

this series (Textual Criticism and the Translator) will be employed as reference tools, it would doubtless make them easier to use if the entry for each case were headed not only with chapter and verse number(s), but also with the Hebrew lemma of the case itself (i.e., the text of the MT under discussion). At the moment, the reader must hunt through the first paragraph of the entry to find the expressions with which the case is actually concerned. When one wants to know whether *A Handbook on Jeremiah* includes a discussion of the particular expression one is working with, scanning for that information is more of a chore than it needs to be.

It also would aid readers substantially if a couple of matters received fuller discussion in the introduction. The first has to do with the mode of reporting the committee's decisions. The HOTTP committee voted on its decisions, and assigned them letters indicating the level of probability they assigned to their preferred text. *CTAT* reports these details, and *A Handbook on Jeremiah* quite properly does so as well. However, there seems to be no explanation of the process and, more importantly, of the meaning of the letters A, B, C, and D as used by the committee. Thus readers who are not already familiar with these matters will be hindered in understanding the implications of the decisions described by these means as, e.g., when de Waard reports that on such and such a case four members of the committee gave a certain reading B votes, and two gave it C votes. Second, a more detailed elaboration of the principles for excluding from the *Handbook* cases that were included in *CTAT* would have been beneficial.

Should *A Handbook on Jeremiah* ever appear in a second edition, there is an additional lacuna that I hope the author will consider filling. The introduction currently offers a brief and appropriate review of the discussion behind the evaluation of the Old Greek for Jeremiah as often reflecting a Vorlage that diverges from the proto-MT. This is essential background for understanding the HOTTP committee's assessment of the Old Greek's testimony, and is a real help to the reader. Equally essential and helpful would have been a review of the discussion concerning the nature of the relationship between the Vorlage of the Old Greek and the proto-MT, and the positioning of the stance of HOTTP within the options in that discussion. Alas, this is almost entirely absent from the current form of the introduction.

However, the limitations just observed do little to detract from the essential usefulness of *A Handbook of Jeremiah*. For its intended audience of Bible translators, this volume achieves in splendid fashion its goal of assisting them in applying the fruits of the HOTTP committee's work. It will also be an eminently useful tool for all others who work with the Hebrew text, and thus are concerned with finding the best available reading for that text, but are not experts in textual criticism (e.g., seminary students, pastors). For the cases included this is a clear, reliable, and useful presentation of very solid text-critical work and its implications for translation of the text that will serve many readers very well.

RICHARD D. WEIS

Black, David Alan, ed. *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. 157 pp. US\$16.99. ISBN 0-8010-2280-0 (US).

Following a brief, five-page introduction by the editor of this volume, five chapters survey the following areas of NT textual criticism: "Issues in New

Testament Textual Criticism: Moving from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century” (Eldon Jay Epp, 17-76); “The Case for Reasoned Eclecticism” (Michael W. Holmes, 77-100); “The Case for Thoroughgoing Eclecticism” (J. K. Elliott, 101-24); “The Case for Byzantine Priority” (Maurice Robinson, 125-39); and “Response” (Moisés Silva, 141-50).

The essays in this volume had their origin in a “Symposium on New Testament Studies: A Time for Reappraisal,” held April 6-7, 2000, at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina. Epp gave the keynote address, surveying the current state of affairs in NT textual criticism, and the others gave papers focusing on specific areas of their expertise. The articles by Epp, Holmes, and Elliott have extensive footnotes, which lead the reader to significant studies—both new and old.

Epp, as always in his writings, is thorough and helpful. He identifies five issues facing textual criticism at the beginning of the twenty-first century and compares them to the same or similar issues in the nineteenth century: (1) choosing among variants and deciding on priority: the issue of the canons of criticism (20-34); (2) choosing among manuscripts and deciding on groups: the issue of text-types (34-44); (3) choosing among critical editions and deciding for compromise: the issue of current critical editions of the Greek NT (44-51); (4) choosing to address context and deciding on influence: the issue of manuscripts and variant readings in their church-historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts (52-70); and (5) choosing to address goals and directions and deciding on meanings and approaches: the issue of original text (70-75). This sixty-page essay, replete with footnotes that should not be overlooked, should be read by anyone involved in the translation of the New Testament. Epp’s discussion of the fourth and fifth issues will perhaps be the most stimulating for most readers.

Holmes defines “reasoned eclecticism” as “an approach that seeks to take into account all available evidence, both external (i.e., that provided by the manuscripts themselves) and internal (considerations having to do with the habits, mistakes, and tendencies of scribes, or the style and thought of an author)” (79). The most significant part of his essay is probably the section called “The Transmission of the Text of the New Testament” (92-99), in which Holmes discusses the history of the transmission of the text. Along the way here, he makes a strong case against both thoroughgoing eclecticism and Robinson’s Byzantine-priority approach.

Elliott has been a long-time advocate for thoroughgoing eclecticism, which has also sometimes been called “rational eclecticism” and “radical eclecticism.” This approach to assessing variant readings gives primary weight to matters of internal evidence rather than to external evidence of manuscripts. Through brief comments on numerous texts, Elliott makes a good case for this approach; and perhaps more importantly, he indicates that “on the level of theory and principle, thoroughgoing eclecticism is not widely divergent in its views compared with the approaches adopted by other eclectic scholars” (124).

Robinson’s essay is a summary of the paper that he presented at the symposium at Southeastern Seminary. The original essay may be read on the internet in the electronic journal *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* (<http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol06/Robinson2001.html>). His essay gives a brief

description of the method and principles used within a Byzantine-priority theory of textual restoration. Robinson claims that other methods of restoring the original text are too subjective and ultimately fail because they produce “a resultant text that reflects a piecemeal assemblage created from disparate variant units otherwise unrelated to each other” (139).

Silva’s response considers all four presentations; but for this reviewer, the most important part of his response is his concise, but very convincing, refutation of Robinson’s argument for priority of the Byzantine text-type.

For the beginner in the field of NT textual criticism, this volume is a good introduction to the major issues. For the scholar, this volume is a good summary of current text-critical scholarship; and the footnotes provide numerous valuable references to important books and articles that deserve to be read and studied.

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