

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.

9104 Linson St.
Silver Spring, MD 20901

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

Graeco-Roman world is a noteworthy feature of this commentary. "Letter-writing, which was something of an 'art' in pre-typewriter, pre-computer Western culture, was likewise taken with great seriousness by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The 'friendly type,' was well known to all, and according to Cicero was the reason for the 'invention of letter writing.' In many ways this is the most 'artless' of the letters, since what are now known as 'family letters' very often belong to [this genre]" (2).

The other kind of letter mentioned in the commentary is the letter of moral exhortation, which was common in the context of friendship. While this kind of letter lacked a rigid format, it was distinguished by two main elements: (1) the writer was the recipient's friend or moral superior, and (2) the letter aimed at persuasion or dissuasion. Fee comments that "because the persuasion or dissuasion was toward or away from certain 'models' of behavior, the author frequently appealed to examples, including sometimes his own" (11). Evidence of the exhortatory character of Philippians is that a substantial part of the letter is taken up with two hortatory divisions (Phil. 1:27-2:18 and 3:1-4:3).

Regarding the so-called Christ-hymn of 2:5-11, Fee does not agree with the widely accepted view that this passage is a hymn, but does conclude that Phil 2:5-11 constitutes one of the most significant pericopae in the letter to the Philippians. He observes that "most commentaries have been compelled to offer an excursus of some kind simply to deal with the critical issues that have been raised on this passage" (39-40). Despite the widely accepted hymnic theory (by scholars such as Lohmeyer, Käsemann, Martin, and Murphy-O'Connor), Fee presents several reasons to doubt this theory: "First, if originally a hymn, it has no correspondence of any kind with Greek hymnody or poetry; second, exalted, even poetic, prose does not necessarily mean that one is dealing with a hymn; third, the *hos* in this case is not precisely like its alleged parallels in Col. 1:5 (18b) and 1 Tim. 3:16; fourth, as pointed out in the commentary, these sentences, exalted and rhythmic as they are, follow one another in perfectly orderly prose; and finally many of the alleged lines are especially irregular if they are intended to function as lines of Semitic poetry" (42). Not all scholars, of course, have accepted Fee's views. The secondary literature on the passage is massive.

This is a solid commentary based on the Greek text and including a thorough exposition of theological issues. An abundance of grammatical, textual, and historical information is presented in the footnotes, special notes, and appendices. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* will provide a mine of information for all students of Paul and especially of the Epistle to the Philippians. It should be in the hands of every serious scholar, pastor, and student.

9104 Linson St.
Silver Spring, MD 20901

PANAYOTIS COUTSOUPOS

Finkelstein, Israel. *Living on the Fringe. The Archaeology and History of the Negev, Sinai and Neighboring Regions in the Bronze and Iron Ages*. Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology, no. 6. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. xiii + 197 pp. \$60.00.

As professor of archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv