This volume contains papers presented at an international symposium held at the University of Salzburg in December 2009. The introductory essay by Peter Arzt-Grabner (“Papyrologie und Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft: Einige Beispiele aus neueren Papyruseditionen”), one of three PKNT (Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament) editors and the driving force behind the commentaries (see http://www.uni-salzburg.at/bwkg/pknt), provides an overview of what papyrology can offer New Testament studies. He begins with a brief history of the relationship between papyrology and New Testament studies (with mention of Deissmann, Moulton and Milligan, Horsley, and Lee). A short survey of recently published New Testament papyri follows. The bulk of the essay is taken up with a comparison of papyrus and Pauline letters. Of roughly 58,000 edited papyri, ostraca, and tablets, about 7,000 are letters. Finding fault with Deissmann’s differentiation between “private” letters and “public” epistles, Arzt-Grabner argues that almost any kind of ancient document could take the form of a letter and that private letters became public when published. Moreover, the Pauline letters are not longer and more literary than papyrus letters. The language of papyrus letters covers a spectrum from short messages written in rough Greek to long, private letters in which news, advice, and requests are interspersed with philosophical and abstract musings. One such letter, P.Ammon 1.3, offers a clear parallel to the Pauline letters. Another, P.Oxy. 73.4959, which was dictated to a secretary and then revised by the sender himself, is
instructive for the relationship between secretary and author in the Pauline letters. After providing a number of minor philological and interpretative insights gleaned from documentary papyri, Arzt-Grabner closes with positive mention of what the circa 100,000 still-unpublished papyri might reveal.

The two lead papers, which are written by the other PKNT editors (except for Destro), are concerned with methodology and cultural awareness. Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce (“The Colour of Words”) argue that words lose their original color(s) or meaning(s) apart from the ancient context(s) in which they were used. But it is not simply a matter of comparing words as used in Christian and documentary texts. Rather, comparison of words used in different contexts requires “a careful process of interpretation and cultural mediation” (28). Drawing on theoretical models and contexts found in ancient sources, Destro and Pesce identify the social and relational context(s) of slavery in the Gospel of John. The household with its masters and slaves is fundamental to John’s understanding of the master-disciple relationship. In washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus assumes the role of a slave. The tunic, basin, λέντιον (linen cloth), and foot-washing were all elements in the Greco-Roman welcome performed by slaves. So when Jesus adopts the demeanor of a slave, cultural master-disciple roles are inverted. He then invites all of his disciples to take the same servile stance in relation to each other. Other aspects of the slave motif draw on ancient ideas about friendship between slaves and masters and manumission that results, contrary to expectation, in the slave remaining in the house forever.

John Kloppenborg (“Pastoralism, Papyri and the Parable of the Shepherd”) insists that interpretative models must be awake to ancient Mediterranean cultural values, social and economic structures, and mechanisms of exchange. He interprets the parable of the shepherd (Luke 15:4–7 par.) using a “carefully constructed model of pastoralism in Mediterranean antiquity,” one “that is coherent with modern ethnographies of pastoralism” (52). After discussing various modes of pastoralism, he turns to the papyri. A flock of one hundred sheep was typically managed by a single shepherd. Owners of flocks usually hired shepherds, even when they had relatively few sheep. Small owners pooled their animals into a larger flock under the care of one shepherd. So the shepherd in the parable was probably not the owner of the sheep. Moreover, shepherds were poorly paid and had to replace any animals that went missing. The cost of replacing a ewe was around one month’s wages, so the shepherd who left ninety-nine in search of the one may well have been motivated by financial considerations.

There is also some consideration of the Septuagint and papyrology. Christian-Jürgen Gruber (“The Lexical Constancy and Changes in Heb. 7:1–3 Compared to Gen. 14:17–20”) looks at the use and modification of the Melchizedek story (Gen 14:17–20) by the author of Hebrews. While certain words that retain their basic meanings are left...
unchanged, the author replaces ἀναστρέφω with ὑποστρέφω. The papyrological evidence suggests that by the Roman era the meaning of ἀναστρέφω had changed from “to return” to “to behave.” As for ὑποστρέφω, it is not attested before the second century C.E. and always means “to return.” Therefore, the author of Hebrews is likely to have made the change in line with current usage, rather than accessing a different Septuagintal manuscript. In a brief survey of research, Franz Winter (“Die dokumentarischen Papyri Ägytens und die LXX: Einige Beobachtungen zum Text von 2Kön”) notes that the LXX, perhaps because of its voluminous nature, has not yet been thoroughly examined in relation to documentary papyri. As a result, unusual words tend to be categorized as neologisms or voces biblicae. Among a number of examples is στολιστής, which, in the Ptolemaic papyri, is a high-ranking priest responsible for sacred robes. Rather than being a variation on θυατηρεῖται λίθῳ Ἰταμάτης (“and he brought out to them the robes”) at the end of 1 Kgs 10:22, καὶ ἐξῆνεκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ στολιστής (“and the keeper of the sacred robes brought [them] out to them”) is a substitution taken from contemporaneous Greek that explains “the one who is over the wardrobe” (לֶאֶשֶּׁר עַל־הַמֶּלְתָּחָה) in the first part of the verse.

Reference is also made to legal terminology and apparent Semiticisms that have parallels in the papyri.

The remaining essays, which are not discussed in order, are more topical. In a wide-ranging contribution Giovanni Bazzana (“BASILEIA—The Concept of Kingship in Light of Documentary Papyri”) takes issue with the usual procedure for ascertaining whether the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ can be attributed to Jesus. Instead of searching the Hebrew Bible and the Pseudepigrapha for references to God as a βασιλεύς, a word that occurs very rarely and in a negative sense in the Gospels, Bazzana examines the use of both words in documentary papyri. In Ptolemaic papyri βασιλεύς conveys the political and ideological values of Hellenistic kingship. But Augustus, who had appealed to republican traditions during the struggle with Antony and Cleopatra, banned its official use (and, by extension, use of βασιλεία). Bazzana thinks this may account for the absence of βασιλεύς in comparison with βασιλεία in the New Testament. However, Augustus also understood that the concept of divine “kingship” (βασιλεία), when distanced from its embodiment in individual human “kings” (βασιλεῖς), could provide continuity and accommodate change. So Bazzana argues that βασιλεία can mean both “kingship” and “kingdom” in the hypothetical sayings source Q. He then goes on to attribute the two usages to different redactions of Q produced in Galilee at different times (following Kloppenborg and Arnal).

The paper by Joachim Hengstl (“Zum Erfahrungprofil des Apostels Paulus aus rechtshistorische Sicht”) is an even more wide-ranging synthesis that draws in particular on Arzt-Grabner’s PKNT volume on Philemon. He sets out to show why A. Papathomas (Juristische Begriffe im ersten Korintherbrief des Paulus, Vienna, 2009), who argues that in
Paul’s day legal elements dominated 1 Corinthians, is wrong. Hengstl begins by comparing the backgrounds and experience of Luke and Paul from the standpoint of their language. Luke has an educated knowledge of legal terminology and probably administrative experience in a Greek polis. In contrast, the profile of Paul that emerges from his undisputed letters is that of a craftsman who learned Greek from his Greek-speaking environment. Ideas found in apprentice contracts from Egypt appear in Philemon. But apprentices were widely separated, in social terms, from the citizen elites. Therefore, Paul may have been a master of apprentices in a family manufacturing business or factory and so on a par financially with the elites. Familiarity with the formula recommendation letter, which was needed only at higher social levels, may confirm this. At any rate, Paul’s accomplished Greek shows that he managed to overcome educational boundaries. How then to explain the lack of strong legal-specific concepts in his letters, particularly when both Jews and Romans had pursued him legally? If these were excised by the compilers of Paul’s letters, no certain traces of that action can be found. Therefore, like many other people, Paul picked up a general legal knowledge from the legal documents produced by scribes. In the same way, the use of general military terms cannot prove that Paul had military experience. Instead, like the Greek papyri, he uses the koiné in all of its diversity.

Christina M. Kreinecker (“How Power and Province Communicate: Some Remarks on the Language of the [Non-]conversation between Pilate and Jesus”) tackles once again the question of the language(s) of the Galilean Jesus. She proposes that Jesus, an average Galilean, “was not able to speak Greek” or, perhaps, very little, certainly “not enough to follow a whole trial in every detail” (177). In a selection of later papyri, legal proceedings appear to have been conducted in Greek, while judgments were pronounced in Latin, a symbol of Roman power. Although Kreinecker has no burden to insist that Jesus was in fact silent, this primary point remains: since the trial was conducted in Greek, the language of the powerful elite, the provincial Jesus would not have been able to follow everything, and this inability might explain his silence. Unfortunately, this conclusion is overly reliant on the work of Mark Chancey, who quantifies and compares lists of texts without examining and analyzing individual texts in detail and context.

The literary-critical paper by Günther Schwab (“Eine echheitskritische Frage zum Stil und Inhalt von 1Thess 1,5–8”) is a by-product of his contribution to research on the PKNT Thessalonian volumes. Comparison is made first to 1 Cor 1:4–9, which has a number of common words and phrases. Schwab argues that these verses may have been added by a redactor to protect Paul from the idea, conveyed by the rest of the letter, that his preaching in Corinth had been ineffectual. But 1 Thess. 1:5–7 is not an interpolation like 1 Cor. 1:4–9. On the basis of a similar structure (arranged around causal particles) and common words in 1 Thess 1:5–7 and Luke 1:1–4, as well as shared echoes of the in-
filling Holy Spirit and Lukan world mission, Schwab argues that 1 Thess 1:5–8 and, indeed, all of 1 Thessalonians may be the work of Luke or one of his associates. While the parallels might be dismissed as weak and the result of a shared thought world, Schwab insists that certainty one way or the other will not be possible until the whole book has been examined for affinities to Luke-Acts.

Finally, like Schwab’s essay, two other papers are somewhat surprising inclusions in a book about papyrology and the New Testament. Ruth Kritzer (“Secunda urbis praecipua et patriarchalis basilica: Paulusverehrung im stetigen Schatten?”) responds to the papal finding of 2009 that bone fragments, carbon-dated to the first–second century and found under the altar of the Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls, may belong to the apostle Paul. From the literary evidence, which speaks of a halving or dividing of the remains of both apostles in the mid-third century and then deposition in two locations (the aforementioned church and the Lateran), Kritzer ventures that the fragments may come from more than one body. David Martinez (“Epiphany Themes in Christian Liturgies in Papyrus”) looks at three hymns on papyrus that illustrate how baptism and Epiphany were commemorated in late antique Egyptian communities. While several papyrus documents are discussed in this study, the late antique and liturgical focus is still somewhat out of place.

The papers in this book provide a good introduction to the purpose and scope of the PKNT project. The PKNT commentaries function as original and innovative supplements to traditional biblical commentaries. As Bazzana notes in his paper, looking at the New Testament through the eyes of documentary papyri “may enrich and sometimes even radically change the traditional understanding of historical and theological issues” (154). If this book can help to alert scholars to the important and growing body of New Testament–related papyrological work, it will have done its job.