possible to arrive at a common translation even for texts which receive a different interpretation in different Christian traditions. In the fourth section the author has provided a framework for evaluating translations according to different linguistic levels and according to the effect which they have on the understanding of the text. While the abbreviations of the translations and grids for classifying the material seem a bit complicated at first sight, the exercises proposed here seem to be quite helpful for reading each translation carefully and for evaluating its suitability.

Much of the material has been taken from various courses and workshops which the author has given on Bible translation or in articles on the same question, and it is helpful to have such a wealth of material, and of various topics concerned with translating, together in one place. This produces an inevitable repetition occasionally, however, and the book would have gained in readability from an editing and reorganization of some of the material. In spite of this, though, *La Bibbia e la sua traduzione* is a good, practical workbook for Bible translators from someone whose experience in the field enables him to set forth both the principles and the practice of translation in a clear and useful way.

STEPHEN PISANO SJ

Guthrie, George H.: **The Structure of Hebrews. A Text-Linguistic Analysis.** Leiden, New York and Cologne: E.J. Brill 1994. (Supplements to Novum Testamentum LXXIII). xix + 161 pp. 100.00 Netherlands guilders, $57.25. ISBN 90-04-09866-6.

Study of the structure of Hebrews is a well-trodden path, among the best-known travellers along which, until now, have been Albert Vanhoye (*La structure littéraire de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2nd ed. 1976) and L. Dussaut (*Synopse structurelle de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, 1981); also Linda Lloyd Neeley ("A Discourse Analysis of Hebrews", in *Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics* 3-4, 1987, 1-146). Prof. Guthrie pays due tribute to these and other predecessors, his own work ploughing more deeply the furrow cut by Neeley; discourse analysis and text-linguistic analysis are synonymous expressions.

Guthrie's approach is to examine features in Hebrews which mark either (a) shifts between one discourse unit and another, or (b) cohesion within a unit. Under (a), perhaps the most original part of the book, he notes "shifts...in the cohesion fields of genre, topic, spatial indicator, temporal indicator, actor, subject, verb tense, mood, person, and number, reference, and lexical items" (59). Under (b), he notes consistency in these respects, and especially inclusion, that is, the use of the same or related expressions at the beginning and end of a discourse unit. In the latter area, Guthrie generally follows in Vanhoye's footsteps, while disagreeing with him at a number of points. Guthrie's method enables him to assess, by counting the number of shifts, the places where major transitions may be deemed to occur, and conversely to note features contributing to cohesion within a unit.

Guthrie then applies these conclusions to the problem of the relation between the alternating blocks of teaching and exhortation in Hebrews. He rightly holds that "the purpose of...Hebrews is to exhort the hearers to endure in their pursuit of the promised reward, in obedience to the word of God, and especially on the basis of their new covenant relationship with the Son... In the expositional units the discourse deals with information about the Son. In the hortatory units the author

turns to his hearers and exhorts them to take action" (143). Guthrie believes that each of the two types of discourse, which he calls "genres", develops with a momentum of its own, but that semantic overlap between the two enables them to work together to serve the author's general purpose.

Guthrie points out certain weaknesses in Vanhoye's argument for an overarching chiastic structure, yet Guthrie's work does not supersede Vanhoye's, and appears to do less than justice to the skilful smoothness with which the author of Hebrews makes his transitions. Guthrie's argument, however, though necessarily technical, is clearly and cogently presented, with the help of no less than 35 diagrams. It is therefore particularly unfortunate that the book is marred by a regrettable number of misprints and other minor errors.

P.E.

Johnson, Luke Timothy: **The Acts of the Apostles.** "Sacra Pagina, vol 5." Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 1992. xvi + 569 pp. $29.99. ISBN 0-8146-5807-5.

Polhill, John: **Acts.** "The New American Commentary," vol. 26. Nashville: Broadman Press 1992. 574 pp. $27.99. ISBN 0-8054-0126-1.

The New American Commentary (NAC) series takes its name from the nineteenth-century series "An American Commentary," which was "authored and edited by scholars committed to the infallibility of Scripture." The authors of the NAC similarly "affirm the divine inspiration, inerrancy, complete truthfulness, and full authority of the Bible" (editors' preface). That the authors work within such a framework will commend this series to some translators and will suggest possible limitations in its usefulness to others.

One wonders, however, what words such as "complete truthfulness" mean in light of statements by Polhill such as, "It [the story of Ananias and Sapphira] is part and parcel of Luke's ideal portrait of the early church in Acts" (161) and "Luke depicted it as a unique period..." (161). Or again, "...but one would assume from Paul's Thessalonian correspondence that his initial ministry in Thessalonica was of a somewhat longer duration" [than the time suggested in Acts] (360) and "[Paul's letters] would indicate a more extensive Gentile witness than one might gather from Luke's highly compressed account" (360, n 49).

The "Sacra Pagina" authors, on the other hand, are not committed to a narrow view of inspiration; and this difference is reflected in these two commentaries. Concerning the speeches in Acts, for example, Polhill writes, "Suffice it to say, the speeches...are suited to their various contexts; and one need not doubt that Luke based them on reliable traditions and indeed succeeded in giving the 'general purport of what was actually said' " (46-47). On the same topic, Johnson states, "the historian can see that Luke's creative scope was most ample, simply because he was unconstrained either by narrative precedent or wealth of information. Whatever historical basis there is to his account must be found at the level of substance and pattern rather than at the level of detail or specific incident" (4). Johnson also states, "We are more confident that Luke got his 'world' right than that he got exactly right the sequence or meaning or character of events that form the substance of his narrative...As in the Gospel, he creatively shapes his vignettes