

times Easley says there is no need to refer to this or that Greek construction in the sermon. But even more fervently, I hope that s/he will not refer to Greek grammatical and syntactical structures with any degree of frequency, certainly not so often as Easley's book allows! Easley is eminently practical, interested in a working knowledge of Greek, rather than in preparing students for graduate study. Most of us who preach exegetical sermons would benefit from working through this little book. His work really is a common-sense approach and it seems he has followed Nancy's sage advice and kept the cookies on the lowest shelf.

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RONALD L. JOLLIFFE

Ehrman, Bart D. and Michael W. Holmes. *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*. Studies and Documents Series, no. 46. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. xiv + 401 pp. \$39.99.

This collection of 22 essays by as many authors is presented in honor of Bruce M. Metzger, the most highly recognized American textual critic in the history of the discipline. This volume 46 in the Studies and Documents series, founded by Kirsopp and Silva and now edited by E. J. Epp, focuses on important advances made in textual criticism during the past fifty years. Bart D. Ehrman is associate professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, chair of the Society of Biblical Literature's New Testament Textual Criticism Section, editor of *New Testament in the Greek Fathers* series, and coeditor of the series *New Testament Tools and Studies*. Michael W. Holmes is Professor of Biblical Studies and Early Christianity at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, North American editor for the International Greek New Testament Project, and coauthor of *The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen*, Vol. 1 (1992).

Each article is written to present an authoritative general outlook of the *status quaestionis* by an international group of scholars in the field. The topics considered in this book include: Greek manuscripts, the early versions, patristic citations, studies of scribal habits, approaches to manuscript classification, the use of computers for textual criticism, recent apparatuses and critical editions, and the use of textual data for early Christian social history.

In Part I, the individual articles discuss the various kinds of Greek manuscripts (papyri, majuscules, minuscules, and lectionaries). In the first article, E. J. Epp discusses the papyrus MSS of the NT, which because of their antiquity occupy first place in the list of witnesses to the NT text. In chapter 2, Parker examines the majuscule manuscripts of the NT. Chapters 3 and 4 present the use of the Greek minuscule and lectionary manuscripts of the New Testament. "The minuscule script arose during the seventh century C.E. out of the majuscule cursive. This new form of writing involved a small script in which adjacent letters were joined together so as not only to save space and expensive writing materials but also to facilitate the writing process itself" (43). According to Aland and Wachtel, the newly recovered literary style dominated from the early ninth century until far into the tenth. However, the scanty sources do not allow us to determine how this change of script occurred or how it was carried out. "What we can say for certain is that the MS tradition of ancient Greek authors always runs

through Byzantium, and that the Byzantine archetype often presents the earliest attainable form of the text." (44).

In Parts II and III, the main foci are the study of the early versions of the NT (the Diatessaron of Tatian, and the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Georgian versions), and the patristic witnesses to the NT. Some scholars consider the patristic citations as a secondary source, indirect and supplementary to the Greek MSS. Fee argues that "[W]hen properly evaluated, however, patristic evidence is of primary importance for . . . NT textual criticism: in contrast to the early Greek MSS, the Fathers have the potential of offering datable and geographically certain evidence" (191).

The final part of the book deals with methods and tools for New Testament textual criticism from theoretical methodology to the use of computers in the study of the text. Bart Ehrman's essay, "New Testament Manuscripts and the Social History of Early Christianity," argues that the NT MSS can serve as a window into the social world of primitive Christianity.

In a time when textual criticism is all too often considered as an unfamiliar field for many New Testament scholars and graduate students, this volume is a significant contribution that should be in the collection of every research library. Each essay includes a full and up-to-date bibliography of works relevant to the field, and the volume is thoroughly indexed.

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PANAYOTIS COUTSOUMPOS

Fee, Gordon D. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995. xlvi + 497 pp. \$34.99.

This is the first commentary to appear in the NICNT under the editorship of Gordon Fee, professor of New Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia. His earlier contributions to the field of New Testament textual criticism include *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, coauthored with Eldon J. Epp. Fee's commentary is a highly scholarly, yet thoroughly readable study of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

A 53-page introduction covers the customary questions raised regarding the authorship and integrity of Philippians, the recipients of the letter, the city of Philippi, and the place and date of writing. Fee argues that the letter to the Philippians was one letter, written by the Apostle Paul from Rome in the early 60s, to his longtime friends and compatriots in the gospel who lived in Philippi. He also comments that "in contrast to many of Paul's other letters, especially the more polemical and/or apologetic letters [such] as Galatians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians reflects all the characteristics of a 'letter of friendship,' combined with those of a 'letter of moral exhortation'" (2). Fee sets Paul's letter to the Philippians within the context of first-century "friendship" and "moral exhortation" to a church facing opposition because of its loyalty to Jesus Christ. The question of the apostle's opponents and the identity of the false teachers is according to Fee an issue without end. However, there is a general consensus that the opponents are most likely Judaizers.

The comparison of Philippians to two well-known types of letters in the