

The Textus Receptus

Novum Instrumentum Omne

by Daniel Stanfield

The "Textus Receptus"

For the **KJV New Testament**, the Novum Instrumentum Omne (the "Received Text") by Erasmus was used.

Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) was a Catholic theologian who used Greek manuscripts available in Basel, Switzerland to publish a revision of Jerome's Latin Vulgate (A.D. 405), which was the current Bible in use at that time. What was originally intended as a revision to the Vulgate became a very useful and popular printed source of the Greek New Testament.

Erasmus provided his Latin side-by-side with the Greek in printed form in **1516** as "Novum Instrumentum Omne," which translates to, "the Complete New Testament." From the publisher's preface came the phrase "Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum," meaning, "You have the text, now received by all," from which we get the vernacular names, "Textus Receptus" and "the Received Text."

The Novum Instrumentum Omne was revised by Erasmus in **1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535**. It is the first edition which Martin Luther used for his German Bible. The publication of Tyndale's English Bible (KJV precursor) was in 1526-1534 and includes the Comma Johanneum of the 3rd edition which Luther excluded.

The Source Manuscripts of the TR

There were 8 manuscripts used for the first edition, all of which had originally come from Constantinople (in 1453). The 9th manuscript was provided for the 3rd edition as a Greek source for the longer version of 1 John 5:7-8 (the Comma Johanneum), as given in the Vulgate.

GA stands for Gregory-Aland and is a manuscript identification number.

Dating	Contents	GA #
10th-11th C.	Pauline Epistles	2817
12th C.	Four Gospels, Acts, Epistles	1
12th C.	Four Gospels	2
12th C.	Pauline Epistles	2105
12th C.	Apocalypse (Revelation)	2814
12th C.	Acts, Epistles	2815
15th C.	For Gospels	817
15th C.	Acts, Epistles	2816
16th C. (1520)	1 John 5:7-8	61

Later Revisions

The Novum Instrumentum Omne was revised by Robert Estienne (Stephanus) in 1539 and again in 1550 using "various other Greek manuscripts" including Codex Bezae (D).

The Novum Instrumentum Omne was revised again in 1565 by Theodore Beza using "some other Byzantine family texts."

Because Tyndale died in 1534, these later revisions could not have bearing on his work, but they would have been a factor for the later translators (Coverdale, Matthew, Taberner, etc.) working on Bibles leading up to the KJV.

Note: A primary source for this article was <https://textandcanon.org/erasmus-and-the-search-for-the-original-text-of-the-new-testament>, by Martin Heide, retrieved 3/06/2025. Other unrecorded sources were also used (mostly from my own library), but Heide's article was extremely helpful.

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