

Institute for New Testament Textual Research. *Novum Testamentum Graece: Nestle-Aland*, 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012, 94+890 pp. Hardcover, \$59.95.

After nineteen years, the highly anticipated new edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, or as it is more commonly referred, the *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament*, has finally been published. This edition is the twenty-eighth in a long history of volumes that date back to the seminal text of Eberhard Nestle published in 1898. Whereas the last three editions were developed under the direction of the now deceased Kurt Aland and an international team of textual scholars, the current volume is the result of the dedicated labor of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster, Germany, under the supervision of Holger Strutwolf.

A first glance at the volume might lead one to conclude that little change has taken place over the last nineteen years. The current edition not only has nearly the same look and feel as the NA27, but the Greek text of the two volumes is identical, except for 34 largely minor textual changes across 31 verses in the Catholic Epistles. While such textual gains may seem modest, they do not reflect the extent of the advances that make the current volume a much-improved edition of the NT text. These advances will be evaluated in connection to the stated goals identified by the book itself: (1) to include the latest results from the *Editio Critica Maior* on the text of the Catholic Epistles, and (2) to completely revise the textual apparatus for clarity of use (48).

Following the work of the *Editio Critica Maior*, the text of the Catholic Epistles has been established on an entirely different basis from the rest of the NT text. The method used to do this is the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method developed by Gerd Mink. Instead of classifying manuscripts and their readings based on “text-types,” this method seeks to be more comprehensive by comparing all the readings in a given manuscript to all the other readings across an entire book or corpus in order to determine the genealogical “coherence” among the various readings. One of the interesting results of this method so far is the greater appreciation it has produced for the role of Byzantine manuscripts in the textual history of the Catholic Epistles. While scholarly consensus is growing in favor of the beneficial aspects of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, the verdict is still out on whether it will be as useful outside of the Catholic Epistles.

The vast majority of the 34 textual changes in the volume involve one word, either an omission, addition, replacement, elision, or a change of case. Of the remaining differences, nine involve two words, three involve three words, and one involves four words. The most significant changes occur in 2 Pet 3:10 and Jude 5.

The textual problem in 2 Pet 3:10 involves the reading εὑρεθήσεται and its meaning in relation to the destruction of the world on the day of the Lord.

Although the reading is difficult, the NA27 listed it as the initial reading due to its strong external support (Ⲛ B K P 0156^{vid} 323 1241 1739^{ext}) and because it also offers the best explanation for the rise of the other variants. The text of the present edition, however, prefers the reading οὐχ εὐρεθήσεται. This is surprising since it does not have the support of a single Greek witness, and the support it does have is extremely minimal (sy^{ph} mss sa cv^{vid}).

The other interesting textual change is the decision to favor the reading in Jude 5 that instead of identifying Jesus as the Lord, instead presents him as the one who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt. This change is understandable. It has the strongest support among both Greek and versional witnesses, and it is also the most difficult reading, suggesting why later scribes would have altered it.

Along with a newly established text of the Catholic Epistles, there is also a completely revised textual apparatus for them. Following aspects from the *Editio Critica Maior*, the revised apparatus in the Catholic Epistles is somewhat different than the apparatus for the rest of the NT. The primary differences include the abbreviation “Byz” to represent the “Byzantine text in a pure form,” instead of the gothic **Ⲙ**, and the sign “◆” to identify passages that the editors are divided about concerning which variant represents the initial reading. The editors also abandoned the use of the square brackets ([]) in the Catholic Epistles since they felt more sophisticated forms were necessary to describe differing degrees of reliability. These changes are likely a harbinger of the sort of revisions that will eventually define the entire textual apparatus of future editions of the Greek text.

The most significant feature of the present volume, however, is the revision and correction of its entire critical apparatus. An indication of the extent of these changes can be seen in the increase of the number of pages between Matthew to Revelation (from 680 pages in the NA27 to 789 pages in the NA28). While some of this increase may be attributed to a slight increase in the size and spacing of the Greek font, the vast bulk of the increase is due to the changes made to the apparatus, which include both the addition and elimination of variant readings and the witnesses that support them.

A comparison of the manuscripts listed in Appendix 1 of the NA27 and NA28 reveal that 219 manuscripts were deemed insignificant for establishing the text of the NT and therefore eliminated. This included the removal of 93 of the 272 uncial manuscripts, 121 of the 219 miniscule manuscripts, and the removal of 5 of the 10 Greek lectionaries cited previously. In an attempt to ascertain how the elimination of these witnesses affected the various readings in the textual apparatus, a sample examination was made of each variant affected by the elimination of the 18 miniscule manuscripts listed on p. 710 of the NA27 (1518 1555 1573 1574 1678 1689 1709 1729 1758 1827 1831 1832 1836 1838 1845 1846 1875 1877). The following types of changes were revealed: (1) outside of the Catholic Epistles, 11 minor variants were removed

(e.g., Matt 5:45; Luke 3:22, 23-31; Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 2:9, 8:21; Phil 1:20; Heb 11:13; Rev 2:1), and the support for 3 readings was removed (Acts 5:9; Gal 1:3; Rev 1:6); and (2) within the Catholic Epistles, 10 variants were removed, and the support of 21 other readings was affected. While the loss of the testimony of these 18 miniscule manuscripts is unfortunate, their textual value simply did not outweigh their absence in a hand edition of the NT.

Other casualties in the NA28 apparatus include the loss of subscriptions, the ¶ symbol identifying readings from the NA26, conjectures, and the signs *pc* (*pauci*) and *al* (*alii*), due to the confusion over the significance of the presence or absence of these two signs on a given reading.

The absence of the above manuscripts and features from the apparatus of the NA28 was offset by a number of additions. The most notable is the inclusion of new manuscripts deemed more significant for the study of the text, including 11 papyri, 1 uncial ms (0211); and 10 miniscule mss (5 18 30 288 606 1175 1718 2473 2521 2685). An example of how these new witnesses augment the current apparatus can be seen in the revised support of the initial text of Rom 5:2. In addition to increasing the textual support of the passage by seven new witnesses, the revised apparatus also includes the support of three current witnesses (104 630 1241) that were not listed previously. Until a searchable form of the new apparatus is available, it is impossible to determine how significant these particular manuscripts will be on the current text.

Other noteworthy features that should not be overlooked include (1) the much welcomed decision to spell out the full text of variant readings instead of merely abbreviating them (e.g., James 1:17), (2) a bolder vertical line to separate variant readings in the apparatus, (3) the revision of the minor readings in Appendix 2 (an increase from 15 to 28 pages) that includes moving some minor readings to the main apparatus itself (e.g., Matt 2:23), and (4) the expansion of the textual citations and allusions in Appendix 4 (now Appendix 3).

The NA28 marks another significant and much welcomed stage in the history of NT textual criticism. The advances it has made in establishing the text of the Catholic Epistles and the accuracy and clarity of its revised textual apparatus will make it the definitive text for scholarly study for years to come. It is a “must have” purchase for professors, seminary students, and pastors alike.

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Joosten, Jan. *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 10. Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 2012. 513 pp. Hardcover, \$75.00.

Since the days of pioneers such as Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Driver in the nineteenth century, the question of how to understand the verbal system