

Stevens, Gerald L. *New Testament Greek*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994. xxiv + 492 pp. Cloth, \$29.50.

_____. *New Testament Greek Workbook*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994. x + 287 pp. Paper, \$29.50.

New Testament Greek is a static language. Developments in the study of the language come slowly. The production of new textbooks for New Testament Greek, therefore, depends less on the need created by rapid developments in the field than on the creativity of the authors and their dissatisfaction with previous texts with which they have struggled. So it is with Stevens's textbook and accompanying workbook.

Upon opening the textbook, one is immediately struck with the creative new format of the book. Here, finally, is a Greek textbook that is pleasing to the eye. Stevens lists three things that prompted him to publish the book, and all three have to do with the format and design of the book, including more tables, generous graphics, greater point sizes, and an appealing text (xv). It must be admitted that he has accomplished his objective well, through the use of desktop publishing technology. He has built "a better mousetrap" (xv).

Stevens has done more, however, than merely design a more attractive format. While he describes his approach as conservative and his methodology as traditional (xvi-xvii), he has labored to include many features often omitted by other grammars, but which contribute to the task of learning the material. At the end of each lesson, he includes a section called "What To Learn." In two parts, "Beginning" and "Advanced," he identifies the key points the student should have mastered in that lesson. He presents an introduction to the corresponding English grammar before introducing new Greek grammar in order to build a bridge for students that are unfamiliar with English grammar. He even introduces diagramming in order to aid the student in identifying the grammatical elements and seeing grammatical relationships between the parts of a sentence.

He offers copious examples from the New Testament text, which he has researched on his own rather than borrowing from the standard examples. He distinguishes between the five morphological "cases" and the eight syntactical "functions" in dealing with substantives so as not to confuse the beginning student, while at the same time using the categories and terminology from Brooks and Winbery's *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham, MD, 1979) in order to facilitate a smooth transition for students going on to study more advanced syntax.

Stevens incorporates 342 tables into his 34 chapters. This does not include the 31 pages of paradigms and 15 pages of principal parts in the back of the book. He also has an appendix, "On the Art of Translation," which introduces principles for formulating a translation theory and

procedure that will attempt a balance between formal and functional equivalence, a feature no good Greek text should be without. In addition, he adds an extensive glossary and an annotated bibliography of about 75 resources in a variety of areas related to the study of the Greek New Testament, plus three vocabulary lists and a full subject index.

A special feature of Stevens's textbook is what he calls "Lagniappe," a French word signifying a bonus. At the end of certain chapters, he adds a page on selected Greek manuscripts, including a photo reproduction of part of the original text of the manuscript along with some notes of interest regarding the particular portion of text. This feature is very appealing and helps to interest the student in the science of textual criticism.

All that and a workbook too! The workbook provides exercises correlated to the lessons in the textbook. Each workbook lesson begins with the "What To Learn" section found at the end of the same lesson in the textbook, followed by the list of vocabulary from the textbook lesson. Then there are sentences to complete (from the grammar lesson), tables and paradigm charts to fill in, vocabulary words and Greek sentences to translate, and more sentences to diagram. Most sentences are taken from the text of the New Testament, but some are contrived to meet the specific needs of the lesson.

Since I began teaching Greek twelve years ago, I have been collecting Greek grammars, looking for the perfect textbook for beginning and/or intermediate Greek. I have never found it. Stevens's set may not be perfect, but it is far more satisfying than any other I have found to date.

What are some of its weaknesses? We cannot go into minor details here, but a couple of major features merit further attention. The delay in introducing the aorist tense of the verb until Lesson 19 seems unjustified. The aorist is the most common tense of the verb in the New Testament. Stevens himself calls it "the workhorse Greek tense" (232). If the goal is to get the student reading the text of the New Testament as soon as possible, it seems that the most frequently used forms should appear early in the lessons. Why not present the aorist before such things as the imperfect middle, conditional sentences, third declension, liquid future, and numerals? Of course it's traditional to present the tenses in the order of the principal parts, which Stevens does, but is it necessary? The order of the principal parts is based on morphology, not on frequency of use. The student is capable of dealing with the morphology in a different sequence. Let's break out of the mold! Building a better mousetrap involves more than cosmetic changes. We must give attention to functional needs also.

Stevens claims to offer in one text both a beginning and an intermediate grammar. This is not done by presenting first lessons in beginning grammar, then in intermediate grammar. He does it rather by merely adding a part in his "What To Learn" section, entitled "Advanced." He admits that this is material which beginning students can also use to their

profit—and many will if not told not to—and that there is no division in the lessons themselves into beginning and advanced materials or discussions (xv). So, once the beginning students have studied these lessons, what is left for the intermediate students? They will not want to begin with lesson one of the same textbook—and workbook—and cover the same ground again. It seems Stevens has not given serious reflection to this matter.

Stevens is to be commended for producing a fine beginning Greek grammar, one which I heartily recommend to teachers and students of New Testament Greek.

Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studies
Silang, Cavite, Philippines

EDWIN E. REYNOLDS

Thompson, Thomas L. *Early History of the Israelite People from the Written and Archaeological Sources*. New York: E. J. Brill, 1994. xv + 482 pp. \$123.00.

The *Early History of the Israelite People from the Written & Archaeological Sources* by Thomas L. Thompson is a remaking of the history of Israel. If Thompson's syntheses gain the support of a majority of biblical scholars, this book and its associated suppositions will impact biblical studies much as Wellhausen's interpretation of the documentary hypothesis did a century ago.

The nine chapters of this book take the reader from the known (the documentary hypothesis) to the unknown (the new syntheses of Thompson). According to Thompson, a growing consensus that the Bible sheds no historical light on the period of the judges or the patriarchal period has caused him to conclude that scholars can no longer look to any part of the Bible for history. He sees this, likewise, as a major upset for the documentary hypothesis, since Thompson sees the historicity of the biblical text and the documentary hypothesis as linked together. Thompson suggests that scholars "need an independently derived history before we can adequately discern the nature and context of the ideologies that are implicit in the text" (126).

Thompson's independent history is radical and provocative. He sees the settlement patterns of the archaeological periods as largely the result of weather conditions. He doubts that any significant change of population ever occurred in Palestine after the Neolithic period (177). To him, the Philistines of the Bible stories never existed (177, 264, 270-272). The new settlements established during Iron I, etc., were not new populations but