

Jovan Stanojević, *Orthodox New Testament Textual Scholarship: Antoniadēs, Lectionaries, and the Catholic Epistles*, Texts and Studies 3/26, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2021. ISBN: 9781463242671. Pp. xvii + 207. \$114.95.

- [1] Present-day New Testament scholarship generally follows the modern critical text that finds its origin in the nineteenth century. Yet this sort of scholarly development is not present in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. In fact, the Byzantine majority text is still predominantly favored by the Orthodox community. This volume attempts to provide text-critical reflections on the Greek text of the New Testament from an Orthodox perspective.
- [2] This book is a revised edition of the author's PhD dissertation at Bergische Universität Wuppertal (in cooperation with the Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel).¹ It contains an introduction, five chapters, an appendix, a bibliography, and three indices.
- [3] At the very beginning of the introductory chapter (1–7), the author makes the main purpose clear: “The present study attempts to expand the methodological and practical framework of textual scholarship on the Greek New Testament from an Orthodox perspective” (1). His point of departure is the edition prepared by Vasileios Antoniadēs (*Βασίλειος Αντωνιάδης*; 1851–1932). Published in 1904, Antoniadēs's edition and the text-critical principles therein have been followed by scholars and ecclesiastical authorities of the Eastern Orthodox Church for the past one hundred years. However, despite its significant reception, according to Stanojević, this edition has never been systematically evaluated. He tries to fulfil this desideratum with a twofold examination: “the first is to analyze Antoniadēs' edition with regard to the sources he selected and the way they are presented in the edition, and the second is to analyze the textual differences between Antoniadēs' text and the most widely accepted critical text” (4). The scope of Stanojević's examination is limited to the Catholic Epistles, which is reasonable for a PhD project. In addition, the available data in the *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) have made the study much more feasible.²
- [4] The first chapter in the main body, “History and Background of the Antoniadēs Edition,” is the longest one (9–73). It first provides an overview of Antoniadēs's edition. The purpose of the edition, as indicated by Antoniadēs himself, was “to restore the earliest *Constantinopolitan Ecclesiastical text*” (9, emphasis original). To achieve this goal, the editor believed, one must *a priori* exclude modern critical editions and their sources, especially those of the great majuscules. Instead, Antoniadēs emphasized the importance of *lectionary manuscripts*, which—in his mind—had been inappropriately neglected and rejected by modern critical scholarship. And he also claimed that his edition was independent of any other printed edition. Following the summary of Antoniadēs's preface, Stanojević then sketches the history of the printed editions of the Greek New Testament, focusing on those used by the Orthodox Church. Starting with the *editio princeps* of Erasmus in 1516, Stanojević goes through the past five centuries to highlight significant editions relevant to the present discussion. According to him, before the appearance of the Antoniadēs edition, the *Textus Receptus* has long been accepted as the standard

¹ The original title is “Editing the Greek New Testament for the Orthodox Church: Research into Antoniadēs' Praxapostolos, with Special Reference to the Catholic Letters,” defended on 28 August 2019 (supervisors: Martin Karrer and Stefan Weise).

² The ECM volume of the Catholic Epistles (²2013) was the only published instalment when this project was initiated (in 2016). Hence this choice seems quite logical.

text for the Orthodox community.³ This historical sketch is followed by an assessment of Orthodox New Testament textual scholarship since Antoniades and the reception of his edition in Western scholarship. Notably, already in a review in 1905, Eberhard Nestle pointed out that Antoniades's text "does not differ significantly from the *Textus Receptus*, even though some notable differences do exist" (58). Later scholarship concurred with Nestle's observation and noted that the Antoniades text is not a representative of the lectionary textual group, nor is it close to any particular lectionary manuscript.

- [5] On the basis of the history of scholarship on the edition of Antoniades, the subsequent chapter examines the manuscripts listed by the editor as his sources (75–94). Since not all the listed manuscripts were precisely described, comprehensive identification of the manuscripts used by Antoniades is difficult. Stanojević undertakes this task by providing a useful table, consisting of ninety-five identified manuscripts with Antoniades's sigla, their GA number, age, and content (77–84 [table 8]). References to the Praxapostolos witnesses are also given by the author, thus offering grounds for further examination. Three manuscripts that Antoniades mentioned in the introduction to his edition are specifically discussed. Interesting is the analysis of GA 1869, a late minuscule copied in 1688.⁴ Although Antoniades believed that GA 1869 preserves the more ancient text, Stanojević shows that it seems to have relied on a printed edition (89–90). It is a telling example to illustrate the inadequacy of Antoniades's text-critical judgment.
- [6] After building the basis, the next two chapters provide a concentrated analysis of the Catholic Epistles. Chapter 3, "*Teststellen*: Collation of the Catholic Epistles," aims to "determine the level of textual coherence of the texts of the Catholic Letters in Antoniades' edition" (95). The data used for collations include the manuscripts listed by Antoniades and two widely-used *Textus Receptus* editions.⁵ By adopting the collation model of the Münster *Text und Textwert* volumes, ninety-eight test passages are selected to ensure a reliable evaluation of the textual profiles of the witnesses under examination, including eighteen continuous-text minuscules, ten lectionaries, two *Textus Receptus* editions, and the Antoniades edition. The results are given at a full scale (97–133), following four tables that show the overview and agreements among the collations. Based on this thorough analysis, the author discovers that the editions with the highest level of agreement with Antoniades's text are Stephanus's edition and a lectionary manuscript (*l* 1159): nearly 90 percent of the test passages are the same.⁶ This particular tendency strongly suggests the dependence of Antoniades on the *Textus Receptus*. In short, as far as the Catholic Epistles are concerned, Antoniades's text does not consistently agree with the manuscripts listed as his sources, but it "is eclectic because it represents a combination of readings from different manuscripts and most likely also editions" (142). It thus betrays the statement declared in Antoniades's preface, namely, the claim that the edition was made according to lectionary manuscripts and independent from any printed editions.
- [7] The fourth chapter analyzes textual differences between the Antoniades text and the ECM (145–72). In the Catholic Epistles, according to the author's collation, 268 variant units are different between these two editions. Although at first sight the differences appear to be many, Stanojević suggests that a certain proportion of them "are purely formal" and "do

³ Interestingly, there was a great demand for printed gospel and apostolos lectionary editions, compared to the relatively limited need for an entire edition of the Greek New Testament.

⁴ The other two manuscripts discussed are GA 1739 (tenth century) and *l* 884 (twelfth century).

⁵ Namely, Stephanus's 1550 edition and the BFBS edition of 1830.

⁶ According to table 16, *l* 1156 has an even higher level of agreement (91.58 percent), but it does not contain all the *Teststellen*.

not influence meaning” (154).⁷ Among the remaining differences, twelve units are further commented on because of their significance in terms of meaning. It is important to note that these textual comments are provided *particularly from an Orthodox perspective*, guided by two principles: originality and pragmatism. Accordingly, whereas the pursuit of the original form of the text is indispensable, for the sake of the Orthodox community, “changes are sometimes necessary to make the texts meet the needs of users in different contexts” (154). By employing these two guiding principles, the author comes to the conclusion to follow the ECM nine times (including one with a footnote), the Byzantine text twice, and one time he opts for a reading to be found neither in the ECM nor the Antoniades edition.

- [8] In the final chapter (173–77), the author summarizes his findings and mentions several prospects that can be further developed. This is followed by an English translation of the preface to Antoniades’s edition (179–85), which allows the reader to glimpse how Antoniades described his enterprise. Then a fourteen-page bibliography and three indices of biblical passages, manuscripts, and subjects are given to close the book.
- [9] The advantages of this volume are plenty. First and foremost, it offers a text-critical study concentrated on an influential Orthodox edition from an insider’s perspective. Belonging to the Orthodox tradition himself, Stanojević makes valuable insights into some voices often neglected by Western textual scholarship. His way of tackling variant readings also shows great sensitivity to the pragmatic side of interpretation for a conservative confessional community. Second, the project is clearly structured, starting with the historical investigation and manuscript examination, followed by the textual analysis and comparison with the latest critical edition. This structure can easily be applied to the remaining portions of the New Testament in Antoniades’s edition, or even to other historical or contemporary editions that are worthwhile for investigation. Third, the selected case studies show that the author is well aware of the heated debates on the text-critical issues in the Catholic Epistles. His affiliation with Wuppertal also provides solid grounds for his application of the ECM and its related tools. Lastly, the numerous tables and the appendix are valuable. They offer a more comprehensive understanding of the edition and manuscripts under examination. The making of these tables must be time-consuming, and thus we should appreciate the effort to which the author devoted.
- [10] However, a few points for discussion deserve to be raised. First, it is practical to concentrate on the history of the printed editions that were made for the Orthodox readers. Yet, given the fact that the used text was generally the Textus Receptus and that Antoniades was plausibly influenced by it to a great extent, it might be beneficial to comment more on the formation and establishment of the Textus Receptus. The second issue concerns the author’s analysis of the differences between Antoniades’s edition and the ECM Catholic Epistles. Some variations are considered by the author as insignificant since they do not appear to affect the meaning of the text. But as some recent studies have suggested, word order and the use of articles often play an important role in interpretation. Hence, it would make the author’s selection more persuasive if more emphases were on the distinction between significant and insignificant differences. Furthermore, concerning the selected variant passages, the author occasionally suggests combining a textual variant with a footnote as the best solution. For instance, in Jas 4:4 his choice is to read *μοιχαλίδες* in the text with a footnote explaining its figurative use (161–62). The solution seems to be a mixture of text, paratext, and interpretation. If such a footnote is given, in my opinion,

⁷ Seventy-four instances are listed, including orthographical variations (22×), transpositions (17×), variants concerning article usage (11×), and those with the diamond symbol in the ECM (24×).

it is recommendable to set out the principles of footnote usage in the first place. Without doing so, it might not be easy to draw the boundary between text-critical and explanatory notes, as the latter are normally given in commentaries. Moreover, despite being carefully crafted, I still infrequently spotted some inconsistencies and typesetting errors.⁸

- [11] All in all, this is a fine work that not only fulfills one of the desiderata in current textual scholarship but can also serve as a module for future research. The author does not avoid tackling the tension between critical studies and confessional presuppositions, and he is not afraid to offer fresh prolegomena to a faith community that treasures its tradition profoundly. From this perspective, this book is meaningful and laudable.

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⁸ E.g., the misplaced layout on p. 92; inconsistency of name references on p. 157 and p. 162; on p. 170 “orthographica” should be in italics; on p. 173 “ben” (read “been”); some punctuations are missing in the bibliographical entries; Metzger’s textual commentary was published in 1994, not in 2002; the revision information is missing in Metzger’s *Text* (with Ehrman) and Nestle’s *Einführung*.