

to conform more nearly to the punctuation found in Nestle-Aland²⁶, although there were no changes made in the Greek text itself.

After decades of use by those engaged in Bible translation, it was decided that the Fourth Edition should incorporate changes in the apparatus to enhance its usefulness for translators. About 15 translations in several major languages were carefully checked to see where these translators made text-critical decisions that affected their translation. The Editorial Committee then carefully reviewed both the existing items in the apparatus and the additional items that could be useful to translators to determine which items could be removed from the textual apparatus and which should be added. As a result, nearly 300 items were deleted from the apparatus and about the same number of other items were added. It was also felt that the punctuation apparatus of the first three editions, while useful, was inadequate because it did not take into account discourse segmentation above the clause and sentence level. An entirely new "Segmentation Apparatus" was prepared and has now been published in the Fourth Revised Edition.

Two distinguished scholars who are knowledgeable in both New Testament textual criticism and Bible translation have reviewed this new edition of the Greek New Testament. The contributors to this symposium review have been asked to focus primarily on their evaluation of the new edition in relation to its stated purpose of providing a reliable Greek New Testament text for translators. Other reviews will undoubtedly focus on the text-critical scholarship on which this new edition is based. Our reviewers offer to the readers of this journal their perspectives on the usefulness of the GNT⁴ to Bible translators.

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The publication of the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* is an event of greater significance than might appear at first blush. It is true that the text itself remains unchanged, so users who seldom glance at the bottom of the page may think there is little to be gained from purchasing this new edition. In fact, however, the distinctive value of this volume as opposed to the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* lies precisely in its unique presentation of textual evidence and in the comparative data it provides regarding alternative punctuation. Because the textual and punctuation (the latter now called "discourse segmentation") apparatuses have been carefully reworked, what we have now is a thoroughly refurbished work.

Discourse Segmentation. For interpreters in general, and for translators in particular, explicit help regarding the identification of syntactical units can be most valuable. Editors of the Greek New Testament must make numerous choices when punctuating and formatting the text, and users must not assume that those decisions represent the only possible way of segmenting the material. The fourth edition of UBS GNT, by

including a totally rewritten apparatus, represents a marked improvement in this area.

The new discourse segmentation apparatus deals with items that have been selected on a much more judicious basis than was the case before. It omits minor differences that reflect stylistic rather than semantic options, while it now includes information that affects the sentence and paragraph levels. The number of editions – both of the Greek text and of modern translations – used for comparisons is greater. Abbreviations have been employed to identify some of the segments, and these are not always intuitive (e.g., “MS” for major section, “SP” for sub-paragraph), but they are relatively few in number and one gets used to them without too much trouble. As a whole, this apparatus is a major improvement that should be greatly appreciated by translators.

Textual Variants. Although the text of this edition has not been changed, the editorial committee has rethought which variation units should be included in the textual apparatus. Out of more than 1400 total units, approximately two percent of them have been removed, but a comparable number of new ones has been added. To give as concrete a picture as possible using a fairly homogeneous selection of material, I have gone over the variants for Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, and Galatians.

Throughout these four books, the third edition included 206 passages for discussion. The fourth edition has deleted 35 of them but added 43, for a new total of 214 units. Many of these changes seem reasonable because the grounds for the decisions are fairly obvious. For example, eight of the new items involve the divine names, particularly the variation Jesus Christ/Christ Jesus; differences of this type do not really affect the meaning, but clearly they do affect the translation, and so they would be significant for many users of the edition. Conversely, many of the deletions are variants that would not affect the translation, such as *en tō nomō* versus the simple dative *tō nomō* in Rom 7.23. It was also wise, in my opinion, to delete such variations as acute versus circumflex accent on the verb *krinei* at 1 Cor 5.13; though the difference is substantial (present/future tense), the markings on some manuscripts reflect a scribal interpretation and not a textual variation as such. But then why was the variation of *oidamen* versus *oida men* added at Rom 7.14? Word divisions in the manuscripts are not to be regarded as witnessing to the form of the original text. (For a similar reason, I question the inclusion of the syntactical problem at Jn 1.3-4 in the textual apparatus. To avoid confusion of categories, it would be better to include that kind of information in the discourse segmentation apparatus.)

Unfortunately, there are plenty of instances where the reason for including or excluding a variation unit is not at all obvious. The *de/gar* variation at Rom 2.2 was deleted, but the same variation was added at 4.15 and 6.8, and I cannot come up with a reasonable explanation for this discrepancy. Again, why delete the variation between the first and second person plural pronoun at Rom 14.16 but add the one at 2 Cor 8.9? Since the semantic effect of the variation is the same in both passages, presumably the decision to include one and not the other was based on the amount of textual support for the rival reading (in both passages the

second person form was chosen for the text and the rival reading is the first person). If that was indeed the reason, then the decision is puzzling. At 2 Cor 8.9 the first person form is supported by C and K, six minuscules, eight lectionaries, and strong patristic evidence, but no versions; at Rom 14.16 the same form is supported by D F G 044, a few minuscules, strong versional evidence, and a few fathers. To add to the confusion, the variant at 2 Cor 8.9 is given a rating of B in the new edition, while the one at Rom 14.16 had been given a C in the earlier edition; in other words, it is unlikely that the variant at Rom 14.16 was deleted because the decision was much easier there than at 2 Cor 8.9.

On the basis of this example and a few others, one is tempted to infer that the evidence of Codex D and its allies is now being treated with significantly less regard than it had been earlier. This inference would be in keeping with Kurt Aland's well-known criticisms of the so-called Western Text, but the introduction to the new edition says nothing that would help us confirm or set aside such an interpretation. And that is in fact the point of my comments: we are not given enough information to determine the criteria by which these decisions were made.

It should also be noted that many of the additional items in the textual apparatus relate to material which is bracketed in the text. According to the introduction, bracketed words "may be regarded as part of the text, but ... in the present state of New Testament textual scholarship, this cannot be taken as completely certain" (page 2*; the phrasing in the previous edition was a little different). Moreover, we are now informed that all such passages are given a C rating, but we are still not told how they differ in degree of certainty from other C-rated (let alone D-rated) passages that are *not* bracketed. In a way, this new information may add to the confusion over the use of brackets.

Textual Evidence. The actual list of witnesses in the textual apparatus, as well as the presentation of those witnesses, has been revised substantially, no doubt for the better. According to the introduction (page 4*), the classification of manuscripts described by Kurt and Barbara Aland in their book, *The Text of the New Testament*, has been the basis for selecting the material. As a result, the evidence from witnesses prior to the tenth century is "almost complete" (page 5*), while the rest of the evidence is admirably broad and representative. One important change is the explicit mention (in brackets after the symbol *Byz*) of the most important Byzantine uncials. It cannot be questioned that, for the variation units included in it, the fourth edition of UBS GNT provides the most accurate and complete information available today.

But that raises a question of principle. Is such full information appropriate in an edition intended not for scholars but for translators? Even most New Testament scholars do not really know what to do with all that data, particularly the ambiguous evidence from the versions and the fathers. In fact, Bruce M. Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* makes fairly clear that the committee's own decisions were not significantly influenced by much of the data: only a proportion of the evidence (perhaps less than half?) seems to have affected their work.

What it is that translators do with so many textual witnesses is anyone's guess. They would be much better served if the space now devoted to a mere listing of the evidence were used instead to summarize the reasoning of the committee, with a listing only of those witnesses that played a decisive role in the decision.

Textual Evaluation. Perhaps the most obvious revision of this work is in the set of ratings used to evaluate textual problems. The very description of these ratings (page 3*) is different:

A = "certain" (previously, "virtually certain")

B = "almost certain" (previously, "there is some degree of doubt")

C = "the Committee had difficulty in deciding which variant to place in the text" (previously, "there is considerable degree of doubt whether the text or the apparatus contains the superior reading")

D = "the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision" (previously, "a very high degree of doubt").

The language used in this edition to describe C and D ratings is a little more helpful than was the case before, but a certain ambiguity remains. The expression "the Committee had [great] difficulty" could refer to a subjective sense of doubt shared by all the members, but it could also refer to the objective fact that there was no agreement among them (even though they may have felt very sure about their vote!). Perhaps this is splitting hairs, and one could argue that the result is the same, but I for one would like to know. For example, if in my judgment a reading is "almost certain" (therefore B), but the committee gives it a C, should I temper my judgment? I should if all the members feel uncertain, but not if the decision was really based on the strong, but perhaps idiosyncratic, protests of only one member.

Note also that the description for A and B ratings is a good bit more positive than in the previous edition. What makes that change even more significant is the fact that the rating for most passages has been raised. For Romans through Galatians, 19 passages were already given an A in the third edition and thus could not be raised. Out of the remaining 152 passages (206 minus 19 As minus 35 deletions), a full 105 are given a higher evaluation, that is, 69 percent. Specifically, 15 were raised from D to C, 41 from C to B, and 37 from B to A; and, as if that were not enough, 2 passages were raised from D to B, and a full 10 from C to A! Out of the 43 variation units added to the fourth edition, no fewer than 24 are given an A. How radically different is the resulting complexion of the material can be seen by comparing the totals from the third and fourth editions: Third Fourth A 20 93 B 62 64 C 99 55 D 25 2 (Rom 14.19; 1 Cor 7.34).

As is clear from these figures, D ratings have all but disappeared (there is not one left in the Gospel of Luke, for example, and the total for the whole New Testament cannot be more than 10). Since the manuscript evidence is not substantially different from what it was a decade ago, do these changes mean that the committee members have used different principles, or that they have implemented the principles differently, or that they have become more certain of their decisions, or merely that they are concerned that users of the earlier editions might have misunderstood the

relatively few instances of A ratings? No explanation is given, and the present review is not the place for speculating about the reasons. In any case, translators and students who may have worried unnecessarily over variants rated B or lower can now relax a bit. And that is probably a good thing.

Conclusion. The production of a critical text of the Greek New Testament requires thousands of decisions, some of them very intricate indeed. It would be unreasonable to expect of the editors a detailed accounting of those decisions, or to think that any group of scholars could implement their principles in a totally consistent fashion. With the publication of this fourth edition, some nagging questions remain, but it undoubtedly represents an improvement over previous editions. For my part, I consider most of the changes to be felicitous and heartily congratulate the members of the committee, and those assisting them, for their work.

The Textual Apparatus in the Fourth Edition
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Long ago – it must have been in the early sixties – I was honored by an invitation of the Netherlands Bible Society to co-operate in the preparation of the first edition of the Greek New Testament. Since I had then made my first steps in the area of Tatianic studies I was asked to provide the committee with the details of the Diatessaron. I did the utmost to fulfill that task. However, when I had worked on it for several months, it turned out that it was almost impossible to produce the evidence. The Diatessaron study is beset with so many difficulties that it would have taken quite a long time to collect all the material, let alone to decide which reading would be that of the original Diatessaron. Even supposing that one could reach a safe decision with respect to the Diatessaron, what would a Bible translator somewhere in a remote area gain by that knowledge? What he or she ought to have in hand is only a text established by competent textual critics, and, added to it, a small apparatus in which the most important variations are mentioned. However, it would be not necessary to sum up all the witnesses that provide us with this or that reading. A small *Textual Commentary*, like that of Bruce Metzger, would enable him to see why those competent textual critics had opted for the text established by them, and why they had rejected the variant readings to this text. It is wholly unnecessary to know whether the Tuscan Diatessaron provides a testimony in favor of some textual reading, whereas the Arabic Diatessaron supports one of the variations to that text. That was the reason that I ultimately suggested to the Bible Society in the Netherlands to drop the idea of giving information about the Diatessaron. It would be only a waste of time and money.

The fourth edition One may conclude from my introduction that I have been always very skeptical about the value of *The Greek New Testament*. This was partly so, because I wondered why a Bible translator in the field would wish to know that the text or a variation was found in the Hareclean version, in the Old Slavonic Gospel, in Clement, or even in (Clement).