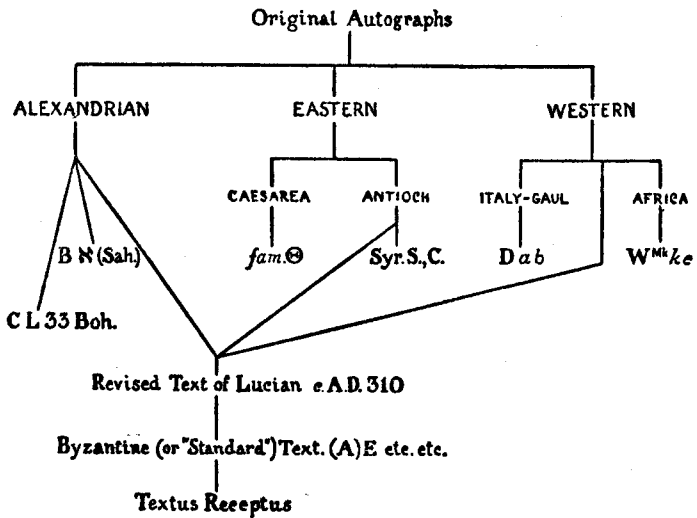
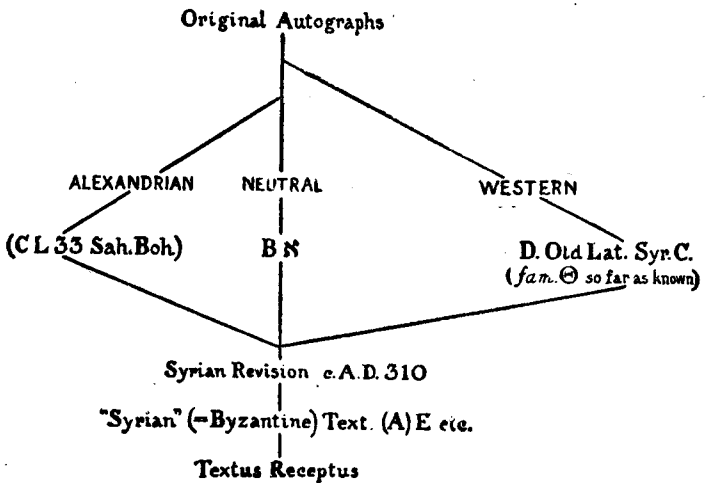


PART I
THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

(I) THE THEORY OF "LOCAL TEXTS"



(II) WESTCOTT & HORT'S THEORY



II

LOCAL AND STANDARD TEXTS

SYNOPSIS

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

The Received Text represents approximately the Byzantine text found in the majority of MSS. But the earliest MSS. and Versions afford evidence of the existence at an early date of a number of local texts, differing considerably from one another, which in the course of time were gradually submerged by the Byzantine standard text. Recent discovery and investigation necessitates considerable modifications of the theories put forward by Westcott and Hort.

(1) The two oldest MSS., B \aleph (on which W.H. mainly based their edition of the Greek Testament), represent the local text of Alexandria. (2) What is called the "Western" text is really not a single text, but a group of distinct local texts within which an Eastern type (with two sub-varieties current in Antioch and Caesarea respectively) must be clearly distinguished from the Western type (used with some slight differences in Africa and Italy).

The materials for the textual criticism of the Gospels contrasted with those available for classical authors. Note on von Soden's edition.

LOCAL TEXTS

Brief survey of the conditions of copying and correcting MSS. which led to the development of local texts. The maximum of divergence between local texts probably reached c. A.D. 200. This is reflected in the oldest Latin, Syriac and Egyptian Versions.

The great majority of various readings are, in regard to points of grammar, order of words, etc., so small as to make no essential difference to the sense; but for the identification of the various local texts, the concurrence in a group of MSS. of a large number of these minute variants is of chief significance. Large omissions or interpolations, though more striking, are for this purpose less important, since in the period when the churches were comparing different texts and correcting one by another, the more conspicuous variants would be the first

to attract attention, and would thus be adopted from one text into another.

STANDARDISATION

As Constantinople came more and more to dominate the Greek-speaking Church, MSS. representing the old local texts were gradually by a series of corrections brought into conformity with the Byzantine standard text. An analogy from the history of ancient liturgies. Similarly MSS. of the Old Latin version were corrected into conformity with the revised version produced by Jerome at the command of Pope Damasus in 381. The result of this standardising process was the production of "mixed" texts, *i.e.* of MSS. in which one set of readings survive from ancestors representing an old local text, while others agree with the standard text. In mixed MSS. the only readings that need be noticed are those which differ from the standard text.

THE FATHERS AND THE STANDARD TEXT

Since later scribes who copied the works of the Fathers were themselves familiar with the standard text of the Gospels, there was an inevitable tendency for them to correct quotations from the Gospels occurring in an early Father so as to make them conform to the standard text. Two striking illustrations of this process. It follows that when in the printed editions of an early Father (few Fathers have been critically edited from the best MSS.) a quotation from the Gospels is found to agree with the Byzantine text against the local text which that Father elsewhere seems to use, there is a presumption against that particular reading being what that Father originally wrote; it is more likely to be the result of a scribal correction in the MS. of the Father.

AN ILLUSION ABOUT MSS.

The distinction between MSS. written in uncial (*i.e.* capital) letters, or in a cursive (*i.e.* small running) hand, in no way corresponds to a difference in their value to the textual critic. Many cursives are quite as important as any uncials after the first five, \aleph BLD Θ ; the practice of citing uncials by a capital letter, cursives by a number, makes the difference between them appear far greater than it really is. After A.D. 600 MSS. with a substantial mixture of the old local texts were rarely copied except in out-of-the-way places or by some accident, and this might occur at quite a late date; also a late cursive may be a direct copy of an early uncial. Of special interest are 33, 579 (allies of B \aleph); also 1, 28, 565, 700, and the "Ferrar Group" (13 &c.), which, together with Θ , form a family (*fam.* Θ) preserving the text of Caesarea.

CHAPTER II

LOCAL AND STANDARD TEXTS

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

TO those who read the Gospels in order to obtain a general idea of the life and teaching of Christ, or who value them mainly for devotional purposes, it makes very little difference whether they use the Authorised or the Revised Version. All they want the textual critic to tell them is within what limits of error the text of either version represents what the authors wrote. Any one, however, who wishes to study the subtler shades of meaning in particular passages, or who is interested in the evidence for every detail of the life and teaching of our Lord, will be more exacting, and will demand the most accurate text that a scientific study of the MSS. can produce ; while to the student of the Synoptic Problem, endeavouring by a microscopic comparison of the Gospels to determine the sources which their authors used, the minutest variant may be of the utmost significance. Indeed, as will appear in a later chapter, it is precisely because most writers on the Synoptic Problem have been content to use without question *Synopses* of the Gospels in Greek, based either on the text of Tischendorf or on that of Westcott and Hort, that a completely satisfactory explanation of the relation of Matthew and Luke to Mark has not sooner been attained.

The facts which constitute the main difficulty in our quest for the original text may be summed up in a paragraph.

There are over twelve hundred manuscripts of the Gospels in

Greek, beginning with the eighth century MS. commonly cited as E, which present a text of a remarkably uniform character. This text was named by Griesbach the "Byzantine text"—a name preferable to that of "Syrian" given it by Hort, since, whatever its origin, it was indubitably the standard text of the Byzantine Empire all through the Middle Ages. In sharp contrast to the general uniformity of the Byzantine text is the extent of variation exhibited by the half-dozen Greek MSS. that survive from the fourth and fifth centuries, and by the Greek texts underlying the Old Latin, the Old Syriac and the older Egyptian Versions, of which we possess MSS. of an equally early date. Of the six oldest Greek MSS. only one, A, has a text that in all four Gospels approximates to the Byzantine standard. The other five, \aleph B C D W,¹ and the three ancient Versions just mentioned have texts which differ to a remarkable extent both from one another and from the Byzantine text. What is even more significant—the quotations from the Gospels made by all Christian writers up to about A.D. 360 almost invariably agree with one or other of these older MSS. or Versions rather than with the Byzantine text.

Thus there is forced upon our notice evidence that in the earlier period there was great diversity between the texts of the New Testament current in the Church—a diversity which was succeeded later on by a high degree of uniformity. We notice at once an analogy between the history of the text and that of the settlement of the canon and the formulation of doctrine. Here, as elsewhere, the final result, it would seem, is a standardisation of an earlier variety.

The problems which the textual critic has to solve are three. (1) He must account for the great divergence between the types of text current in the second, third and fourth centuries. (2) He must explain the origin of the Byzantine standard text and the process by which it replaced the other types. (3) Finally, in the light of the conclusions reached on these two points, he

¹ I accept the date (fifth century) assigned to D, the Codex Bezae, by F. C. Burkitt and E. A. Loew. Cf. *J.T.S.*, July 1902 and April 1913.

must endeavour to determine which of these types of text, or what kind of combination of them, will represent most nearly the text of the Gospels as they left the hands of their several authors. The third problem is of course much the most important; but he cannot hope to solve it rightly unless he has first found a reasonably satisfactory solution to the other two.

The relation of our printed Greek Testaments and of the English versions to the types of text found in the MSS. may be summarily stated in a very few words. Erasmus was the first to produce an edition of the Greek Testament in print; a subsequent revision of his edition by the Paris printer Stephanus, 1550, became the standard printed text or *Textus Receptus*. Readings of this text are commonly cited by the abbreviation T.R. or the Greek letter σ (= st). Since both Erasmus and Stephanus used (all but exclusively) late Byzantine MSS., the English Authorised Version, which was translated from the *Textus Receptus*, represents a late stage of the Byzantine text. On the other hand, in the great critical editions of Westcott and Hort and Tischendorf the Byzantine tradition is entirely abandoned and the text is based almost entirely on the two oldest MSS. of all, B (Vaticanus) and \aleph (Sinaiticus)—of which the first probably, the second possibly, dates from the reign of Constantine (d. A.D. 337). Where these two MSS. differ, Westcott and Hort usually follow B; Tischendorf more often prefers \aleph (Aleph), his own discovery. The "Revisers' text," from which the Revised Version was translated, and which is published by the Oxford University Press, represents a compromise, on the whole a very reasonable one, between the views of Hort, who championed a text based on B, and those of the more conservative members of the Committee who defended the Byzantine text.

At that time neither party was concerned to put in a plea for any readings (except a few omissions) supported only by D (Codex Bezae), by the then known MSS. of the Old Latin and Old Syriac version, or by certain late Greek MSS. exhibiting texts of an unusual type. These authorities were all lumped together

under the general name of the "Western text," and their readings were treated as interesting eccentricities. But investigations by more recent scholars and fresh discoveries—of which the Sinaitic Syriac (Syr. S.), the Koridethi MS. Θ, the Freer MS. W, and 700 are the most notable—have changed this. (1) It is now generally realised that B \aleph represent, not, as Hort held, some almost impeccable "Neutral" text connected with no particular locality, but the text of Alexandria in its purest form. (2) The question has been raised whether, under the misleading name "Western," Griesbach and Hort did not group together what in reality are several distinct local texts.

In Chapters III. and IV. I shall submit an outline of the evidence which compels us to recognise in what they called the "Western" text two distinct types, an Eastern and a strictly (in a geographical sense) Western text. Each of these types can be further divided into at least two distinct local texts. Indeed it can, I think, be shown that recently discovered MSS., if properly used, enable us to get a fairly clear idea of the different types of text current about A.D. 230, not only in Alexandria, but in Caesarea and Antioch in the East, and in Italy and Carthage in the West.

If this is established, obviously the basis of evidence on which the text of the Gospels rests is greatly widened. Of these five early local texts that of Alexandria (B \aleph) is, as we should expect from the tradition of textual scholarship native to the place, undoubtedly the best; but no MS. and no line of textual tradition is infallible, and it will not infrequently appear that the true reading of a particular passage, lost at Alexandria, has been preserved in one or other of the rival texts.

It is, however, quite impossible for the student to interpret rightly the evidence by which the identification of local texts is achieved unless he has previously considered (a) the conditions which originally gave rise to the existence of these local texts, and (b) the exact nature of that process of progressive correction into conformity with the Byzantine standard text

to which many of our most important authorities have been subjected. The present chapter, therefore, will be mainly devoted to a discussion of these two points.

In the field of classical literature the main difficulty of the textual critic, except in the case of a few extremely popular authors like Homer or Virgil, is the paucity and late date of MSS. No portion of Tacitus, for example, survived the Dark Ages in more than one; and the number of famous works of which, apart from Renaissance reproductions, there are less than half a dozen MSS. is very large. Again, apart from fragments, there are no MSS. of the Greek classics earlier than the ninth century, and very few older than the twelfth. The student of the text of the Gospels is confronted with a difficulty of an opposite character. There are more than 1400 Greek MSS., about forty of which are more than a thousand years old; there are over 1300 Lectionaries which contain the greater part of the text of the Gospels arranged as lessons for the year; there are fifteen Versions in ancient languages, which are evidence of the Greek text used by their translators. In addition, there are innumerable quotations by early Fathers, which are, in effect, fragments of other early MSS. now lost. The mass of material to be considered is crushing. The consequences of this are twofold. On the one hand the degree of security that, in its broad outlines, the text has been handed down to us in a reliable form is *prima facie* very high. On the other, the problem of sorting the material in order to determine those minuter points which interest the critical student is proportionately complex—how complex is only known to those who have given considerable attention to the study. Nevertheless so much has been accomplished in this way by the labours of generations of scholars, that it is now possible—if we disregard minor issues and accept as provisionally established certain conclusions to which a minority of experts might demur—to present “a bird’s eye view” of the history of the text, which will be both intelligible to the plain man and at the same time in principle scientific. Such a view will be in one

sense a further development of, in another an attempt to supersede, the theory put forward by Westcott and Hort in the Introduction to their famous edition of the Greek Testament. Thus it will frequently be necessary to criticise certain of the views of Hort—by whom that Introduction was written. I wish, therefore, once and for all to affirm that this implies no undervaluing of the truly epoch-making character of the work of that great scholar. There is no greater name in the history of Textual Criticism. But for Hort, no such thing as what I am here attempting would be possible; and such modification of his views as seems to be necessary is mainly due to discoveries made since the time he wrote.¹

¹ Of the views of H. von Soden it is impossible to speak in such terms as I should wish, retaining, as I do, pleasant recollections of a personal interview with him a few years before his tragic death. Soden had at his disposal a large sum of money given to enable him to employ numerous assistants, in order to scour the libraries of the East for MSS. hitherto either unknown or not carefully examined; but unfortunately not much of the first importance was discovered. The Byzantine text he styles **K** (= *κωνσ*), the Alexandrian **H** (= Hesyehian); all other authorities, whether Eastern or Western, are assigned to an **I** (= Jerusalem) text. In Chapter IV. I shall attempt to discriminate between the almost equally balanced elements of truth and falsehood in his conception of an **I** text.

In his colossal Introduction he has succeeded in illuminating the grouping of late MSS. and the history of the Byzantine text. But his theories of the influence of Tatian and of a II^{cent.} I—H—K text are, if I may borrow a phrase once used by Dr. Sanday, "not only wrong but wrong-headed." I am informed by one of the leading scholars in Germany that Soden's theories, in so far as they are original, are universally rejected in that country, and that his grouping of the MSS. is considered arbitrary. Of his cumbrously conceived attempt to introduce an entirely new naming and numbering of the MSS. I need say nothing, as the vast majority of scholars in Europe and America have agreed that they will not accept it, but will henceforth use Gregory's revision of the old notation. Advanced students, however, must have some acquaintance with his views, for without that the Apparatus Criticus of his edition cannot be deciphered, much less understood. They should, however, be warned that it is very inaccurate. (On this point there is some damaging evidence in the Introduction to the "New Collation of Codex 22" by Prof. H. A. Sanders, *Journal of Biblical Studies*, xxxiii. p. 91 ff.) Such students I would refer to an invaluable pamphlet by Prof. K. Lake, *Prof. H. von Soden's Treatment of the Text of the Gospels* (Otto Schultze, Edin.; a reprint of articles in *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, Oct.-Nov. 1908). This paper gives an extremely clear account of Soden's grouping of the MSS. and a sympathetic exposition of his very complicated views, followed by a very courteous but, in effect, annihilating criticism of them.

LOCAL TEXTS

The invention of printing made it possible that every copy of a book should be exactly the same. This was a new thing in the history of literature. So long as books were copied by hand, no two copies could be *exactly* the same; every copy included certain scribal errors. In the scriptoria of the great libraries it was customary in antiquity for a corrector, *διορθωτής*, to go over a MS., sometimes with the original from which it was copied, more often, apparently, with another copy. The most obvious mistakes, including accidental omissions, would thus to a large extent be rectified. But this is unlikely to have been done in the earliest MSS. of the Gospels, which would be cheap copies and often made by amateur scribes. In that case an error which made nonsense or spoilt the grammar of a sentence would be subsequently corrected by the owner of the book—probably, from lack of another copy, by conjecture. If, however, the error was one which left a reading which still made sense, it would be likely to escape notice altogether. In either case the new reading would be reproduced by all subsequent scribes who used this copy as an exemplar. Now as soon as there were numerous copies of a book in circulation in the same area, one copy would constantly be corrected by another, and thus within that area a general standard of text would be preserved. But what we have to consider is that it is unlikely that the errors in the first copy of the Gospel of John, for example, which reached Rome would be the same as those in the first copy which came to Alexandria; and as each of these would become the parent of most other copies used in those respective cities, there would, from the very beginning, be some difference between the local texts of Rome and Alexandria.

Once the Gospels were regarded as inspired, they were copied with scrupulous accuracy and by the most skilful scribes available. But during the first and most of the second century they

would be, for the most part, copied by amateurs—for Christians were a poor community and a secret society under the ban of the police. It was during this period that all the really important various readings arose. Both insertion and omission would be more possible then than at a later date. For, on the one hand, it was a time when incidents or sayings not included in the original Gospels would still survive in oral tradition, and when their inclusion in a text not yet regarded as sacred would be least resented. On the other hand, accidental omissions—the commonest of all errors in copying, whether in ancient or modern times—would most easily become permanent; for at a period when the churches were relatively isolated, a passage once omitted from the earliest copy which reached a particular church would not for a long while, if ever, be replaced. This is the explanation of what is the most conspicuous difference between one text and another, that caused by the presence in some MSS. of sentences or paragraphs not found in others. Of these variants the so-called *Pericope Adulterae*, *i.e.* the story of the woman taken in adultery (Jn. vii. 53 ff.), and the last twelve verses of Mark are much the most considerable; but there are quite a number of other interesting passages, from half a verse to a couple of verses in extent, which are found in some MSS., but omitted in others. The textual critic is called upon to decide in each particular case whether the reading is the result of accidental omission in the texts which lack, or of interpolation in the texts which contain, these passages. The principles on which such decisions can be made will be discussed later.

But variants of this kind, though the most conspicuous, are not the most important to the critic who is seeking to identify early local texts, for the simple reason that they are so conspicuous that they would be the first passages to strike the eye of later scribes or editors who wished to correct or supplement their own text by that of another church. A convincing proof that a group of MSS. represents the text of a particular locality is only forthcoming if they are found to concur in a large number of

minor variants which are either not found at all or found but rarely in other MSS.

For a discussion, with illustrative examples, of the causes and exact character of these minor variants I refer the reader to Appendix I., "The Origin of Variants." In this place I need only say that the number of such variants is immense. Between the *Textus Receptus* and Westcott and Hort, that is, practically between the Byzantine text and that of B, there are, in the Gospels alone, about 4000 differences.¹ And the number of differences between the text of B and that of D would, I imagine, be quite twice as many. But no less remarkable is the infinitesimal character of the vast majority of these differences. For the most part they consist in variations in the relative order of words in a sentence, in the use of different prepositions, conjunctions and particles, in differences in the preposition with which verbs are compounded, or in slight modifications of a grammatical nature.² Indeed the great majority of them cannot be represented in an English translation.

The main influences which operate to produce differences of text are illustrated by the passages discussed in Appendix I. These are all influences which would operate in every locality. Where a change would effect an obvious grammatical improvement or tend to assimilate the text of one Gospel to another, the same alteration might easily be made independently in two different neighbourhoods. But only rarely would any of the other causes of corruption result in a coincident alteration of exactly the same kind along two different lines of textual transmission. On the contrary, corruption as a rule causes texts to become in the course of time more and more different. In this way local texts would inevitably develop, not only in the greater,

¹ Any one who would like to study these may find a collation of the two texts in W. Sanday, *Appendices ad Novum Testamentum*, Oxford, 1889.

² Such phenomena are by no means confined to the text of the New Testament. They are a conspicuous feature of the texts of the Fathers; they are found, though to a much less extent, in the texts of some classical writers. See the remarks about MSS. of Augustine quoted by F. G. Kenyon, *The Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Macmillan, 1912), p. 355 note.

but also in the smaller centres of Christianity. But, along with a growing veneration for the text as that of inspired Scripture, there would come a tendency, whenever a new copy of the Gospels for official use in the public services was wanted, to lay more and more stress on the importance of having an accurate text. This would naturally result in the smaller churches obtaining new copies from the greater metropolitan sees, since these would be thought likely to possess a pure text. From these any copies in private hands in the smaller churches would be corrected. Thus the local texts of smaller churches would tend to become assimilated to those of the greater centres in their immediate neighbourhood. The next stage would be for the great churches to compare their texts and endeavour to reach a standard text which would be universally accepted.

To this process the history of the text of Homer, obscure though it is in certain ways, presents some analogies. The quotations of ancient authors and the earliest papyrus fragments attest readings not found in the *κοινή*, or standard text, which has come down to us; and grammarians often cite readings of other texts which are described as *κατὰ πόλεις*, that is, apparently, local texts once current in certain famous cities.

In the light of these antecedent probabilities we should expect to find the maximum of diversity between local texts of the Gospels in the early part of the third century. After that date, with the increasing possibilities of communication between churches and the rapid spread of Christianity among the more educated classes, there would gradually arise a demand for a standard text. All the evidence points in this direction. The oldest Greek MSS., the oldest versions, the quotations of the oldest Fathers, all attest diversity. Scholars like Rendel Harris, Chase and Hoskier have made ingenious attempts to discount the evidence of the ancient Versions and to discredit, as due to retranslation, the text of the Greek MSS. like D or B which are most closely allied to them. Such attempts are inspired by the assumption, only half conscious but wholly fallacious, that

at the beginning of the third century there was anything approaching a uniform Greek text in use throughout the Church. On the contrary, antecedent probability and the evidence of Patristic quotations alike point to the period \pm A.D. 200, when the older Versions were produced, as that of maximum local diversity. And it is precisely because they preserve this diversity that these versions are of primary importance to the critic as evidence for the older local texts.

The ultimate aim of textual criticism is to get back behind the diverse local texts to a single text, viz. to that which the authors originally wrote. But the high road to that conclusion is first to recover the local texts of the great churches, and then to work back to a common original that will explain them all.

STANDARDISATION

The Byzantine text, we shall see later, most probably originated in a revision based on older local texts made by Lucian of Antioch about A.D. 300. The fact of such revision, and still more the precise relation of it to the older texts, is a matter on which opinions may differ. What is not open to question is that this type of text, whatever its origin and whatever its value, did gradually oust all other types and become the standard text in the Greek-speaking Church. It is therefore important to recognise the difference which the invention of printing has made in the mechanism, so to speak, of the process by which a standard text can be introduced where it was not previously in use. If the proper authorities in the Church of England should decide that henceforth the Lessons be read from the Revised Version instead of from the Authorised, the change would for the most part be made in three months. A certain number of clergy might resist it; in that case, some churches would henceforth be using the one version, and some the other. But by no possibility could a *mixed version* be anywhere used. In antiquity it was just the reverse. From the end of the third century the

relatively cheap papyrus roll was replaced by the magnificent "codex" (*i.e.* MS. in book form) written on parchment. It was not practicable, except in the largest cities, to discard the Bibles already in use and obtain new ones. No doubt this would be done in the great cathedrals and in the larger monasteries. Elsewhere existing MSS. would be corrected more or less carefully from some copy of the standard text—much as an incumbent is still legally bound to correct the copies of the Prayer Book belonging to the parish, when the names in the prayers for the King and Royal Family require to be changed on the accession of a new monarch. This is no mere conjecture. In some of our oldest MSS. we can see the process actually at work. \aleph , for example, has been corrected by several hands at different dates, and (apart from corrections by the διορθωτής and an all but contemporary scribe) the great majority of corrections are into conformity with the standard text; the same thing holds good of the corrections in W.¹

Doubtless the wealthier and more important churches or monasteries would get from Antioch or Constantinople completely new copies of the approved text. Bishops and priests in smaller towns would bring their old MSS. with them next time they had occasion to visit the provincial capitals and take the opportunity of making the necessary corrections. Let us suppose that the text of the Gospels in a particular city or monastery was of the B type, and that the Bishop or Archimandrite, on a visit to Constantinople, wished to correct it to the standard text. He would bring his own copy with him and tell off one of his attendant priests or monks to collate it with the model. Two-thirds of the 4000 or more differences which the microscopic eye of a Tischendorf, trained by a lifetime of such comparison, would detect, this man would never notice. Of the

¹ This can be conveniently verified in Scrivener's *A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus* (Cambridge, 1864), *passim*, and in H. A. Sanders, *The N.T. MSS. in the Freer Collection* (Macmillan Co., New York, 1912), pp. 31, 36.

rest, at least half would seem to him too unimportant to record, since they make no real difference to the sense. If the corrector were more than usually careful, and had plenty of leisure for the work, he might make 500 corrections; if careless or pressed for time, perhaps only 50. The copy thus corrected would be taken back; and from it other local copies would be made, *embodying these corrections in the text*. What then would be the character of the resultant text? It would be a *mixed text*, some of its readings being Alexandrian, others Byzantine. Some actual examples of mixed texts of this type are discussed below (p. 61 ff.) and in Ch. IV.

This sort of thing would be going on everywhere; but the results would differ in every case. For instance, a priest from another town might also bring a B text to be corrected; but the list of differences which he happened to notice, or to think worth correcting, would be quite a different one. This time the resultant text, although equally a mixture of B and the standard text, would be a *different* mixture. Again, from other centres the MSS. brought for correction might be of one of the types of text commonly called "Western." Descendants of these MSS., as corrected, would show a mixture of "Western" and Byzantine readings. And now suppose that, a century or so later, some conscientious bishop or monk arose who again compared his partially corrected local text by the Byzantine standard. The same process would be repeated; but it would result in a still further diminution of the Alexandrian or "Western" elements in the text current in that locality. Since this process of successive standardisation was going on for centuries, the remains of the pre-Byzantine texts would gradually get revised away.

In the later period of classical antiquity a text more or less pure of the great authors was preserved by the tradition of scrupulous accuracy and careful correction maintained in the great libraries—especially that of Alexandria. And, as every one who wanted a good text resorted to these centres, a standard text gradually supplanted that of cheap popular copies. In the

Middle Ages the library tradition passed to some of the greater monasteries, and doubtless this had a similar effect in fixing and propagating the standard text. Thus after the eighth century it was only here and there, in small monasteries in remote districts, that MSS. would be copied which still contained a substantial proportion of readings characteristic of the older texts.

According to Hort there are (not counting fragments) only three MSS., B, \aleph and D, which have altogether escaped some measure of correction to the Byzantine standard; and it is significant that two of them are a century older than any others. It is also noticeable that D was written by an ill-educated scribe, and that the same thing applies to other important MSS. with a large non-Byzantine element, *e.g.* L, Δ , 28 and, still more conspicuously, Θ . This suggests that they were written in out-of-the-way places, where the Byzantine text had not yet penetrated or had only recently done so. Zoology presents us with an analogy; the last survivors of species, once widely prevalent but now on the way to extinction, are found in remote and isolated spots.

The slow and haphazard working of this process of standardisation explains the comparative failure of any standard revision of the Old Testament to oust the older texts. In the first place, anxiety to correct and recorrect, in the endeavour to attain what was regarded as the purest text, would be much less acute for the Old Testament than the Gospels.¹ Secondly, the Old Testament being so much longer, and therefore so much more expensive to copy, than the New, many even of the cathedrals and larger monasteries would prefer to correct old, rather than to purchase new, copies. Thirdly, only selections of the Old Testament were

¹ The reputation of Origen's *Hexapla*, a work we shall speak of later (p. 111 f.), which was preserved at Caesarea till the city was sacked by the Saracens, made that, as the scholia prove, an alternative to the revision of Lucian of Antioch as a standard of correction. The majority of MSS. of the LXX give a mixed text; though it is believed that in B we have an early Alexandrian, in a few other MSS. a text derived from the *Hexapla*, in rather more the text of Lucian, and in some few a text which is thought to represent the revision by Hesychius alluded to by Jerome.

read in the Church services, and for this purpose Lectionaries were used. The complete Old Testament was a work of reference for theologians, copies of it not being subject to the wear and tear of daily use lasted a long while. Indeed this is the probable explanation of the fact that, although MSS. containing the whole New Testament are comparatively rare and MSS. containing the whole of the Old Testament rarer still, the four oldest MSS. we possess, B & A C, originally contained the whole Bible. There must always have been an overwhelming proportion of MSS. containing the four Gospels only; but, while most early copies of the Gospels were worn out by constant use, the four great Bibles survived because they were kept in libraries as works of reference.

To this standardisation of the text of the New Testament there is an illuminating parallel in the history of the Greek liturgies during the same period. In the sixth centuries the Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria had each its own liturgy, known respectively by the names of St. James and St. Mark; and there were various other local rites in use. But gradually the later Byzantine rite superseded all others within the remains of the old empire. Then the churches of Syria and Egypt, which survived under Mohammedan rule, gradually assimilated the Liturgies of St. James and St. Mark to the Byzantine standard. Thus all the surviving Greek texts of these liturgies have been, to a large extent, standardised. But the original form can be recovered by means of the vernacular liturgies of the Syriac and Coptic churches.¹ It is an interesting reflexion that, had no Greek MSS. earlier than the tenth century survived, we should in the same way be dependent on Latin, Syriac, and Coptic translations for our knowledge of the older forms of the text of the Greek Testament.

Precisely the same process of standardisation can be traced in the Latin church. In 381 Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus to produce a revised translation of the New Testament

¹ Cf. F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*, i. p. xx ff. (Rivington, 1915).

in order to remedy the confusion arising from the great diversity in the text and renderings of the Old Latin version at that time current. Two years later his translation of the Gospels was formally presented to the Pope as a first instalment. Revised versions are rarely popular at first, and for some little time copies of the old version continued to be reproduced. Indeed, Pope Gregory, writing in 595, lays down¹ that both versions are recognised by the Catholic Church. Gradually, however, the text of Jerome's translation, which we know as "the Vulgate," prevailed. But its influence spread quite as much through the correction of old copies by the new standard as by the substitution of new text for old. The result is that we have a number of MSS. the text of which is a mixture, in varying proportions, of Old Latin and of Vulgate elements. Indeed, just as the Greek Textus Receptus includes certain readings (e.g. the Pericope in John) which, though found in some pre-Byzantine MSS., are absent from the earliest MSS. of the Byzantine text, so in the "received" text of the Vulgate certain Old Latin readings are found which Jerome had discarded. Fortunately, however, our MSS. of the Vulgate are so numerous and ancient that the text of the version as it left Jerome's hands can be recovered with approximate certainty. This has been done in the magnificent edition of Wordsworth and White. With a copy of this edition in his hands, the student can readily distinguish in any mixed MS. the readings characteristic of the Old Latin.

We may now formulate a canon of criticism of the first importance. *Of MSS., whether Greek or Latin, later than the fifth century, only those readings need be noted which differ from the standard text.* That does not mean that readings of the Byzantine Greek or the Vulgate Latin are necessarily wrong; most of them are to be found in one or other of the earlier texts. It means that, since the authorities for any reading

¹ "Sedes apostolica, cui auctore Deo praesideo, utraque utitur (v.l. utrique nititur)," *Moralia in Job*, Pref. Ep. *ad fin.* It is possible, however, that Gregory's remark only applies to the Old Testament.

adopted in the standard text number in Greek twelve hundred, in Latin five thousand, a few hundred more or less makes no difference. But, as will shortly appear, our knowledge of the earlier types of text current in the East, not counting Egypt, depends mainly on the fragments of older MSS. which survive in mixed texts, and these fragments can only be identified by noting those readings which differ from the standard text.

THE FATHERS AND THE STANDARD TEXT

The standard text has also influenced the textual tradition of quotations from the New Testament in the works of the Greek and Latin Fathers. As a general rule it may be laid down that in late and inferior MSS. of the Fathers the Biblical quotations accord much more closely with the Byzantine text or the Latin Vulgate, as the case may be, than in good or early MSS. That is to say, that same process of assimilating earlier texts to the later standard, which we find in our MSS. of the Gospels, can also be traced in the quotations from the Gospels found in the works of the Fathers. Seeing that quotations by early Fathers are the principal means by which we identify and localise the type of texts found in pre-Byzantine or pre-Vulgate MSS., this consideration is of great importance. It may be illustrated by a concrete example. Hort had detected a connection between the text of the Old Latin Codex Bobiensis, known as *k*, and the text of Cyprian. Dr. Sanday pressed the investigation a stage further. Working from the printed texts of Cyprian he found that, in general, the quotations of Cyprian agreed with *k*; but, especially in the work entitled *Testimonia*, they frequently agreed with the Vulgate against *k*. He noticed, however, that in a number of cases when a quotation in the *Testimonia* agreed with the Vulgate, the same quotation occurred in other works of Cyprian in a form which agreed with *k*. Pursuing the subject further he studied the MSS. of the works in question, and made the illuminating discovery that the quotations as given in one group of MSS.

accorded with the text of *k*. The MS. which had been followed in Hartel's edition of Cyprian had suffered some correction from the standard text.¹ A precisely similar thing happened in regard to the recently recovered *Expositions of XIII. Epistles of St. Paul* by Pelagius. The first MS. identified gave an almost pure Vulgate text, which led one famous scholar to conjecture that the Vulgate revision of the Epistles was the work of Pelagius, not of Jerome. Subsequently the Balliol MS. of the commentary was discovered, in which the text commented on by Pelagius is clearly not the Vulgate, but the Old Latin.²

For a very large number of the Fathers the only printed texts available are the Benedictine editions or the reprint by Migne. These are frequently based on late MSS. Hence confidence can be placed in their texts of the quotations from the Gospels in the earlier Fathers only where these give a reading which differs from the standard text. I give an illustration of this from Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*—a work I shall have occasion to refer to again. Origen quotes Mt. xxvi. 3-5 and then proceeds to comment on the passage. In his quotation according to the Benedictine edition the words "and the scribes" occur, as in the Byzantine text; but his comment makes it clear that these words were absent from the MS. he was using, as they are from B \S 1 &c., 13 &c., and many other extant MSS.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers survive in so few MSS. that caution must be exercised even in regard to the texts of those Fathers of whom modern critical editions are available. For example, all our authorities for Origen's *Commentary on John*³ go back to a single X^{cent.} MS. This, on the whole, is a reason-

¹ *Old Latin Biblical Texts: No. II.* (Oxford, 1886), p. xliii ff., p. lxii ff., and p. 123 ff.

² A. Souter, *Texts and Studies*, ix. 1, p. 157 (Cambridge, 1922).

³ Of this there are two excellent critical editions, that of A. E. Brooke (Cambridge, 1896), and that of E. Preuschen (Berlin Corpus, 1903). There is no critical text of the equally important *Commentary on Matthew*, the Berlin Corpus not yet having reached this work.

ably good MS., and in this work of his we very rarely find quotations of the Gospels by Origen agreeing with the Byzantine against one or other of the pre-Byzantine texts. This shows that the quotations have suffered very little from scribal assimilation to the standard text; but it does not constitute even an antecedent presumption that they have not suffered at all. Here and there Origen quotes a verse with a reading characteristic of the Byzantine text. But it is quite unsafe for the critic to build upon these exceptional cases. A tenth-century scribe, presumably a monk, must have known the Gospels—at any rate, Matthew, Luke, and John, from which the Church lessons were mostly taken—almost by heart, and that according to the Byzantine text. However faithfully he tried to copy the text before him, there is always an interval between reading and writing in which, in moments of inadvertence, the human memory has time enough to substitute a familiar for an unfamiliar phrase. Hort was well alive to the danger of taking for granted the texts of the Fathers, but it seems necessary to reiterate the caution since, for all practical purposes, it has been ignored by von Soden, with disastrous consequences to his evaluation of patristic evidence for the pre-Byzantine texts.

AN ILLUSION ABOUT MSS.

The student who desires detailed information about the dates, history, and paleography of individual MSS., I must refer to the standard text-books.¹ But it will be well to begin the discussion of the whole subject by clearing out of the way a misapprehension which has affected the practice, if not the conscious theory, of even distinguished scholars. Before the

¹ *E.g.* Sir F. G. Kenyon's *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the N.T.* (Macmillan, 1912); C. R. Gregory, *Textkritik des N.T.* (Leipzig, 1909); *Eb. Nestles Einführung*—rewritten and brought up to date by E. von Dobschütz (Göttingen, 1923)—is excellent on a smaller scale. A bare list of select MSS., with dates and with von Soden's enumeration, is to be found in the Introduction to A. Souter's edition of the Revisers' Greek Testament, which also has a selected Apparatus Criticus (Oxford, 1910). See also *Index of MSS.*, p. 601 ff.

year A.D. 800 Greek books were written in capital letters or "uncials," but shortly after that date a "minuscule" or "cursive" hand—previously only used for informal writing—began to come into use for books also. The modern printed Greek characters, it may be remarked, bear much the same relation to this cursive script as printed italics do to ordinary handwriting. But it took a couple of centuries before the cursive finally supplanted the uncial style, and an actual majority of the uncials of the Gospels which survive in at all a complete state belong to this transitional period. Now Greek uncial MSS. are commonly cited by the capital letters of the English or Greek alphabet, except the Codex Sinaiticus, to which is assigned the Hebrew א (aleph). Cursives, on the other hand, are cited by a number. Now, it is much easier for most people to individualise a MS. which is cited by a letter. But, through the overlapping of the English and Greek alphabets, there are only about forty letters available; and some of these have been traditionally assigned to MSS. of the Gospels which are mere fragments. Thus over 2000 MSS. remain to be cited by a number. But, while a letter has something of the quality of a proper name, a number is a "mere number." Hence an illusion of the superior importance of uncial testimony is created, which subtly infects the judgement and the practice even of commentators and others who should know better. The illusion is fostered by the practice, which on principle I discard, of referring to uncials as MSS., but to cursives as *mss.* The leading MSS. are B א D; next in importance come L and the newly discovered Θ. These five are all uncials. Again the three V^{cent.} uncials, A C W, have from their antiquity claim to special consideration. But there are several cursives which are quite as important as these three, and which are of decidedly greater value than any uncial after the first eight.

A cursive is not necessarily later than an uncial. There is a curious ninth-century MS. of which the first part (cited as 566), containing Matthew and Mark, is written in a cursive hand,

while the second half (cited as A) is uncial. To the same century belong 33, "the queen of cursives," one of the main supporters of the B Σ text; and 565, the gold and purple "Empress Theodora's Codex," the most important ally of Θ , so far as Mark is concerned. These two are actually earlier in date than some, and they contain a more important text than any, of those fifteen uncials which, being designated by the capital letters E F, etc., look so much more impressive in an Apparatus Criticus. Of course the mass of cursives are considerably later than the mass of uncials; but a notable fact about the authorities for the text of the New Testament is that, once we get past the year 600, the value of a MS. for determining the text is very little affected by the date at which it was written. The explanation of this is that the Byzantine text, except perhaps in Egypt, became more and more the universally accepted standard, and, as we have already pointed out, only in out-of-the-way places, or by some oversight, could a MS. which did not (as regards the bulk of its readings) conform to this type be copied without drastic corrections being first made.¹ And when such a MS. did get copied, it was an accident which might occur at practically any date. Thus, to take an extreme instance, the readings of the XV^{cent.} Leicester cursive 69—one of the best representatives of the so-called "Ferrar Group" (13 &c.)—are of the greatest interest to critics. It seems to have been copied from an ancient uncial surviving in a monastery in S. Italy which had long lost

¹ An apparent exception is the specially fine illuminated XII^{cent.} MS. 157. The text of this, regarded by Hort as the cursive next in importance to 33, cannot be due to an oversight, since it was written for the reigning Emperor. It is to be explained, I believe, by the colophons at the end of all four Gospels stating that it was "copied and corrected from ancient exemplars from Jerusalem preserved on the Holy Mountain." As the same colophons are found also in the much older MS. A-566, they must have been in the ancestor from which 157 was copied. I suggest that a mediaeval Emperor seeing or hearing of a MS. purporting to represent the old text of Jerusalem might well wish to possess a copy, although aware that it differed from the standard text. The "Jerusalem colophon" occurs also in 565, another "imperial" MS., but only after Mark; here, too, it may explain the preservation in that Gospel of an older text. New collation of 157 by Hoskier, *J.T.S.*, xiv. p. 78 ff.

contact with the main stream of Greek Christianity. Again, it has been shown¹ that the XIII^{cent.} Paris cursive 579 was (in Mk., Lk., Jn.) almost certainly copied directly from a VI^{cent.} uncial having a text akin to B \aleph (cf. p. 62). Hence for all practical purposes these late cursives must be treated as if they were among our older uncials. The same thing applies to the XI-XII^{cent.} cursives numbered 1, 28 and 700. These, as we shall see later, are—along with Θ 565 and the Ferrar Group—the most important members of the family of MSS. (*fam.* Θ) in which is preserved the ancient text of Caesarea. *The precedence of MSS. depends, not on their age, but on their pedigree.*

¹ A. Schmidtke, *Die Evangelien eines alten Unzialcodex* (Leipzig, 1903).