is, in Critchley's argument, a stronger, more rigorous, and more ethically demanding action. This affirmative stance unites his deeply personal, highly engaging, and compelling account of a post-Christian ethics and a faith for the faithless.

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The Early Text of the New Testament.

Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (eds.). Oxford: OUP, 2012.
ISBN: 9780199566365. Pp. xiv + 483.
Reviewed by Brice C. Jones, Concordia University

According to the introduction ("In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament"), the editors state that the main goal of this volume is "to provide an inventory and some analysis of the evidence available for understanding the pre-fourth-century period of the transmission of the NT materials" (2). The book is divided into three main sections: (1) "The Textual and Scribal Culture of Early Christianity"; (2) "The Manuscript Tradition"; and (3) "Early Citation and Use of New Testament Writings."

The essays in the first section are devoted to various topics concerning the literary culture of early Christianity, with essays on "The Book Trade in the Roman Empire" (Harry Y. Gamble), "Indicators of 'Catholicity' in Early Gospel Manuscripts" (Scott Charlesworth), "Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading" (Larry Hurtado), and "Early Christian Attitudes toward the Reproduction of Texts" (Michael J. Kruger). The second section is comprised of essays that are more specifically focused on the evaluation of individual manuscripts of the early papyri (and a few early parchments) of the Gospels (Tommy Wasserman, Peter M. Head, Juan Hernández Jr., Juan Chapa), Acts (Christopher Tuckett), Paul (James R. Royse), the Catholic Epistles (J. K. Elliott), and Revelation (Tobias

Nicklas), as well as one final chapter on the early versions (Peter Williams). The essays in the final section examine the text of the New Testament in early Christian writings, such as the Apostolic Fathers (Paul Foster), Marcion (Dieter T. Roth), Justin (Joseph Verheyden), Tatian's Diatessaron (Tjitze Baarda), Apocryphal literature (Stanley E. Porter), Irenaeus (D. Jeffrey Bingham and Billy R. Todd, Jr.), and Clement (Carl P. Cosaert), with one essay devoted to citation techniques in the second century (Charles E. Hill).

If there is one term that keeps resurfacing in this book it is "early." Not only do we find the term in the title of the book, it is also present in the titles of fourteen of the twenty-one essays. The agenda of the volume seems to be reflected in the title of the introduction: "In Search of the Earliest Text of the New Testament." While the individual authors express different views concerning concepts such as the "early text," "original text," "initial text," or *Ausgangstext*, the editors in the introduction state clearly that the traditional goal of New Testament textual criticism, namely, seeking the "original text," should be upheld (4). This thinking goes against the grain of the "new textual criticism" (a phrase used by J.K. Elliott elsewhere), where working toward an original text has been generally subordinated (though not completely abandoned) to other objectives that focus on plotting out the history of the text. The book's emphasis on the "early" manuscripts of the New Testament, i.e., manuscripts dated before around 350 CE, is also problematic, since an early date is not necessarily determinative of textual quality. As Elliott rightly states in his chapter, "to emphasize their [i.e., the papyri] early dates is deceptive. The age of a manuscript is of no significance when assessing textual variation, unless we know how many stages there were between the autograph and that copy and also what changes were made at each of the intervening stages. No one has such information" (223). I am still waiting for the day that textual critics give as much attention to the many later majuscule manuscripts as they do the papyri, which continue to take the spotlight, but I will not hold my breath.

In stressing the "early" and the "original," one gets the overall impression that the motives of the editors may be apologetic in nature. In addition to the introduction, two other essays evince further an apologetic tone. Co-editor Michael Kruger's essay attempts to combat the view that the early text was unstable and corrupt by showing that "this is not necessarily how early Christians viewed these texts or how they approached their transmission" (65). Kruger provides several examples from early Christian writings as evidence, such as the *Didache*, Revelation, Irenaeus, Dionysius, etc.; however, not all of the examples he provides are as "express" as he claims. For example, in Gal 3:15, Paul's reference to the annulment of a covenant does not refer in any way to the text of the New Testament, yet Kruger lists it in his "select examples" (73) that are said to reflect the attitude toward the reproduction of the New Testament. He also cites (75) as another example a passage from the *Epistle*

of Barnabas (19.11), which states, "You shall guard what you have received, nor add or take away." Kruger then argues that that which is received "likely" signifies written traditions about Jesus. However, it is not at all clear that the phrase "what you have received" is referring to a New Testament text. It could just as well (and more likely does) refer to some kind of catechetical teaching, extant or otherwise, written or oral. We simply do not know to what the phrase is referring. So, to say that these examples serve as evidence that "early Christians, *as a whole*, valued their texts as scripture and did not view unbridled textual changes as acceptable" (79; italics mine) is both dubious and reductionistic.

In his essay, Scott Charlesworth takes two indicators of "catholicity," the codex and *nomina sacra*, to be a corrective to Walter Bauer's thesis that second-century Christianity consisted solely of Christian diversity or heterodoxy without any form of centralized theological uniformity. His two scribal "indicators," however, are not valid criteria for arguing for "catholicity" (on his definition) over against Bauer's thesis. Bauer was mainly concerned with ideological/theological diversities, and while I agree with Charlesworth that his two indicators do seem to reflect some systematic uniformity early on, early Christian collaboration on issues related to *text-production* (Charlesworth's two indicators) does not necessarily imply collaboration and consensus on matters theological. It is true that some scholars have argued that the codex and *nomina sacra* carry certain theological implications (e.g., the "Four Gospel codex," *nomina sacra* as expressions of Christian piety), but scribal conventions generally do not tell us anything about theological unity or diversity in early Christianity. Christians could have agreed on certain scribal methods and practices related to text-production early on without agreeing on the larger theological issues, practices, and beliefs.

The introduction (written by the co-editors) and the essays by Kruger (a co-editor) and Charlesworth are, therefore, perhaps suggestive of the underlying motives of the editors: (1) to privilege the "early text," (2) to argue that the Christians copied their texts with care and that these "attitudes" about their texts have "broad attestation" (79) and are "remarkably uniform (ibid.)," and (3) to argue that the "earliest papyri" overthrow Bauer's thesis of early Christian diversity, since these papyri "are indicative of 'catholic' collaboration and consensus, presumably among the 'orthodox'" (47). The conservative and apologetic undertones in these arguments are clear. None of the arguments, however, is tenable.

Lest the above assessment sound too unfavorable, I must state that the volume as a whole is excellent. The essays in section two provide detailed analyses of each pre—fourth–century papyrus for each book of the New Testament, which can be used as a kind of reference for the early papyri of the New Testament. The approach and layout of each chapter in this section was apparently left up to the authors (other than the discussions of the Alands' judgments about the freedom or

strictness of each text, which every contributor was asked to include [18]), since there are various points of focus, such as textual analysis, scribal habits, variants, etc. Elliott's evaluation of the papyri containing the Catholic Epistles stands out from other chapters in terms of approach, in that it examines how the text of the papyri relate to the text established by the *Editio Critica Maior*. In his evaluation of the text of Matthew's Gospel, Wasserman adopts the method of Kyoung Shik Min, which maps the correspondence between the text of the papyri and that of the NA[27]. Here I should say that I found the approach and format of Wasserman's essay to be the most clear of all the essays.

Overall, this book is an important addition to our field and thus is to be recommended to anyone interested in the text of the New Testament, in spite of the apparent apologetic predispositions on the part of the editors. It should be noted that there are numerous typographical errors, which I list here: "Papryi" (p9); "P.Papyrus inv. 2" (47); "διαθήκη-γ῾ρ" (73); "δεκαπντε" (92); incorrect chart (97); "7/1" should be 7/12 in chart (98); "Manuscript" (105); "suggests that were" (109 n.2); "edition." (114); P in "P[45]" is without Unicode (115); "ι<ει" (127); "Jesus affirmation" (149); "identity" should be "identical" (164); "Leonidas" should be "Leonides" (187 n.49); Coptic conjunction "AYO" should be "AYW" (243); "collection of come kind" (267); "what he though" (274); last word of *Did*. 3b in Table 15.1 is ὑμᾶς but should be ὑμῶν (286); "κριθῆτε.ε᾽ν" in Matt 7:1 in Table 15.2 (289).

The Thunder: Perfect Mind: A New Translation and Introduction.
Hal Taussig, Jared Calaway, Maia Kotrosits, Celene Lillie, and Justin Lasser. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
ISBN: 978-0230105638. Pp. xii + 189.
Reviewed by Stéphanie Machabée, McGill University

This book is a collaborative volume between Visiting Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York, Hal Taussig, and a team of students, who selected *The Thunder: Perfect Mind (Thunder)* from the Nag Hammadi corpus as the major text for their semester work in 2007 (xi). This book is divided into ten chapters and includes the Coptic version of *Thunder*, along with the editors' English translation of the text. This volume is a close literary analysis of *Thunder* and provides reflections on the meanings it has "in relationship to society, gender, violence, and identity through the ways in which it has been written and performed" (viii).

Thunder is the second text in codex VI of the corpus of manuscripts discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945. The voice of *Thunder* uses "I am" statements in a powerful