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A Reader's Greek New Testament, 2nd Edition

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One Amazon reviewer opined with regard to the RGNT2:

For the money this is great — in fact for the money I'd give it 4.5 stars — but you're much better off, assuming it's within your budget, applying the price of this volume to the UBS Reader's edition. There's no comparison between the two.

Although I understand the sentiment, I ultimately disagree. These are certainly comparable products and because a reader's budget is a factor, one will probably be more suited to some than the other. Having already reviewed the *UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition (UBSRE)* I will approach this review in a comparative manner. The features I outlined in that review will be outlined in this as well, with a conclusion as to which resource wins the day in each category and then in overall usefulness.

The Text

The same reviewer lamented that the *RGNT2* doesn't use the "standard text" (UBS4/NA27) but surely this is not grounds for criticism. The introduction clearly states:

The Greek text presented in *A Reader's Greek New Testament* is the eclectic text that underpins the Today's New International Version. . . .The critical apparatus included with modern versions of the Greek New Testament alerts the reader to the possibility of other readings. One of the preliminary tasks of any translator is to review the variants found in a source text. The Committee on Bible Translation (the body responsible for the translation of the NIV) subjected the Standard Text to a critical review, and somewhat unsurprisingly, their independent scholarship led them to favor different readings in the case of selected variants. (9-10)

I can be no more disappointed that the *RGNT2* differs from the UBS4/NA27 than I can be that the UBS4/NA27 differ from the Westcott-Hort GNT. This is a welcome addition to my ever-growing library of GNT texts, as it shows the weight that certain scholars felt certain variants held in their composition of an eclectic text. The more the merrier I say! I would also add that there are footnotes in the places where the *RGNT2* differs from the UBS4/NA27 which makes for easy cross-referencing.

Main Features

- Footnoted definitions of all Greek words occurring 30 times or less
- Mini-lexicon of all words occurring more than 30 times
- Greek text underlying Today's New International Version
- Footnotes offering comparisons with UBS4
- 4 pages of full-color maps

Aesthetic Features

I can't express how much I love the look of this Bible.

- Designer box (pictured above)
- Beautiful burgundy Italian Duo-tone cover
- Burgundy ribbon marker
- Sewn binding which allows the Bible to lay flat in your hand or on your desk
- Ultra-thin paper (with gilded edges) making it a very slim volume

Generally, bleedthrough is a problem with Bibles that use ultra-thin paper, but not so in this volume because the Greek font used is rather thin, a little too thin if you ask me. Having seen the difference between the font used in the first edition and the font used in this edition (pictured on the back of the box) I would say that this is an improvement, but only slightly so. I've never been one to complain about italicized Greek fonts (which the first edition employed). Size-wise, I prefer *RGNT2* over the *UBSRE* because it's much lighter and only about half as thick. It has a much better feel in your hand as well, and lends itself to travel much better than the *UBSRE* in my opinion.



Functionality

My comments on the functionality of the *UBSRE* can be equally applied to the *RGNT2*. With the amount of vocabulary I have memorized, this makes reading the GNT much easier since it lists the words I'm not familiar with in the apparatus. But concerning the apparatus I will express some disappointment with the layout. For starters, it appears in paragraph form. This makes it harder than it has to be to pick out the gloss you're

looking for. In this area I much preferred the “itemized” (for lack of a better term) layout of the UBSRE.

RGNT2 APPARATUS

¹βιβλος, ου, ἡ, book, sacred book, record. ²γένεσις, εως, ἡ, beginning, origin, descent, birth, existence
 τινι, genealogy. ³Ἰσαάκ, ό, Isaac. ⁴Ἰακώβ, ό, Jacob. ⁵Φάρες, ό, Perez. ⁶Ζάρα, ό, Zerah.
⁷Θαμάρ, ἡ, Tamar. ⁸Φάρες, ό, Perez. ⁹Ἑσρώμ, ό, Hezron. ¹⁰Αράμ, ό, Aram. ¹¹Ἀμιναδάβ, ό,
 Amminadab. ¹²Ναασσών, ό, Nahshon. ¹³Σαλμών, ό, Salmon. ¹⁴Βόες, ό, Boaz. ¹⁵Ραχάβ, ἡ,
 Rahab. ¹⁶Βόες, ό, Boaz. ¹⁷Ἰωβήδ, ό, Obed. ¹⁸Ρούθ, ἡ, Ruth. ¹⁹Ἰωβήδ, ό, Obed. ²⁰Ἰεσσαί,
 ό, Jesse. ²¹Σολομών, ὠνος, ό, Solomon. ²²Οὐρίας, ου, ό, Uriah. ²³Σολομών, ὠνος, ό, Solomon.
²⁴Ρεβοάμ, ό, Rehoboam. ²⁵Ἀβιά, ό, Abijah. ²⁶Ἀσάφ, ό, Asaph. ²⁷Ἰωσαφάτ, ό, Jehoshaphat.
²⁸Ἰοράμ, ό, Joram. ²⁹Οζίας, ου, ό, Uzziah. ³⁰Ἰωαθάμ, ό, Jotham. ³¹Ἀχάζ, ό, Ahaz. ³²Ἐεκίας,
 ου, ό, Hezekiah. ³³Μανασσής, ἡ, ό, Manasseh. ³⁴Ἀμός, ό, Amos. ³⁵Ἰωσίας, ου, ό, Josiah.
³⁶Ἰεχονίας, ου, ό, Jechoniah. ³⁷μετουκεία, ας, ἡ, deportation. ³⁸Βαβυλών, ὠνος, ἡ, Babylon.
³⁹μετουκεία, ας, ἡ, deportation. ⁴⁰Βαβυλών, ὠνος, ἡ, Babylon. ⁴¹Ἰεχονίας, ου, ό, Jechoniah.

UBSRE APPARATUS

¹ γένεσις, -εως <i>f</i> , birth	¹⁶ γαστήρ, -τρός <i>f</i> , womb (ἐν γ. ἔχω be pregnant)
² μνηστεύω <i>aor pas ptc f.s.gen, pas</i> be promised in marriage	¹⁷ μεθερμηνεύω <i>pres pas ptc n.s.nom</i> , translate (ὃ ἐστιν μεθ. which means)
³ συνέρχονται <i>aor act inf</i> , be married/ have marital relationships	¹⁸ ἐγείρω <i>aor pas ptc m.s.nom, intrans pas</i> wake/get up
⁴ εὐρίσκω <i>3s aor pas ind</i> , find	¹⁹ ὕπνος, -ου <i>m</i> , sleep
⁵ γαστήρ, -τρός <i>f</i> , womb (ἐν γ. ἔχω be pregnant)	²⁰ προστάσσω <i>3s aor act ind</i> , command
⁶ δειγματίζω <i>aor act inf</i> , disgrace	²¹ παραλαμβάνω <i>3s aor act ind</i> , take
⁷ λάθρᾳ, <i>adv</i> , secretly	²² τίκτω <i>3s aor act ind</i> , give birth to
⁸ ἐνθυμέομαι <i>aor pas ptc m.s.gen</i> , think about	²³ μάγος, -ου <i>m</i> , wise man/astrologer
⁹ ὄναρ, <i>n</i> , dream (κατ' ὄναρ in a dream)	²⁴ ἀνατολή, -ῆς <i>f</i> , east/rising (of the sun)
¹⁰ φαίνω <i>3s aor pas ind, mid & pas</i> appear	²⁵ παραγίνομαι <i>3p aor mid ind</i> , come
¹¹ παραλαμβάνω <i>aor act inf</i> , take	²⁶ τίκτω <i>aor pas ptc m.s.nom, pas</i> be born
¹² γυνή, -αικός <i>f</i> , wife	²⁷ ὀράω <i>1p aor act ind</i> , see
¹³ τίκτω <i>3s fut mid ind</i> , give birth to	²⁸ ἀστήρ, -ἔρος <i>m</i> , star
¹⁴ λέγω <i>aor pas ptc n.s.nom</i> , say	²⁹ ἀνατολή, -ῆς <i>f</i> , east/rising (of the sun)
¹⁵ παρθένος, -ου <i>f</i> , virgin	³⁰ ἔρχομαι <i>1p aor act ind</i> , come
	³¹ ταρασσώ <i>3s aor pas ind</i> , trouble

I also found it strange that it listed words that appear more than once in a given passage with separate footnotes for each. This can't even be explained by the context denoting different uses of the word, as in some cases the glosses are exactly the same. E.g., the noun κλέπτῃς in John 10:1 and 10:10 is glossed in the apparatus both times as: “κλέπτῃς, ου, ό, thief” under different footnotes (3 & 15 respectively). (224) The UBSRE on the other hand defines it in only its first use (277). Had the RGNT2 followed this approach it would have saved the mistake in Matthew 12:31 where βλασφημία appears twice and is footnoted twice (60 & 61 respectively), but the gloss for the second occurrence is actually the gloss for δένδρον in Matthew 12:33 which was also numbered as 61 in the footnotes (44).

But the UBSRE is not without its peculiarities, and it was only by comparing it with the RGNT2 that I was able to notice some of them. One thing that jumped out at me was the fact that the verb ἐγένετο appears 162 times in the UBS4/NA27, yet it is inconsistently footnoted in the apparatus of the UBSRE. For example, of the 13 times this verb appears in Matthew, it is footnoted in:

- Mat. 7:28 (20)

- Mat. 9:10 (24)
- Mat. 11:1 (30)
- Mat. 26:1 (79)

But not in:

- Mat. 8:24, 26 (22)
- Mat. 11:26 (32)
- Mat. 13:53 (42)
- Mat. 17:2 (51)
- Mat. 19:1 (56)
- Mat. 21:42 (65)
- Mat. 27:45 (88)
- Mat. 28:2 (90)

The *RGNT2* is consistent in not footnoting this verb throughout. An example of where the *RGNT2* *should* have had a footnote but didn't (perhaps due to an oversight) is with the verb διαρπάσει which occurs only twice in the NT (Mat. 12:29 & Mk. 3:27). The *RGNT2* has the footnote in Mark 3:27 but not in Matthew 12:29. The case is reversed in the *UBSRE* where διαρπάσει is footnoted in Matthew 12:29 but not in Mark 3:27.

And the last area of functionality in the apparatus that I wish to comment on is the parsing (or lack thereof) in these two GNTs. The *RGNT2* unfortunately does not give parsing information in the apparatus (whereas the *UBSRE* does), although it does have various "definition tags" for words that "change their meaning depending on their syntactic function." (11) I've found that the more detailed parsing information in the *UBSRE* is useful, but I have to question how necessary it is if the goal is simply reading the GNT. Ultimately, it's not a necessity for the goal of reading, but one can easily see the benefits it has in learning the language to the best of one's ability.

Finally, a word on the lexicons in each of these Bibles. The *RGNT2* has a six-page lexicon of all Greek words that appear more than 30 times in the GNT with very simple (usually one or two word) glosses. The *UBSRE* has a twenty-two-page lexicon with fairly detailed definitions that outline the different possibilities depending on context. The definitions in the *RGNT2* are based on Warren Trenchard's fantastic work *The Complete Vocabulary Guide to the Greek New Testament*, whereas the definitions in the *UBSRE* are based on Barclay Newman's *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. I have to give the advantage to the *UBSRE* here.

Conclusion

I think that both the *RGNT2* and the *UBSRE* will benefit the person seeking to simply read the New Testament in Greek equally. In terms of look and feel, I prefer the *RGNT2*; this is the Bible I'd rather travel with. In terms of apparatus I think the *UBSRE* wins the day. It's both easier to read and more informative. But as I said in the beginning of this review, price *is* a factor. The *RGNT2* is much more affordable and so

for those on a budget, I'd recommend it without hesitation. If you have the money and can only get one, then I think the *UBSRE* would be the more beneficial of the two. If money is no object then get both, because there's enough difference between them to warrant owning one of each. In the end I give the *RGNT2* a strong recommendation with hopes that subsequent editions will revise the apparatus to be easier to use and more appealing to the eye.