

**Examining the Scriptures Daily (Acts 17.11):
Developments in Paratext and Their Impact on Translation and Revision Checking**

Stephen Pattemore, November 2011

Introduction

I first met Kees de Blois at the UBS Triennial Translation Workshop in Chiang Mai, in June 1994, which, as an Honorary Translation Advisor based in Thailand, I attended with my wife Raewyn. This was our first contact with the world-wide fellowship of UBS. Kees and Janneke were among many new friends we made, and their warmth and personal interest contributed significantly to our sense of inclusion in the fellowship, and this was to continue in the years that followed. Over many years now of working as colleagues, though in different parts of the world, I have come to greatly appreciate Kees' visionary and highly skilled leadership, which has always been matched by that warmth of personal relationship which I first encountered. One prominent aspect of Kees' leadership in UBS has been in the area of computer-based aids for translation and publishing. And without doubt the tool which has contributed most to the efficiency and depth of the work of a Translation Officer (TO) is Paratext. It is therefore with great appreciation that I offer to Kees this descriptive analysis of the role of Paratext in translation and revision checking from a consultant's perspective.

Let me approach my subject by giving two snapshots of the same checking procedure, a decade apart.

In 1995, as translator/exegete/coordinator of the Urak Lawoi' New Testament project in Thailand, I set out to do a synoptic check of the gospels (sometimes including John), to prepare them for publication. Each gospel had been individually checked by a UBS consultant, but because they had been translated over a significant period of time, I was as yet unsatisfied that the relationship between the translated gospels reflected that between the source texts. Our texts were stored chapter by chapter and edited in a DOS-based Thai language word processor, Chulaword. Newly equipped with Windows 3.1, I set about opening a series of DOS windows to enable me to check the parallel passages. With the printed *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*¹ on my physical desktop, I worked through each set of gospel parallels, opening, sizing and placing

¹ Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels. Greek-English Edition of the Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, 9th Edition, Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1989.

each chapter of each gospel to make the best use of my screen space. This laborious process took me about 3-4 months of full-time work to complete.

In 2005, as consultant to the Tokelau Bible project in New Zealand, I advised the team to perform a synoptic check on the gospels. The difference was that this time, the Checklists available as part of the Paratext 6 suite of programs, allowed the immediate automatic construction of parallel passages (based on the same *Synopsis*) in both the target language and a user-selected set of comparative texts, with the text sequences that closely corresponded highlighted in both source and target text windows. Although the target language text was not editable in this view, it was a simply hyper-link jump to the editable text within Paratext itself. Today, within Paratext 7, the same functionality is more integrated, is further nuanced to show two degrees of similarity of texts by different coloured highlighting, and allows editing of the target language text in a small window without dragging your whole desktop to the location.

The same story could be told from the perspective of many different aspects of the checking of scripture texts: reference to UBS handbooks, checking of key terms and biblical names, access to, searching and analysis of biblical source language texts, and reference to the ever-growing library of exegetical and source-language resources available electronically in Logos/Libronix.² However, rather than tracing each of these developments historically, I would like in what follows to describe (with occasional backwards glances) how Paratext supports my work as a Translation Consultant (TC), checking both new translations and revisions of earlier translations.

Skills and Resources for Consultant Checking of Translations

Among the many, and sometimes shifting, roles that a UBS Translation Consultant is called on to play in the task of Bible translation, the central, pre-eminent and unchanging role is as the guarantor that each translation published by the Bible Societies is a faithful representation of the biblical texts. This involves examining the target language text in comparison with the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek source texts. The forms this examination takes are many and varied. It is usually conducted on the final product of the translation team's work, though

² This is not to mention a vast array of format and consistency checks and other procedures to prepare a text for publication. These are another highly important contribution of Paratext to the translation task, but lie outside the purview of this article.

occasionally in new projects earlier drafts may also be examined. As consultants have to approve translations in many more languages than they can possibly learn, it usually involves examination through the lens of another language, one which the consultant shares with the translation team. This may be done through back-translation, whether written or oral, or by detailed questioning. It will often require painstaking verse-by-verse scrutiny, as well as broader examination by means of key terms and concepts, large-scale discourse structures, and synoptic comparisons. It involves careful study and analysis of the source Biblical texts, with the full range of academic resources available to the scholar.

This always-challenging task requires both a particular personal skill set, and adequate and convenient resources. The basic skills and competencies have not changed with the advent of computing, with one obvious exception. So it is still necessary for the TC to be a competent reader and interpreter of the scriptures in their original languages, to be at least a passable linguist and to be familiar with contemporary work in translation theory (and more could be added.) The new skill, of course, is that the TC must be able to make use of the new ways in which technical resources are provided and accessed, which reflect the seismic shift in information management in our society. Computers, in providing new, more convenient ways of accessing old resources, and allowing new kinds and levels of detailed textual work to be done, also require something new of consultants. They must first be themselves willing and skilful users of the latest electronic tools, and then also capable of teaching and guiding translation teams in their appropriate use.

Checking Translations with Paratext 7

What resources might a TC require to effectively examine a target language text? First, of course, would be the source text in the biblical languages, together their textual apparatus, textual commentaries, lexicons, and perhaps concordances. Second would be a range of comparative translations in English or other major languages. Third would be the UBS Handbooks, and other exegetical commentaries on the text. Finally the TC needs to look inside the target language translation, through the text itself and most often some form of backtranslation. Since in the course of a single field trip, TCs would often be required to check several projects working on different books of the Bible, to be fully equipped they would have to travel with a mobile theological library. In the days, not so long ago, before the widespread use

of computers, and Paratext in particular, this was a practical impossibility. I can remember discussions with our UBS consultant on the Urak Lawoi project, over some more obscure point of grammar or exegesis, where he would conclude by saying “I will have to write back to you on that question, after I get home and have access to my library.” (This he invariably did, having made notes with meticulous care.) There are still locations where I sometimes have to check translations, where I find myself in similar circumstances – but only when my computer battery is flat and there is no means of charging it! Most of the time, thanks to Paratext, I have not only the full range of desirable resources, but tools for using them and for examining texts in ways which were not previously possible. In a fairly standard checking situation, my Paratext desktop might look something like Figure 1.

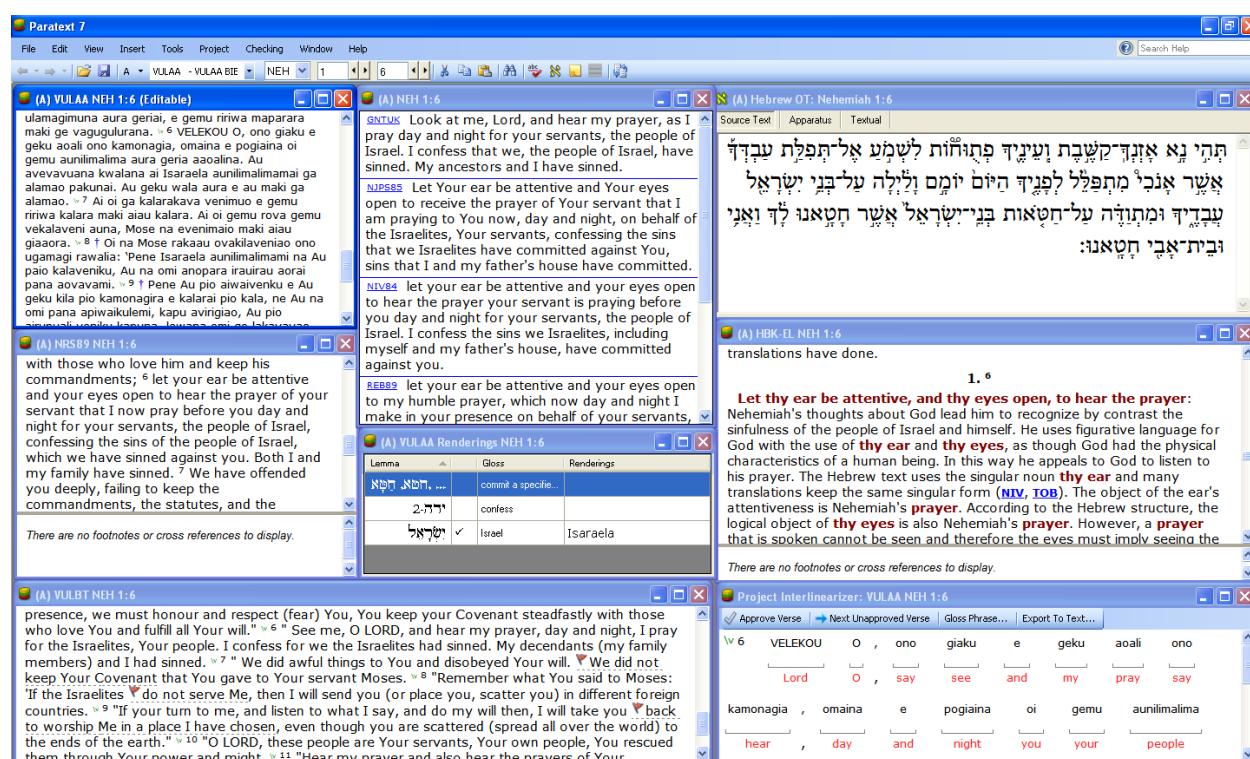


Figure 1: A Paratext desktop for translation checking.

Source Language Tools

At the top right hand corner is the source language text, in this case the Masoretic Text of Nehemiah 1.6, displayed in a special source language window which not only shows the pointed text, but has tabs which allow the display of textual apparatus and textual commentary materials. Where such information exists for the particular verse, the tab headers are coloured to alert the

user. This relatively simple display is just the front for a wealth of further information and resources. Clicking on any word in the text will bring up a box showing the lemma (or lemmata) for the word, an analysis of its form, and a gloss. This information can alternatively be displayed interlinearly with the text. Further clicking on the lemma, will uncover a large range of options for further investigation, as seen in Figure 2..

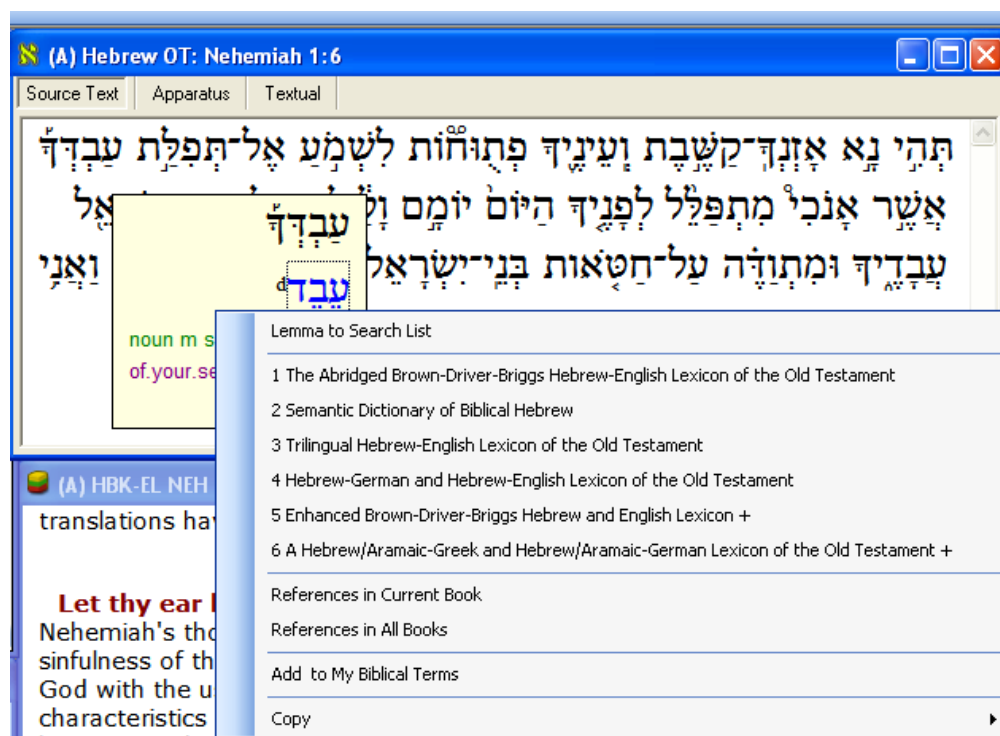


Figure 2: Extra information available from a source language text.

In this case I have clicked on עֶבֶד on end of the first line, and then again on the lemma עֶבֶד in the box which appeared showing word, lemma, form and gloss. Resources internal to Paratext itself include an Abridged BDB lexicon, the (beginnings of) the Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (on a Greek text this would be Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains*)³ and two other shorter lexicons. Also available within Paratext are hyper-linked versions of the texts (though not yet the illustrations) of the new UBS Fauna and Realia handbooks.⁴ Where a word features in either of these volumes, a superscript letter on the lemma

³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols, New York: UBS, 1988.

⁴ Edward R. Hope, *All Creatures Great and Small: Living Things of the Bible*. New York: UBS, 2005; Ray Pritz, *The Works of Their Hands: Man-made Things in the Bible*. New York: UBS, 2009.

indicates this, and the resource will appear on the selection list alongside the other lexicons. In addition, two resources which are listed on the menu with a plus sign (+) are not in Paratext but in Logos/Libronix. Selecting, for example, the Enhanced BDB lexicon⁵, will open the lexicon in Logos (if it is not already open) at the word in question. Any lexically organised database which you own in Logos format is accessible by this means.

Apart from accessing multiple lexical and exegetical resources, this menu also allows you to perform searches for the word in question. Simple searches for occurrences of the lemma, either in the current biblical book or through the whole Bible, can be combined in Boolean fashion (*and*, *or*, *and not* and combinations.) But more powerful still is the full-featured source language search, which allows searches for specified morphological forms of a word, or combinations of words with up to five other words in between. The results of these searches can be saved to a database called “My Biblical Terms” which can be used for future checking. Using these search tools, the consultant can easily switch from linear checking of verses of text to global checking of key words, expressions, and even morphological forms, and back again.

These tools were previously part of a stand-alone package, Source Language Tools (SLT), which worked in parallel to Paratext. They have now been integrated into the same desktop without losing any of their functionality. Thus while the apparatus, textual commentary and lexicons allow consultants full use of a library of scholarly resources while checking in the field, the search tools empower them to perform checks which would never have been possible before the advent of this software, or at best would have required considerable time and tedium to perform.

Parallel Translations, Commentaries and Notes

The most obvious feature of the Paratext desktop, one that is used as much by translators as by TOs, is the ability to display multiple texts of the Bible in multiple languages, scripts and fonts. These may be standard published translations in major languages, or other national or regional language texts. They can scroll together with the source and target texts in up to five different groupings. The only limitation on this is the actual space on the desktop, and to make things easier a single window can display just the focused verse from a selected collection of

⁵ F. Brown, S.R. Driver, & C.A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000.

texts (top centre in the first illustration), with the option of seeing one of these in wider context by splitting the window. This is a feature previously found only in SLT which has now been included in Paratext.

Apart from Bible texts, there are a number of other resources referenced by chapter and verse, which can be displayed in parallel. The most significant of these is the full set of English UBS Handbooks, but there are also other reference-based resources such as some Chinese and French Handbooks, TAZI notes, and Craig Keener's NT background notes.⁶ Further, if the TC owns a set of Logos electronic texts, Paratext can be set to send the current reference to Logos. Thus with a simple ALT+TAB keystroke, these are all instantly available pointing to the verse being examined. When checking I routinely have Logos operating for ready access not only to the lexicons, but also to commentaries such as the Word Biblical Commentary series, and the Jerome Biblical Commentary.⁷ Finally, there is a cumulative database of notes compiled from the work of UBS and SIL consultants as they have checked translations, which have been peer-reviewed and are made available within Paratext as "Reference Notes." If the focused verse has Reference Notes available, a button at the top of the screen illuminates and, when clicked, opens a new window to display them.

Each of the resources which Paratext displays in parallel windows is also searchable for words, parts of words, phrases and multiple words. The results of these searches can be displayed in context and can be combined with Boolean operations. This means that, just as with the Source Language Tools, Paratext provides TCs not just with fast, convenient access to a vast array of traditional resources, but with the power to perform searches and checks on word occurrences and combinations which they could never have previously contemplated.

Target Language Windows and Tools

In the top left of the first screen-shot above is the target language text. In this case the script is Roman, but it might just as easily be in one of the numerous scripts and hundreds of fonts of the world's languages now supported in Paratext using Unicode. For one who has been

⁶ Adapted by the author from Craig Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1993

⁷ R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, & R.E. Murphy, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall:1968; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996.

working with texts on computer screens for as long as they have been struggling with representation of Asia's complex alphabets, this is little short of miraculous.

But the target language text itself may or may not be of great interest or value to the consultant, depending on the extent of their familiarity with the language and its structures. At the bottom left hand corner of the screen is the back-translation into English supplied to the TC by the translation team, which maybe the focus of the consultant's examination, but in face-to-face checking situations will be supplemented by interaction and questioning. In the bottom right corner (and it should be stressed that the arrangement is entirely decided by the user and multiple arrangements can be stored for future use) is a tool which helps the TC link the backtranslation to the target language text in a constructive and helpful way. This is an interlinear gloss of the target language text, based on statistical comparisons with a specified standard text. This is created automatically by statistical functions built into Paratext itself and the first presentation of the data is the computer's "best guess" as to the likely correspondence of the words or phrases of the target text to those in the selected standard text.⁸ This can be refined in many ways by the user, and has multiple possible applications, but here I note its important contribution as an independent window into the target language text, which provides the consultant with further resources for questions to be directed to the translators.

At the centre of the screen in the first illustration above is a small window which lists a set of terms that occur in the source text for that verse which are considered to be important biblical terms. Alongside these is a gloss in English and a box into which the target language rendering can be dragged or copied.



Lemma	Gloss	Renderings
חָטָא, חָטָא, ...	commit a specific...	
יָדָה-2	confess	
יִשְׂרָאֵל ✓	Israel	Isaraela

Figure 3: Biblical Terms Rendering window

⁸ See Jon D Riding & Gerrit J. van Steenberg, "Glossing Technology in Paratext 7," forthcoming in *BT* 62, 2011

This is a contextually sensitive window into a much larger data-base of terms and their equivalents which can be accessed in several ways, but here, for example by double clicking on the Hebrew word. The large database allows the translation team to keep records of how specific terms from the source language are rendered. These come from any one of several categories – attributes, beings, fauna, flora, names, realia and rituals, as well as a miscellaneous category – and the user can choose to view any or all of these.

Lemma	Category	Gloss	Renderings
חַטָּאת	Attributes	commit a specific...	
חַטָּאת	Name	Hattush - descen...	
חַטָּאת	Name	Hattush - descen...	
חַטָּאת	Name	Hattush - descen...	

VULAA:	NRS89:	CEVUK:	HEB/GRK:
GEN 4:7 Pere oi na veveni poro kala roriria, ne au na oi gemu vanama para apiragea. Na oi na aiau kalagia aurai alama na oi ealoomuna, ene varakavamu gena. Na oina pano valakaoa aomu ai. [edit]	If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."	If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!	הָלוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁוֹקֶתוּ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ:
GEN 13:13 Sodomu aunilimalimara ila rakava aura e Velekou genai ge alamaao. [edit]	Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.	where the people were evil and sinned terribly against the Lord.	וְאִנְשֵׁי סֹדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד:
GEN 18:20 Ne Velekou na Aberaamo evakilaao, "Sodomu e Gomora geria varara kuluna rakavavagi, e ila alamara maki ai nama. [edit]	Then the Lord said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin!	The Lord said, "Abraham, I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are doing all kinds of evil things.	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סֹדֹם וְעִמְרָה כִּי־רַבָּה הָחַטָּה וְהָאָדָם בִּי כְבֹדָה מְאֹד:
GEN 20:6			

(8231 of 8231 terms shown)

Figure 4: Major Biblical Terms window

The full database allows comparison of how the term has been rendered in the target language, for the whole range of occurrences in the source language. But further, when a rendering has been entered for a particular term, it will show in the small “Renderings” window whenever that word occurs in the source language. Usually, and especially if the consultant is not familiar with the target language, it is the translation team who construct and maintain this list of renderings. However, the same statistical glossing routines that produce the interlinear gloss can also fill in a best guess automatically, which can then be refined manually. These equivalents provide an invaluable tool to enable the consultant to examine how key biblical

terms are rendered in a particular verse, or to switch to the global view and explore the renderings of the same term throughout the Bible.

Finally under this heading mention must be made of the facility which I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. When the verse or passage in focus has a parallel in another part of scripture, a button on the top bar is illuminated and gives access to the parallel passages tool. Lists of parallels available include those relating to the synoptic gospels, to other NT-to-NT parallels, OT-OT parallels, and OT quotes in the NT. Most recently I used this when checking the Thai revised translation of Jeremiah 52, when the parallel passage window uncovered very substantial differences in the style and detail of language used between the almost identical records of the fall of Jerusalem in Jer 52, Jer 39, and 2 Kings.



Figure 5: OT Parallel texts

Checking quotes from the Old Testament in the New Testament is of course much more difficult but the parallel passage tool provides a good glimpse of what is happening, by allowing comparison of both MT and LXX readings, as seen in Figure 6.

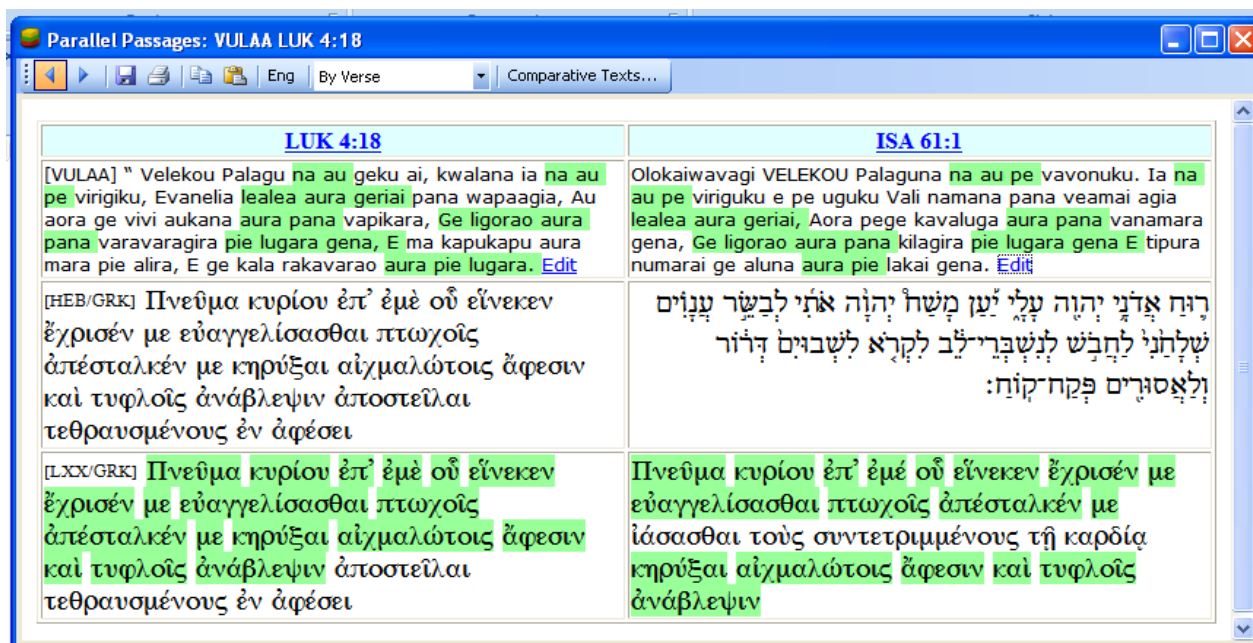


Figure 6: OT-NT parallel texts

Administrative Tools and Remote Checking

The ideal checking situation has always involved the consultant sitting down face to face with members of the translation team, to examine the text together. There are many good reasons for this which will not be rehearsed here, and it remains the best option. Yet there is an increasing need for TCs to examine a text at a distance from the translation team. This may be a matter of choice and efficiency, where the TC checks a backtranslation in anticipation of a visit with the team, or as a follow-up to a visit. Or it may be a matter of necessity, where financial restrictions, visa difficulties, war, disease or disaster prevent the TC from travelling to visit the team. As Paratext has developed over the past few years it has provided increasingly efficient and powerful tools to facilitate remote checking. Most of these tools are not specifically designed for remote checking, as they support the administrative and text-processing work of all teams using Paratext. But I am describing them under this head because they significantly enhance the ability of TCs to check translations at a distance.

First, there is the new method of passing texts to other users while protecting the text from accidental overwriting. Texts may be sent and received locally (using, for example, a flash drive or a local network drive) or, more powerfully, via the internet using a common server in the USA for all Paratext users worldwide. Compared to the older method of text exchange

through “Backup and Restore,” this is significantly more refined, flexible and safe, because it is built on a technology which allows the entire history of the text to be retained. And in the latest incarnation, permissions are carefully controlled so that changes can only be made by those authorized to do so by the project administrator. The complete memory of previous versions of the text allows for comparisons between different stages of the text’s development, and where necessary, reversion to earlier stages of the text. From a consultant’s viewpoint, I am now informed by email when a new or revised text or backtranslation is ready for me to download, wherever I may be in the world. I can immediately examine the history of the text, note changes and make comparisons.

I then write my consultant notes and questions as project notes which are flagged in the actual target text (if I am directly examining it) or in the backtranslation, and when I re-send the project to the internet, the translation team receives these notes. This is just the beginning of a conversation which can go back and forth between consultant and translators until the issue is resolved – and the entire conversation is preserved in the notes. This is far more convenient and efficient than my previous method, which was to write notes and questions in a separate project which had to be sent to the team – and was usually of no further use. When the translation team sends their text to the internet, any biblical term renderings they have made also become available to me to assist my checking procedures. And progress of each book through the four standard stages of the translation progress can be tracked within Paratext and the results transferred to written reports. It is anticipated that at some future stage these results will also be able to synchronize with the Translation Management System database, providing further convenience and efficiency for the TC’s administrative tasks.

Finally, if a translation team is having difficulty with their use of Paratext, it is possible directly from within Paratext itself, to establish remote support, allowing the TC to take control of the team’s computer. Until recently I have done this using third-party programs, which continue to provide a good alternative. The proliferation of free communication programs also means that Paratext does not have to develop its own chat or VOIP capabilities.

Checking of Revisions with Paratext

Revisions of existing translations have become an increasingly important component of the work of Bible Societies and TCs. This is in part because many of the major language

translations completed during the second and third quarters of the 20th century, both formal and functional equivalent ones, have been reaching the end of their useful life, through natural language change, discovery of new documents affecting the textual base, and the swings and pendulums of translation theory. The interests and demands of the users of Scripture have also changed and have become a significant feature in assessing translation needs. As a result the process of translation revision has received a lot of attention in UBS translation circles. A document entitled “UBS Guidelines for Revision of Scripture Translations” was adopted by the Committee on Translation Policy in 2004.⁹ Kees de Blois and Daud Soesilo convened a Revision Workshop of UBS translation staff in Cairo in 2007. And one of the working tracks of the Triennial Translation Workshop in Bangkok in 2009 was dedicated to the issue of revisions. Prominent in many of these discussions has been the practical effectiveness of computer technology in carrying out the task of revision. For the revision team, this can involve the execution of consistent changes to words and phrases (using either Paratext’s Search and Replace function, or the more nuanced possibilities in various interlinearising approaches), monitoring and reviewing of the consistency of rendering terms and names (using the Biblical Terms databases in Paratext) and the facility of text comparison which has been developed in Paratext from version 6 and now much more usefully in version 7.

Surprisingly, relatively little attention has been given to the role of the Translation Officer in the process. It is only in the “Model Document on Revision Policy and Procedures”¹⁰ at the very end of the *Guidelines* that any mention is made of the TO, who is there described as approving appointment of revision team members, arbitrating on difficult decisions, making final decisions in consultation with the revisers, and recommending the revision to the Bible Society for publication. But what is the extent of the TO’s responsibility? We can assume that it is to give support to the revision policies established by the Bible Society and the committee overseeing the project. But does it only relate to *changes* made (or not made) by the revisers? Or does it extend to the exegesis and translation of the base text as well? Given the list of “Issues to be Addressed in Revisions” (*Guidelines*, pp. 15-17), this is at least a reasonable supposition. This would require of the TO the full range of skills and tools already described above in the case of a new translation. But the added feature is that this translation stands in

⁹ UBS Guidelines for Revision of Scripture Translations, UBS internal document available on intranet.

¹⁰ Guidelines, pp. 26-27

special relationship to the translation being revised. And here Paratext provides a uniquely useful tool for assessment.

In Paratext 6 (2003) it became possible to compare and contrast two texts, with additions, subtractions and alterations shown in blue and red, similar to the notation in MS Word. But this was only possible when there were just those two texts open on the Paratext desktop – no other texts or resources. When I began checking the revision of the Thai Bible, few of the revisers were using Paratext, and I had to examine paper copies of a MS Word text on which changes had been tracked. When revisers began using Paratext, I was able to use the text comparison tool, but had to make two passes through all the material. For the first pass, I had the original and revised texts open and compared them, making notes of places where I would need other exegetical resources in order to determine whether the change was appropriate or not. Then I would open a new desktop with a full set of resources, and do a check of the entire text, with particular attention to those points where I had made notes on the changes. With the advent of Paratext 7, this double handling is no longer necessary. My desktop looks like Figure 7:

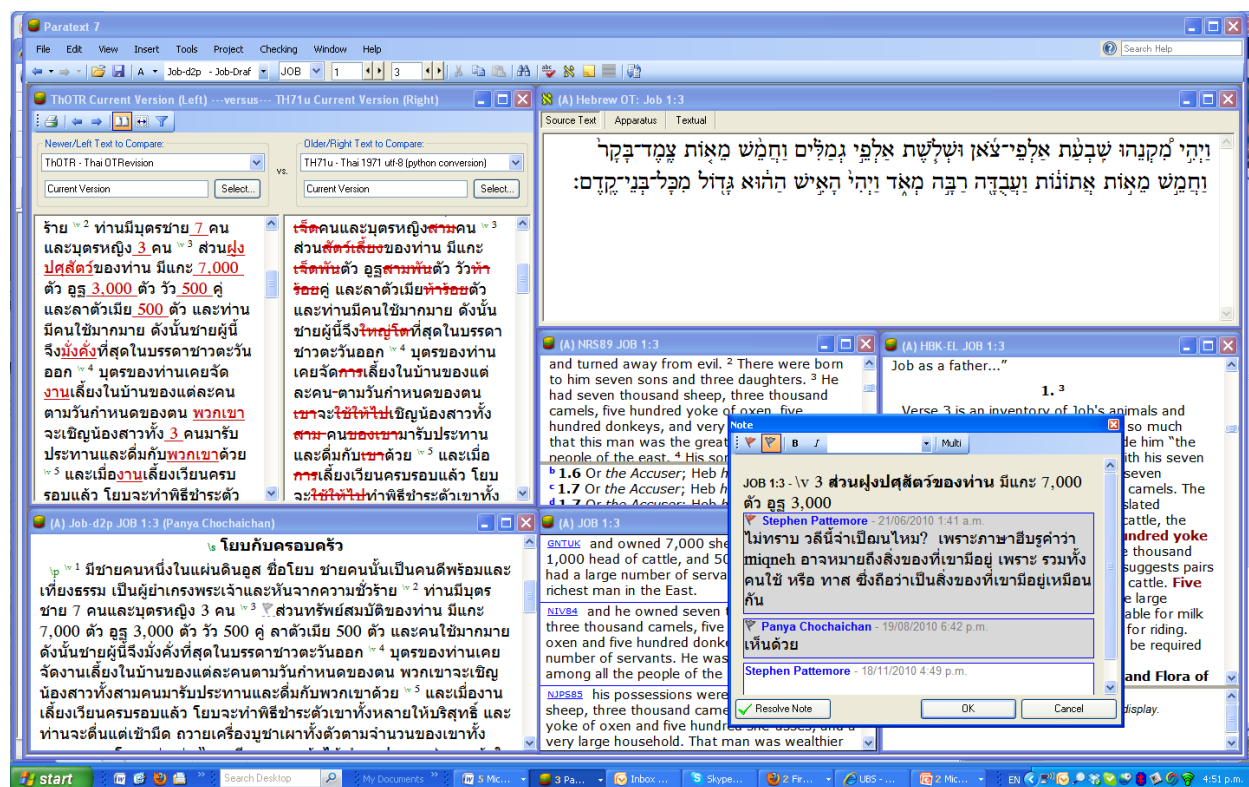


Figure 7: Paratext Desktop for checking Thai Bible Revision

At the top left is a comparison between the 1971 Thai translation, and the reviser's new version. Below, referenced to the same location, is the new version again, but in a form to which I can attach project notes – an example from Job 1.3 can be seen, showing the translator's response to my original query. All of the facilities described in the earlier sections on the use of Paratext in checking translations are simultaneously available, allowing the TC to perform both tasks of monitoring changes and examining the exegesis of the text as a whole. Admittedly this would not be so easy to perform if the TC did not read and understand the target language.

Conclusions and Questions

This has been in truth a brief summary and not an exhaustive description of the ways in which I use Paratext in my checking of translations and revisions. I have not even attempted to describe the numerous ways in which a translation team can use Paratext to ensure the consistency and completeness of their target language text, and to assist them in producing drafts for checking, and record-keeping. Nor yet have I mentioned the other end of the process, as Paratext integrates seamlessly with other software to produce typeset print-ready output. But within these limitations, certain conclusions can be drawn.

First, Paratext has grown to enable fast, efficient and convenient access to nearly all the traditional resources that a TO might need in the examination of manuscripts. Even in remote field locations, TOs can be almost as well resourced as in a library. Resources internal to Paratext have expanded, and with the link to Logos, the only barrier to a very extensive theological library is cost.

Secondly, Paratext has enabled kinds of checking, both in depth of research into a particular term, and breadth of scope over the whole canon, which were previously either impossible or only possible with great investment of time and effort. Contextual consistency of translation equivalents, discourse strategies and comparison of revised or parallel texts are all made feasible to an extent that greatly improves the confidence that can be placed in a fully checked translation.

Thirdly, Paratext enables translation teams to produce texts of much higher standard of consistency and accuracy, and this has some significant implications for the work of TOs. If translation teams can be trained to use the full potential within Paratext to check their own

work, much tedious checking can be taken off TOs' agendas, giving them more time to interact at higher levels of consultancy, to do with issues of difficult exegesis or interpretation, discourse structure, or translation theoretical matters. But this possibility requires that TOs themselves are both thoroughly familiar with the workings of Paratext, and are able to effectively train and teach the teams they work with to reach this standard.

Developments in Paratext are such that the question is no longer what *can* a TO do to check a translation – that is almost limitless. Gaps in capability are steadily being filled by the user-sensitive development priorities of the team which Kees de Blois has led. Freed from the constraints of possibilities, the real question which emerges is one that has always been there, but which is most often conveniently ignored: what checking *should* a TO do to guarantee the quality of a Bible Society product? What types, depth and extent of checking constitutes the “gold standard”, the ISO rated checking? In my experience this has nearly always been an intuitive decision by individual TOs on particular projects – matching the type and degree of checking to the capability and history of the project team. Such a system is certainly flexible, but whereas in the past it was all that was humanly possible, the software, and Paratext in particular, now gives us the option of being more rigorous in our definitions. Quality assurance in the commercial world consists in a combination of “best practices” for procedures, and carefully specified testing. What might that look like for the Bible translation process? Given the vast and increasing workload on UBS TOs, the challenge of maintaining standards of checking is a very significant one. It seems appropriate to maximize the usefulness of Paratext for the benefit of the task of producing the highest quality scripture products. There is, to my knowledge, no credible body of research which relates the degree and kinds of checks performed on a text to the ultimate reliability and accuracy of the final product. There are clearly a lot of variables to be controlled in such research, but it seems both feasible and desirable. On that basis, it might be possible to establish sets of “best practices” both for translation teams (what capability should they have with Paratext, what checking processes should the text have been through before it is presented to the TO for quality assurance?) and for Translation Officers (given a particular translation's compliance with these standards, what checks are needed to guarantee the achievement of UBS standards of publication of scriptures?) To tackle these issues we need the wisdom and experience of Kees de Blois!

References

- Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels. Greek-English Edition of the Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, 9th Edition, Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1989.
- Brown, F., S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000.
- Brown, R.E., J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall: 1968; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996.
- Hope, Edward R. *All Creatures Great and Small: Living Things of the Bible*. New York: UBS, 2005.
- Keener, Craig. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1993
- Louw, Johannes P. and Eugene A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols, New York: UBS, 1988.
- Pritz, Ray. *The Works of Their Hands: Man-made Things in the Bible*. New York: UBS, 2009.
- Riding, Jon D and Gerrit J. van Steenbergen, "Glossing Technology in Paratext 7," forthcoming in *The Bible Translator* 62, 2011.