# The Textual Roots of Modern Bibles

There are two principal sources for the texts that form the foundation of the New Testament in Bible versions. While this is somewhat simplistic, it is the best way for the non-specialist to understand the textual roots of the English Bible. This diagram seeks to explain those roots in diagram form.

These two streams

differ in thousands

of places

The AV and RV

differ in over

36,000 places.

## **Byzantine Family**

= Traditional or Syrian Text

Focus: majority of trustworthy mss written in Koine (common) Greek
Mss not found before 4th c.

Old Latin Version(s) Mid 2<sup>nd</sup> c.

Diatessaron 160 Early Syriac version.

Old Syriac Late 2<sup>nd</sup> c.

Peshitta early 5<sup>th</sup> c. Standard Syriac version.

#### **Majority Text**

95% of all ancient mss.
The text always used by the Greek Church.

**Erasmus Greek Text** 1516

Luther's German Bible (NT 1522)

Tyndale's English Bible (NT 1525)

Stephen's (Stephanus) Greek NT 1546-51 Based on Erasmus & Ximenes (1520 Complutensian Polyglot)

Beza Greek Texts 1566-1611 (9 editions.)

**Geneva Bible** 1560 (NT 1557)

## **Authorised Version** 1611

Based on Stephen's 1549/1551 & Beza's 1589/1598 not the Textus Receptus. Current printed Greek text based on Beza 1598.

Textus Receptus (Ab. Elzevir) 1624-33 ('Traditional Text', publisher's unauthorised claim!) Not a single mss but a compilation of Beza, Ximenes & Stephanus.

Similar to Majority Text, except in Revelation (where the MT is better).

New King James' Bible 1979

## **Alexandrian Family**

= Neutral Text

Focus: ancient but corrupted mss.

Origen's writings (185-254 AD)

Constantine Bibles 331 50 Bibles.

## Sinaiticus (Aleph) 4th c.

One basic text for modern versions.

#### Vaticanus (B) 4th c.

The other basic text for modern versions; despite disagreeing with 'Aleph' thousands of times.

### Latin Vulgate 384+

Translated by Jerome. Includes 7 apocryphal books.

Rheims-Douay 1609 (NT 1582) Roman Catholic

Westcott & Hort Greek Text 1870

Heavily based on 'Aleph' and 'B'.

Revised Version (NT 1881)

#### **Modern Greek Texts**

Are 'eclectic' – use whatever text best fits!

**American Standard Version 1901** 

Revised Standard Version (NT 1946) New American Standard Version 1971

**New International Version (NT 1973)** 

**All Modern Versions** 

Paul Fahy Copyright © 2008
Understanding Ministries
http://www.understanding-ministries.com