 2378, 2385, 2400, 2401, 2412, 2423, 2464, 2495, 2652, 2718, 2774, 2802, 2803, 2805, 2815, 2816, 2818, 2886, 2892.

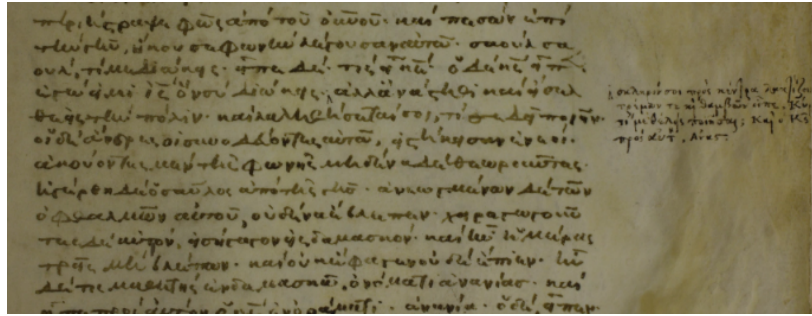
Greek manuscripts have, like many of the Latin Manuscripts added “the Nazarene” after “I am Jesus” either out of an unintentional harmonization to the parallel in Acts 22, or, more likely, as one of the normal and regular expansions of the name “Jesus” that happen in some manuscripts in many of the places where His name appears bare.

⁶ See “*Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments. III: Die Apostelgeschichte. Band 1.*” De Guyter, Germany, 1993, pg. 2-20; and NA 28, pg 407;

Which is to say, all of them that have this passage, apparently have the shorter reading. What Greek manuscripts can the longer reading be found in? It has not been found in the text of any. *Not one*. Frankly, this rather surprises me. I fully expect that at some point a Greek manuscript or two will turn up that has some form of the longer reading, since it is very likely that a Greek scribe somewhere along the way harmonized the passages just like the Versional witnesses did. But to date, none have been found. KJV advocates sometimes allege miniscule 69⁷ as proof that the KJV addition is correct. How a single late manuscript from the latter half of the 15th century against every known Greek witness from the 1st millennium could be proof of an original reading is beyond me. But note that the actual *text* of miniscule 69, as it stood towards the end of the 15th century does not contain the longer reading of the passage. A later corrector,⁸ in a different hand, after the original hand wrote the text, (and probably after Erasmus) either added what he thought was missing from the Latin, or perhaps even (if after Erasmus) added Erasmus' own translation of the longer reading into the margin, in a marginal note, as can be seen in the INTF photo of the manuscript, folio 3410, 171r;

⁷ Miniscule 69 was copied by a scribe named Emmanuel around 1468 (Metzger, "Text" pg. 88). It is well known as a rather eccentric manuscript. It is a member of what is now referred to as "family 13." It is missing the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53-8:11) from its normal place in John, but has added the Pericope at the end of Luke 21. It is missing Luke 22:43-44 from its normal place in Luke, but has added it after Matt. 26:39. It contains most of the NT, with a few gaps (strangely, Acts 10:45-14:17 is missing, not from lost pages, but because the scribe jumped for some reason in his copying straight from 10:44 to 14:18!). It contains a variety of apocryphal material. It contains a variety of unique readings never found in other manuscripts. It seems to typically be what some call "the Caesarean" text type for most of the NT, but seems to be "Byzantine" in Paul and the general epistles. (Aland, pg. 129).

⁸ Interestingly, it is usually possible to make a more accurate estimate of the time period when a corrector wrote a marginal note by noting the distinction in the inks (usually gall nut ink for such late parchment MSS) and hand. However, this corrector "re-inked" the entire manuscript, meaning that he traced back over the lines of every single letter, so that the marginal note is now the same darkness as the text, and all that can be noted is that the corrector is a different hand, and later than the text (since a marginal note obviously cannot precede the body of text which creates the existence of a margin). The corrector's hand is much more elegant than the original hand, and it might be natural to think that Erasmus himself penned some of his own readings (or what would become his readings) into the margin of the manuscript when he examined it. MS 69 is generally considered one of the manuscripts Erasmus examined, see Rummel, pg. 36. But others disagree (Brown, *Opera Omnia* pg. 11). When looking through the marginal corrections in MS 69, the corrector sometimes corrects the MSS to read just like Erasmus' text, (with Erasmus against almost all other manuscripts in Rev. 2:15; 5:14; "The 24" and "Him who lives forever and ever" etc.). But sometimes the corrector corrects to a form different from Erasmus (against the TR, eg. Rev. 21:8 -7 "περι"; Col. 1:24 - 5 "μου υπερ"; I Tim. 6:9 - 7 του διαβλω, etc.) so it might be more reasonable to think that if the corrector is after Erasmus, he had Erasmus' text, and sometimes corrected the MSS to it, sometimes to another source. If the corrector is previous to Erasmus, then they both produced similar translations.



But the text didn't exist in any Greek manuscript prior to that, and it still doesn't stand in the text of any Greek manuscript that we have ever found. KJV advocates sometimes also allege that minuscule 629 is "proof" that the reading is original. But MS 629 is a bilingual minuscule written in the late 14th century. If a 14th century minuscule can stand against every known Greek manuscript to give the true reading, then there is no such thing as preservation in the original languages, and every variant in the NT is essentially up for grabs. Further, minuscule 629 is well known for often translating the Latin Vulgate into Greek.⁹ It is a diglot manuscript, presenting the Latin text in neat print on the left hand column of the page, and a Greek text (often translated directly from the opposing Latin) scrawled on the right hand side. But the form of the Vulgate which it translates is different than the form that Erasmus had access to (as we noted above, there are a large variety of Latin forms), and thus, quite different than the KJV.¹⁰ It does contain the last part of verse 5 "*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*" It also adds the phrase "the Nazarene" not found in the TR, which suggest that the Latin text which is being translated into Greek here has harmonized the passage to the other accounts in Acts. But it is still missing the first part of verse 6, "*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him*" and instead picks up after verse 5 with "*arise, and go into the city...*" The passage thus reads in the Greek and Latin texts as follows in 629, quite differently from the TR/KJV, – "*And he said, 'Who are you Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, who you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks. But rise and go into the city, and it will be told you what you shall do.'*" Thus, the section that is contained in 629 could not be support for the KJV/TR reading, and if anything, would be support *against* it. But really, as a well-known late translation of the Vulgate, showing in this passage clear evidence of being a harmonization to the other parallels, it has literally zero text-critical weight, and even if it did have weight, it adds nothing to the possibility of the longer reading of the KJV/TR being original. Besides which, the large section of verse 6 is not found at all in 629, and is thus still missing from the text of *every single Greek witness in existence*.

Where Did It Come From?

A Mistake Gets Made

Why is the longer reading in the TR and the KJV? It made its way into the KJV because Erasmus included it in his NT text. It must be noted that it was never Erasmus' primary intention to publish a Greek text.¹¹ He published his edition of the Greek NT primarily in order to defend his own *Latin* text,

⁹ See, for example, Brown, "*Opera Omnia*" pg. 12, "Another example of a Greek manuscript which appears to incorporate many instances of retranslations from a Latin version is the 14th century bilingual codex 629, which in some places is the only known Greek witness to agree with the wording of the late Vulgate."

¹⁰ See NA 28 pg. 407 for the text itself, and Comfort, "*Textual Commentary*," pg. 365.

¹¹ See De Jonge, "*Novum Testamentum*" pg. 395-413, for a lengthy defense of this now obvious fact. De Jonge examines the repeated statements of Erasmus to this effect, as well as his titles (which all clearly

which he intended to set forth as a more accurate revision of the current Latin Vulgate. He provided the Greek text only to substantiate his own Latin translation. The Latin Vulgate was often considered to have been an inspired translation of the text.¹² Most Christians of the day did not feel any need to resort back to the original Greek. They felt the “inspired” Latin Vulgate was good enough. Very few people were educated in Greek, even among the scholars of the day. The scholarly language of the day was Latin. The Latin text had the historical tradition of over 1,000 years use. Why challenge it now? Yet challenge it Erasmus did. He was convinced that the Latin translation current in his day had been corrupted through minor scribal alterations, (he refers occasionally to “sleepy scribes” who corrupted the text), and was not as close to the translation that had been done by Jerome originally. Plus, he thought himself to have a better grasp of Latin style and syntax, and able to produce a smoother and more accurate Latin text (he was, frankly, probably right about this).

He began the work by writing ‘*Annotations*’ which brought out Greek and Latin variants in the manuscripts he had studied. These annotations led him to publish his text. Originally, he planned to print only his Latin text with the annotations. However, his revisions of the Latin could be more substantiated by appeal to the original language if he printed a Greek text, and so he included the Greek text with the Latin. This was the impetus that compelled him to produce his Greek New Testament. He writes himself, “But I have translated [into Latin] the whole New Testament after comparison with the Greek copies, and so have added [“added” – meaning clearly as a secondary element] the Greek on the facing pages, so that anyone may easily compare it. I have appended separate annotations in which, partly by argument and partly by the authority of the early Fathers, I show that my emendations [to the current Latin translation] are not haphazard alterations, for fear that my changes might not carry conviction and in the hope of preserving the corrected text from further damage.”¹³ Thus, the editions of Erasmus’ Greek text were all published as diglots,¹⁴ with the Greek text printed parallel to the Latin text. When he was derided for suggesting that students should study the original languages, instead of relying solely on the authorized Latin translation of the Church, he explained, “There are several passages in my Annotations where I prefer the accepted Latin reading to that which we find in the Greek manuscripts today.”¹⁵ And also stated that “...in fact in not a few places I prefer the Latin translation to the reading in the Greek.”¹⁶ While he has certainly a humanist, with a desire to sound the cry of “*Ad Fontes*” and revive the learning of the original Greek, he was also still a Roman Catholic, whose goal was to produce a better Latin text, not a good Greek one. This clearly influenced how he handled texts like Acts 9:5-6. One can see here Acts 9:5-6

refer to the Latin NT), and his repeatedly stated intentions. See also, Jan, “*Beyond What Is Written*” pg. 13-22, 27-28, 67, et al. and, in conclusion, pg. 333.

¹² Roman Catholicism dogmatized this already common attitude less than a decade after Erasmus died, in 1545, when the Council of Trent asserted, (among the many grievous errors of that council), that “Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod,— considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic,—ordains and declares, that the said old and vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever.” Replace “Latin” with “English,” and “Vulgate” with “Authorized” in that statement and it would sound disturbingly like many KJVO statements of faith.

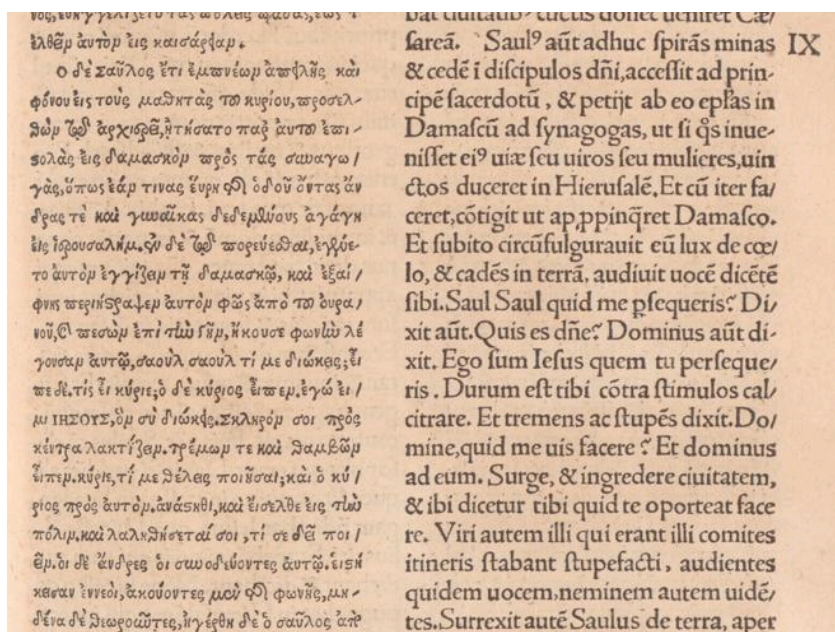
¹³ Erasmus, “*Letter to Dorp*” EP 337:885, translated in CWE vol. 71, pg. 29.

¹⁴ Diglot meaning, “two languages.” The one exception to this is a 1521 edition published by a printer (Gerbellius) without Erasmus’s knowledge, and against his express wishes. It contained the text of his second edition (lacking, for example, the *Comma Johanneum*), but printed in a handy small folio, with only the Greek text. De Jonge has shown that Erasmus was not happy about this publication, as it was never really his intent to publish a Greek text.

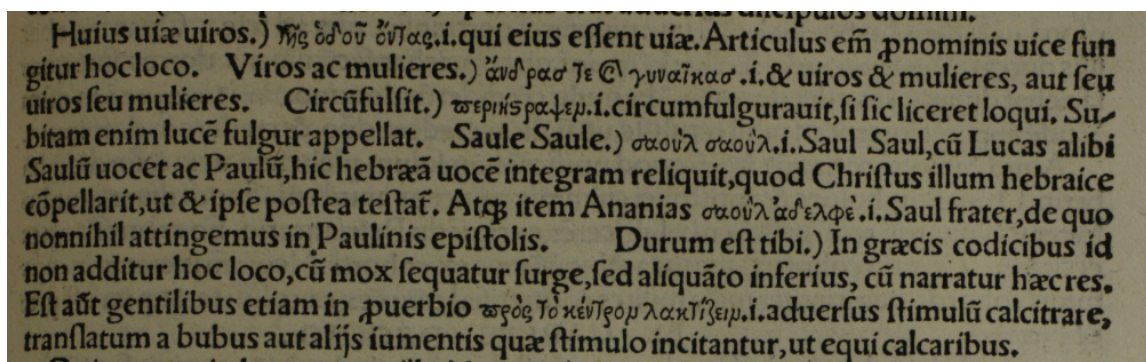
¹⁵ Erasmus, “*Apology against Latomus*” LB IX 88D, translated in CWE vol. 71, pg. 53.

¹⁶ Erasmus, “*Correspondence*,” as translated by Jan, pg. 19.

in his first edition.¹⁷ Note that he includes the longer reading of his revision of the Latin text. He has translated that Latin¹⁸ into Greek for the text of Acts 9:5-6, so that the longer reading now appears, translated by him into Greek, on the left hand side.



Erasmus himself tells us directly that this section is not in the Greek manuscripts he has, and that he has added it from the Latin. The full text of his “*Annotation*” on this passage, printed with his first edition of 1516 (and reprinted in each edition) reads;¹⁹



¹⁷ Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum*, Froben, 1516, pg. 169.

¹⁸ KJV advocates occasionally allege that the text cannot be a translation from Latin, since its possible that the Latin Vulgate he had didn't have exactly this form. First, to be precise, Erasmus is translating not the Vulgate, but his own edition of the Latin. Since his goal is to substantiate his edition, it would have been counterproductive to present a Greek text which didn't support his revisions. But besides that, this is simply ignorance of the primary sources. We know exactly what form of the Vulgate Erasmus had available to him. After taking so much flack for suggesting revisions to the Vulgate, he decided to alleviate some of that criticism by printing a copy of it, so he could then claim that he was promoting the Vulgate, and that his revisions were only suggestions for further study. Thus, in his 1527 edition, he prints the Vulgate text in the right column, his revision of the Latin in the center, and his Greek text on the left. The text of Acts 9:5-6 is found in this edition on pg. 260, should one want to consult it.

¹⁹ Erasmus, “*Annotations*” in the chapter, “*Annotationes in Acta Apostolorum*,” pg. 385 to his first edition Greek testament, “*Novum Instrumentum*,” Froben, Basil, 1516.

Note that he explicitly explains that he has chosen to include the longer reading, even though he states that it was “*in graecis codicibus id non additur hoc loco*,” or “not added in this place in the Greek manuscripts.”²⁰ Note well what his statement means. It is sometimes alleged²¹ that while the manuscripts we have today might be lacking passages that are found in the TR, in the time of Erasmus and the KJV translators, they must surely have had many manuscripts which we have lost²² which contained those passages. But here Erasmus is stating directly that the passage wasn’t found in any of the Greek manuscripts of his day either. It was added from the Latin text. This didn’t bother him, since his primary concern was only to produce a better Latin text, not necessarily a good Greek one (in fact, he slightly improves his Latin translation in the 1519 edition). The only reason he included the Greek text at all was as a way to substantiate his refinements to the Latin translation which he proposed. Thus, he has no problem translating the phrase from Latin into Greek, so that his Latin edition would be supported by Greek.

Andrew Brown, the editor of Erasmus’ text of Acts in the ASD “*Opera Omnia*,” (the complete works of Erasmus) has a section in his note reconstructing the entire process that Erasmus went through in creating this emendation in more detail than I do here. The reading borrowed elements from the parallels in Acts, but Brown explains that some elements are, “undoubtedly a retranslation from the Latin.” For example, when Erasmus translated the phrase “trembling and astonished” from Latin as, “τρέμων τε καὶ θαμβῶν” he translated it into a form which is unknown for some of those words anywhere in the NT. He notes that had Erasmus known Lucan style better, he should perhaps have used Luke’s normal vocabulary for “trembling” and “astonished” (ἐντρομος and ἔκθαμβος).²³ He concludes that, “The result of Erasmus’ conjectural restoration of the Greek text was that the *Textus Receptus* would hereafter contain, at this passage, twenty words which are almost entirely devoid of Greek Mss. support.”²⁴

Interestingly, Jan notes from several of the later annotations of Erasmus and correspondences of Erasmus with Lee, that Erasmus later changed his mind about the longer reading of Acts 9:5-6, and concluded that it was not original, and that the Latin text was in error. Erasmus came to realize that he had made a mistake. Jan writes, “Later, Erasmus was no longer aware of this decision, and while he initially defended the Greek text of his edition in a half-hearted way, he finally came to the correct conclusion that the words did not belong in the text. Because of his general editorial practice not to change the Greek text he had, however, the passage remained as it was.”²⁵ The longer reading thus remained in the text by a sort of editorial accident, even though even Erasmus no longer considered it original.

²⁰ He notes that the phrases are “*sed aliquanto inferius*” or “moved to further below” meaning, he thinks that in the Greek manuscripts the phrases have been moved to the later passages in Acts (22 and 26) which we have already mentioned.

²¹ Though it should be noted, I have only heard such claims made by KJV/TRO advocates demonstrating repeated ignorance of the primary sources. I would not want to mistakenly leave the impression that any credible scholar would ever say such of thing.

²² And yet they call this “losing” of so many manuscripts and the complete “disappearance” of such readings from the Greek manuscript tradition “preservation!”

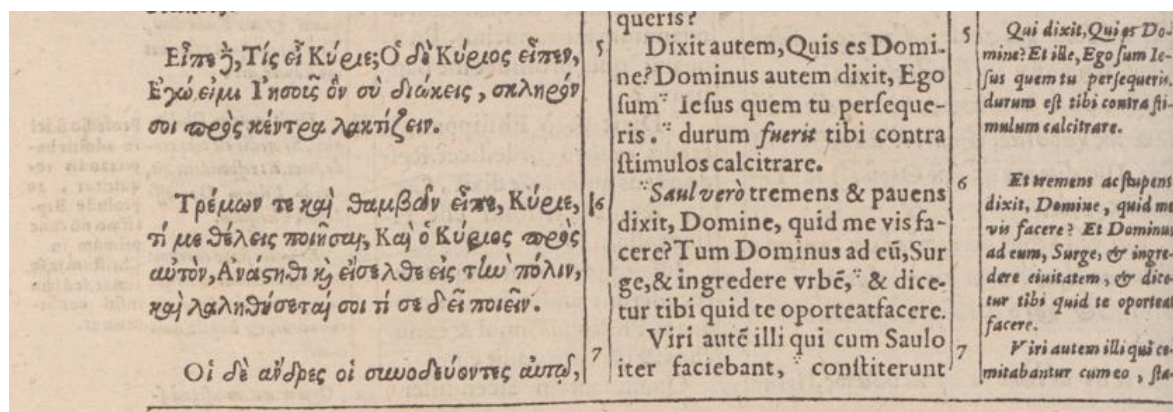
²³ E.g., Acts 16:29, Luke 2:47; 4:32; 8:47, 56; 24:22; Acts 10:45; 12:6; 13:12. This paper doesn’t deal in with internal evidence, but this would be but one example of internal evidence from intrinsic probability.

²⁴ Brown, “*Tomus Secundus*,” pg, 295.

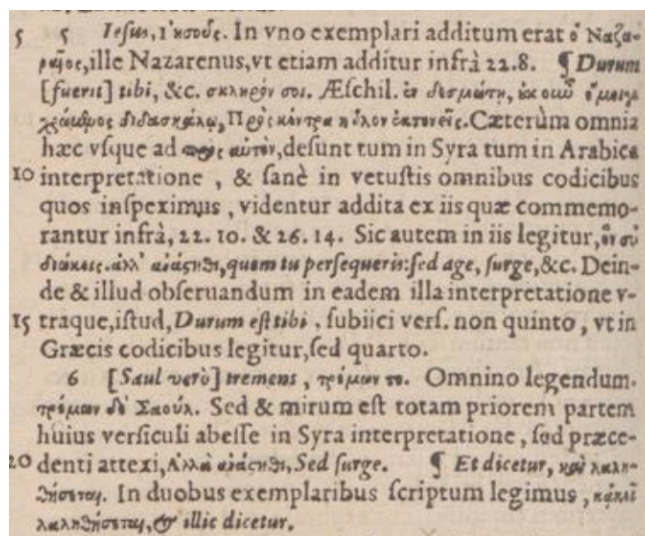
²⁵ Krans, Jan, “*Beyond What is Written*.” Brill, Leiden, 2006. Pg. 61.

The Mistake Gets Perpetuated

Stephanus²⁶ and Beza never fixed this particular mistake of Erasmus, and so both retain the longer reading of the text of Erasmus. Beza in particular is noteworthy, as the KJV translators seem to follow him more often than any other of the Greek texts which they had. Why did Beza retain the longer reading? Probably because he, like Erasmus, was not primarily interested in producing a good Greek text, but in improving the common Latin one.²⁷ Like Erasmus, he includes the Greek only to substantiate the Latin. Thus, he prints his text in three columns, containing the longer reading, with the Latin Vulgate, and his own improved edition of the Latin, as follows;²⁸



However, like Erasmus, he writes a marginal note below the text, explaining that the longer reading is surely an addition. His marginal note states in full,



He explains explicitly that the longer reading of the Latin text he has included is not, "*Graecis codicibus legitur*" or "not the reading of the Greek manuscripts." He then proceeds to explain, just like we have pointed out above, that is it likely that scribes "*videntur addita ex iis quae commemorantur infra*,

²⁶ Stephanus prints the longer reading in the text, but notes the omission in the apparatus. However, in the apparatus, he lists no manuscripts as actually having the longer reading. He simply reprints the text of Erasmus at this point with no Greek manuscript support (Stephanus, *Novum Testamentum*, 1550, pg. 226).

²⁷ Ibid, part II.

²⁸ Beza, *Novi Instrumenti*, 1598, pg.

22:10 & 26:14,” or, that scribes have “added the words that are written below in 22:10 and 26:14.” This is the common opinion of essentially all textual critics since Erasmus, who consider the longer reading to be a scribal harmonization to these two later passages. Note that such an opinion is not the invention of some demonic malice in Hort and Westcott (nor does it have anything to do with some supposed worship of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) – it is the common opinion of the men who produced the Greek texts which were the basis of the KJV. However, like Erasmus and Stephanus, Beza corrects the text of Erasmus only in his marginal note, and unfortunately leaves the longer reading in the text, out of deference to the Latin Vulgate. He probably presumed that anyone reading his text would read his note, and realize that the words were clearly not original. He also, like Erasmus, probably sought to alleviate criticism this way, since he could then, if accused of correcting the Vulgate, explain, “But I printed the Vulgate! I only wrote my correction to it in the margin.”

The mistake gets translated into English

Unfortunately, the KJV translators, who didn’t have any Greek manuscripts, and simply translated from these printed Greek texts, either didn’t read the marginal notes of Stephanus, Erasmus, and Beza, or just decided that they preferred the Latin Vulgate to the Greek manuscripts, and so they translated the phrase from their printed Greek texts into the English of the KJV. They really shouldn’t be blamed for their mistake. Every Greek text which they had access to had the words of the longer reading in its actual text, even though each of them explained in the margin that it was supported only by Latin. For whatever reasons, they translated the longer reading of the text, which, while printed in their Greek texts, had no Greek manuscript support. And this lack of support is true of the reading in their day, prior days, and our day. Thus, the mistake of Erasmus became the mistake of the KJV translators. Metzger comments concerning the words, “So far as is known, no Greek witness reads these words at this place; they have been taken from 26:14 and 22:10, and are found here in codices of the Vulgate [and the other witnesses we’ve listed above.]”²⁹ And, “The spurious passage came into the Textus Receptus from the Latin Vulgate when Erasmus translated it into Greek and inserted it in his first edition of the Greek New Testament (Basil, 1516).”³⁰ Comfort notes, “The expanded version, not found in any Greek witness (except the fourteenth century miniscule 629 – but only in part,) is the result of ancient translators embellishing the text with their own coloring (such as adding “trembling and astonished”) and harmonizing this account with the other records of Paul’s conversion experience (namely, 22:10 and 26:14). What is noteworthy about this variant is that the full interpolation became part of the TR without ever being in a Greek witness.”³¹ As we have noted, it is to this day not found in the text of any known Greek witness in existence.

The Implications

A brief note on the Word “Preserved”

Think through what this means for the KJVO or TRO position. To say that the words which are added by Erasmus to the TR here are the “preserved words of God,” is in fact to demand that God supernaturally moved Erasmus to put words into the text from the Latin Vulgate which are absent from the text of *every known Greek witness in existence*. But since Erasmus’ text contains other differences from the KJV, it is really to demand that the KJV translators were supernaturally moved by the Holy Spirit to include it on the basis of his mistake, even despite all the evidence we have today that lacks it. It seems rather impossible not to call this “inspiration,” (what else could it be called? It is certainly some form of new revelation) which makes any denial of the inspiration of the translators somewhat contradictory, and at the least disingenuous. But whatever one chooses to call this supernatural “restoration” of the text in 1611, it is simply disingenuous to refer to it as “preservation,” and no one can truly say with integrity

²⁹ Metzger, “Textual Commentary,” pg. 362.

³⁰ Metzger, “Textual Commentary,” pg. 362.

³¹ Comfort, “Textual Commentary,” pg. 365.

that the KJV is the “preserved” Word of God in English. If they are to be honest, they must say that it is the “restored” Word of God in English. It would not be proper to use words like “preserved” to speak of the reading, since it clearly was not “preserved” before the time of Erasmus in any Greek witness. It is further, by inevitable consequence, to condemn every single Greek manuscript listed above as something less than “the complete, preserved, inerrant Word of God” and it is to say in fact that God only “preserved” His Word in English, by losing it in Greek. Such a sentiment is thus to condemn every single Greek manuscript of the book of Acts as a “corruption” of the true Word of God, which can only ever been found in the KJV. And historically, it is to demand that everyone who used any Bible in any language prior to 1611 didn’t have the preserved Word of God.³²

Note finally the long list of Greek manuscripts above. Anyone who claims the KJV is the perfect Word of God at this passage must condemn everyone who read any of those texts as having something less than the perfect Word of God. Just think through the logic of such a claim. Imagine those poor churches preaching from such corruption. Imagine those families gathered around reading such a corrupt text. It’s a good think that God loves you so much more than everyone else, in every other language, at every other time, and so has given you the perfect Word of God, when all He ever gave anyone else was corruptions of it. KJVO advocates want to deride modern versions for “taking verses out” etc., but they often don’t realize that this is not only to condemn modern English versions. It is to condemn every person who read any Greek manuscript prior to Erasmus. There is not a single Greek manuscript in existence that contains all of the readings of the KJV. *Not one. Not even close.* This passage alone would demonstrate that, without even mentioning all of the many others which would make that point.

The common position of Erasmus,³³ Burgon,³⁴ and the common position of evangelicals after them has been that God’s Word is preserved in the entirety of the manuscript tradition rather than any one text or translation. This has been the historic position. This is to truly believe in preservation.³⁵ The KJVO or TRO advocate does not actually believe in preservation in any normal sense of the word. He believes that parts of God’s Word disappeared in Greek, until God miraculously restored it in English in the 16th and 17th centuries. I implore you to be honest with your words, and in how you state what you believe. Do not go around telling people the KJV is the “preserved Word of God in English” unless you are willing to then directly admit that God did *not* preserve His Word in the original languages, and that the “perfect Word of God” couldn’t be found anywhere until 1611 (and still cannot be found in any language except English). Anyone who believes the KJV is the perfect Word of God in English must believe that God “lost” His perfect word in Greek. And it still cannot be found in Greek or Hebrew, as I have yet to see a KJVO advocate who can show me which Greek and Hebrew text is as perfect as the KJV. If they are honest about their position, they must admit that the closest one can get to such a text is Bomberg and Scrivener’s. But

³² One could say that the Latin Vulgate was the “preserved” Word of God, but then every one of the manifold textual corruptions and Roman doctrinal aberrations becomes the “Word of God” in which case, the KJV is not the preserved Word of God.

³³ Erasmus, who describes the ideal textual critic as, “The man who makes such advances does not follow any manuscripts which happen to come into his hands, nor does he stick to one only. He makes a selection. Nor does he rely only on the comparison of manuscript authorities: he carries out careful research among the Greek and Latin commentators to find out what the most reputable authorities have said about a passage, how they have explained it, what nature of agreement there is between them. And even then he does not deny any man’s right to his own view unless the error is so obvious that it would be shameful to turn his back on it.” Erasmus, “*Apologia Contra Latomi Dialogum*” LB IX 88A, translated in CWE Vol. 71 pg. 52. Unfortunately, his own critical work was mostly with Latin manuscripts.

³⁴ Burgon, “But I would especially remind my readers of Bentley’s golden precept, that, ‘The real text of the sacred writers does not now, since the originals have been so long lost, lie in any MSS or edition, but is dispersed in them all.’ This truth, which was evident to the powerful intellect of that great scholar, lies at the root of all sound textual criticism.” (Burgon, “*The Traditional Text*” vol. 1 pg. 26. Cf. pg. 25, 28).

³⁵ See, for example, Combs, “*The Preservation of Scripture.*”

the KJV doesn't follow Bomberg exactly, and Scrivener's text can only be considered the perfect Word of God in Greek if one believes that the KJV translators were supernaturally moved by God to recreate a Greek text which had not existed prior to their time. Since Scrivener's text wasn't printed till 1881, and no Hebrew text has ever been printed which reconstructs the exact original language texts from which the KJV OT was translated, there was never any "preserved" Word of God in Greek or Hebrew. Thus, anyone who calls the KJV the "preserved" Word of God in any exclusive sense is simply not being honest. That is simply not an honest use of the word. What such a person actually believes in is a "lost but miraculously restored in 1611" text.

A brief note on the word "Majority"

As a final note, anyone calling the TR a "majority text" is simply being dishonest with the evidence. Several on this page have directly made that claim, and it is one repeated commonly by KJVO and TRO advocates. In fact, it is the most common argument I see people make for why they are KJVO or TRO. They think the KJV is based on the majority of manuscripts. They are ignorant or dishonest, or simply repeating statements made by someone who is ignorant or dishonest. The TR is decidedly not a majority text. It is the product of about 19 Greek manuscripts, as represented in a dozen or so different critical Greek texts that were based on those few manuscripts. William Combs has shown at length (in agreement with many others) that when Erasmus compiled the 1st edition of his Latin-Greek text he only had access to 7 Greek manuscripts, (a mere fraction of the Byzantine tradition), none of which were complete New Testaments, and only two of which were substantially complete.³⁶ The work of Combs accords substantially with that of all major Erasmus scholars like De Jonge, Rummel, Brown, and Jan. Erasmus then apparently had access to the following manuscripts for his first edition;

- Codex 1 eap (GA 1) – this miniscule manuscript contained the entire NT except Revelation. It is dated to about the 12th century.
- Codex 1 r (GA 2814) – this miniscule contains the book of Revelation, except for the last 6 verses. It is dated to about the 12th century.
- Codex 2 e (GA 2) – this miniscule contains the gospels and dates to about the 12th century.
- Codex 2 ap (GA 2815) – this miniscule, containing Acts and the Epistles, dates to about the 12th century.
- Codex 4 ap (GA 2816) - this miniscule, containing Acts and the Epistles, dates to about the 15th century
- Codex 7 p (GA 2817) – this miniscule, containing Paul's epistles, dates to about the 11th century.

³⁶ See Combs, William, "Erasmus and the TR," DBTSJ, pg. 45. Burgon mistakenly thought it was 5 (Burgon, "The Traditional Text," vol. 1, pg. 3). De Jonge states that he used only seven, and identifies the same seven as Combs (*Novum Testamentum*, pg. 404, note 40). P.F. Hovigh, mentions these listed, (*Opera Omnia* pg. 2-4) and suggests 2 others which he used for later editions, from a later letter by Erasmus. Brown essentially concurs, (*Opera Omnia*, pg. 2-14, listing nine that he consulted throughout his editions, and complaining that he did not consult a sufficient number, pg. 9) though noting that we can't always speak with certainty in each case. Rummel likewise concurs (*Annotations* pg. 36-88), noting that Erasmus himself states directly that he only had 4 to consult directly for his first edition ("*nos in prima recognition quattuor Graecis adiuti sumus*"), though she notes that he later consulted several others, and that his final edition may ultimately have rested on as many as twelve. Jan, with more support, list exactly the 11 which he believes the evidence shows he used in total, and which editions he used each for (Jan, "Beyond What Is Written" Appendix I). These are some of the most notable Erasmus scholars in the world. Frankly, while we do have still a few questions, and there is occasionally minor disagreement among scholars in a few particulars, all notable Erasmus scholars are agreed that we know in almost every case the exact manuscripts which Erasmus used, (and we still have almost all of them!) and, while an excellent amount for their time, by today's standards, they were disturbingly sparse in number, character, and date.

- Codex 817 (GA 817) – this miniscule containing the gospels dates to about the 15th century.

For his second edition he also had access to;

- Codex 3 eap (GA 3) –

For his 3rd edition (which is the edition the KJV translators seem to follow most closely) he also had access to;

- Ms 61 (GA 61) -

It is generally agreed that he consulted a few others at other points (for example, MSS 69 mentioned above). For most of his readings, Erasmus used exclusively what we know now as miniscules 1 and 2.³⁷ In fact, Erasmus presented these manuscripts to Froben as the base for setting the type, and made corrections to them then, rather than actually writing out a full Greek text. We can still see them both today, and they still have the red chalk marks which Erasmus used to indicate the lines upon which the type would be set, as well as his occasional remarks in the margin. Thus, in most of the NT, the Greek text of Erasmus is actually based on only two Greek manuscripts, and a number of Latin ones.

In light of the vast wealth of the manuscript tradition which we have available today, we would consider the manuscripts Erasmus was working with a rather meager lot. I have occasionally seen KJVO advocates claim that Erasmus had access to thousands of Greek manuscripts (which of course are presumed to have all exactly supported the KJV readings), which have since been lost.³⁸ But not only is such a claim a blatant argument from silence, it completely ignores the actual historical data in favor of wishful thinking. Each of the noted Erasmus scholars listed in the previous would staunchly disagree with such a sentiment. Stephanus, in his 1550 *Editio Regia* edition, just 15 years after Erasmus died, listed *sigla* in the critical apparatus of the margin of his text which represent the different manuscripts known in his day which supported each variant reading. He has a total of 16 such *sigla*, because in 1550 he had access to only 16 manuscripts.³⁹ Beza in his final edition of 1598 (only about a decade before 1611) mentions only nineteen, 16 of which were the ones he knew only from the apparatus of Stephanus.⁴⁰ It seems to me like quite a stretch to suggest that Erasmus had thousands of manuscripts in 1516, and all but 19 of them were lost before 1598! Erasmus himself often bragged (in response to criticism from Lee and Stunica) that he had used as many as four Greek manuscripts in a particular passage.⁴¹ Bragging about four manuscripts would be nonsense if one had access to thousands.

³⁷ For example, see Metzger, “*Text of the New Testament*,” pg. 136-152, or Brown, “*Opera Omnia*,” pg. 10-12. See images of both, with the Erasmian marks at <http://intf.uni-muenster.de>.

³⁸ In fact, someone sent me a video once (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I98SDiZC72E>) of a well-known preacher who I know personally, love, and respect deeply, but who claimed in the video that 5,000 manuscripts were present in that day and were all collected by the KJV translators, and, further, that all of them agreed together perfectly (identical in everything except spelling), and that this is what the translators translated from! One wonders how, if this were the case, John Mill’s publication of his *Novum Instrumentum* in (Oxford, 1707), the culmination of 30 years of collecting variants from every manuscript known at the time (just under 100 listed in his “*Index Mss Exemplarium*,” no page numbers) could have caused the storm that it did. His work would have been a retroversion to a meager and paltry fraction of highly divergent witnesses if such a fictional narrative had any basis whatsoever in fact. Such a story simply has no credibility. Incidentally, Mill’s entry on this passage, pg. 341, is instructive – he has only a handful of witnesses in the apparatus – all of them have the shorter reading. But like his predecessors, he explains that it is clearly a scribal harmonization to the other passages in Acts, but he retains the error in the text, and corrects it only in the margin.

³⁹ See a detailed treatment of each of these manuscripts in Jan, “*Beyond What Is Written*” Appendix II.

⁴⁰ Beza, *Novi Testamenti*, 1598, first unnumbered page, see also Jan, “*Beyond What is Written*” pg. 214 ff. for detailed discussion of the Manuscripts which Stephanus used.

⁴¹ See Rummel, “*Erasmus’ Annotations*.” This was usually only the case in the gospels and Acts, as those were the passages he had most support for.

Erasmus didn't have any of the Majuscule manuscripts, although he apparently sent someone to consult Vaticanus when the controversy arose over I John 5:7, and Erasmus wanted to be sure he was right about it not being ancient. Vaticanus was the only uncial discovered by that point. It is somewhat sad that he did not directly consult Vaticanus and use it more. If he had, its deficiencies notwithstanding, the KJV would probably not have most of the textual inaccuracies it has today, and would probably look almost identical to the ESV, and would likely have remained forever the standard English version used by all. Either way, He didn't have access to a single papyri manuscript. None had been discovered in his day. The 131 papyri manuscripts and 323 majuscule manuscripts we have today are our oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, sometimes by almost a full millennium, yet he had none of them. He didn't even have the vast number of Miniscule manuscripts which we have today. Rather, he had access to a meager handful of late⁴² miniscule manuscripts, and did the best work he could with the resources of his time. He was an incredible scholar, and performed a marvelous service for the church in the production of his Greek text, but he simply did not have access to the wealth of data that we have today.

Maurice Robinson has written in the preface of his *"The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform"* about the relation of the majority of Greek manuscripts, and how they often diverge from the TR. He says, "Early printed Textus Receptus (or 'Received Text') editions closely resemble the Byzantine Textform but often diverge from it in significant readings. Such editions primarily derive from the limited selection of a small number of late manuscripts, as utilized by Erasmus, Ximenes, or their immediate historical successors. The overall text of these early printed editions differs from the Byzantine Textform in over 1800 instances, generally due to the inclusion of weakly supported non-Byzantine readings. Since the Receptus from of text does not provide an accurate reproduction of the common Greek manuscript tradition, the present edition strives to rectify that situation by presenting the readings of the Byzantine Textform in a more precise manner."⁴³

Is it true that the KJV sometimes aligns with the majority of Greek manuscripts? Of course. It is also true that every single Greek text in existence agrees with the majority of manuscripts in over 90% of the text. This is utterly irrelevant if one is trying to make a case for the TR over a modern text. Is it true that the TR is slightly closer to the majority of manuscripts or Byzantine text than a modern text like the NA 28? Sure. But many of the readings of the TR are not now and never were part of the Byzantine text, or any part of the majority of Greek manuscripts. If one wants to suggest that the Byzantine manuscripts or the Majority text have anything to do with what makes a Greek text superior (instead of admitting that what they actually believe makes their text superior is the new revelation of God given in 1611), then they must argue for an *actual* majority text, or the Byzantine text, which demands that the KJV and TR are in error in many places. Even if there were only one place where the KJV/TR is not a majority text, then it is simply a hijacking operation when a KJVO advocate pretends that a majority text argument is support for his position. If one is not willing to admit the errors of the TR when it diverges from the majority of manuscripts (or in this passage, every manuscript) then the presentation of a "majority text" argument must be recognized for what it is – utterly irrelevant to their position. Only, since there are such divergences, it might not be fair to say that a majority text argument is irrelevant to a case for the KJV/TR. It would be more accurate to say that when someone suggests that the majority of manuscripts is the reason they are TRO or KJV, they are actually presenting (as support for their position!) some of the most solid evidence that undermines and refutes their own position. This is simply an utter lack of intellectual integrity. Please be honest with yourself, and with others, about what you truly believe, and why you truly believe it. God is most honored with us when we are most honest with ourselves. Jesus is Truth incarnate, and desires truth from us. Be honest. Don't tell people that the majority of Manuscripts or the Byzantine text has anything to do with why you hold your position, if you definitively reject those

⁴² He brags at one point that he has "ancient" manuscripts because he has a 12th century manuscript. Bragging that a 12th century manuscript is "ancient" today would be ludicrous in light of the hundreds of manuscripts we have which would predate it, in many cases by almost a full millennium.

⁴³ Robinson, Maurice, *"The New Testament"* (preface), pg. i., footnote 1.

arguments at every single point where they would demand correction in the KJV. Everyone has the right to hold whatever position they choose. But no Christian who desires to honor Jesus has the right to be dishonest about why they hold it. And no Christian who desires to honor Jesus has any right to continue to propagate as support for their position falsehoods that are demonstrably not true. Please, be honest with yourself, and be honest with others.

Bibliography

(With Brief Explanations)

Primary Sources - Texts

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- Aland, Kurt, and Mink, Gerd, and Benduhn-Merz, Annette, et. al. *"Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments. III: Die Apostelgeschichte Band 1."* Volume 20 in the series *"Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung."* De Gruyter, Berlin, 1993.
- Aland, Kurt, and Nestle, Erwin, eds. *"Novum Testamentum Graece"* 28th rev. ed. (NA28) Germany, INTF, 2012. This is the standard critical Greek NT text used by scholars today. It contains a much more comprehensive list of variants, but due to space shares only representative witnesses for each variant. It thus lists around 7,000 variants, the vast majority of which are not really viable or significant, and thus generally only concern specialist scholars for whom the detailed nuances of the syntax and spelling are important (variants that affect only tense, form, mood, etc.; variants that affect spelling only, as in the case of many ways to spell a proper name; the presence or absence of an article, etc. and variants like our present passage, that have no chance of being original, but which have historical value).
- Hodges, Zane C., and Farstad, Arthur L. *"The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text."* (2nd ed.). Nelson, Nashville, 1985. Basically the first "Majority Text" published since Burgon never ended up finishing and publishing his. It wasn't well done, relied almost exclusively on the work of Von Soden, and while its introductory articles on "stemmatics" seem interesting, when one compares the application of what they predict in the intro to what actually happens when they apply the method in the two places where they don't just repeat Von Soden (John 7:53-8:11 and Revelation), the result is, ironically, not a "Majority Text" in any sense of the word. Which, as one reviewer noted, makes their title a bit of an embarrassment.
- Mill, John, *"Novum Testamentum Graecum."* Oxford, 1707.

Robinson, Maurice A., and Pierpont, William G. *"The New Testament in the Original Greek; Byzantine Textform 2005."* Chilton, US, 2005. The most recent, and by far the most well done "Majority Text" to come along yet. While it is still largely not at every point a comprehensive presentation of all of the M data, (except in Revelation and John 8), it is a very helpful move toward such. It has a lower apparatus which lists differences between the MT and the UBS text, and a side apparatus which lists places where the Byzantine manuscripts disagree among one another. Unfortunately, the collation of the Byzantine manuscripts (especially the lectionaries, which make up around half of the Byzantine witnesses) is still far from complete, so the variants he lists are only a fraction of the variants that actually exist between the Byzantine witnesses.

Scrivener, F.H.A. *"The New Testament In Greek According To The Text Followed In The Authorized Version Together With The Variations Adopted In The Revised Version."* Originally printed in 1881, 1884, Reprinted by Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010. The original 1881 edition of Scrivener's TR reprinted, containing his preface and noting every place the revision (which Scrivener worked on) chose a different Greek base text than the KJV had followed.

Scrivener, F.H.A. *"The New Testament in Greek H KAINH DIAΘHKH" The New Testament: The Geek Text Underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611."* TBS, No date given, but the text they print is the 1894 edition. This TBS reprint for some reason chose not to print the text-critical apparatus which Scrivener printed with each edition, and which was the whole reason he compiled the volume. It also doesn't print the preface which Scrivener published in every edition, explaining the purpose and method of his work. This seems disingenuous at best, as this is the edition typically used by all who think the TR verbally perfect. It would seem the better part of integrity to include Scrivener's apparatus showing textual variants, and his preface showing that he would vehemently disagree with such a sentiment about his own work.

Critical Editions of Erasmus

The ASD *Opera Omni* is the standard Critical Edition of Erasmus's works with commentary by the world's leading Erasmus Scholars. The Toronto CWE (*Collected Works of Erasmus*) is slowly publishing English translations. Divided into "*Ordinas*," the "*Ordo VI*" contains his NT editions and partial annotations, with intro and commentary. PDFs of each are available for free download at

<http://www.oapen.org>.

Erasmus, Desiderii; (edited by J. K. Sowards) *"Collected Works of Erasmus: Controversies Volume 71."* Toronto Press, Buffalo, 1993

Erasmus, Desiderii; Eds. Kumaniecki, K.; Mynors, R.A.B.; Robinson, C.; & Waszink, J.H. (This is the general intro to the *Opera Omni*.) *"Opera Omni Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Recognita Et Adnotatione Critica Instructa Notisque Illustrata: Ordinis Primi Tomus Primus."* Brill, Amsterdam, 1969.

Erasmus, Desiderii, Ed. Hovingh, P.E. (This is the text of the Synoptics.) *"Opera Omni Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Recognita Et Adnotatione Critica Instructa Notisque Illustrata: Ordinis Sexti Tomus Quintus."* Brill, Amsterdam, 2000.

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Printed Editions of Erasmus

JPEG Images of the actual printings of Erasmus works (I cite only partial titles here, because I tire of writing out page long titles in Latin) are available for free viewing at the academic sites collected here; <http://vuntblog.blogspot.com/2010/11/erasmus-1516-edition-online.html>.

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JPEG Images of the actual printings of the works of Beza are available for free viewing here;

<http://vuntblog.blogspot.com/2012/11/bezas-new-testament-editions-online.html>.

Beza, Theodore. "*Novum D. N. Iesu Christi Testamentum*" Robert Stephanus, 1556.

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Burgon, Dean John William. "*The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, Being the Sequel to The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*." (Title on the cover is given as, "*The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text Volume II*.) Originally edited posthumously by Edward Miller and printed by Cambridge, Deighton, 1896. Reprinted by The Dean Burgon Society Press, Collingswood, New Jersey, 1998.

Burgon, Dean John William. "*The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*." (Title on cover is given as, "*The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vol. 1*"). Originally Edited posthumously by Edward Miller, and published by Cambridge, Deighton, 1896. Reprinted by Dean Burgon Society Press, Collingswood, New Jersey, 1998. This and the second volume are basically Burgon's own theory and method of how to reconstruct the original text of the NT from the many diverse manuscript copies. They are exceptional well done works, and anyone who adheres today to a "Majority Text" position will find these classic works to still be among the most valuable ever written on the subject from a Majority Text perspective. I wouldn't follow the basic theory, but, contrary to a TR only or KJV only position, it certainly has my respect as a valid, studious, and scholarly approach to reconstructing the text of the NT.

Comfort, Phillip W. "*New Testament Text and Translation Commentary: Commentary On The Variant Readings Of Ancient New Testament Manuscripts And How They Relate To The Major English Translations*." Tyndale, Illinois, 2008. This is Comfort's own textual commentary. Often treating more variants than Metzger, it is valuable for the amount of its material. When his own judgments

- differ from Metzger, I tend to disagree with Comfort and follow Metzger. His dating of witnesses in particular has garnered much criticism from some reviewers.
- Huizinga, Johan. *"Erasmus and the Age of Reformation,"* Harper & Row, New York, 1924. (Kindle Edition). Excellent brief intro to the life and impact of Erasmus. Now replaced by the works of Rummel and Bainton.
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- Metzger, Bruce M. *"A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament."* (2nd ed.) United Bible Society, London, 1975. Printed as a sort of "companion volume" to the UBS, this standard textual commentary takes the reader "behind the scenes" to explain the internal and external data that went into deciding which readings should be in the text, and which should be relegated to the apparatus. Considers the 400 or so most important textual variants in the NT, presents a good argument for each reading, and shows why the UBS landed where they did. The reader will immediately gain an appreciation for the fact that at a few minor points, deciding which reading is original can be very difficult, and is necessarily at points an uncertain task, which is why marginal notes and apparatuses are the mark of honest scholarship. Interestingly, the work tackles each of the most significant textual variants in the NT which affect meaning and exegesis. Thus, when a skeptic says, (or KJV advocate supposes to be the case were there no inspired TR), "we have no idea what the NT originally said," they can read a single volume which will show them that that is actually only true in a few hundred places, and in most of those it is fairly clear, and most of them are not at all as major as some like to pretend. 2 variants contain 12 whole verses. A few dozen concern 1-2 whole verses. The remaining few hundred significant variants concern a phrase/ short phrases or a single word.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *"The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations."* Clarendon, Oxford, 1977. Still the standard work on the ancient versions of the NT, their character, date, witnesses, and value and use in NTTC. Note that some of this work has been corrected in Kruger and Hill.
- Metzger, Bruce M. and Ehrman, Bart D. *"The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration."* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press, New York, 2005. While there are many who take different general approaches to NTTC, and would diverge from Metzger at many points, this has been for decades and still is the undisputed standard basic introduction to NT textual criticism. Anyone who hasn't read it is simply not acquainted with the field, and should not be promoting themselves as an amateur, much less an expert. I think Metzger does at times show a bit of bias, but it is an excellent work nonetheless. I actually prefer the 3rd edition, but he 4th has more up-to-date information.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *"Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Paleography."* New York, Oxford, 1991. An excellent intro to paleography, with an analysis of handwriting styles, dating, etc. Contains a large number of beautiful plates for examination.
- Pickering, Wilbur N. *"The Identity of the New Testament Text III."* Eugene, Wipf and Stock, 2012. Better than many of the works in this list. An older edition is available free at; <http://www.revisedstandardversion.net/text/WNP/>. Pickering is a defender of the Majority text, basically following Burgon's method, and suggests that he would revise the TR in about 1,500 places, about a third of which would translate into English. He has in fact produced a new majority Greek text, though, it is not truly a "majority" since it relies solely on Von Soden's Kr group, which Pickering is convinced are the only manuscripts that preserve the true text. In fact, in his most recent edition, he seems to directly state that miniscule 35 is the one manuscript which is exactly identical to the original autographa. His eccentric claims have not been largely followed. His Greek text and a translation of his "Majority Text" into English, are available in print, and free online.
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Journal Articles

Combs William W. *"The Preservation of Scripture"* Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal volume 5 (Fall 2000) pg. 3-44.

Combs, William W. *"Erasmus and the Textus Receptus"* Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 1 (Spring 1996) pg. 35-53.

De Jonge, Henk Jan. *"Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum."* Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses. 1980, pg. 381-389.

De Jonge, Henk Jan. *"Novum Testamentum A Nobis Versum: The Essence of Erasmus' Edition of the New Testament"* Journal of Theological Studies 35 (1984) pg. 394-413. Exceptional article. De Jonge has been called the world's leading Erasmian scholar, and he seeks here to rescue Erasmus, so to speak, from the common charges laid against him by modern textual critics. He describes some of the derogatory claims sometimes made about the Greek NT of Erasmus (that it was based on a handful of recent, inferior manuscripts; that it often corrects itself to align to the Latin text, even when doing so against all known Greek support both of his day and ours; that it contains hundreds of printing errors due to the hasty nature of his work; and that in Revelation, the only manuscript he had access to was embedded in a commentary of Andreas, and thus, often Andrea's words have slipped into the TR having no manuscript support in any language). He allows that they are in fact true claims. However, he raises and argues at length a point far too commonly ignored in such critiques of Erasmus. A Greek NT was not the primary intent of his work, and was something of a provisional and secondary accident. Since it was not his aim to produce a good Greek text, but merely provide any Greek text which would substantiate his Latin translation, he should be judged by what he actually intended to accomplish; not by what he didn't. The Greek text which he printed was of little import to him initially, and was not his primary concern. Any form of the Greek text would have done. Latin was the point. He concludes by stating, "My claim can be summed up in one sentence; In judging the Greek text in Erasmus' editions of the New Testament, one should realize from the start that it was not intended as a textual edition in its own right, but served to give the reader of the Latin version, which was the main point, the opportunity to find out whether the translation was supported by the Greek. In one of the forewords to *Novum Instrumentum*, Erasmus warned, 'Let no one, like an unreasonable guest, demand a dinner instead of a light luncheon. We state clearly what we have undertaken. Let no one desire of us what is beyond this purpose.'"

De Jonge, Henk Jan. *"The Date and Purpose of Erasmus's Casitgatio Novi Testamenti: A Note on the Origins of the Novum Instrumentum."* Dealing with the multiple conflicting statements by Erasmus and his contemporaries about when Erasmus first began to work on his new Translation of the NT into Latin, he concludes that the work had actually begun as early as 1511, and that for apologetic reasons Erasmus later claimed that it was a brief thought just prior to its printing. However, as generally accepted, and as more pertinent to this essay, the idea to include the Greek text, and thus his work of correcting Greek manuscripts to that end, did not commence until August 1514, after his arrival in Basel. His work on constructing a critical Greek text was, as has commonly been asserted, something of a rush job, and an afterthought ancillary to his main purpose.

KJV/TR works

I have chosen not to interact with the standard KJVO works directly, as I have given a more full and accurate presentation of the data in the essay itself, and I think their arguments are refuted in the essay by the data, without specific interaction. However, my consultation of the following works bears mentioning at least. Their basic KJVO and TRO arguments (only occasionally if ever in reference to this passage) are standard and well-worn, and I think clearly refuted in the body of this essay without direct reference to these works.

Fuller, David Otis, D. D. *"Which Bible?"* (5th ed.) Grand Rapids, IBTS, 1997. Reading this work and its sequel as a teen was my first introduction to the KJVO position, and I unfortunately didn't have the critical thinking skills to evaluate the work. It is basically a collection of writings purported to support a perfect KJV, though several of the men quoted (e.g., Hodges, Hoskier) would not have affirmed a perfect KJV or even a perfect TR. But perhaps most unusual is that the biggest chunk of the book is simply reprinting Benjamin Wilkenson's, "Our Authorized Bible Vindicated." Wilkenson was a 7th day Adventist, and in all likelihood was historically the first proponent of a "King James Only" position. Strangely, all mention of his denominational connection is omitted.

Fuller, David Otis, D. D. *"True or False? The Wescott-Hort Textual Theory Examined."* Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1975. Basically a second collection of writings purporting to support a perfect KJV, though, yet again, several (e.g., Pickering, Burgon) did not defend the TR, but the Majority Text, and felt that the KJV and the TR were in direct error at many points.

Waite, D. A. *"Defending the King James Bible: A Four-fold Superiority."* (3rd ed.) Old Paths Publications, 1998. Vitriolic, unkind, and deeply misinformed.

Riplinger, G. A. *"New Age Bible Versions: An Exhaustive Documentation of the Message, Men & Manuscripts Moving Mankind to the Antichrist's One World Religion."* (4th ed.) A.V. Publications, 1993. Vitriolic, unkind, deeply misinformed, and at points, it would appear, terribly dishonest in its use of sources.

Riplinger, G. A. *"The Language of the King James Bible."* A.V. Publications, 1998. Vitriolic, unkind, and deeply misinformed.

Ruckman, Peter S. *"Manuscript Evidence."* B. B. Bookstore, 1970 (kindle edition). Vitriolic, unkind, and deeply misinformed.

Grady, William P. *"Final Authority: A Christian's Guide to the King James Bible."* Grady Publications, 1993. Vitriolic, unkind, and deeply misinformed. Filled with unchristian and unfounded attacks upon others. His chapter for example on Westcott and Hort reveals a disturbingly dishonest use of sources, and his chapter on the NKJV (which seems to be claiming the use of different original language texts than the KJV) reveals in fact that the author has little or no understanding of the original languages, or little understanding of English. Or that he understands both and is counting on the fact that his readers don't.

Sargent, Robert J. *"English Bible: Manuscript Evidence"* (Landmarks Series). Bible Baptist Church Publications, 1989.