

SHORT NOTE

Two recent articles return to the question of how to translate the Hebrew *yam súp*. Bernard F. Batto, in "The Reed Sea: *Requiescat in pace*" (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 102.1 (1983), 27-35) points out that reeds cannot grow along its banks. He relates the term to *yam sóp*, "the distant sea", "the sea at the end of the land", so that Exodus 15.4 could be translated:

Pharaoh's chariot and his army he cast into the Waters of Chaos;
his picked officers are sunk in the Depths of Extinction . . .

This translation would also bring out the mythological overtones of the phrase. More cautiously, we should perhaps retain "Red Sea" in translation, but add a footnote stating that the Hebrew means "Reed Sea", or, following Batto, "Some scholars believe the Hebrew name meant 'the Final Sea' or 'the Sea at the End,' because the known land ended at the southern sea."

The same author returns to the same subject in "*Red Sea or Reed Sea?*" (*Biblical Archaeology Review* 10.4 (1984), 57-63).

LOUIS DORN

REVIEWS

E. A. Nida, J. P. Louw, A. H. Snyman, and J. v W. Cronje: **Style and Discourse**. Cape Town: The Bible Society 1983. 199 pp., paper, n.p.

This book is the product of a series of seminars at the University of Pretoria chaired by E. A. Nida and involving a total of twenty South African scholars. Nida wrote the basic text, and then edited it with the help of Louw. Snyman and Cronje contributed an appendix offering a new and elaborate classification of figures of speech in the Greek New Testament. The book makes the effort to synthesize creatively the contributions of biblical studies, linguistics, communication science, and rhetorical and literary studies, bringing them all to bear on the text of the Greek New Testament. The overarching framework is drawn from semiotics, the discipline which studies the nature and functioning of sign and symbol systems. Though the effort at synthesis is not in every respect successful, it advances our understanding of the structure of texts and their communicative roles far beyond what was available hitherto; it is a truly pioneering work, and therefore highly stimulating and insightful. Most importantly, it forces us beyond the reductionism which too often afflicts attempts to analyze texts within the boundaries of any one of the relevant disciplines.

The authors offer both an experimental theoretical framework and extensive exemplification of their analytic method. There are eleven chapters: (1) Rhetorical Signs; (2) Rhetorical Structures; (3) Types of Texts; (4) The Meaning of Lexical Units; (5) Symbolic Meaning; (6) The Meaning of Nuclear Structures; (7) The Meaning of Internuclear Structures; (8) Methods for the Analysis of Texts; (9) The Communication Process; (10) Literature and its Study; and (11) Rhetorical Features and Translation. Chapters 4 and 6 are the least original, repeating largely material from *Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969), *Componential Analysis of Meaning* (1975), and *Exploring Semantic Structures* (1975).

The most original material is found in chapters 1, 2, 8, 10, and 11. These constitute the core of the book's theoretical and methodological contribution. The remaining chapters display a mixture of new and old ideas. A review can give only a sample of the treasures contained in these pages. There is, for instance, the important distinction, in a semiotic frame of reference, between three relations in the working of language: discourse to intent, discourse to the real world, and discourse to the response of receptors. Or the typology of discourses with brief but lucid characterizations: narratives (strings of events), description (spatially or categorically arranged), logically organized texts, and dialogue. Chapter 2 expounds, with New Testament examples, a fourfold typology of rhetorical structures: repetition, omission, shifts of expectancy, and compactness. In the same chapter, there is a helpful discussion of the functions of rhetorical features in terms of five relationships: parts of a text to one another, text to participants in the communication, text to setting (time, place, audience), text to real world, and text to similar texts. Under the rubric "relationship of text to participants" are listed eight functions: expressive, cognitive, egocentric, informative, imperative, performative, emotive, and phatic. I would suggest that "esthetic" should be added in its own right, not merely tacked on at the top of p. 48. There is also in this chapter a good discussion of three dimensions of the relation of a text to the real world: real/unreal, factive/fictive, and true/untrue. A good many epistemological and hermeneutical errors are caused by confusions about this important distinction.

The best part of chapter 5 is its discussion of types of signs: icons, indices, and cultural conventions (the typology is borrowed from Peirce, and it is an indication of the parochial nature of our disciplines that it took nearly fifty years for this concept to penetrate into biblical studies). Chapter 8 offers extensive exemplification via the detailed analysis of six passages. The first three (John 1.1–5; James 1.2–8; Heb. 1.1–4) are used to illustrate the complex interrelations between syntactic and rhetorical structures; as such they are presented with elaborate dual diagramming. Ephesians 1.3–14 and Romans 2.1–11 are used to show how one can identify dominant themes in the hermeneutical and exegetical process. Finally, Luke 15.18–32 is given as an example of narrative material.

Chapter 10 is especially important for its discussion of religious language, particularly the distinction between and characterization of primary and secondary religious language. There is also a brief treatment of two approaches to literary study—developmental and "text as text" and their potential use in biblical study. But the authors in the end prefer what they call a semiotic approach which in fact incorporates the best aspects of the others. The value of this comprehensive approach is fivefold: it takes the referents of language seriously; it relates denotative meaning to referents; it provides insight into the derivation of connotations; it shows how signs can be defined only by other signs; and it helps one escape from the idea that thought and communication are restricted to language.

Chapter 11 is less systematic, but is full of practical insights and tips regarding the pitfalls and opportunities of rhetorical analysis for translation.

Any preliminary experimental work will bear the marks of its unfinished

nature, and this is no exception. There are a number of weaknesses which will no doubt be remedied in future reformulations. In the first place, the book is itself rhetorically weak at the macrolevel. To give only one example, chapter 1 moves back and forth without obvious motivation between a discussion of ancient Greek rhetoricians and the authors' own model. At the macrolevel, there are too many rambling, diffuse sentences.

A related problem is the partial conflation of the discussions of rhetorical forms and rhetorical functions in chapter 2; this is possibly caused by the effort to discuss forms first. It may be possible to make a more coherent presentation by discussing functions first, since they are universal, and then to discuss how these functions are served by various forms in different languages.

There is a great bulk of terminology—or rather, a plurality of terminologies derived from different disciplines and converging on the topic of the book. These cover in many cases the same phenomena, but it is often not made clear how they relate to one another. To this extent at least, the synthesis is imperfect and needs further work.

One quibble regarding content: the authors seem to me to exaggerate the putative *conscious* dependence of the New Testament authors on the rhetoricians of the Greco-Roman world. A good case could be made that Paul, the author of the Hebrews, and perhaps Luke, may have known some or all of these gentile authors. But surely it is straining to see in the rhetorical devices of Mark or John actual awareness of the academic analysis of rhetoric; it is much more plausible that they simply used the devices which their knowledge of the language made available to them without academic awareness. After all, M. Jourdain also spoke prose all his life without knowing it!

But all of these problems are, as I have said, marks of a pioneer, experimental work. On balance, this is a most important and stimulating work, and I heartily recommend it to all persons who have an interest in the rigorous analysis of texts.

C. R. TABER

Nestle-Aland: *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine* edited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1983. Praefatio, Introductio (pp. 1*–44*), Text (Greek pp. 1–680, Latin pp. 1–680), Appendices (pp. 684–779).

This latest Nestle bilingual stands in a long tradition. The Greek is Nestle-Aland²⁶ (N-A²⁶), and the Latin is the 1979 Neo-Vulgata (NV). The introduction to the Greek is a Latin translation, with some up-dating, of the original German: a five page preface introduces NV. The Latin text is divided into sections introduced by a Latin translation of the headings found in the *Einheitsübersetzung*. The apparatus to the Latin is restricted to variants between NV, the versio Clementina 1592 (C), Wordsworth and White (W) and the Stuttgart Vulgate ²1975 (S). Unlike the earlier Nestle bilinguals, the Sixtine edition of 1590 is not included but the apparatus to the Greek text does however