

## Introduction

"The first principle is that you must not fool yourself -  
and you are the easiest person to fool."  
(Richard P. Feynman)

In this textcritical commentary the major (=translatable) textual variants in the Greek text of the Gospels are listed and discussed.

This is of course always a subjective selection. Probably all textcritics have their own view on what is important and what is not. I tried to select all variants that affect the sense in any way.

Variants that are not translatable are normally not covered, e.g. simple word order variants. Also variants in which a reading supplies a direct subject/object for an indirect one (in most cases "Jesus", also often personal pronouns) are normally excluded. One exception to this is that all differences between WH and NA are covered. So if you come across a minor variant and are wondering why I may have added this one, it is probably a WH variant.

Some other more minor variants are noted, because they are either interesting or otherwise noteworthy: Minor because of weak external support or because of small differences in meaning. Additionally some important punctuation problems are discussed.

For the external evidence I relied almost completely on printed matter (e.g. NA, Swanson, IGNTP, Lake/Geerlings, editio princeps transcriptions etc.), only for P66, P75, and some other papyri, 03, 05 and 032<sup>Mk</sup> I had a facsimile at hand. I tried to note those cases where the editions are contradictory. Several cases are corrected/confirmed by contact with the INTF/Muenster.

I will try to present all pro and contra arguments that make sense to me. This is basically a "reasoned eclectic" approach in the Hort-Metzger-Aland form. I do not always cite a source for an argument. Arguments should stand on their own. It was not my idea to create a "Documenta TC" (which would be of course a good thing to have!). Nevertheless I often cite sources in a short form. One source must be mentioned specifically and this is Bruce Metzger and his textual commentary on the UBS GNT. I checked him always and tried to represent the arguments. I also cite him at times. It is a pity that the second edition omits important verses that have been discussed in the first edition.

After presenting all the evidence and discussing it, I tried to give a final judgment. Is the NA reading correct or is it probably or certainly wrong? This is given as a "Rating" at the bottom of the discussion. After finishing the commentary I gathered all these Rating data and compiled some tables from it to get an idea about the "good" and "bad" manuscripts. The results are presented in the following files.

Disclaimer:

I am not a professional textual critic. It is possible and even probable that there are some things plain wrong in here. It is possible that I have overlooked some important arguments at certain variants. Be critical! A complex work such as this will never be perfect.

1. I invite and welcome suggestions for other variants that should be added and discussed. I do not want to extend this collection too far though to keep it manageable.
2. Also references to interesting literature with discussion of specific readings are welcome, especially articles in obscure journals!
3. Of course new arguments are welcome!
4. If you note any inconsistencies in the manuscripts evidence, let me know.
5. If you have access to manuscript facsimiles or even originals in your library, please check them out.

Please send in suggestions and comments.

Thanks and be kind!

Wieland Willker, Bremen  
December 2002