

THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF THE TEXT OF THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

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There are many factors that go together to make a good Bible translation. The combination of accuracy and clarity is one of the most important and if this is done with a fine literary style, the excellency of the translation will be assured. But more basic to the task of translation itself is the selection of the original text for translation. Translation only begins after the text has been selected.

While the selection of a text does not affect the total quality of a translation, since the area of differences in the text is comparatively small, its usefulness can be limited if the text is poor. A serious disadvantage of the Authorized Version is not only its archaic language but also the quality of its text. Catholic Versions including that of Ronald Knox even with his excellent English have suffered from the handicap of a text which is a translation from the original.¹ However, there are several Catholic versions which are based on the original Greek and, if we interpret the signs of the times rightly, all Catholic versions will hereafter be translations from the original languages. Moffatt was right up-to-date when he used von Soden's text but unfortunately that text had no enduring value because of weaknesses in von Soden's method. This miscalculation, however, does not seem to have affected the acceptance of Moffatt's version. More serious is the decision

¹ Even when he is quite sure that his Vulgate text is wrong, he doggedly follows it as in Acts 17 : 6, where a bad copyist had written *urbem* instead of *orbem*. "So I have rendered, 'who turn the state upside down'; that is how the thing stands in every Vulgate in the world nowadays, and it is no part of the translator's business to alter, on however good grounds, his original." R. Knox, *Trials of a Translator* (New York, 1949), p. 2.

by G. Verkuyl to incorporate into the Berkeley Version many of the secondary interpolations of the Textus Receptus.²

Some evaluation of the text of the New English Bible³ has been made on the basis of the English text but now that the Greek text⁴ has been published the nature and quality of its text can be more precisely assessed. These two elements can be best seen when compared with the text of previous translations. These comparisons are made on the basis of the footnotes in the versions compared and the differences that arose on the basis of a collation of the Greek text of the NEB with the Greek text of the RV as published by Souter.⁵ Since there are no Greek texts for the AV and RSV, their readings based on the English translation were checked where the Greek texts of RV and NEB differed. What is important for our purposes are those variants which would be seen even in translation so that it would be possible to determine in such cases the reading of the Versions where no Greek text is available. There are

² In Mt they are found in 5 : 22; 6 : 13; 15 : 14; 17 : 21; 18 : 11; 21 : 44; 23 : 14; 24 : 36; and 26 : 20. These are usually enclosed in parentheses but none is found around the words included in 21 : 44. Mk 16 : 9-20; Jn 7 : 53-8 : 11 (placed at the traditional position), Acts 8 : 37, and 1 Jn 5 : 7, 8 are also included in the text with parentheses. Some of these are accompanied by explanatory notes but there is no consistency.

In an explanation of his version in *The Bible Translator*, II (April, 1951), 80-85, G. Verkuyl seeks to justify his procedure in retaining these words, clauses and passages which were not found in the original from which he translated. "If the only readers were new converts . . . no great harm might be done; but to these accustomed to the KJV, the gaps come with a shock, which to me seems happily avoidable. Our Lord has a tender feeling toward 'these little ones,' and we do well not to offend them."

³ Hereafter cited as NEB. The following abbreviations will also be used: KJV for the King James Version of 1611, RV for the Revised Version of 1881, RSV for the Revised Standard Version of 1946, N for Nestle's Greek text, ABS for the American Bible Society Greek text of 1966.

⁴ R. V. G. Tasker, ed., *The Greek New Testament Being the Text Translated in The New English Bible*, 1961 (Oxford and Cambridge, 1964).

⁵ Alexander Souter, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Oxford, 1910).

many variants in the Greek such as the presence and absence of the article, the use of synonyms, differences in orthography, and the order of words which do not usually show up in translation. In a translation these types of variants often disappear and are in most cases as if they never existed. Our major concern shall be a comparison of the text of the NEB with the previous "authorized" versions at those places where differences in translation result from differences in text.

The area of comparison shall be limited to the Gospel of Mt. The reasons for this are its relatively large size and its usefulness in indicating variants of harmonization. The latter is seen especially in the first section compared.

It would be expected that the text of the NEB would agree more with that of the RSV, less with the RV, and still less with the KJV. While this is true, the results were not as uniform or predictable as one would have expected.

This first section came out as expected, for the type of readings included are of poor quality and would be unanimously rejected today. There were twenty-nine such readings which are found in the KJV but are dropped in the NEB in agreement with the RV and RSV. Many of these are harmonizing variants. Readings from the other Synoptic Gospels have been interpolated into Mt. Of the KJV readings below N has placed 15 : 14; 21 : 44; and 26 : 20 in its text, the last two, however, in brackets. ABS has 13 : 22 in single brackets and 21 : 44 in double brackets, the first indicating a dubious reading while the latter a later insertion of "evident antiquity and importance." The first reading is that of the KJV.

5 : 22 εικη) omitted

5 : 44 ευλογειτε τους καταρωμενους υμας, καλως ποιειτε τοις μισουσιν υμας) omitted

5 : 44 επηρεαζοντων υμας και) omitted

6 : 1 ελεημοσυνην) δικαιοσυνην

6 : 4 εν τω φανερω) omitted

6 : 6 εν τω φανερω) omitted

- 6 : 13 οτι σου εστιν η βασιλεια και η δυναμις και η δοξα
εις τους αιωνας. αμην) omitted
- 8 : 28 Γερασηνων) Γαδαρηνων
- 10 : 10 ραβδους) ραβδον
- 11 : 19 τεκνων) εργαων
- 13 : 9 ακουειν) omitted
- 13 : 22 τουτου) omitted
- 13 : 43 ακουειν) omitted
- 15 : 6 την εντολην) τον λογον
- 15 : 14 τυφλων) omitted
- 16 : 13 με) omitted
- 17 : 21 τουτο δε το γενοσ ουκ εκπορευεται ει μη εν προσευχη
και νηστεια) omitted
- 18 : 11 ηλθεν γαρ ο υιοσ του ανθρωπου σωσαι το απολωλοσ)
omitted
- 19 : 3 οι) omitted
- 19 : 16 αγαθε) omitted
- 19 : 17 τι με λεγεισ αγαθον· ουδεισ αγαθοσ ει μη εισ ο θεοσ)
τι με ερωτασ περι του αγαθου; εισ εστιν ο αγαθοσ
- 19 : 29 η γυναικα) omitted
- 21 : 44 και πεσων επι τον λιθον τουτον συνθλασθησεται·
εφ'ον δ'αν πεση, λιμησει αυτον) omitted
- 22 : 30 του θεου) omitted
- 23 : 14 ουαι υμιν γραμματεισ και Φαρισαιοι υποκριται, οτι
κατεσθιετε τασ οικιασ των χηρων και προφασει μακρα
προσευχομενοι· δια τουτο λημψεσθε περισσοτερον
κριμα) omitted
- 24 : 36 ουρανων) + ουδε ο υιοσ
- 26 : 20 μαθητων) omitted
- 26 : 27 το) omitted
- 26 : 28 καινης) omitted

It is interesting to note that NEB translates τον λογον in 15 : 6 as "law" instead of "word," *i.e.*, if its Greek text is correct at this point (there is a Greek variant τον νομον which one would have expected to be its Greek base).

There are twenty-one readings which are found in KJV and RV which are dropped from both the RSV and NEB in favor of another reading. The first reading is that of the former.

- 3 : 7 αυτου) omitted
 3 : 16 αυτω) omitted
 4 : 23 ο Ιησους) omitted
 5 : 25 σε παραδω) omitted
 5 : 39 σου) omitted
 9 : 14 πολλα) omitted
 14 : 22 ευθεως) omitted
 14 : 24 μεσον της θαλασσης ην) σταδιους πολλους απο της γης απειχεν
 14 : 27 ο Ιησους) omitted
 14 : 29 ελθειν) και ηλθεν
 17 : 10 αυτου) omitted
 17 : 22 αναστρεφομενων) συστρεφομενων
 18 : 7 εκεινω) omitted
 19 : 9 και ο απολελυμενην λαλησας μοιχαται) omitted
 19 : 22 λογον) τουτον
 20 : 30 κυριε) omitted
 22 : 10 γαμος) νυμφων
 22 : 20 αυτοις) + ο Ιησους
 22 : 21 αυτω) omitted
 27 : 24 του δικαιου) omitted
 28 : 6 ο κυριος) omitted

Of the KJV, RV readings N supports 5 : 39; 14 : 22; 14 : 27; 20 : 30; and 22 : 20, but the first three are in brackets, while ABS supports 3 : 7, 16; 5 : 39; 9 : 14; 14 : 22, 27; 20 : 30; 22 : 10, 20, 21. Of these 3 : 16; 5 : 39; 14 : 27; and 20 : 30 are in brackets and, therefore, of dubious validity, 14 : 27 having a D rating and 20 : 30 a C rating. The others which have ratings are 14 : 22, C, and 22 : 10, B. On the other hand while N and ABS support the reading of NEB in 19 : 22, they place the reading in brackets.

The non-bracketed readings in N and ABS which support

the KJV, RV readings need to be examined. It is very difficult to follow ABS in its addition of *αυτου* in 3 : 7. There is every reason to expect such an addition which is also a characteristic of the Koine and Western readings. In 9 : 14 we would expect harmonization to take place with Lk 5 : 33 and this is what has happened. Some manuscripts add *πυκνα* as in Luke but many manuscripts have made the harmonization with the more common *πολλα*. It would be difficult to explain its omission if original. The ABS reading at 14 : 22 is also questionable since the inclusion of *ευθεως* is easily accountable as harmonization with Mk 6 : 45 while its omission would be more difficult to explain. The N reading in 20 : 30 likewise is an easier reading and the fluctuation of its position would add to its suspicion of being a later insertion. The ABS reading *γαμος* in 22 : 10 is easily accounted for. Five times previously it was used in the parable and it would be natural for a scribe to change *νυμφων* to *γαμος* here. At 22 : 20 we have the only reading which has unquestioned support by both N and ABS. The textual evidence is also in their favor. Is it not expected that scribes would tend to add *ο Ιησους* in such situations? Even for the sake of harmonization it is difficult to see why the omission of *ο Ιησους* would be made. In 22 : 21 the *αυτω* was probably added in Mt to harmonize with Mk, or independently, simply to complete the verb *λεγουσιν*. Thus the NEB readings generally appear to stand the test of close scrutiny.

There are thirty-nine readings where the KJV, RV, and RSV agree against the NEB. Nothing reveals so much concerning the nature and quality of the text of the NEB as its readings in this section. Its differences from the KJV and the RV are not significant, especially when it agrees with the RSV text, but when it differs also with the latter they are quite significant. The RV agreements with the KJV can easily be explained as reluctance on the part of the translators of the former to embrace so quickly the results of the work of Westcott and Hort. But this cannot be said when the three earlier

versions agree. Why then does the NEB text deviate from all three earlier versions?

The revisers of the RV were guided in their decisions mainly by "the authority of documentary evidence,"⁶ or external evidence, while the RSV translators, Frederick Grant⁷ informs us, were guided by the eclectic principle in the selection of its text. Actually the results are frequently the same. The NEB translators follow the same principle as the RSV by considering "variant readings on their merits, and, having weighed the evidence for themselves, select for translation in each passage the reading which to the best of their judgment seemed most likely to represent what the author wrote."⁸ In weighing the internal evidence against the external evidence more often than not the RSV translators seem to have placed more weight on the latter, while the NEB translators have placed more value on the former.

Because of the importance of this section in evaluating the text of the NEB it is necessary to discuss these variants individually and to cite their manuscript evidence.⁹ A few of these are discussed in the "Appendix" of the NEB. In such cases, an asterisk before the verse will indicate this. In each case, the first reading represents the reading of the three versions and the second, the reading of NEB.

1 : 4, 5 Σαλμων all evidence
 Σαλμα no evidence

The NEB reading (the Hebrew form of the name) is not even indicated in Tischendorf, Nestle, or Legg. It is a surprising reading and it would be interesting to discover

⁶ "The Revisers' Preface to the New Testament," of the RV, p. viii.

⁷ F. C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," p. 41, in *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* prepared by Members of the Revision Committee (n.p., 1946).

⁸ The "Introduction" of NEB, p. vii.

⁹ The manuscript evidence is given in abbreviated form almost entirely from S. C. E. Legg, *Novum Testamentum Graece, Evangelium Secundum Matthaeum* (Oxford, 1940).

how this reading found its way into the text of the NEB. N and ABS agree with the first reading.

1 : 18 *Ιησου Χριστου* P¹ Uncs. pler. Minus. pler. Sy^{p.h.pal}
 Cop^{sa.bo} Arm Aeth Geo Ir^{p†}
Χριστου 71 latt Sy^{c.s} Ir^{p†}

The textual evidence lies heavy on the side of the first reading. Legg lists one minuscule supporting the second reading, but all other witnesses are versions and one patristic writer, Irenaeus, who is divided. Besides these two readings there are *Χριστου Ιησου* of B and *Ιησου* of W. These have very little textual support. In favor of the first reading is the fact that it is the same as that found in 1 : 1, which seems to be a parallel construction. The expression is found nowhere else in Mt without doubt. The only other place it is found is in 16 : 21, where several variants exist. The NEB translators no doubt reasoned that it would be easier to change *Χριστου* to *Ιησου Χριστου* than vice versa. They may have felt also that it was harmonized to 1 : 1, although one can speak of harmonization to 1 : 17 as well. All in all, *Χριστου* is the harder reading and is perhaps original. N chooses the first reading as well as ABS and the latter rates it as a C reading.

1 : 19 *ο ανηρ αυτης δικαιος* rel.
δικαιος ανηρ Sy^c Ephr

The textual support again for the first reading is overwhelming in its favor while it is very poor for the NEB reading. The tendency might be to omit *ο ανηρ*, although it could not have been very strong. At any rate it would be very unwise in this case to follow the reading of a version unsupported by any Greek manuscripts. N and ABS both follow the first reading.

3 : 16 *και* N^cCDKLPW Δ fam 1, 13. 28 33 565 700 892
 Byz d f l Vg^{cl} Sy^{c.s.p.h.(pal)} Arm Aeth Geo
 omitted after *περιστερων* N^{*B} a b c ff¹ g¹ h aur
 Vg^{ww} Cop^{bo} Ir Hil Aug

Clearly the first reading is the easier reading here. It is awkward with two participles coming together and therefore the tendency would be to insert the *καί*. It is hard to see why anyone would omit it. ABS follows the first reading and N the second.

5 : 11 ψευδομενοι **κ**BCKWΔΘΠ 0196 fam 1, 13. 28 33 565
Byz aur f ff¹ l q Vg Syc.^{p.h.pal} Cop^{sa.bo} Arm Aeth
Diat Chry Aug Cyr Ps-Chry
omitted D b c d h g¹ k Sy^s Lucif Hil Tert Or Aug

The first reading looks very much like an explanatory gloss to point out that the reproach and calumny were unjustified. There may also have been a tendency to harmonize with Lk 6 : 22. On the other hand, the omission can be explained as an attempt to remove a redundancy, especially since it is supported predominantly by translations. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how anyone would omit ψευδομενοι if it were originally present since it does make explicit the unjustified nature of these reproaches.

N and ABS support the first reading; the latter, however, gives it a C rating.

5 : 45 οτι rell.
ος it (exc. d k) Vg Sy^{omn} Eus Cyp Hil Cass

The second reading is supported by the Latin and Syriac versions and patristic citations. In such a case as we have here it is easy to understand why the evidence falls this way. The οτι is the harder reading and would almost inevitably have been changed to ος.

N and ABS also support the first reading.

6 : 15 τα παραπτωματα αυτων (1) BKLWΔΘΠ fam 13. 28
33 565 700 Byz (b) f q Syc.^{h.pal} Cop^{sa.bo(pler.)} Goth
Arm Aeth Geo Ps-Chry
omitted **κ**D fam 1. 892^{txt} a c ff¹ g¹ h k l aur Vg
Sy^p Cop^{bo(allq.)} Diat Eus Aug

The omission can be accounted for as due to a desire to remove the repetitious expression which is found in the previous verse as well as the latter part of the same verse. But it is easier to explain the first reading as a harmonization with these two places.

N supports the omission while ABS places these words in the text with square brackets.

9 : 27 αυτω Uncs. rell. Minus. pler. VSS rell.
omitted BD 892 d k^{vid}

The interpolation of αυτω can be explained as a stylistic alteration because of ηκολουθησαν which at the same time brought this verse into harmonization with Mk 20 : 29. It would be difficult to explain the omission.

N supports the omission while ABS supports the first reading but includes it in square brackets.

*9 : 34 οι δε Φαρισαιοι ελεγον· εν τω αρχοντι των δαιμονιων
εκβαλλει τα δαιμονια κBCKLWXΔΘΠ fam 1, 13.
28 33 al. pl. Byz aur b c f ff¹ g¹ h l q Vg Sy^{p,h,pal}
Copt^{sa,bo} Goth Arm Aeth Geo
omitted D a d k Sy^s Diat Juv Hil

The NEB translators¹⁰ consider the first reading as an assimilation to 12 : 24 and its parallel Lk 11 : 15. McNeile¹¹ gives the same reasons for rejecting this reading but adds further that it was possibly added here "to form an antecedent to x. 25." It is also difficult to find reasons for omitting this verse, if it were original.

An interesting error (?)¹² has been found in the NEB. While its Greek text omits the entire verse, the English translation has omitted only the words "But the Pharisees

¹⁰ Tasker, *op. cit.*, "Appendix: Notes on Variant Readings," p. 412.

¹¹ A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London, 1961), p. 128.

¹² If this is not an error, it is an unjustifiable tampering with the text. All of verse 34 should be either omitted or kept. No manuscript supports the NEB translation.

said" resulting in the inclusion of the words, "He casts out devils by the prince of devils," into the quotation closing 9 : 33. Thus verses 33b and 34 read, "Filled with amazement the onlookers said, 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel. He casts out devils by the prince of devils.' "

N and ABS support the first reading, while the latter rates it as a C reading.

10 : 19 πως η rell.

omitted a b ff¹ k Sy^{s,h} Epiph Cyp Aug

The first reading can easily be regarded as a harmonization to Lk 12 : 11, but if it were it would be difficult to account for the fact that there is no Greek manuscript support for its omission. Actually the harmonization goes the other way. Since the word here is λαλησητε the scribes harmonized by omitting πως η before τι λαλησητε to make it agree with τι ειπητε. Besides, it is easy to see how a translation could easily gloss over the expression to τι since the verb was λαλησητε, and the same thing apparently happened in Lk 12 : 11, where the word απολογησησθε caused the same expression πως η τι to become πως in D, the versions, and some patristic writers where frequently the same free tendency is manifested as seen in versions. The NEB reading is difficult to accept.

Both N and ABS support the first reading.

10 : 25 Βεελζεβουλ (NB) C(DL)W(X) Minus. pler. (a b d) f
(g¹ h) l q (aur) Sy^h Cop^{sa} Aeth Arm Geo^B Epiph
Cyp

Βεελζεβουβ c g² m ff¹ Vg Sy^{s,p} Aug

While there are orthographical variants for the first reading, these are not important for our purposes, and will be disregarded. The external evidence for the latter is very poor. It has no Greek manuscript support whatsoever. The second reading seems to be an assimilation to 2 Ki 1 : 2, 3, 6 and may be due in the Vulgate to Jerome's knowledge of Hebrew. Its conclusion in the Syriac version can also be explained in the same way. The NEB can hardly be right here.

Both N and ABS follow the first reading.

11 : 15 ακουειν Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. VSS rell. Jus Or
Clem
omitted BD 700 d k Sy^s

The interpolation of the first reading is probably a harmonization with passages where the word was included, such as Mk 4 : 9, 23 and Lk 8 : 8.

Both N and ABS follow the second reading, although the latter gives it a C rating.

11 : 16 εταιροις GSUVΠ² 565 700 al. pler. ff¹ l m aur Vg
Syc.^{s.p.h} Cop^{sa} Aeth Arm
ετεροις **ⲚBCDEFKLMNWΔΘΠ*** fam 13. 33 892
d g² k Goth

Because of itacism this variant in this context was bound to arise. But which reading caused the other? Was the first reading changed to the second to bring it more in line with Lk's ἀλληλοις or does Lk's ἀλληλοις show that the first reading must have been ετεροις which later became εταιροις through itacism? The second seems more likely, since at this point both Mt and Lk seem to be following Q. The manuscript evidence for the first is on the one hand late and on the other hand versional.

Both N and ABS support the second reading.

12 : 24, 27 Βεελζεβουλ
Βεελζεβουβ

See above under 10 : 25.

13 : 1 απο της οικιας (**ⲚBΘ**)CLWXΔΠ Minusc. pler. c h l
q aur Vg (Syc.^{s.p.h} Cop^{sa.bo} Or)
omitted D a b d e f ff^{1.2} g¹ k Sy^s

Other variants read εκ της οικιας and simply της οικιας. Though the manuscript evidence is poor, the first reading is probably an explanatory gloss to connect the εξελθων with the

previous pericope. The omission would be difficult to explain.

N and ABS support the first reading without the preposition.

13 : 11 αὐτοῖς Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. it (pler.) Vg Sy^{omn}
 Cop^{sa} Arm Geo
 omitted ⌘CZ 21 892 k Cop^{bo} Aeth Eus

One can say that αὐτοῖς was added to harmonize with Mk 4 : 11 or that it was omitted to harmonize with Lk 8 : 10. Actually it is easier to see an interpolation here than an omission. The tendency would definitely be to add and with this kind of variant it is less likely that even for the sake of harmonization an omission would be made.

N supports the second reading, while ABS has the first reading but in square brackets in the text.

*13 : 35 δια Uncs. pler. Minusc. pler. it Vg Sy^{omn} Cop^{sa.bo}
 Aeth (cdd) Arm
 + Ησαιοῦ ⌘*⊕ fam 13. 28 33 Aeth (cdd) Ps-Clem

NEB has chosen the second reading "on the assumption that the maxim *ardua lectio portior* is here relevant, the following quotation being from Ps. 78.2." ¹³ It is difficult to fault the reasoning here. The textual evidence in this instance is just what one would expect, heavily in favor of the reading which removes the difficulty.

N and ABS favor the first reading, while the latter gives it the rating of C.

14 : 16 Ἰησοῦς rell.
 omitted ⌘*D 517 659 d k Syc.^{s.p} Cop ^{sa.bo} Aeth

One can explain the omission as an attempt to harmonize with Mk and Lk, but in verse 14 a similar addition took place which did not harmonize. Actually it is difficult to explain why anyone would omit Ἰησοῦς if it were originally present in the text, and this kind of interpolation is common.

¹³ Tasker, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

N favors the first reading but ABS places it in the text with brackets.

*16 : 2b, 3 οψιας γενομενος λεγετε· ευδια, πυρραζει γαρ ο ουρανος· και πρωι· σημερον χειμων, πυρραζει γαρ στυγναζων ο ουρανος. το μεν προσωπον του ουρανου γινωσκετε διακρινειν, τα δε σημεια των καιρων ου δυνασθε; CDWΘ fam 1 pm. Byz latt
omitted **NBX** fam 13. 1216 Syc.^s Cop^{sa}.bo (aliq.) Arm Or

The NEB translators omitted this reading because they considered it to be "probably a later insertion from a source parallel to Lk. 12.54-56."¹⁴ It would be unquestionably a case of harmonization if the Matthaean passage was identical with that of Lk, but this is not the case. That is why a source parallel to Lk must be posited. But why would the scribes resort to this source when Lk was near at hand? This is difficult to answer.

The manuscript evidence is strong on the side of omission. The argument for its omission is also strengthened by the fact that there is no apparent reason why anyone would remove it from the text if it were originally present. It may be, however, that harmonization took place here with Mk 12 : 38, 39; Mk 8 : 11-13; and Lk 11 : 29; Lk 12 : 54-56 not being in the mind of the scribe at this point. But this is difficult to accept since one would hardly expect an omission in Mt of such a long passage for the sake of harmonization.

N and ABS place this reading in brackets, while the latter gives it a C rating.

16 : 4 και μοιχαλις rell.
omitted D a d e ff^{1,2}

The NEB translators no doubt omitted because they regarded the addition as a harmonization with Mk 12 : 39, although

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

it may have harmonized by omission to agree with Mk 8 : 12 and Lk 11 : 29. The first reading is probably not original since the tendency in such cases would be to harmonize by conflation rather than omission.

N and ABS follow the first reading.

*18 : 15 εἰς σε Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. VSS rell. Cyp Hil
Lucif Bas^{pt} Chrys
omitted B fam 1 Cop^{sa.bo(aliqu.)} Or Bas^{pt} Cyr

The addition of the words εἰς σε was considered by the NEB translators as an early interpretation of the original text, and so it seems. It is difficult to see how anyone would omit these words if they were original.

ABS has the first reading in brackets while N agrees with NEB in the omission of the words.

18 : 26 κυριε Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. ff² g¹ q aur Sy^{p.h.pal}
Cop^{sa.bo} Aeth
omitted BDΘ 700 a c d e ff¹ l Vg Sy^{s.c} Arm Geo
Lucif Or Chry

The κυριε was probably added for effect. There would be no reason to omit it if it were already present.

N and ABS agree with NEB in supporting the second reading.

19 : 14 ειπεν ΒΔΘΠ 078 Minusc. pler. a b c e ff^{1.2} q r¹
Cop^{sa} Arm
+ αυτοις κCDLMN 892 1241 d f g^{1.2} l h aur Vg
Sy^{omn} Cop^{bo} Aeth Geo

There is every reason to expect the addition of the αυτοις. The verb ειπεν in this context would suggest it and the parallel in Mk (10 : 14) contains it. It may be that it was omitted to remove the too frequent repetition of this pronoun since it was already used twice in the previous verse, but it still seems easier to accept the first reading as original.

Both N and ABS follow the first reading.

19 : 29 εκατονταπλασιονα Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. VSS rell.
πολλαπλασιονα BL 1010 Sy^h Cop^{sa} Aeth (cod) Diat
Or Cyr

The first reading could be a harmonization to Mk 10 : 30 while the second could be a harmonization to Lk 18 : 30. The former possibility is more likely since a few manuscripts have harmonized Lk to Mk.

N agrees with NEB while ABS follows the first reading.

20 : 8 αυτοις Uncs. rell. Minusc. omn. vid. VSS rell.
omitted \aleph CLZ 085 Geo^{1.B} Or

The first reading seems very much like a stylistic addition following a verb which was used absolutely. There would be no reason to omit if originally present.

N agrees with NEB while ABS follows the first reading.

20 : 17 μαθητας BCW fam 13. 118 209 pm Byz b f ff^{1.2} h l q
Vg Sy^h Cop^{sa}
omitted \aleph DL \ominus fam 1, 13. 892* d Sy^{c.s} Cop^{bo} Arm
Geo¹ Or Hil

The second reading can be explained as an attempt to harmonize with Mk 10 : 32 and Lk 18 : 31. The tendency to omit is also strengthened by the fact that δωδεκα is never used with μαθηται in the rest of the Gospels, though in Mt it is used two other times with μαθηται where no variant is present. From this standpoint it is easier to account for its omission. It must have been originally present.

N follows NEB while ABS places μαθητας in the text with brackets.

21 : 12 του θεου Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. it (pler.) Vg
Syc.p.(pler.)^h Geo^A Aug
omitted \aleph BL \ominus fam 13. 33 700 892 1009 1010 b Sy^h
Cop^{sa.bo} Aeth Arm Geo^{1.B} Diat Or^{pt} Meth Chry

Was the first reading omitted to harmonize with Mk 11 : 15 or was it added to heighten "the horror of the abuses practiced there"?¹⁵ The words του θεου are never found with ιερον in Mt or in the other Gospels. The words probably were not in the original.

N and ABS omit them.

21 : 23 διδασκοντι rell.
omitted 7 a b c e ff¹ g² h l r^{1,2} Syc.^s

Apparently the NEB translators felt that διδασκοντι was added to harmonize with Lk 20 : 1. But its omission can be accounted for as a desire to remove the awkwardness of having two participles, ελθοντος and διδασκοντι, referring to the same person, and also to remove any doubts that the question which follows refers to the cleansing of the temple rather than to his teaching. The textual evidence bears this out since the versions would tend to remove this kind of awkwardness.

Both N and ABS take the first reading in their text.

21 : 28 και Uncs. rell. Minusc. omn. it. Vg Sy^{p,h} Arm Geo
omitted after δυο \aleph^* LZ e Syc.^s Aeth Or

The NEB translators decided on the second reading probably because they felt it was the harder reading. The tendency at this place would be to add and its omission is difficult to explain if it were originally present.

N follows NEB but ABS takes the first reading.

21 : 29-31 ου θελω, υστερον μεταμεληθεις απηλθεν et εγω κυριε, και ουκ απηλθεν et ο πρωτος \aleph^* C*KWXΔΠ
Minusc. pler. c f q Vg Syc.^{p,h} Cop^{sa} mss Ir Or
Eus Hil Cyr
εγω κυριε, και ουκ απηλθεν et ου θελω, υστερον μεταμεληθεις απηλθεν et ο υστερος B(Θ fam 13)
al. Sy^h Cop^{sa(pler.)}bo Aeth (2 cdd) Arm Geo

These three units of variants are directly related to one

¹⁵ McNeile, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

another, as is evident from the pattern of the manuscript evidence. The change from one set of variants to the other apparently has to do with the application of the parable in verses 31 and 32. John the Baptist came to the high priests and elders but they did not believe nor did they repent later, but the publicans and harlots believed. The high priests and the elders, then, are like the son who did not repent later. Therefore, if the first set of readings of these three units with the repentant son first is accepted as original, the tendency would be to change to the other since the order would then be that of the application—first, chief priests and elders and second, publicans and harlots. But if the second set is accepted as original, this reason for change would no longer be present.¹⁶

N follows the reading of NEB but ABS takes the first reading and gives it a C rating.

22 : 23 οὐ κ^cKLΔΘΠ² 0197 700 Byz it (pler.) Vg Sy^{h.pal}
 Cop^{bo} Arm Hil
 omitted κ*BDWII* 047 fam 1. 28 33 d (ff¹)
 (Sy^{c.s.p}) Or Meth (Ephr)

The NEB translators probably felt that the article was added to harmonize with Mk 12 : 18 and Lk 20 : 27. It is difficult to account for its omission if it were original.

N and ABS agree with NEB.

*22 : 35 νομικος κBDKLWΔΘΠ fam 13. 28 33 565 700
 Byz it (pler.) Vg Sy^{c.p.h.pal} Cop^{sa.bo} Aeth
 omitted fam 1. 1582 e Sy^s Arm Or^{lat}

The second reading has hardly any Greek manuscript sup-

¹⁶ W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* ("International Critical Commentary"; Edinburgh, 1912), p. 229, thinks that the transposition of order in B and others was caused by a text in which "the last" (the reading of D latt) had already been adopted. The reading "the last" was due to antipharisaic motives but these were not understood by the scribes who, therefore, corrected the order to make the Pharisees return the obvious answer.

port but the editors felt that it was added later to harmonize with Lk 10 : 25. It would be difficult to see why anyone would omit the word if it were originally present. Allen indicates that the word, though used seven times by Lk, is never found in Mk or elsewhere in Mt. ¹⁷

N follows the first reading while ABS places the word in brackets in the text.

23 : 4 και δυσβαστακτα B(D*)D^cKWΔΘΠ fam 13. 28 33
565 Byz aur c d f ff¹ g¹ l q Vg Sy^{h.pal}
omitted (Ⲁ)L fam 1. 892 a b e ff² h Sy^{c.s.p} Cop^{bo}
Ir^{lat} Or^{lat}

Apparently the first reading was considered as a harmonization with Lk 11 : 46. This is confirmed by the fact that a few manuscripts read δυσβαστακτα in the place of βαρεα. The latter could hardly have arisen from the former since it is in perfect agreement with Lk's φορτια δυσβαστακτα, nor also from the first reading above since a scribe would tend to drop βαρεα rather than δυσβαστακτα, as is witnessed to by the few manuscripts noted above.

N and ABS agree with NEB.

23 : 26 και της παροψιδος ⲀBCKLWΔΠ fam 13. 33 565
Byz aur c f ff¹ g h l Vg Sy^{p.(h).pal} Cop^{sa.bo} Arm
omitted DΘ fam 1. 700 a e ff² r¹ Sy^s Ir^{lat} Clem

The first reading looks very much like a harmonization with verse 25. There would be no reason for its omission.

Both N and ABS agree with NEB, though ABS gives it a D rating.

*23 : 38 ερημος Uncs. rell. Minusc. omn.^{vid} it (pler.) Vg
Sy^{p.h.pal} Aeth Arm Geo Clem Eus Or aliq. Cyp
omitted BL ff² Sy^s Cop^{sa.bo} mss Or aliq. Cyr

The first reading was rejected by the NEB translators because they felt that it was a later insertion made to har-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

monize more closely with Jer 22 : 5. The same thing has happened at Lk 13 : 35. Here again it is difficult to account for the omission.

N agrees with NEB but ABS follows the first reading.

24 : 48 *εχεινος* Uncs. pler. Minusc. pler. it Vg Sy^{p,h,pal}
 Cop^{bo} Aeth Geo
 omitted *κ*Θ* 56 58 Sy^s Cop^{sa} Arm Ir Hip Aug

The NEB translators probably decided that the first reading was a harmonization with Lk 12 : 45. But the omission can be accounted for because the presence of *κακος* with the *εχεινος* confused the relationship between this evil servant and the good servant mentioned in verse 46. The form with *εχεινος* is definitely the harder reading and it seems less likely that harmonization would take place in this kind of situation.

Both N and ABS disagree with the NEB reading.

26 : 25 *αυτω* Uncs. pler. Minusc. pler. d ff¹ g¹ l aur Vg
 Sy^{s,h,pal} Cop^{sa,bo} Aeth Arm Geo¹
 + *ο Ιησους* P⁴⁵κ 13 440 a b c f ff² h q r¹ Sy^p Geo² Or

It is difficult to see why the NEB translators have chosen the second reading. It is a very frequent type of interpolation and there would be no reason to omit it if it were originally present.

Both N and ABS disagree with NEB.

26 : 33 *αυτω* a d f ff¹ g¹ h l q aur Vg Sy^{p,h} Cop^{sa,bo} Aeth
 Arm Geo^A
 omitted P³⁷ 700 1675 b c ff² Sy^s Geo^{1,B}

Here again is a frequent type of interpolation. Besides, the first reading also is harmonized with Mk 14 : 29 and Lk 22 : 33. There is every reason to consider the first reading as secondary.

N and ABS disagree with NEB.

27 : 16 *Βαραββαν* κABDKLWΔΠ fam. 13. 33 565 Byz latt
 Sy^{p,h,pal} ms Cop^{sa,bo} Goth Aeth Geo¹ Or^{lat}

- Ἰησοῦν Βαραββαν Θ fam 1. 700* Sys.^{pal} mss Arm
 Geo² Or
 17 Βαραββαν ⲠA(B)DKLWΔΠ fam 13. 565 700^c Byz
 latt Sy^{p.h} Cop^{sa.bo} Goth Aeth Geo¹ Or
 Ἰησοῦν τον Βαραββαν (Θ) fam 1. 700* Sys.^{pal} Arm
 Geo² Or^{lat}

The NEB translators have chosen the interesting variant Ἰησοῦν for the following reasons: "(a) it has the serious attestation of Θ fam. 1, Syr. sin. and pal., the Georgian version, and Origen; (b) it adds considerable point to the passage; (c) Ἰησοῦν may well have been omitted from reverential motives."¹⁸ There is no doubt that they have selected the harder reading. It is difficult to see why anyone would add Ἰησοῦν at this place. It could have arisen through apocryphal fancy and imagination, but no such evidence is seen in the apocryphal gospels.

The analysis of the differences above show that twenty-six out of thirty-nine times the NEB translators seem to have chosen correctly in this section. The quality of the NEB text shows forth clearly in this important section but it could be more consistent. The translators did not allow the external evidence to determine the readings but looked for internal factors to help them decide. They seem, therefore, to be more in line with the methods of textual criticism today than were the translators of the RSV.

Another comparison which brought out interesting elements had to do with readings where KJV, RV, and NEB agree against the RSV. There were three such readings, in all of which the RSV followed the text of Westcott and Hort. The first reading represents the text of KJV, RV, and NEB.

- 1 : 10 Αμων KLWΠ² fam 13. 28 565 (700) Byz (aur) a
 (f) Vg Syc.^{s.p.h.pal} Geo
 Αμωϛ ⲠBCΔΘΠ* fam 1. 33 157 c ff¹ g¹ k q Cop^{sa.bo}
 Aeth Arm Epiph

¹⁸ Tasker, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

- 12 : 47 ειπεν δε τις αυτω· ιδου η μητηρ σου και οι αδελφοι σου εξω εστηκασιν ζητουντες σοι λαλησαι \aleph^a CDKWX ΔΘΠ fam 1, 13. Byz lat Sy^{p.h} Cop^{bo} Arm Aeth Geo Diat Or^{lat} Chry omitted \aleph^* BL 1009 ff¹ k Sy^{c.s} Cop^{sa}
- 18 : 14 υμων \aleph^d cKLWXΔΠ fam 1. 28 565^{vid} Byz it (pler.) Vg Sy^{c.p.h}ms Aug μου B^Θ 078 fam 13. 33 700 892 Sy^{s.h} Cop^{sa.bo} Aeth Arm Geo Or

Unfortunately, these verses are not discussed in the NEB "Notes on Variant Readings" so that we cannot know the reasons that guided the translators in their selection here. As we have mentioned above, the RSV follows the text of Westcott and Hort in these three passages. The external evidence in 1 : 10 strongly favors the reading of RSV but NEB ignores this in its reading and falls on the side of KJV and RV. The NEB reading can be explained as a later correction to the LXX form of the name. The omission of 12 : 47 can be explained as an attempt to remove the awkward connection of this verse with the verse which follows, in which the answer of Jesus is directed not to the one in verse 47 who announces the presence of the family of Jesus outside but to the one who asks who his mother and his brothers are. In both Mk and Lk, Jesus' answer is directed to those who announced the presence of his family. This is more likely what has happened rather than the possibility that a scribe has interpolated this verse by assimilating Mk and Lk.¹⁹ The textual support for the RSV reading in 18 : 14 is strong, but apparently here the NEB translators selected the harder reading, since 18 : 10 has πατρος μου.

N and ABS agree with RSV at 1 : 10 and this one reading is considered by the ABS editors as a B class decision, *i.e.*, as having only some degree of doubt. In 18 : 14, however, N and ABS agree with NEB but the ABS considers it a C class de-

¹⁹ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

cision, while 12 : 47 is placed in square brackets in N and ABS. Here again the independent nature of the NEB manifests itself, although its quality is not consistent.

In five passages NEB agrees with KJV and in one instance (10 : 3) it takes a reading unsupported by the other three versions. The first reading is the KJV, NEB reading except in 10 : 3, where the NEB reading is placed second.

- 8 : 25 ημας Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. VSS pler.
omitted **κ**BC fam 1, 13. 33 892 Sy^h Geo²
- 10 : 3 Λεββαιος ο επικληθεις Θαδδαιος Uncs. rell. fam 1.
28 33 157 700 al. pler. f Sy^{p,h} Aeth Arm Geo
Λεββαιος D k Or^{lat}
Θαδδαιος **κ**B 124 174 788 892 c ff¹ g² l aur Vg
Cop^{sa,bo}
- 14 : 30 ανεμον ισχυρον Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. latt
Sy^{omn} Aeth Arm Geo
ανεμον **κ**B 073 33 Cop^{sa,bo}
- 15 : 6 αυτου η την μητερα αυτου Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler.
lat Sy^{s,p,h} Cop^{bo} Aeth Arm Geo²
αυτου **κ**BD a d e Sy^c Cop^{sa} Geo¹
- 21 : 9 προαγοντες NWXΔΘΠ Minusc. pler. it (rell.) Vg
Arm Geo
+ αυτον **κ**BCDL 1 1582 69 33 157 892 1010 d ff¹
Sy^{omn} Cop^{sa,bo} Aeth
- 24 : 38 ημεραις Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. a e ff¹ g¹⁻² q r^{1c} Vg
+ εκειναις BD 472 1295 1515 b c d f ff² h l m r^{1*}
aur Sy^{h,pal} Arm Geo

In 8 : 25 ημας is clearly a stylistic interpolation. It would be difficult to see how anyone would wish to omit it if originally present. The predominant support for its inclusion from the versions is expected. Both N and ABS oppose NEB.

The textual support for the NEB reading in 14 : 30 is good, being early and from a wide geographical area, while the RSV reading is supported only by Alexandrian witnesses which have

a tendency to abbreviate. The omission of *ισχυρον* may be accounted for by its similar ending with *ανεμουν*. The scribe may have accidentally omitted it, thinking that he had already written it. On the other hand, it is easy to see why an interpolation of this sort would take place. It was obviously added to give due cause for Peter's fear. It is hard to understand the choice of the NEB here on the basis of the principles used by its translators. Both N and ABS oppose NEB here.

The NEB reading in 15 : 6 is also difficult to account for. The weightier manuscripts support the other reading. But more important, it is easier to account for the inclusion than the omission since the previous verse has *τω πατρι η τη μητρι*. The omission can be accounted for by homoeoteleuton but the various combinations of the variant readings can be explained better on the assumption that, independently, these additions were made to harmonize this verse with the previous verse. Everything opposes the NEB reading. N agrees with NEB but ABS opposes it.

The late manuscript support for the omission of *αυτον* in 21 : 9 seems to indicate that this was done to harmonize with Mk 11 : 9. Ordinarily one would suspect a stylistic addition here. N and ABS oppose NEB.

In 24 : 38, it is easier to explain the omission than the addition of *εκειναις*. It could have been dropped because of the similar endings of *ημεραις* and *ταις*, but also in order to remove the redundancy of *εκειναις* created by the explanatory words "which were before the flood." ABS agrees with NEB and N has *εκειναις* in the text within brackets.

The textual support for *Λεββαιος* in 10 : 3 is weak, although when the two conflated readings, which presuppose this reading *Λεββαιος ο επικληθεις Θαδδαιος* and *Θαδδαιος ο επικληθεις Λεββαιος*, are taken into consideration, it is somewhat strengthened. The justification of the translators of the NEB for its reading is that "Θαδδαιος may have been an assimilation to Mk. 3.18."²⁰ The name *Λεββαιος* is the more difficult

²⁰ Tasker, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

reading and its presence is harder to explain than Θαδδαϊος. N and ABS support the latter reading.

These point up again the nature of the text of the NEB. The translators were not afraid to select Koine readings if they could justify them even in the face of very strong textual evidence against them. However, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, their selections here must be evaluated as poor. And this says something concerning the quality of the text of NEB; it is erratic. In many cases its translators have brilliantly justified a reading previously considered secondary, but in other cases they seem to have failed badly to discern on the basis of their own principles what appear to be clearly secondary readings.

Another interesting set of variants includes readings in which the NEB in agreement with KJV and RSV opposes the reading of RV. The first reading represents the RV.

11 : 23 καταβηση BDW 372 579
καταβιβασθηση Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler.

The first reading can be understood as a substitution of a common word for a less common word. This could be done because they are similar in meaning and the context allowed this change. On the other hand, the second reading being passive could be an assimilation with $\psi\omega\theta\eta\sigma\eta$ or a scribe may have been influenced by Eze 31 : 10-18.²¹ It seems, however, that if a scribe was influenced by Eze 31 and Is 14 : 15, he would have been influenced more toward $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\eta\sigma\eta$ rather than $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\iota\beta\alpha\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\eta$ since, though both words are used, the former is more prominent. Therefore, the second variant is the harder reading and probably original.

N and ABS support the first reading.

19 : 3 εζεστιν \aleph^* BL 28 125* 301 475 517
+ $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega$ Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. VSS omn Or Hil

The second reading appears very much like a harmonization with Mk 10 : 2. However, there the word is $\alpha\nu\delta\rho\iota$. If harmoni-

²¹ McNeile, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

zation took place it was not identical. It seems it was less a case of harmonization than a necessary correction independent of Mk. The omission would be difficult to explain.

N follows the first reading but ABS agrees with NEB on the second reading.

23 : 5 κρασπεδα \aleph BD Θ fam 1. 22 a d e ff¹ g¹ l m r² aur Vg
 + των ματιων αυτων Uncs. rell. Minusc. pler. f
 ff² h q Sy^{omn} Cop^{bo} Arm Geo

The second reading seems like an explanatory gloss. It would be difficult to see why anyone would have omitted it if it were original.

N and ABS disagree with NEB here.

Conclusion

The various combinations in which NEB agrees or disagrees with the previous translations tell us something concerning the nature of its text; it is highly eclectic. The translators apparently did not feel bound by the external evidence no matter how overwhelming it might be. If some reason or reasons of an internal nature could be found to support a poorly supported reading, this was more important than all the external evidence. What Tasker lays out as the aim of the translators is borne out by our investigation:

The present translators regarded it, therefore as their duty, in the search for 'the best ascertainable text,' not only to consider the antiquity and the geographical nature of the manuscript evidence (Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Syriac), but also to bring into play in the discussion of various readings of individual passages all the exegetical and philological scholarship of which they were capable. . . . The questions that were constantly being asked were 'Which reading best accounts for the rise of the variants? Which is most likely to have suffered change at the hands of early copyists? And which seems most in keeping with

the author's style and thought, and makes the best sense in the context?' ²²

Based on the standards of textual criticism as it is practiced today with emphasis upon internal evidence and the acceptance of the principle that the best text is that which has been determined on the basis of the best individual readings rather than the best group of manuscripts, we would expect the text of the NEB, therefore, to be of excellent quality. And in most cases its text has stood the test of close scrutiny. However, on its own standards it is very difficult to account for some of its readings. The quality of the text is not consistent so that our judgment of it must be somewhat qualified.

²² Tasker, *op. cit.*, p. viii.