

BOOK REVIEWS

Aland, Kurt, and Aland, Barbara. *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2d ed., rev. and enl., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989. xviii + 366 pp. \$32.50.

Since the original edition of this book in both English and German has been extensively reviewed, this review will primarily summarize the main reactions to the earlier edition and attempt to assess whether the revised edition succeeds in overcoming its weaknesses.

To call this edition "revised and enlarged" is an overstatement. While the revisions are many, they are largely limited to details of wording. The only substantial additions are a brief discussion of the recent synopses of the Gospels by Orchard, Boismard/Lamouille, and Swanson (pp. 263-265) and chap. 8 (pp. 317-337), which is essentially a paper read by Barbara Aland at a 1987 conference in Birmingham on textual criticism.

NT textual criticism is both an art and a science. The consensus in reviews of the original edition is that the Alands' book has made a tremendous contribution to the science of NT textual criticism but is seriously flawed in attempting to describe its art. (The reader will appreciate the summary of issues and the citation of reviews provided in the article by Eldon Jay Epp, "New Testament Criticism Past, Present, and Future: Reflections on the Alands' *Text of the New Testament*," *HTR* 82 [1989]: 213-229.) Among the strengths of both editions are the descriptive lists of papyri, uncials, many minuscules, and the church fathers; the introductions to the use of the critical editions edited by Kurt Aland; and the listing of working tools for the practice of NT textual criticism. Reviewers have considered these usable, reliable, and to some degree indispensable for work in the discipline. By themselves these scientific achievements are worth the price of either edition.

The main criticisms of the original edition can be grouped into four general areas. (1) There is a perceived arrogance on the part of the authors, resulting in what has been called a "revisionist history" of the development of NT textual criticism—a history calculated to highlight the work of the Alands and their institute at the expense of other contributions to their discipline. In particular, the work of British and American text-critical scholars is disparaged or ignored. (2) There is a circularity of reasoning by which manuscripts are evaluated on the basis of an assumed "original text" (apparently the critical text produced by the Münster Institute), although

the exact procedure is unclear. The traditional text types are, as a result, replaced by two systems of categorization that are neither self-consistent nor clearly explained. (3) In a book intended for the use of beginners, there is a remarkable lack of basic explanation and pedagogical skill. (4) There is a failure both to clarify the theoretical principles which underlie text-critical decision-making and to give the novice some inkling that there are other methods by which text-critical scholars make such decisions.

Apparently the Alands read and considered the reviews of their earlier edition. The "outrageous untruth" regarding the International Greek New Testament Project, pointed out by Birdsall, has been corrected as called for, although without apology (J. Neville Birdsall, *BT* 39 [1988]: 340; cf. Aland and Aland, rev. ed., p. 24. It could be argued, of course, that the Alands would have corrected it anyway.) More significantly perhaps, the revision eliminates an incorrect statement about Greeven's synopsis that only a determined critic like Elliott would have discovered (J. Keith Elliott, *TZ* 39 [1983]: 248; cf. Aland and Aland, rev. ed., pp. 260-263.)

How well does the revision address the four issues summarized above? A multitude of minor changes certainly could indicate a concern to eliminate or modify both self-important assertions and unnecessarily derogatory remarks about other efforts in the field. To cite some examples: The use of "standard text" to refer to Nestle-Aland²⁶ is consistently changed to "new text"; the derogatory remark about the International Greek New Testament Project is dropped (p. 24); instead of "textual critics" ignoring the role of church history in textual study, "many NT scholars" do so (p. 52); the "Caesarean text" is based on an "uncertain" foundation rather than a "dubious" one (pp. 66-67); other editions of the Greek NT are granted a level of importance (pp. 222-223); and "this is helpful" is added to highlight an aspect of Greeven's synopsis (p. 261). In spite of numerous changes of detail, however, the chapter on the history of textual criticism remains essentially unchanged, and British and American authors fare little better than in the original. Thus the fundamental objection to the first edition has not been dealt with satisfactorily in the revision.

In the second place, the danger of circular reasoning remains in the revision, although chap. 8 argues with considerable cogency that the Alands' approach is an improvement upon its alternatives as a meaningful evaluation of the huge mass of NT manuscripts. (Still, the lack of a description and critique of alternatives, such as the Claremont Profile Method, continues to be a weakness.) The circularity arises from the fact that manuscripts are considered to be of high textual quality to the extent that they read like the text of Nestle-Aland²⁶, which to a large degree was determined on the basis of judgments regarding textual quality. But the danger is considerably alleviated by two factors: (1) collations are made according to test passages in which the original reading is reasonably self-evident, at least on the basis of the Alands' "local-genealogical" method; (2) these test passages are fully

available for examination in Kurt Aland, ed., *Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, I: Die Katholischen Briefe, 3 vols. (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung, vols. 9-11 [Berlin/New York: 1987]). Any who disagree with Nestle-Aland²⁶ can modify the evaluations on the basis of the objective collational evidence collected at Münster. A major improvement in the revision, therefore, is the full clarification of the basis for the evaluation of uncials and minuscules into five categories and the papyri into four.

The categories themselves, however, remain a mixture of "apples and oranges." Categories 1 through 3 represent judgments on the textual quality of manuscripts (although most category 1 manuscripts would be classified as Alexandrian), while categories 4 and 5 represent the "D Text" and Byzantine Text, respectively. Categories 2 and 3 represent a dumping ground for manuscripts (some 10% of the total) whose text type is uncertain at this time. Since all the early papyri are placed in category 1 by definition, they are distinguished as "free," "normal," or "strict," depending on the degree to which they agree with Nestle-Aland²⁶. Even here there is inconsistency, however, since three very early papyri that exhibit a "D Text" are placed in category 4. While these inconsistencies call for some tinkering, the system as a whole is clearer and more useful in the revised edition.

The book, however, is no more helpful to the beginner than before. The crucial new chap. 8 is obviously written for specialists, thus making the book even more difficult than the previous edition for the novice to comprehend and use. Since the Alands have their hands full with a multitude of projects, it would be wise if someone like Bruce Metzger would be permitted to rewrite the book in a format more directly helpful to the beginner.

Those unhappy with the chapter on the praxis of NT textual criticism will remain unhappy, as no significant changes or clarifications are forthcoming in the new edition. Thus it continues to leave the impression that the "local-genealogical" method of the Alands is "the only game in town." Those interested in other ways to play the game will want to consult Eldon Jay Epp, "Textual Criticism," in Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae, eds., *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters, vol. 3 [Philadelphia/Atlanta, 1989]), pp. 75-126; and Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (New York, 1968), pp. 156-185.

The above criticisms need to be tempered by the reality that the revision was performed in haste. The occasion was the rapid sellout of both German and English versions of the first edition (p. vi). Thus it must be considered a transition document requiring considerable modification before it can be called a finished and polished product.

The revised edition, nevertheless, should be purchased by those who specialize in the NT, despite these shortcomings. The addition of chap. 8 is of crucial importance. Beyond that, the lists of manuscripts are helpfully

updated, a list of recently discovered lectionaries is added on p. 170, and a synopsis of the sigla used in various Greek NT editions for the correctors of manuscripts is added on p. 108. These and other additions make the revised edition well worth the price.

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Andersen, Francis I., and Freedman, David Noel. *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 24A. New York: Doubleday, 1989. xlii + 979 pp. \$30.00.

This contribution by Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman to the Anchor Bible is an important one for students of Hebrew prophetic literature in general and of Amos in particular. The authors, by devoting over 1,000 pages to the nine short chapters of Amos, have followed the series' current practice of providing expansive treatments of biblical books.

In keeping with the format of the Anchor Bible, the Amos volume begins with an original translation that is fresh and creative, while at the same time is characterized by an odd capitalization here and there (e.g., She, Girl, Fire, and Pestilence) and a few constructions that, although following the Hebrew word order, are clumsy in English (e.g., 5:7b, 12b).

The introduction section is fairly complete, covering the basic questions surrounding issues of background, authorship, textual considerations, Amos' geopolitical terminology (a forty-two page treatment), and—most importantly for the authors, it seems—the initial expression of their proposed four phases for the prophet's ministry (see below). Unfortunately, literary features, so rich in Amos, receive little mention here. On the other hand, the select bibliography is certainly adequate.

In structuring their notes and comments, our authors divide the book of Amos into four parts: 1) The Book of Doom (1:1-4:13), 2) The Book of Woes (5:1-6:14), 3) The Book of Visions (7:1-9:6), and 4) the Epilogue (9:7-15). According to Andersen and Freedman, nearly the entire book comes from the eighth century. The commentary's final fifty-three pages consist of subject, author, lexical, and scripture indices.

The most prominent feature of this commentary, and one that governs interpretation throughout, is a proposed four-phase ministry for the prophet which, over time, shifts in attitude from tempered optimism through unmitigated pessimism to glorious anticipation for the future. By interfacing segments from chaps. 7-9 in loose chiasmic fashion with portions of chaps. 1-6, Andersen and Freedman reconstruct Amos' ministry in the following way: Phase 1 is expressed in the first two visions of chap. 7 (vv. 1-6), with their openness to God's turning based on Israel's repentance, in conjunction with chaps. 4 and 5, which likewise focus on repentance and include other thematic ties as well. Opportunity still exists to "seek Yahweh and live."