

**J.W. Childers and D.C. Parker, eds. *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-Critical and Exegetical Studies*. Texts and Studies 3rd series, no. 4. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006. Pp. xxiv + 327. ISBN: 1593333676. \$99.00 USD, cloth.**

1. Not by accident a proverb warns: ‘Do not judge a book by its cover.’ Taking this literally, it is of course self-evident that not the outer appearance is what counts but contents, although some modern publishers heavily rely on the attention they attract by employing eye-catching book covers. For the volume under review, however, the proverb refers to the summarizing text of the back cover, which is somewhat a programmatic promise of what readers have to expect from the present book: the sixteen studies the book consists of are praised as “ground-breaking studies”, “intriguing explorations”, and being “indispensable for those interested in textual criticism” to form “a welcome resource for New Testament scholars”. These phrases (together with the whole paragraph on the back of the book) will be my guiding lines for my evaluation of the individual contributions to this volume *and* of the volume as a whole. All in all, the scope and the quality of the studies vary considerably and the promises made are only partially fulfilled. Nonetheless, the collection is a valuable contribution to the relevant discussions in the field of New Testament textual criticism.

2. Actually the volume is a *Festschrift* for Carroll D. Osburn (until 2004 Carmichael-Walling Distinguished Professor for New Testament at Abilene Christian University) on the occasion of his 65th birthday, which the reader learns from the preface (xii-xvii, here xvii). Surprisingly, the dedication written by Tera Harmon (Abilene Christian University) and Osburn’s bibliography are presented at the end of the book (285-91). The essays of the volume touch Osburn’s own oeuvre thematically; its authors are colleagues and friends (xvi). Consequently, the volume is divided into two main parts with nine studies about the transmission of the text of the New Testament and seven about its reception.

3. The first part comprises essays on more general and methodological topics as well as some very specific ones. Larry W. Hurtado opens the book thematically with a survey over ‘The New Testament in the Second Century: Text, Collections and Canon’ (3-27). Readers of his recent studies and monographs are already familiar with his approach to manuscripts as (archaeological) artefacts. Scholars well-informed about the publications in the fields of papyrology and palaeography will not be much surprised by Hurtado’s observations. Those primarily focusing on Biblical theology, be they textual critics or historians of early Christianity, will certainly be thankful to be informed in such a sound way about the setting manuscripts in the second century were produced in and the context they were meant for.

4. Klaus Wachtel pleads for a better understanding and a more appropriate evaluation of ‘Early Variants in the Byzantine Text of the Gospels’ (28-47). Above all his focus on the too often neglected lectionaries is an extraordinary feature only rarely found even in works in the field of textual criticism. David C. Parker dedicates his study to the mysterious *Hermeneiai* in manuscripts of the Gospel of John (48-68) and interprets his data as an early witness to the development of the Johannine text. Curt Niccum’s essay deals with ‘The Ethiopic Version and the “Western” Text of Acts in *Le Texte Occidental des Actes des Apôtres*’ (69-88), and he concludes that “the ‘Western’ text of Acts proves to be a phantom in Ethiopia as well” (88). Michael C. Holmes points out the significance Günther Zuntz’s work still has for text-critical methodology (89-113). Remaining quite on the surface of the topic Barbara Aland reflects on the question (114-22): “Sind Schreiber früher neutestamentlicher Handschriften Interpreten des Textes?” There are certain methodological problems linked with her approach that tries to bring together palaeography (manifested by referring to James R. Royse’s work) and the linguistic

conditions of the reception of texts (for example, citing Wolfgang Iser's *Der Akt des Lesens* from 1994). Certainly, more recent publications in both fields, as well as in narrative criticism and semiotics, would have been academic disciplines for reference in order to develop a more profound approach. As usual, Eldon Jay Epp employs his topic ('Minor Textual Variants in Romans 16:7', 123-41) in a sound and concise way with a focus on  $\text{P}^{46}$ . Also specializing on an individual verse Gordon D. Fee reflects on 'text and meaning in Romans 8:11' (142-53), while J.W. Childers' study of 'clarifying the relationship of the Greek and Georgian versions [of the *Life of Porphyry*] through New Testament citations' (154-78) may have been put into the second part as well, as it is also a piece of reception history. Childers' evaluation of both, the Greek and the Georgian versions, is very much welcome in respect of the recent discussion of the *Life*. Finally, he draws the conclusion that (178) "[t]he Syriac *Life* was translated from a Greek original, after which it became the source for the extant Georgian version" that "does not represent an uninterpolated and therefore potentially earlier form of the *life*."

5. The second part of the volume with its seven essays is more heterogeneous than the first, consisting of very specialized studies only loosely connected with each other. Mark W. Hamilton works on '11QTemple 57-59, Ps.-Aristeas 187-300, and Second Temple Period Political Theory' (181-95), Kenneth V. Neller on 'Water into Wine (John 2:1-11): Foreshadow of the Atonement' (196-211), and Richard E. Oster, Jr., on Acts 19:27 (Artemis) and epigraphical testimony (212-31). Then there are Kenneth L. Cukrowski's 'An Exegetical Note on the Ellipsis in 1 Timothy 2:9' (232-8), James W. Thompson's 'The Epistle to the Hebrews in the Works of Clement of Alexandria' (239-54), Everett Ferguson's 'The Greek Grammar of Sexuality' (255-70), and Frederick D. Aquino's 'Clement of Alexandria: an Epistemology of Christian *Paideia*' (270-84).

6. The book comes with a dedication to Carroll D. Osburn and his bibliography (285-91), a list of contributors (293-4), and some indices (manuscripts, versions, editions, and translations; biblical passages; ancient authors and texts; modern authors and subjects; 295-327).

7. All in all, most of the essays collected in this *Festschrift* provide sound and essential information for readers interested in the transmission and reception of the New Testament, while the central theme that links the essay does not always become evident. Although the promise made on the back of the book cover is not fully kept, the volume comprises some first class studies that provide state-of-the-art information. Scholars and post-graduates who have already gained knowledge in the academic disciplines touched by the contributions will certainly benefit from the essays in this volume.

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