

Metzger, Bruce, and Bart Ehrman. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 384 pp. Paper, \$40.25.

Since the publishing of the first edition in 1964, Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament* has been an essential introduction for readers interested in the textual criticism of the NT. That we now have a fourth edition after 40 years is a testimony both to the esteem accorded Metzger and the contribution of the original edition, but also to the continued growth of the discipline.

The late Bruce Metzger was Professor Emeritus of NT Language and Literature at Princeton University. He was a prolific writer in the field of NT textual criticism and a renowned editor, including a leadership role in both Greek editions of the NT and in English translations. His student, Bart Ehrman, chairs the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and, in many ways, has assumed the mantle of Metzger.

The Text of the New Testament provides a readable, practical survey of the history of the NT text from the making of ancient books through the latest critical editions, and deserves its standing as a "definitive text." Because the earlier editions have been fully reviewed, the remaining comments will focus on the significant additions to the fourth edition. Throughout the book, general information has been updated. Of particular value to understanding the progress of the discipline are the references to recent scholarship both in the text and in the footnotes. Material that was in the Additional Notes and Appendix of the third edition (1992) has been worked into the text of the fourth edition.

Sections worthy of note have been added to this edition. In chapter 6, "Modern Methods of Textual Criticism," a section has been added covering "Alternative Methods of Textual Criticism." A brief introduction and critique of the "majority text" and the "thoroughgoing eclecticism" approaches are given; however, "one may conclude" that these methods are less convincing than the approach of "reasoned eclecticism" mapped out in this book.

Another new section in chapter 6 of this edition discusses "Methods of Determining Relationships Among Manuscripts." Here, the Claremont Profile Method and the Alands' use of *Textstellen* are described in terms of their limitations based on their purpose, followed by the Comprehensive Profile Method introduced by Ehrman in his work, which can then provide a "definitive statement" that is used with "particular success." Current computer applications and major projects are also discussed, providing an excellent overview of the direction in which the discipline is headed today.

Of particular interest is a new chapter, the "History of the Transmission of the New Testament." After setting the stage briefly by introducing the "Complications in Establishing the Original Text," the "Dissemination of Early Christian Literature," and "The Rise and Development of the New Testament Text Types," the author makes the case for "The Use of Textual Data for the Social History of Early Christianity." It is suggested that the task of NT textual criticism needs to move beyond determining the original text and should include the contribution that studies of textual variants can make in understanding the early history of the church. A number of variant readings are used to illustrate the various controversies and social developments in the church during the first few centuries. Thus there remains much to engage scholarship, even though we have a strong consensus Greek text in the UBS4.

Textbooks such as this serve as a snapshot in time of the consensus or "common knowledge" in a discipline. As the development of this text from the first to the fourth

editions illustrates, disciplinary growth in knowledge is taking place. NT textual criticism is a dynamic and lively discipline, with its schools of thought, methodological debates, and emerging agendas. This text persuasively presents one coherent approach, methodology, and perspective, usually labeled "reasoned eclecticism." The influence of this text continues to be dominant. Every student who wishes to engage in this disciplinary discourse will need to take this book into account.

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Nardoni, Enrique. *Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World*, trans. Sean Charles Martin. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004. 343 pp. Paper, \$29.95.

The late Professor Enrique Nardoni presents us with a work that strives to be contextually biblical and historical. He works to counteract ideological readings of the biblical and ancient texts in which eisegesis at times is more prominent than exegesis. This comprehensive coverage and discussion of justice in the biblical world take us on a journey that is authentic and satisfying.

The topic of justice is covered in all of its dimensions: commutative, distributive, and legal—from early Mesopotamian texts to the Johannine writings of the first century C.E. *Rise Up, O Judge* begins by showing that exploitation and oppression existed in ancient Mesopotamia. The legal codes and decrees of mercy, however, demonstrate that the rulers desired to establish justice and equity. The same can be said of ancient Egyptian society and rule of law. Nardoni argues that both cultures influenced the thinking of Israel, and that their preoccupation with justice was analogous with the Hebrews' concerns.

This preoccupation with justice is highlighted with particularity in the Exodus event. This event, Nardoni writes, "is a paradigm of hope for all oppressed peoples, assuring them that they have not been created to be slaves but to be free in a society that should protect and practice justice" (62). Yet, the analogy is not exact. For, unlike the laws of the surrounding nations, biblical laws give preeminence to human life. For example, the life of the poor in the biblical documents is not less valuable than that of the rich.

Nardoni argues that the Prophetic texts present God's persistent hope for justice despite its elusive character. In varied ways, the prophets showed that God would intervene to change the present situation. Utilizing strong and intense language, they also challenged and encouraged all—both oppressors and oppressees—to participate in God's plan.

The Sages' and Apocalypticists' approach to justice is slightly different. Nardoni demonstrates that Wisdom literature is less acerbic and intense; yet, these writings are just as insistent on the fact that God's justice will vindicate the oppressed. In the same vein, the apocalyptic writers highlight the intervention of God to liberate his oppressed people. By the use of symbolic language, the writers encourage the oppressed community and hope is revived for the future.

It seems to me that Nardoni struggled as to how to best present Jesus and Justice. Ultimately he discussed the topic in five different chapters: the historical Jesus, the (odd) combining of Matthew and James, the perspective of Mark, Luke-Acts, and the Johannine discussion. These combinations and varied discussions are complex and worthy of more analysis than space allows here. Be that as it may, Nardoni does clearly demonstrate that Jesus' justice as presented in the Gospels is both liberative and transformative.

The book ends with treatments of the Pauline and Johannine writings. The former focuses on the condition of women, slaves, the poor, and household codes in the deuteropauline writings. The discussion of justice in the latter arises from the experience of