

Ex 10.3 (4, 7) *and-said-3pl* to-him. This is NOT the same clause as the earlier part of example (4), but the unexpressed subject is evidently plural from the NPs in the preceding clause.

Num 12.1 (8) whom *took-3sg m*

and in Greek:

Jn 6.2b because *were-watching-3pl* the signs (plural subject understood from collective “crowd” in the preceding clause; compare 6.22a where “crowd” occurs before a plural verb; contrast 6.24a where “crowd” follows a singular verb, as in 6.2a).

Jn 12.22d and *say-3pl* to the Jesus (subject understood from previous clause)

Jn 20.3b and *were-coming-3pl* into the tomb (subject understood from previous clause)

Then there is the mirror image of Pattern I:

Pattern 5: *Verb* agreeing with all following NP1 and NP2 and...as in Greek:

Jn 4.12c and *he* from it *drank-3sg* and the sons [of-him] and the animals

Jn 4.36c so-that *the sower* together *should-rejoice-3sg* and the reaper

Jn 6.24b that *Jesus-not-is-3sg* there nor the disciples of-him

Jn 8.52d *Abraham died-3sg* and the prophets

Jn 9.3b neither *this-man sinned-3sg* nor the parents of-him

So, in conclusion, all the following patterns are found:

a plural Verb may agree with all preceding or following multiple singular NPs, as in Patterns 1 and 5;

a singular Verb may agree with only the last preceding, or only the first following, singular NP out of several NPs, as in Patterns 6 and 2, and 4 (the commonest in John); and

a Verb with no overt subject in its clause takes its number and gender from an NP in the preceding clause, as in Pattern 0.

IVER LARSEN

VARIANT READINGS IN 2 CORINTHIANS

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The main difference between the 4th edition of the UBS Greek New Testament (UBS4) and the 3rd edition (UBS3) is that the apparatus has been extensively revised. Part of this revision included a reconsidering of all the 1,438 sets of variants cited in the apparatus¹. This re-evaluation of variant readings has implications for translation policy. It used to be a commonly accepted rule that if a particular variant reading was evaluated with an A or B rating, the translator (or consultant) would need to muster strong arguments if he or she preferred an alternate reading.

The reconsidering of the evaluations of variant readings has resulted in almost all former D ratings becoming either C ratings or B ratings. Two have even changed from D to A. Kent D. Clarke has made a comprehensive study of the UBS variant readings and offers several statistical charts illustrating the change of evaluations from one UBS Greek version to the next.¹ A large number of former C ratings have changed to B or A ratings (310 according to Clarke) and a good number of B ratings have changed to A ratings (189 according to Clarke). Some B, C and D ratings have remained at the same level. For 2 Corinthians which I am focusing on here, there is not a single reading which has been lowered in rating. The major difference between the committee decisions on evaluations for the 4th edition as compared to the 3rd edition is that the committee has grown considerably in self-confidence. This is probably why Clarke has entitled his book *Textual Optimism*.

A comparison of evaluations in the 3rd and 4th edition for 2 Corinthians shows the following changes with the number of changes shown in parentheses: D→C(3), D→B(2), C→C(5), C→B(12), C→A(3), B→B(1), B→A(4)². Four variants have been dropped in the 4th edition, while 10 variants have been added, five of them with A ratings, three with B and two with C. There were no A ratings in 2 Corinthians before, and there are no D ratings left in the 4th edition.

That the committee has grown in confidence is not necessarily bad. However, I do not think it means that we are more certain of the original text than we used to be. There have been no new manuscript findings, nor any significant change in evaluation criteria. The implication for the translator is that the recommendation to generally follow readings with A and B ratings, but be more free with C and D ratings, will need to be updated as well. In the case of 2 Corinthians, the 3rd edition had 17.6% of the variant readings with an A or B rating and 82.4% in the C or D bracket. In the 4th edition, the situation is almost reversed with 75% being in the A and B bracket and 25% in the C and D bracket. Because of this change, I would feel less obliged to follow an A or B rating in the 4th edition than I felt following an A or B rating in the 3rd edition. There is one alternate reading in 2 Corinthians (in 3.2) which was relegated to the apparatus with a C rating in the 3rd edition, while UBS 4th edition has raised it to A. In my opinion, the context strongly favours the alternative reading given in the apparatus. With the former C rating, I wouldn't feel too bad were I to base the translated text on the alternate reading and keep the other reading in a footnote. But with the present A rating of what appears to me to be the wrong choice, will I be castigated if I don't follow it? In the next section I will present arguments for choosing the alternate reading.

With this kind of change where many more readings are given the higher A and B ratings and where the D rating has been almost eliminated, one may ask whether it is just a redefinition of the ratings, so that A, B and C in the 4th edition

1 See the chart in Kent D. Clarke, *Textual Optimism. A Critique of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press 1997, 113-115.

2 Some of these numbers vary slightly from those given by Clarke (113-114). The reason is that I have compared only the 3rd edition with the 4th edition, whereas Clarke has compared through all the editions. For instance, I have 3 instances of C→A, but Clarke has none. These three variants (3.2; 12.1 [twice]) all had a B rating in the 1st edition, a C rating in the 3rd edition and now an A rating in the 4th edition.

are less certain than in previous editions.¹ The answer which can be deduced from the data given is surprisingly: “No, the opposite is the case”. This answer is derived from a comparison of the definition of the ratings given in the 3rd edition² (the same as in earlier editions) and the definition given in the 4th edition.³ I am here listing the definitions in brief form:

	1st, 2nd and 3rd edition	4th edition
A rating	Virtually certain	Certain
B rating	Some degree of doubt	Almost certain
C rating	Considerable degree of doubt	Difficulty in reaching a decision
D rating	Very high degree of doubt	Great difficulty in reaching a decision

Comparing the definitions, I see no significant difference in the definitions for the C and D ratings. However, the expression “virtually certain” is very close in meaning to “almost certain” and “certain” is more certain than “virtually certain”. It is clear that the 4th edition uses definitions of the A and B ratings that show a greater confidence than in previous editions. In addition, many ratings have been raised to a higher degree of certainty, even without the slight redefinition of the terms used. These two factors work together in showing the much greater confidence the committee now has in its decisions concerning the choice of textual variants. I have not seen evidence that this greater confidence is warranted, and I cannot therefore put as much trust in an A rating in the 4th edition as I could in an A rating in the 3rd edition, despite the claim that it is supposed to be not just “virtually certain” but “certain”.

Some questions on the criteria used in textual criticism

Bruce Metzger has explained the criteria used by the committee in choosing which variant reading to include in the text and which to relegate to the apparatus.⁴ There is general agreement on the usefulness of these criteria, but there are questions as to how to weigh the various criteria against one another in each particular case. As can be seen from Metzger’s commentary, there were a number of situations where the committee did not agree. I would like to comment on two of these criteria, the greater weight put on early manuscripts and the principle of the harder reading.

Early manuscripts

Concerning external evidence, I am happy to accept the following words of Metzger: “In general, the earlier manuscripts are more likely to be free from those errors that arise from repeated copying.” Obviously, a manuscript which is the result of many copyings through time is more likely to contain errors, since each copying process has the potential to introduce new errors. However, it is not necessarily true that a papyrus or other manuscript which is old is also therefore more accurate. Some copyists and copying traditions were more accurate than

1 Clarke addresses this question, 124ff.

2 Pages xii-xiii.

3 Page 3*.

4 Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart etc: German Bible Society and United Bible Societies, 2nd ed, 1995, 10*-14*.

others. In the case of 2 Corinthians where I surveyed the variant readings, one might have thought that \mathfrak{P}^{46} from around the year 200 would be more reliable than, say, the Ephraimi manuscript (C) from the 5th century. Since the choice of readings adopted in the UBS/Nestle text was based on many different criteria weighed together, and not primarily on the age of a manuscript, it should give an indication of the relative “trustworthiness” of a manuscript if we look at how many times a particular manuscript agreed with the reading chosen by the committee. I did such a study for 2 Corinthians, but only looked at the A and B ratings, since the readings chosen here are considered more certain to be correct than the C and D ratings.¹ I found that going by the evaluation in the 3rd edition, manuscript C was “right” 100% of the time, whereas \mathfrak{P}^{46} was “right” only about 50% of the time. The other manuscripts were in between with Sinaiticus (\aleph) being number 2 with 83% “rights”. Admittedly, there were rather few B ratings and no A ratings in the 3rd edition, so the data are too few to be relied on heavily. In the 4th edition, the result was different, but with a similar trend. Here \aleph and C were most often “right” with 72% whereas \mathfrak{P}^{46} was “right” 67% of the time (at almost the same level as manuscripts A and D). This little exercise seems to indicate that we cannot claim that a papyrus manuscript like \mathfrak{P}^{46} is *a priori* more reliable than a manuscript like C which is considerably later.²

The harder reading

There is another criterion which should be used with caution. This is the criterion which says: “In general, the more difficult reading is to be preferred, particularly when the sense appears on the surface to be erroneous but on more mature consideration proves itself to be correct. (Here ‘more difficult’ means ‘more difficult to the scribe,’ who would be tempted to make an emendation.)”³ Bruce Metzger adds: “Obviously the category ‘more difficult reading’ is relative, and sometimes a point is reached when a reading must be judged to be so difficult that it can have arisen only by accident in transcription.” The problem with this is that different people have disagreed widely as to when a particular reading is “too difficult”. (See for instance the committee disagreements in the *Textual Commentary*, 574 and 580.)

Furthermore, Anthony Pope, in an article entitled “The Harder Reading Principle in Textual Criticism”⁴, writes: “The second limitation of the harder reading principle is that it is hard to apply. Two people may disagree as to which reading is the harder reading. Or one may regard a certain reading as too bizarre for the author to have written” (12).

1 Clarke has a more extensive discussion, 141ff.

2 I am not suggesting that B.M. Metzger or the UBS committee made such a claim. Clarke suggests (132ff) that the later UBS editions rely heavily on papyri and older uncial manuscripts and less on the Byzantine tradition. This is not evident in 2 Corinthians, but I agree with Clarke and others that it would be helpful to get a clear and detailed description from the UBS committee concerning the relative weight they put on various manuscripts.

3 Metzger, 1st ed, xxxvi.

4 Anthony Pope, “The Harder Reading Principle in Textual Criticism. Some Limitations”, in *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation*, Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics 1984.

I have exactly this problem with three of the chosen variant readings in 2 Corinthians, namely at 3.2; 5.3; and 8.7. In UBS3, two of these had a D rating and the third had a C rating.¹ In UBS4, one was given an A rating and the other two C ratings. I believe there are good arguments why the readings adopted in the text cannot be original. They do not make sense in the context and it is very unlikely that Paul wrote what we see in the UBS text. On the other hand, he could well have written the alternative readings we see in some of the manuscripts.

2Cor 3.2

In the first paragraph of ch 3, that is, vv 1-3, Paul is reminding the Corinthians that it should not be necessary for them to receive a letter of recommendation in order to convince his opponents in Corinth that he was a genuine apostle. Paul's argument is that rather than a written letter of recommendation, he already has a much stronger letter of recommendation which the opponents are able to "read". As he says in v 3, it is not a letter "written with ink" on "tablets of stone", but "written with the Holy Spirit" on "tablets of human hearts". It is furthermore not just a human person who wrote this "letter" of recommendation, it was Christ himself, using Paul (and companions) as those doing the actual "writing" in their hearts. In v 2 he says that this "letter" is known and "read" by everyone. Obviously, he is referring to the changed lives of the Corinthians, the fruit of Paul's ministry. At the beginning of v 2, Paul says that "You (Corinthians) are our letter (of recommendation)". Then comes the disputed phrase. The majority of manuscripts say that this letter is written "in our hearts" whereas other manuscripts (including 8) say that this letter is written "in your hearts." The confusion between "your" and "our" in many Greek manuscripts is very common, due to the words being pronounced the same at some stage in the development of spoken Greek.² So, even though the external evidence is in favour of "our hearts", this reading makes no sense in the context (despite a claim to the contrary in the *Textual Commentary*). It is one of the readings that are too hard for Paul to have written. The principle of sense in context must have a high priority, as a sign of respect to the original author. If the letter of recommendation was written in "our hearts" it could not be "known and read" by all the people in Corinth, nor could it act as a recommendation letter, since no one can recommend himself. The *Textual Commentary* is in my opinion misguided in referring to the expression "in our hearts" in 2Cor. 7.3, because this occurrence is in a completely different context. The immediate context always takes priority over a distant and different context. Since v 3 says that this recommendation letter is written in human hearts and it is "penned" by "us" (Paul and companions), and since the beginning of v 2 clearly says that the Corinthians themselves constitute the letter to be read by everyone present with them, there is no way the letter could be written in the heart of Paul. The mistaken reading "our hearts" is probably a result of the imagery used which is not clear without looking at the wider

1 The D rating at 5.3 is taken from Metzger's Commentary, since the UBS 3rd edition does not offer an alternative reading.

2 Whether the neutralisation of the two sounds in question took place in the 4th century A.D. or earlier is disputed.

context (and the following verse.) A scribe could easily have been carried away by the immediately preceding mention of “our” in “You are our letter.”

If we look at some English translations, the RSV (and NAB) have followed the alternative (and I believe correct) reading by saying “your hearts”, with “our hearts” in a footnote. I would recommend translators to follow RSV here. Commentators are divided on the issue, but the majority prefer “our hearts”. In his recent and detailed commentary, Ralph Martin¹ says, “Only the reading *in your hearts* can make sense of the participles that follow, for the drift of Paul’s thought is that the letter, written on the Corinthians’ changed lives is also a witness to the world. It is ‘read and recognized’ by ‘all the world’ ” (51).

2Cor 5.3

The first edition of the UBS Greek NT (1966) has the reading *endusamenoī* “having put on” with no alternate reading. UBS³ has *ekdusamenoī* “having put off” in the text *without* any alternative reading listed in the apparatus, but with a comment and a D rating in the accompanying *Textual Commentary*. A majority of the committee regarded the reading “having put on” as “banal and even tautologous” and the alternate reading “having put off” as “characteristically vivid and paradoxical”. In his *Textual Commentary*, Metzger appended a dissenting note in favour of “having put on” “in view of its superior external support”. UBS4 has maintained “having put off” in the text, with a C rating.² Among English translations consulted, only the New Revised Standard Version says “we have taken it off” with “put it on” as an alternative in the footnote. The context strongly suggests that the reading “having put on” is what Paul wrote. It is neither “banal” nor “tautologous”. The three verses (5.2-4) must be looked at together as a unity. First Paul uses the word “clothed-on-top”, that is, receiving a new clothing (a new body) on top of or replacing the old clothing without any intermittent time of being unclothed. What Paul does not want is to be “naked” (v 3) or “unclothed” (v 4) for some time before receiving the new clothing. There is some repetition and redundancy in these verses, but that does not make the text “banal” or “tautologous”. Repetition is often needed to explain a difficult concept.

The reading adopted by the UBS/Aland text has received very little commentary support. Ralph Martin says, “We opt for the first reading [that is, *endusamenoī*] and depart from Aland’s 26th edition.”³

2Cor 8.7

In this verse, Paul mentions a number of areas in which the Corinthians are said to “excel,” such as faith, speech, knowledge, and diligence. The last item in the list is textually disputed. Did the original read “your love for us” as found in the majority of manuscripts, including the two which seem to be most reliable for 2 Corinthians

1 Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, (Word Biblical Commentary), Waco, Texas: Word Books 1986.

2 It puzzles me that the Greek text used in the New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House 1990) as well as the Greek text used in the Translator’s Workplace CD-ROM, version 2.0 (September 1996) are both said to be the 4th revised edition of the UBS Greek NT text, yet both use the reading *endusamenoī* “having put on” in conflict with the UBS published version of what is claimed to be the same Greek text.

3 Martin, 97.

(\aleph and C; see above)? Or did the original read “our love for you”? The second reading was adopted by the committee (with a D rating, now changed to a C rating.) The reason as stated in the Textual Commentary (581) was “because it is the more difficult reading.” The Textual Commentary further says that the first reading is “superficially more appropriate in the context.” However, they give no indication as to how they see this as superficial. Clearly, in a list of items which describe the Corinthians, only “your love for us” is appropriate and makes sense, because it describes the Corinthians. There is no way the Corinthians could excel in “our love for you.” “Rejoice” maybe, but not “excel/about”. The scribal error which introduced the reading “our love for you” or more literally “the love from us to/in/among you” may be caused by a misunderstanding of the preposition *en* which normally means “in/among”, but in this context means “to”. With the meaning “in/among”, the pronoun “you” might be expected, but with the meaning “to”, the pronoun “us” is seen as correct.

The English translations are almost unanimous in disregarding the reading adopted by the UBS Greek text and in adopting the variant reading in order to make sense of the text. The NRSV is almost alone in following the UBS text. Translators would be better advised to follow RSV, NIV, TEV and NLT (New Living Translation)¹.

The majority of commentaries support “your love for us” although some attempt to tread a middle ground by saying “the love we inspired in you.”² However, I prefer to adopt the reading which makes sense in the context rather than adopt a reading which does not make sense and then try to twist the meaning of the words in order to make some sense out of them. It is basically a matter of choosing between the principle of the harder reading and the principle that a text is expected to make good sense.

Reviews

Ciampa, Roy E.: **The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2.** Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe, 102. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1998. xiii + 449 pp, DM128. ISBN 3 16 146895 3.

The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2, which began as Roy Ciampa’s doctoral dissertation (University of Aberdeen, Scotland, 1996, under the supervision of Dr. Brian Rosner), is an extremely important and original evaluation of Paul’s use of the OT. Building on recent works that have begun to consider the phenomenon of intertextuality in the NT’s relationship with the OT, Ciampa takes us beyond explicit quotations into the less well-charted territory of symbolic worlds and Scriptural allusion. If Ciampa is correct, the function of OT Scripture within Pauline writing cannot be understood simply as the source of the apostle’s religious vocabulary and of the occasional proof text; it functions rather to provide an interpretive framework, a narrative, a plot within which Paul seeks to make sense

1 Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Tyndale House Publishers: Wheaton, Illinois 1996.

2 Martin translates: “The love we have aroused in you” (259) and “The love I have inspired in you” (261).