Christopher Heilig. *Hidden Criticism? The Methodology and Plausibility of the Search for a Counter-Imperial Subtext in Paul.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017. Edelweisse Ebook.

Hidden Criticism addresses the proliferation in recent decades of studies discussing the possibility of a "counter-imperial" or "anti-Roman" subtext in the letters of Paul. Heilig specifies that his intervention is not intended to provide a final answer to this complex and often controversial question, or even to establish an authoritative method for trying particular cases: "the book is mainly about the background plausibility of the hypothesis of a counter-imperial subtext" (page 8 in the digital edition from Edelweisse that Fortress offers for review). The Pauline Studies trend flagged and discussed in Heilig's study is real and often revelatory, so *Hidden Criticism* is a timely and welcome effort. Unfortunately, it is hampered by what looks like haphazard execution and editing. Some problems make themselves known at the surface level of proofreading and publishing, while other more serious problems (having to do with organization and editing), can be found at the level of the book's overall logic and argument.

The proofreading and publishing problems meet the eye first. Heilig thanks a large number of reviewers for their help in preparing his "monolith" (pp. 13-15), but the end product has a noticeably under-edited appearance. On average, every fifth page preserves a proofreading error glaring enough to be distracting. The many orthographical mistakes and oddities of the 2015 edition remain, and there are also frequent reminders that the author was probably thinking in German – for example, the 2017 ebook, in at least one instance, renders the "subtext-hypothesis" as "subtexthypothesis" (p. 305). Other problems evoke issues with publishing technology and timelines. The 2017 index follows the 2015 edition, for example, in informing the reader that the topic of kingship is discussed on pages 153, 154, 153-154, 154, and 153-154.

The under-edited character of the book appears more subtly but also more seriously in the logic and presentation of its overall argument. Heilig proposes to move from a short excursus discussing possible veiled criticisms of Rome in the writings of Philo (Chapter One) to a presentation of his approach (Chapter Two), and from there to considerations of the discursive context (Chapter Three), the "Roman Context" (Chapter Four), the "Pauline Context" (Chapter Five), and the "Explanatory Context" (Chapter Six) he

Context" (Chapter Five), and the "Explanatory Context" (Chapter Six) he sees as unavoidably involved in the question at hand. However, it is not always clear how well-suited and well-prepared each contextual lens really is, or precisely how each contextual frame relates to the others.

Chapter One ("Analogy") uses scholarship on Philo to show that the question of critical subtexts in ancient Jewish writings is sensible and pertinent, but also dauntingly complex. The parallel does indeed seem pertinent, but for some reason Heilig discusses it before describing his approach in Chapter Two, which neither unpacks nor depends upon this Philonic analogy in meaningful detail. Instead, Heilig recommends in Chapter Two the pursuit of two questions: "How well does the event fit into the explanation given for its occurrence?" and "How plausible are the basic parameters presupposed by the hypothesis?" This stress on likelihood is a welcome instance of a New Testament critic following F. C. Baur's advice to seek the probable in historical investigation – not just the theoretically possible. Heilig's approach accordingly involves sorting and weighing probabilities: the probability that Paul would have wanted to criticize Rome; the probability that Paul would have felt the need to disguise such criticism; the probability that his addressees would have understood and been receptive, etc. In an attempt to add precision, though, Heilig argues at length for importing Bayes' Theorem from the field of probability theory, presented somewhat unusually as $p(H|E)=p(E|H)\bullet p(H)/p(E)$, to help scholars pursue the continuing project as he sees it. The "unknown" probability of the subtext hypothesis must be assessed, Heilig insists, with reference to nested sets of demonstrated "knowns" and acknowledged "likelihoods."

The problem is, of course, that the probability of a hidden anti-Roman subtext in Paul is controversial precisely because scholars have competing ideas both about what is proven and about what is likely. For this reason, introducing an impressive-looking formula adds nothing but potential distraction to the current (non-)method of historians simply sorting and weighing arguments about what they see as probable. Heilig himself demonstrates that his recommended Bayesian frame is disposable at best, by promptly forgetting it for the rest of the book: readers actively interested in the idea of importing tools from probability theory will be disappointed to find only a single (fleeting) subsequent reference to Bayes on page 271. In Chapters Three to Six, Heilig sorts and weighs selected ideas about what seems probable, given certain context-determined likelihoods (James C.

Scott's discursive habits of oppressed people, common and expected ancient Jewish reactions to Roman ideology, etc.). Heilig concludes that an anti-Roman subtext is indeed relatively probable in Paul, but more careful study conducted on such grounds is still needed.

Predictably, Heilig's conclusions and suggestions all look convincing to the degree that the reader shares the ideas of likelihood involved in a given chapter's argument. *Hidden Criticism* spends a lot of time, for example, asking questions about Paul's most likely "intentions," as reconstructed based partly on our understanding of his "personality" (pp. 83, 117, 155, 173, 235, 241, 305). However, if scholars like Laura Nasrallah and Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre are right in stressing that the authorial voice(s) of Pauline letters must always present – in good ancient epistolary form – strategic authorial *personae*, it is not clearly likely that we can recover "Paul's personality" from his letters, or that such intuitions are likely to help us divine any hidden personal intentions. It is even less clearly likely that we can use stories about Paul from the book of Acts to psychologize him, as Heilig does now and then (pp. 38, 115, 137, 232, 237, etc.). At its best, then, *Hidden Criticism* is a necessary, measured and open-minded call for due diligence in scholarly engagement with the anti-Roman Pauline subtext hypothesis. At its worst, it is a valuable reminder of the generally desultory state of the question.

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Jon Stewart. *Hegel's Interpretation of the Religions of the World: The Logic of the Gods*. Oxford: OUP, 2018. xvii + 321 pp.

Reading Hegel is never innocent. As one of the most formidable and challenging intellects of the nineteenth century, Hegel's thought resists being transformed into a museum piece – even exegetical work is forced to consider the real impact Hegel's ideas have on contemporary thought. In his book *Hegel's Interpretation of the Religions of the World: The Logic of the Gods*, Jon Stewart produces some fine textual work contextualizing Hegel's views on religion and the debates it caused in his time. However, the work ultimately fails as a convincing account of religion, precisely because