egalitarianism. There is no distinct role for mothers, and the goal of children is to live fulfilled and happy lives. On the Strict Father model, moral order is timeless and traditional, while on the Nurturant Parent model it is based in fairness and human interdependence. As a root metaphor for government, the job of a “strict father” government is to uphold the moral character of the nation and protect it from external threats. The job of the “nurturant parent” government is to promote equity, to foster a climate of respect, and to cooperate with (not dominate over) other nations.

After a brief chapter on the study of ancient family, empire studies, and generally reading against the grain (chap. 2), the next eleven chapters run through the usual material in the usual way on Roman domestic architecture (chap. 3), family member roles (chap. 4), slavery (chap. 5), marriage, sex, and divorce (chap. 6), Augustus as paterfamilias (chap. 7), Augustan family legislation (chap. 8), and imperial cult (chap. 9). E. then turns to the topic of resistance to the Strict Father imperial model—armed resistance (chap. 10), intellectual resistance (surely not the best way of categorizing Essenes and Cynics; chap. 11), ritual resistance (a term I really do like for the mystery religions; chap. 12), and communal meals and voluntary associations (chap. 13).

The final two chapters focus on Paul’s letter to Philemon, chap. 14 running through the options for the occasion of the letter, and chap. 15 covering the letter commentary-style. E.’s reading of the letter is sensitive to ancient social context, and evocative in its narrative. In it, she surmises that Paul was encouraging the audience to live in an alternative way to the Strict Father family model of the empire.

This book is interesting and readable, but it is unclear who its target audience is. In some ways, the book seems directed at a nonspecialist readership: the number of images and summary tables, the use of art to situate many of the ancient analyses, the terms that are explicitly defined for the reader (alphabetic footnotes in, oddly, just one of her chapters), the infuriating use of endnotes, and a sometimes folksy writing style (see especially the all caps on p. 27) suggest nonspecialists, possibly even undergraduate readers. But it is difficult to imagine a book this narrow in topic serving as a textbook for an undergraduate course.

It is also difficult to understand what has been gained by using Lakoff’s work as the frame for the book, given that E. acknowledges explicitly (p. 42) that the modern American Strict Father family model “differs significantly” from the ancient Roman family model, and none of the variety of ancient alternatives to the dominating Roman family model much resemble the modern Nurturant Parent model. In the end, then, it gives the appearance that the Lakoff material was merely a way of making the ancient evidence appear relevant to modern Americans. The same argument could have been made without Lakoff’s help.

Zeba Crook, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON K1S 1B6, Canada


A revision of his doctoral dissertation (Marquette University, 2011, supervised by Carol Stockhausen and Julian Hills), Foster’s monograph opens with an intriguing reference to the musical Fiddler on the Roof. Tevye the milkman kvetches to God, “I know, I know
. . . we are your chosen people—but once in a while, can’t you choose someone else?”

Anyone elected to office, whether high school class president or president of a home owners’ association knows all too well that the blessing of election is a burden if not an outright curse. Over the course of eight chapters, F. attempts to demonstrate the ways in which Paul’s Romans 9 is a reconfiguration of Abraham’s family along the lines established in Genesis whereby the younger son supplants his older brother. F. is first and foremost interested in Paul’s pre-epistolary exegesis of Genesis in order to explain Paul’s argument that Jews and gentiles are both equal yet distinct children of Abraham.

Before getting to the crux of his argument in chaps. 6 and 7, F. sets the stage by exploring why the story of Abraham is important to Paul (chap. 2), why Paul writes a letter to Christ-followers in Rome (chap. 3), and how he uses scriptural quotations (chaps. 4 and 5). It is interesting to note that, in his introduction, F. spends little time outlining chap. 3 about the reasons Paul wrote Romans, which is his most compelling and lucid chapter. That is to say, while the book is primarily about the exegetical substructure of Romans, F.’s speculation about the letter’s raison d’être is most intriguing. His argument against the consensus view of the sociohistorical context of Romans is provocative and clearly presented.

To be sure, Genesis is shot through with the reversal of the law of primogeniture. First encountered in the narration of primordial history, in the story of Cain and Abel, the motif of the chosenness of the younger over the older comes to the fore in the narratives of the patriarchs and matriarchs. Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Ephraim and Manasseh are part and parcel of this motif. As F. explains, “A younger brother is repeatedly assigned the status of firstborn, but he receives his inheritance only after suffering the rejection his elevation imposed on the elder son. It is this dialectic of election, displacement, and reversal that gives Rom 9 its much sought-after exegetical foundation” (pp. 1-2). Put another way, in Genesis the firstborn son is cast away; he not only suffers a loss of status, but his exile is synonymous with death. He suffers “so that the elect son shares the fate of his oppositional Other” (p. 260). Genesis is permeated with a pattern of irony and reversals such that, as F. and others before him have noted, election comes at a cost—exclusion and exile, displacement and near death before a metaphorical resurrection and restoration. F. writes, “Paul sees Israel’s destiny in the messianic age as a capitulation of its etiology in the patriarchal age: the chosen and elect son Israel loses to his once displaced brother the privileged status he received by grace, only to receive it back again in the far side of his own exclusion” (p. 3).

Foster should be commended for attempting to situate Paul’s exegesis in light of Jewish exegetical principles and practices. In exploring the substructure underpinning Romans 9, F. detects Paul’s use of strategies akin to the rabbinic gezerah shavah (comparison of verses based on a common word or phrase) and heqesh (analogy). Paul’s atomistic use of biblical verses in Malachi, Hosea, and Isaiah, for example, demonstrates an approach to Scripture that is common in rabbinic works.

The work is replete with long, detailed footnotes that often take the reader through a dense forest of bibliographic data, leading to side roads, some more well trodden than others. The meandering quality of the notes conforms well to the general style of the work as a whole. To be sure, F. explicitly states his argument at various points throughout the work and provides summaries at the end of each chapter, yet, with the exception of chap. 3, I found myself plodding through the work, taking notes, revisiting sections, and re-revisiting
scriptural passages. I suspect that readers already exceedingly well versed in Pauline literature, especially Romans, would find the work more readily accessible.

One wonders to what extent Paul’s exegetical substructure is his or F.’s. The explanation of some of the elaborate exegetical maneuvers is dizzying and difficult to follow. Moreover, given the different ways in which the sons in Genesis are deployed exegetically in Jewish and later Christian circles, at times it can be challenging to follow F.’s argument. Be that as it may, Renaming Abraham’s Children reminds readers of the need to situate Paul’s exegesis within its sociocultural context and draws attention to the importance of Paul’s exegesis, in particular of the Abrahamic narrative, for understanding Romans 9.

Carol Bakhos, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90095


Most NT scholars consider textual criticism arcane. With the advent of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) the discipline just got more inscrutable and inaccessible. The great value of Peter Gurry’s book, the substance of his Cambridge Ph.D. thesis (2017, supervised by Peter M. Head), is that it explains this new method and gives a positive and critical evaluation. G. begins by outlining the history and reception of the CBGM (chap. 1) and explains how it works in theory and practice (chap. 2). This method, made possible by advanced computer technology, tracks the pre-genealogical coherence at any given variation unit, and the genealogical coherence (indicating the direction of textual change). These findings are used to construct local and ultimately global stemma. G. offers thirty-eight figures to illustrate his discussion and evaluation. There follow chapters on establishing the “initial text” (chap. 3) tracking scribal tendencies in James (chap. 4), a test case related to the Harklean Syriac group of manuscripts in the CBGM (chap. 5), and the selection of variants to be treated by the CBGM (chap. 6). A final chapter includes G.’s own assessment of the method’s limitations and his suggestions for improvements (chap. 7). In his conclusion, G. states that the CBGM “is a valuable tool for reconstructing the text of the New Testament and for studying its textual history” (p. 221).

To appreciate the CBGM and G.’s analysis the reader must keep in mind several distinctions. The first is the initial text as contrasted with the original text. Traditionally, the goal of the discipline has been to establish the original text, that is, what the authors wrote. The initial text (German Ausgangstext) is the text that can be obtained as far back as the surviving manuscript tradition will take us. This is the focus of the CBGM.

Another distinction is between manuscripts and their texts. The focus of the CBGM on texts (as distinct from manuscripts) highlights the finding of the method that a late manuscript may contain a text of a much earlier date. Minuscule 1739 had been known to contain readings that are much older than this tenth-century manuscript.

CBGM has shown how widely this is the case across the tradition, and in the process has called for a higher regard for the Byzantine textual tradition. At some places, the CBGM and the resultant Editio Critica Maior (ECM) have favored a reading that is not found in