

technical term in reference to natural law. It would have been beneficial to at least clarify how the term “unwritten law” is used in this book. In addition, the omission of any reference to the Greco-Roman concept of natural law is puzzling, since natural law was also a major factor in shaping ancient written laws.

Despite those shortcomings, the quality of each essay is undisputed. Any reader of this book should be aware that the language of the articles is often technical and the issues discussed are very specific and complex. Therefore, a certain familiarity with the subject matter is a prerequisite to actually benefitting from *Writing Laws in Antiquity*.

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Laansma, Jon C., and Randall X. Gauthier. *The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs: Aids for Readers of the Greek New Testament*. The Handy Guide Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017. 80 pp. Softcover. USD 13.99.

The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs is a cooperation of Jon C. Laansma and Randall X. Gauthier. Laansma holds a position as an associate professor at Wheaton College for Ancient Languages and New Testament (backcover). Besides Koine Greek, his past publications point to his expertise in the Letter to the Hebrews. Gauthier serves as a research fellow with the Department of Hebrew at the University of the Free State in South Africa (ibid.). His publications indicate his expertise in Septuagint studies, where he specializes in the Greek versions of the Psalms.

The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs is the second volume in Kregel’s *The Handy Guide Series*. Douglas S. Huffman serves as the series editor and the author of the first 112-page-long volume, (*The Handy Guide to New Testament Greek: Grammar, Syntax, and Diagramming*. The Handy Guide Series [Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012]). With this series, the publisher seeks to enable ambitious students of Koine Greek to fluently read the Greek New Testament. Kregel decided to match the size of the volumes with the size of the printed version of the Greek New Testament (USB⁵ and NA²⁸). This neat feature allows one to always carry the *Handy Guide(s)* together with a hard copy of the Greek New Testament. Having easy access to the printed version is an essential part of the publisher’s philosophy to reach fluency in reading the Greek New Testament. Laansma and Gauthier state in the introduction that, “After a year or two of elementary Greek grammar, the best thing a student can do is read, read, read. Turn off all parsing aids and close all interlinears. With a text and a print dictionary in hand, read, read, read” (13).

In the Preface, the authors point to the key contribution of this publication, which is “a list of difficult verb forms (second–sixth principal parts) in order of frequency of occurrence; the frequencies represent counts of all of the verbs (simplex + compounds) that share the same stem” (11). This contribution will help the student give priority of learning to those difficult and irregular verbs which appear most frequently. Since those are the verbs which play a major factor in preventing a smooth

reading experience, this feature of the book is a valuable tool in enhancing the student's reading experience.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is titled "Frequency List of Difficult and Irregular Principal Parts" (20–26). It starts out by providing a numerical code for the six principal parts of Greek (21): the first principal part is present and imperfect (all voices), the second principal part is future active and middle, the third principal part is aorist active and middle; the fourth principal part is perfect and pluperfect active; the fifth principal part is perfect and pluperfect middle and passive, and the sixth principal part is aorist and future passive. This system allows Laansma and Gauthier to abbreviate the parsing information in their list. The list contains difficult or irregular verb forms which occur ten times or more in the Greek New Testament. The authors divide the list into ten blocks of about ten to twenty-five entries, probably with the intention of facilitating memorization. The blocks are in descending order of frequency. Each entry contains as much information as a student needs to be familiar with, and be able to recognize, any inflected form of this particular stem in the Greek New Testament.

The second part is titled "Alphabetical List of Verbs with Their Compounds" (27–56). This part lists all seventy-two verbs, already mentioned in the first part, in alphabetical order. For each verb, Laansma and Gauthier added "all the PPs [principal parts] of" the verbs (27). Thus, in case a certain principal part of a verb does not appear in the New Testament, they supply it. This makes *The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs* a valuable resource for those students who read Koine Greek beyond the limits of the New Testament. For those principal parts which appear in the New Testament, and thus also in the list of the first part, the authors add a cross-reference. This helps to quickly find out about the frequency of a certain difficult or irregular verb form. Finally, they provide "all the NT's compound forms of each verb . . . underneath it in descending order of frequency" (ibid.). With its seventy-two entries of simplex verbs and the added compound verbs to each entry, this part becomes a comprehensive source for those dealing with difficult and irregular verbs.

At the end of the book, the editors add two appendices. The first is a collection of tables containing the conjugation of εἶμι, -εἶμι, and -ἦμι (57–64). Here again, Laansma and Gauthier decide to complete the tables with the forms that do not appear in the New Testament. The second appendix, titled "The Perfect and Pluperfect Indicative and the Optative Mood," deals with three morphological elements, which tend to be neglected in beginning courses (65–70). However, instead of a "thorough introduction" to these morphological elements, the authors intend only to give "a few tips that might aid reading" (65).

The book ends with a selected bibliography (71–72) and an alphabetical index of all the verbs mentioned in Part One and Part Two (73–80). By compiling the selected bibliography, the authors refer to five valuable reading helps for the Greek New Testament. Laansma and Gauthier also go beyond the limits of the New Testament in their selected bibliography. They point

to five resources that assist readers of the Septuagint, the church fathers, and other Hellenistic literature, and to two resources that may support those who face the challenges of reading classical literature.

This book definitely deserves its place among the tools that enable students to fluently read the Greek New Testament. By exclusively addressing the difficult and irregular verbs, the authors fill an important gap. Their constant effort to go beyond the limits of the New Testament is praiseworthy and much appreciated. There is not much to be criticized on *The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs*. However, I do question the value of using a numerical code for the six principal parts instead of providing the complete parsing information for each entry. Since it is not something everybody is familiar with, the user of this book basically has the option of either learning them by heart and remembering them, or constantly looking up their definitions (21) before he or she is able to make use of the entire entry. Apart from this, the handy guide will benefit not only the ambitious student who envisions fluently reading the Greek New Testament, but also course instructors. Max Lee, for example, states, “I plan on using the *Handy Guide* for writing my quizzes so I don’t test students on a form of the irregular verb which seldom appears in the New Testament” (2). Thus, this book is a welcome contribution among the tools regarding the Greek New Testament. It is exciting to guess where Kregel will head next with this series.

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Metaxas, Eric. *Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World*. New York: Viking, 2017. xiii + 480 pp. Hardcover. USD 30.00.

Eric Metaxas’s biography of Martin Luther during this period of reflection on the five hundredth anniversary of Protestant Reformation is a masterpiece of historic writing and is reminiscent of his epic biography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In many ways, this work reflects some of the qualities of the subject—Martin Luther. It is bold, breathtaking, audacious, magisterial, uncompromising, myth-shattering, and dramatic. It is a welcome addition to many other biographies on the great Protestant reformer.

This remarkable biography tells the story of a courageous man who spoke truth to power, shaking the very foundations of Western Christianity and shattering the monopoly of Roman Catholicism, thus creating the brave new world of Protestantism and changing the course of history forever. His faith and courage would give rise to the ideas of individual freedom, personal responsibility, equality, and liberty which constitute many of the great values that underline our culture today.

As Metaxas points out, the story was inevitable,

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Luther’s story was not a man born—or later inclined—to tilt at papal windmills. In fact until 1520 he was as vigorous a champion of the church as anyone who had ever lived. He desired desperately to help Rome elude the fate it ended up experiencing. In fact, in a case of extreme irony—so much so that one might think of Oedipus—he