Aland, Barbara and Andreas Juckel, eds.  
*Das Neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung: II, Die Paulinischen Briefe. Teil 2:2: Korintherbrief, Galaterbrief, Epheserbrief, Philippberbrief und Kolosserbrief*  
Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung 23  

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The versions are among the most valuable tools for establishing the most ancient text of the NT. Their date is early (especially for Syriac and Latin, both of which are second century); their earliest form would reflect, of course, the Greek text current at the time of their translation. It is certainly possible--indeed, it is probable--that, here and there, they may preserve a more ancient form of the text than any extant Greek NT MS. Although much modern scholarship ignores this tenet of textual criticism, it is, of course, nothing new, for already in 1922 Alexander Souter had remarked of a variant found in Heb 10:29 that it was an instance where "A reading may be right even if no single extant Greek MS. contains it" ("The Importance of the Latin Versions for the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," *The Expositor* 8th ser., 23 [1922] 135); it was also used by the likes of F. C. Burkitt, F. Kenyon, A. Vööbus, and even B. F. Westcott (see p. 328 [in the "Additional Notes"] to the *Introduction and Appendix* [Vol. 2] of *The New Testament in the Original Greek* [second edition; Cambridge: Cambridge, 1896]). Versional evidence is especially compelling when buttressed by our other most valuable tool for establishing the most ancient text of the NT, namely, the earliest patristic citations--from Ignatius, Clement, Justin, and Irenaeus, for example.

The value of the versions and patristic citations is well understood by the members of the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and their Direktorin, Frau Prof. Dr. Barbara Aland. The volume under review is the third in their monumental project to create a new "großen Ausgabe" of the NT. The project deliberately began with those portions of the NT for which the least evidence existed (viz., the Major Catholic epistles in Syriac) in order to use this meagerly attested section as a proving ground for the project's methods and presentation. The results appeared a decade ago in the first volume in the series *Die Grossen Katholischen Briefe* (1986), which was reviewed in vol. 107 of this journal (1988; pp. 351-53). Making adjustments as needed, the project next addressed more complex material: the Pauline epistles in Syriac. The first part of the
Paulines appeared in 1991 (also reviewed in this journal [vol. 111 (1992) 555-58]). The volume examined in this review--the third in the series--completes the Paulines. Still awaiting treatment are the most complex materials: the book of Acts (difficult because of the "Western Text" of Acts, which is intimately connected with the Syriac versions) and, of course, the Gospels (which, because of the problem of cross-gospel harmonization, the popularity of extra-canonical traditions, the freedom with which they were modified, and the influence of the Diatessaron, remain the Mount Everest of textual study).

As in previous volumes, an exemplary introduction (pp. 1-49) sets out the plan of the study, discusses the MS evidence employed, surveys the results of the study of the Peshitta and the Harclean versions, and remarks on the Greek Vorlage of the tradition. The Syriac text occupies pp. 57-445 (this is discussed below); pp. 449-88 contain West Syrian Massora for the text; pp. 473-84 are an Index Patristicus of "paraphrases" of the text (these were not included in the text pages because of their "broken" or fragmentary character and apparently loose citation style); pp. 485-88 present the variant readings of the Peshitta Leit-Zeile against the five major editions of the Peshitta (Walton, Leusden and Schaaf, Lee, the Mosul edition, and the British and Foreign Bible Societies' edition) in the style of a collation; pp. 491-534 contain a Rückübersetzung into Greek of the Harclean, with an apparatus giving variants in Greek MSS 1505 1611 2138 and 2495, which appear to be closest to the Greek archetype from which Thomas of Harkel worked. This is followed by an alphabetical list of the patristic authors cited and the edition(s) used, with complete bibliographic references (pp. 535-62). The remaining twenty pages contain (1) a chronological list of the patristic evidence, grouped into periods and type of literature (e.g., "Early Syrian Authors from the time of the Peshitta," "Monophysite Translations from the time between the Peshitta and the Harclean," etc.); (2) an "Index Patristicus-Biblicus," showing for each Father which passages he cites; and, finally, (3) a thorough bibliography.

As in previous volumes, the text is presented in parallel horizontal lines, à la Jüicher's Ital. This is, of course, the ideal way to present the evidence of individual witnesses. Each verse contains as many lines as there are witnesses. (Normally there is only one line for the Peshitta's text, and one line for the Harclean's text, with variants to these being given in an apparatus at the bottom of the page.) The top line is the Peshitta, here represented by the text of British Library Add. 14.470 (V/VI cent.); another eleven MSS have been collated in their entirety (British Library Add. 7157, 14.475, 14.476, 14.477, 14.479, 14.480, 14.481, 17.122; Vatican Syr. 16; St. Catherines, Sinaiaticus Syr. 5; and Bayerischen Staatsbib. Syr. 8). For the Harclean, the line is (principally) the text of a newly-discovered MS, Jerusalem, St. Mark's Cloister, MS 37 (VIII/IX cent.); two other MSS have been collated completely, with their readings in the apparatus (Oxford, New College 333 and Cambridge, Univ. Lib. Ms Add. 1700). Successive lines set out the exact text of the available patristic citations, with the references given. As in Jüicher, words are positioned in exact vertical alignment, allowing an immediate visual grasp of the agreements and differences among the witnesses.
The analysis of the Peshitta text is similar to the findings in the first Pauline volume. The editors are struck by the "große Konformität der Textüberlieferung" (p. 8), and by the "zunehmende Angleichung an den griechischen Text des Neuen Testaments bei gleichzeitiger Bewahrung von Syrismen." This accelerating tendency to conform to the Greek was, however, in "keiner der Textzeugen führt . . . systematisch durch." This idiosyncratic nature of the Peshitta text means that it does not lend itself to reconstruction of the Greek archetype of the version. (This is hardly a surprising conclusion, for the date of the Peshitta is quite early--fifth century--and its genesis is mysterious.) As for the variants in the Peshitta, many of them--roughly sixty percent of the 364 detected--are singular. The number of variants in these books (2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians) are greater than in Romans and 1 Corinthians. The single most common characteristic of these variants is the (growing) influence of the Greek text, that is, the introduction into the Syriac of a reading that is a more precise translation of the Greek or which conforms better with the Greek of that day. Although Aland and Juckel do not point it out, this raises two possibilities: (1) that these "Hellenizing" changes in the Peshitta are merely "improvements" in the Syriac, making it a more accurate translation of an unchanged Greek base; or (2) that these apparently "Hellenizing" changes in the Peshitta actually reflect changes in the Greek MS tradition, away from the Greek base from which the Peshitta was originally translated (the earlier Peshitta readings no longer reflect the later Greek text and, therefore, need to be brought into conformity with the more recent Greek tradition). The experience of scholars with the text of the earliest patristic citations and, especially, with the Vetus Syra suggests that both motives were at work.

The Harclean's text is, however, a beast of a different sort entirely. Based on the Philoxenian, and-- according to a colophon in Cambridge, Univ. Lib. Ms Add. 1700--corrected against two Greek MSS, its character can be stipulated quite precisely. As in the earlier volume, Aland and Juckel find the Harclean's text closest to MS 2138 (date 1072), a group that includes 1505 1611 and 2495. "Bindefehler" link the Harclean with this group, the surest sign of a genetic relationship. Studies of the text in the present volume confirm the results of the earlier volumes: the famous "Harclean margin" contains two sorts of variants, being (1) readings of the (lost) Philoxenian and (2) readings from the "second" Greek tradition Thomas used as well as other (rejected) Greek readings he wished to preserve.

The most striking thing about these studies is their ability to humble one. They visually confront one with just the facts--but they are facts that admit only one conclusion: the text of the Paulines was never static but always in flux. It displays growth which, speaking generally, can be characterized as moving away from its roots (which lie, presumably, in a Greek version of the Paulines) and toward conformity with a later, different Greek text. This conclusion should not be surprising, for it is exactly what one encounters when one studies the other versions. Nevertheless, it is a hard lesson to learn.
The reviewer cannot emphasize strongly enough the immense importance of this project of the Institut, its importance for the future of NT scholarship, and the value of these volumes. Any commentator on the Catholic Epistles or Paulines who ignores them does so at his or her own peril. Any historian or sociologist of the NT era who does not refer to these volumes runs the risk of making his or her work instantly obsolete, for the basis for all such research remains the text of the NT. And the contents of these volumes, the impact of this project, will alter the shape of the NT text.

The Institut and its members have been criticized in the past for various textual decisions and pronouncements; indeed, this reviewer has sometimes been among the critics. But this project and these volumes, like those of Text und Textwert, are beyond reproach, for they merely collect and then present--in spectacularly transparent fashion--the evidence of the manuscripts. It is astonishing that so much work of such surpassing excellence can emanate from such a single small group of scholars. They deserve our thanks, our support, and our admiration. Anyone who has examined these volumes will assent: At the name of Münster, every NT scholar's knee shall bow. (9/96)