BOOKS I HAVE READ: FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Posted on May 8, 2013 by Eddie

Category: Reviews



One of the great delights in life is reading a book by someone who really loves what they do and who communicates it well. Over the years I've read some fascinating books on subjects as far apart as quantum mechanics and molecular virology. Popular science writing is hard to do, but when it is done well, it is wonderful.

Found in TranslationÂ by Nataly Kelly and Jost Zetzsche is a superb example of a book written by practitioners who have a gift for explaning their subject. It is informative without being heavy, funny without being flippant; and as much as a non-fiction book can be a page-turner, this one manages to be one.

In my line of work, translation tends simply to mean Bible translation, but this book covers a wholeÂ gamutÂ of fascinating fields of translation beyond that of Holy Writ. I have sometimes wondered how sports stars manage to ply their trade in a country where they don't speak the language - now I know. It would be futile to try and list all of the aspects of translation that are covered in this book, so I won't try. However, if you like words and you are looking for something good to read on the beach this summer; this should be in your bag (especially if you are involved in Bible translation).

Just a couple of remarks in passing. It was gratifying to read a whole book on translation that never once mentioned dynamic or formal equivalence, These terms which are so often debated on Bible translation blogs (including, sometimes, this one) are simply not a part of the everydayÂ translationÂ lexicon.

One sad omission from the section on literary translation were the two finest translators of great literature; Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge, the English translators of the Asterix books. Other opinions on great translators are available - they are just wrong!

I should mention that one of the authors ofÂ Found in TranslationÂ kindly sent me a copy; however, I'd have been just as positive about it if I'd paid for it myself. It really is an excellent book.