

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES IN THE GREEK LECTIONARY A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

SAKAE KUBO

Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Comparatively speaking, a good number of text-critical studies exist dealing with the Gospel lectionaries. Some studies have also been made in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline Epistles. But as in textual criticism generally, the Catholic Epistles have been neglected. This paper is an attempt to contribute some knowledge to this neglected area.

I. Introduction

While this is only a preliminary report of a study which must be pursued much further, it may be interesting to survey the results thus far obtained and observe the trends the investigation indicates at this point. Only five lectionary manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles have been collated for this study. These are all medieval manuscripts ranging from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. They are the following: 147, 809, 1153, 1441, and 1590. Manuscript 1294 was collated but only in two lections.

1 Pe 2: 11-20 was not included in any of the manuscripts. There was also some discrepancy in the order of the lections and some manuscripts did not contain all of the lections. Especially were 1 Pe 5: 6-14, 2 Pe 1: 10-19, and 1 Jn 1: 1-7 irregular in appearances.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of the lectionary text of the Catholic Epistles to other text types. The method followed in this study was to check the lectionary variants from the Textus Receptus with a selected group of non-lectionary manuscripts. This control group was

selected from Von Soden's classification as found in Merk's *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*.

The non-lectionary variants were checked in the critical apparatus of Von Soden, Merk, and Nestle. Tischendorf's apparatus was also checked for versional and patristic support.

II. Singular Readings or Readings Not Supported by Control Group

Of the 381 variants from the Textus Receptus 136 of them were singular readings (singular to the lectionary texts or completely singular) or readings not supported by the control group. Again of these 136 readings 95 were genuine singular readings while the other 42 were not well attested, being found outside the control group. One of the latter interestingly enough was attested again only by P⁷² (1 Pe 3: 10 *καλησας*] *καλειν*). Many of the 95 singular readings are probably due to carelessness on the part of the scribe, but they were not obviously so.

One interesting point in this group of 136 variants is the fact that such a large proportion of them come from ms 1441—75 or 55 per cent of them. The closest to this was ms 147 with 31, less than half the number of 1441. Later we will observe more peculiar traits of this manuscript.

There were among the readings in this group 34 due to omissions, 15 to additions, 12 to word order, and 11 to the changing of the η to υ or vice versa. It is interesting to observe that more of the variants are due to omissions than to additions. The most interesting of these singular readings is that found in 1 Pe 5: 13, *συνεκλεκτη*] *σιων εκλεκτη*. The text would then read, "The elect Zion in Babylon and Mark my son greet you." This may be due to itacism, but the writer has never seen υ changed to ω in itacisms.

III. Minority Variants Supported by the Control Group

It is particularly to clarify this area that more collations are needed. For of the 137 minority variants (at this state it

is more proper to call them non-majority variants) only 24 are supported by two manuscripts. All the remaining 113 are supported by one manuscript alone and of these ms 144I has 53 of them. Ms 144I, peculiarly again, has 67 of the total 137 of the non-majority variants, more than twice as many as the next one—ms 147, with 26.

These non-majority variants have strong H or Alexandrian support. Of the 11 members of the H group selected in the control group, 9 agree with the non-majority variants from 31 to 43 times. Of the other groups including the sub-groups under I, the group with the highest number of manuscripts with more than 31 agreements was I^{el} with 3 but ranging only from 31-35 agreements. Including the entire I group there were 9 manuscripts ranging from 31-42 agreements. If we count the manuscript support for 37 or more agreements, we find 6 manuscripts in the H group and only two in the I group. The manuscript with the highest number of agreements in the K group was L with 31. Two K manuscripts, 42 and 398, came at the bottom of the list with 10 and 11 agreements respectively.

The Vulgate, Syriac, and Coptic versions had the greatest number of agreements with 31, 30 and 28 respectively.

Of the Fathers, Theophylact and Oecumenius had the largest number of agreements, 25 and 15 respectively. The high number of agreements in Theophylact with these non-majority variants may indicate that at least for the Catholic Epistles he had a relatively good text. This may bear further investigation.

IV. Lectionary and Non-Lectionary Support of the Majority Variants

The majority variants are those that are read at least three times by the five manuscripts studied. In some cases, however, where because the lection was not present in all five the majority was only two. There were 108 majority variants from the Textus Receptus. Of these 108 variants,

ms 809 supported 100; ms 1590, 97; ms 1153, 90; ms 147, 63; and ms 1441, 56. Taking into consideration the fact that there were some missing lections in some manuscripts the close agreement in the number of times that the first three manuscripts support these variants indicate the close relationship that exists among them. Of these 108 variants 25 of them were supported by all five, 39 by four of them and 42 by three of them.

A tabulation of the non-lectionary support of the majority variants points out an interesting phenomenon. Forty of the 108 variants are supported by almost all of the witnesses. Fifty-one of them are found in Nestle's text. This indicates that the Textus Receptus at least in the Catholic Epistles has very poor readings with very little support even from the late minuscule manuscripts of the I and K groups. Another almost contradictory phenomenon appears in the fact that about the same number of variants have almost no support by the control group. This seems to indicate a text tradition of its own at these places. This seems more so when the 40 or so variants which have almost unanimous support are left out. The latter do not seem to be variants of the majority of the manuscripts but only from the Textus Receptus.

The range of agreements in the non-majority variants was from 10 to 43 while in the majority variants the range is from 39 to 62. The latter has a difference of only 21 while the former has 33. This is accounted for by the large number of unanimous agreements in the majority variants.

While the support from the non-majority variants was predominantly from the H group, the support for the majority variants is more evenly distributed among the various text groups. However, the I group as a whole had the greatest number of agreements. Aleph and C came surprisingly high with 56 agreements.

In the last phase of the study when lectionary ms 1590 was compared with B of the H group, 69 of the I group, and 049 of the K group (this was chosen because of availability) to

ascertain which of these groups has the fewest disagreements with the lectionary text, it was found that 049 had 161 disagreements, 69 had 242, and B, 423. There were lacunae in 69 so it should be 242+. If these are average representations, then the lectionary text is the closest to the K group, in fact almost one and a half times closer than to the I group, and two and two-thirds to the H group.

Of the 137 non-majority variants 31 had readings found in the Nestle text while of the 108 majority variants 51 were found in Nestle. The number of majority variants per book and the number of these that are found in Nestle along with the percentage of the latter to the first and to the number of verses are indicated in the chart below.

Book	Verses	Maj. Var.	In Nestle	Per cent of Maj. Var. found in Nestle	Per cent of Maj. Var. to verses
James	108	27	9	33	8
I Peter	105	31	19	61	18
II Peter	61	13	9	69	15
I John	105	24	8	33	8
II John	13	1	0	0	0
III John	14	3	2	67	14
Jude	25	9	4	44	16

According to this chart 1 and 2 Pe and 3 Jn (this is so small it does not serve as a satisfactory basis) show a remarkably high percentage of Nestle readings of the majority variants contained in them. In regard to the total number of verses, 1 and 2 Pe are again high although Jude rises higher than 2 Pe in this respect while 3 Jn follows closely again. But in all these Jas and 1 Jn are remarkably low in both counts. Translating the last figures into number of Nestle readings per verse we have the following results: Jas, 1 in 12; 1 Pe, 1 in 5.5; 2 Pe, 1 in 6.8; 1 Jn, 1 in 13.1; 2 Jn, 0 in 13; 3 Jn, 1 in 7; and Jude 1 in 6.2.

The versional and patristic support for the majority variants was not tabulated.

V. Conclusions

It is premature to make any definite conclusions at this point because of the preliminary nature of the investigation. However, the results of the study made thus far may be summarized.

1. The peculiar and distinctive character of ms 1441. It supports 55 per cent of the singular readings or readings not attested by the control group. This would indicate a careless scribe or a faithful scribe who copied from a manuscript written by a careless scribe, most likely the former being the case. Again it supports more than half of the non-majority variants which seem to have good textual support indicating a good text base even though the scribe may not have been too careful. And as one would expect in the final item, majority variants, it supports them the fewest number of times, less than half of the highest number. This confirms the peculiar (to the lectionary text) nature of this manuscript and its distinctive character as a lectionary text. This manuscript ought to be studied more thoroughly.

2. The Alexandrian character of the minority readings and mixed character of its majority readings and yet its close affinity to the Byzantine type in its total make-up indicates a definite trend of conforming the lectionary text to the Byzantine standard. The majority of the lectionary manuscripts read other than the Alexandrian readings while a minority still have them.

3. The large percentage of unanimous support for the majority readings definitely indicates the poor quality of the *Textus Receptus* in the Catholic Epistles, while the large percentage of readings not supported by the control group shows that the lectionary text has a small area of distinctive quality.

More collations need to be made to confirm or to modify these trends.