

deviating from those seeing it as an originally independent literary work. This is a point where some scholars would disagree, but a final consensus seems impossible to reach at the moment. Unlike Knohl, for example, Tucker tunes down the differences between the purely priestly material and the Holiness composition. He also refrains from suggesting a definite dating of his HC. It would have been interesting to have a more detailed argumentation on this question since several scholars (Haran, Knohl) have argued for a much earlier date (end of the eighth century BCE) than the traditional exilic-postexilic one.

All in all, Tucker has given a solid, lucid, and fascinating contribution to the debate on the Pentateuch which has to be seriously taken into account in the future discussion.

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JERMO VAN NES

Pauline Language and the Pastoral Epistles:

A Study of Linguistic Variation in the Corpus Paulinum

Linguistic Biblical Studies 16, Leiden: Brill, 2018, Hardcover, 532 pages,

\$158, ISBN 978-9-00435-841-6

This revised version of Jermo van Nes's 2017 doctoral dissertation aims at contributing something new to one of the classic problems of New Testament studies, that is, the authorship of the Letters to Timothy and Titus. Noticing that the authenticity debate involves arguments pertaining to the Pastoral Letters' historical circumstances, theological contents and linguistic characteristics, van Nes has made the decision (a wise one, for a dissertation) to deal exclusively with the issue of the language of these writings.

The first part of the study, "The Linguistic Problem of the Pastoral Epistles," begins with a detailed history of early research into the problem of the Pastoral Letters' authenticity (ch. 1). Here, van Nes reviews several famous contributions, but also breaks new—or should we say very old?—ground by tracing the questioning of the authenticity of Titus back to Edward Evanson in 1792, over a decade before German scholars began to doubt Paul's authorship of these writings. He then cat-

alogues the peculiarities commonly said to characterise the language of the Pastorals, sorting them into two categories (ch. 2). The first category contains peculiarities of vocabulary—the frequency of *hapax legomena*, “lexical richness,” the infrequency of indeclinables, the frequency of compound words and, finally, semantic deviations. The second category comprises peculiarities of syntax—interclausal relations, the infrequency of structural irregularities, and “miscellaneous constructions” thought to differ from the authentic Paul’s language. Van Nes concludes that whether based on scholars’ individual impressions or on computer-assisted analysis, the results of earlier research on linguistic peculiarities in the Pastoral Letters are contradictory. So are the various authorship hypotheses, which van Nes discusses next (ch. 3). He demonstrates that the state of the art cannot be reduced to a simple question of authentic vs. inauthentic: there are also different hypotheses of “partial orthonymity.” For example, 2 Timothy could be a genuine letter and the two others imitations, a possibility often too quickly overlooked in studies that lump together the data from all three writings.

In the book’s second part, “The Linguistic Problem of the Pastoral Epistles Reconsidered,” van Nes introduces the method to be used in his investigation of the primary material (ch. 4). He first of all settles for a population model of authorship, which means that the undisputed Paulines form an authentic “canon” to which the linguistic elements of each individual disputed letter are compared. Next, he describes simple linear regression analysis as the method by which the quantitative analysis of the data will be carried out, in order to discriminate between linguistic variation that lies within the prediction interval as established on the grounds of the undisputed letters and variation that is statistically significant. The final step in this methodological outline is a brief description of the road to be taken in the qualitative analysis. Van Nes then moves to his quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Pastoral Letters’ vocabulary (ch. 5) and syntax (ch. 6). He finds that the Pastoral Letters do not deviate significantly from the undisputed Paulines in terms of lexical richness, use of indeclinables, interclausal relations and structural irregularities. Only the remarkably high frequency of *hapax*

legomena in 1 and 2 Timothy seems to confirm in part many previous scholars' impression that the language of the Pastoral Letters differs significantly from that of the undisputed letters, and perhaps even this depends on what really counts as *hapax*. The qualitative analysis suggests a number of possible explanations beside pseudonymity for the linguistic variations: the author's emotional state or his age; the topic of the letters; the varying role of orality; and so on.

In his conclusion to the study, van Nes does not claim to have resolved the question of whether the Pastorals were authored by Paul or by someone else, but he does claim that their alleged linguistic peculiarities do not provide any firm ground for considering them pseudonymous. Most if not all of these perceived peculiarities fall within a prediction interval based on language data from the undisputed Paulines and are therefore not statistically significant. Moreover, even when one, two or all three of the Pastoral Letters do exhibit considerable linguistic variation in comparison with the undisputed letters, this variation can be accounted for in a number of ways that need not involve pseudonymity. Thus, van Nes concludes, future discussion of the Pastoral Letters' authenticity should be refocused around the aspects of history and theology rather than that of language. At the end of the monograph come four appendices of just above 250 (!) pages in all.

In the view of the present reviewer, the strongest part of van Nes' study is the quantitative analysis of lexical and syntactic data. The findings follow from the author's solid application of the method of simple linear regression analysis and provide scholarship with a firmer foundation for further discussion of the authorship question than has hitherto been available. Only the suggestion that the frequency of *hapax legomena* in two of the letters can be relocated within the prediction interval if one discounts those *hapaxes* which are proper nouns, occur in quotations or result from "productivity" strikes me as a case of special pleading. Apart from this one attempt to circumvent the one clear indication of statistically significant linguistic divergence, however, van Nes's quantitative conclusions are all sound and need to be taken seriously in all future discussion about the language of the Pastoral Letters.

The qualitative analysis, while also containing many valuable insights and seemingly plausible proposals, is not always as compelling as the quantitative. This is probably due to van Nes's self-imposed (and perfectly understandable) limitation to the linguistic aspect of the authorship question. An author's emotional state, the topic treated in a text, compositional procedures and so on are certainly all factors that might account for differences in language, but these factors are clearly bound up with the issues of history and theological contents that van Nes programmatically seeks to avoid. A telling case in point is the factor of age, which van Nes repeatedly considers as a possible explanation for the linguistic peculiarities of the Pastoral Letters. Pointing to, among other things, an investigation that noted that "Plato's overall use of *hapaxes* grew with his age," van Nes suggests that 1 and 2 Timothy may have been "written by an older person" (154). But whereas Plato was an active writer for at least fifty years, Paul must have written all his extant letters during a period of less than twenty years, when he was about 45–60 years old. The time span of Paul's entire career as a letter-writer is equivalent to, or even shorter than, Plato's "middle period." If the historical circumstances are considered, Paul's increasing age can hardly explain the increase in vocabulary between the undisputed Paulines and the Pastoral Letters.

After all, this point of criticism can be taken as a confirmation of van Nes's observation that linguistic analysis can only take us so far towards a solution to the problem of the Pastorals and that future discussion should be directed towards issues of history and theology rather than issues of language. As an investigation of the language of the Pauline letters and its implications for the authenticity question, this is an excellent book that does offer something new and important to a well-researched topic.

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