

Bill was hit by John on the nose.
 Bill was hit on the nose by John.
 Bill was hit on the nose. John did it.
 John hit Bill. He hit him on the nose.

But, on the other hand, none of the three following renderings are faithful, for the reasons given:

John hit Bill on the nose because he did not like Bill.
 (Here a value judgement is made that is not in the original text.)
 Bill was hit on the nose.
 (Here, for some reason or other, the information is omitted that it was *John* who hit Bill.)
 John hit Bill on the nose. Bad boys always behave that way.
 (This is unacceptable for the same reason as the first in this series.)

If the translator really believes that the Bible is the Word of God, then he will respect its integrity; he will never try to "help God out" by forcing one text to conform to another by altering the meaning of either. He will interpret his task as a sacred responsibility, making full use of all scholarly resources available, in his attempt to understand and express the meaning of the biblical text. He will perform his responsibilities humbly and gratefully, fully conscious of the responsibility that is his, a responsibility that no one can ever adequately fulfil, but one to which he must devote all his energies, for this is indeed "a matter of life and death"!

JOHN ELLINGTON

A TRANSLATOR'S NUISANCE: CHAPTER AND VERSE DIVISION IN THE BIBLE

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Within the borders of the Republic of Zaire there are now ten translation teams working on the Old Testament. Another three or four committees will soon be winding up their New Testament work and beginning on the Old. Still others are at various earlier stages in their efforts to translate the New Testament. Each of these teams, like all serious translators, is faced with the annoying but persistent problem of differences in the chapter and verse numbering used in the various translations they consult. The translations consultant is repeatedly asked what to do about individual cases where chapter and verse divisions in the various versions do not correspond with each other. Is there not some uniform reply that the consultant can give to translators? Can we not at least provide a more intelligent practical analysis of the problem, so that translators do not have to waste valuable time wondering what to do each time they come to a numbering problem?

We should say at the beginning that chapter and verse divisions are just conventions, which have been set up to help people refer to the text easily.

They are not part of the original texts. The components of the "system" as we now know it were worked out at different times and in many ways. As recently as the middle of the sixteenth century the convention was still not firmly established. Most historians attribute the modern verse division of the Bible to Henri Estienne (Stephanus) whose edition of the Bible appeared in 1553. Since that time his system has become more or less fixed. There are, however, many minor variations to the system, and it is these variations that are the basis of the numbering problems which the translator faces.

Bible readers in Zaire are accustomed to reading the text in French as well as in one or more of the various existing African translations. And in some cases English is used as well. This is certainly the case among translators working in this country at present. Both Catholic and Protestant versions are also consulted by translation committees. It is the difference between various versions that presents a serious obstacle to present-day translators.

There appear to be three basic types of numbering problems in the Bible. They are: (1) verse division, (2) chapter division, and (3) the numbering of titles as verses. The first of these is characteristic of the New Testament. The second is most common in the Old Testament, and the third is restricted to the Psalms.

Verse division

It has been estimated that the NT contains approximately seventy cases in which a word, a phrase, or sometimes a whole sentence may be considered a part of a given verse or of the verse that follows. Paul's familiar statement in Gal 2, for example, "I am crucified with Christ", is taken as belonging to verse 19 in the UBS Greek text and also by TEV, FC, and Jérusalem; but it is taken as a part of the following verse by KJV, Segond, NEB, RSV, and NIV. The earlier translations into Zairian languages (Kikongo,* Tshiluba, Swahili, Lomongo and Lingala) all include this statement with verse 20. The translator having a reading knowledge of English and using one or more of the African languages as well as the full range of French versions, but without the ability to use the Greek, is left wondering what to do.

In some cases whole verses appear to be lacking in some translations of the NT. On closer examination, however, the content is all there, but the number is missing. For example, what we know as Acts 19.41 in the KJV, RSV, NEB, Synodale, FC, TEV, and NIV is incorporated in verse 40 by Jérusalem, Segond, Maredsous, Crampon, and TOB. The older African translations in Zaire, following the KJV-RSV tradition, include a forty-first verse in this chapter. In the ninth chapter of Mark a similar problem exists. The content in all versions is the same and most of them end with verse 50. Yet French Protestant translations (Ostervald, Synodale, and Segond) add the number 51. Again the translators who are limited to modern language versions will surely wonder which version they are to follow.

In the case of NT verse numbering, the consultant's answer is relatively simple. He makes it clear to the translators that they should follow the best

* Here and elsewhere in this article the Kikongo Fioti version is the one referred to.

available scholarship—as reflected in the UBS Greek text, and in recent UBS sponsored translations such as the TEV and FC, which are based on it. With regard to the problem of verse division in the NT, these texts should be treated as models.

Chapter division

Apart from the special case found in the Psalms, the numbering problems of the OT are tied to the question of chapter division. Some versions end a given chapter at a certain verse while others go on one or more verses beyond that point. The obvious result of this state of affairs is that the verse numbers are also out of line. In two cases passages that are divided into two distinct chapters by some translations form a single chapter in other versions. Protestant translations typically have three chapters in Joel and four in Malachi. On the other hand, Catholic versions, followed by the TOB, have four chapters in Joel and three in Malachi. The fact that the numbering in the Catholic versions corresponds to that of the MT and the LXX is of little practical consequence to the translator concerned primarily with the reaction of his readers. What he wants is some kind of guideline that will permit him to reach a quick and satisfactory solution and one that will cause the least possible discomfort to his readers. Numbering is, after all, a convention and not a part of the inspired text.

Some 37 OT numbering problems have been analyzed for translators working in Zaire. Eighteen translations commonly used by translation teams were consulted. These included five English translations (KJV, RSV, NEB, NAB, and TEV draft), eight French translations (Segond, Ostervald, Synodale, Pléiade, Jérusalem, Maredsous, Crampon, and TOB) and five African translations (Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili, Lomongo, and Lingala). One result of this comparison was an awareness that almost all of these problems could be grouped into two basic categories: (1) those that are divided along Protestant-Catholic lines and (2) those in which English and French versions are different. In the latter, the African translations usually side with the English, but Kikongo (perhaps due to the fact that its principal translator was Swedish rather than British or American) sometimes falls together with the French translations. Also, the NAB is apparently more influenced by the source texts (or by the French Catholic versions) than by the English tradition in chapter division.

In the vast majority of cases (not including the Psalms) the Catholic and non-English translations follow the MT and LXX. Thus it is clear that the people who made the changes in their translations were both Protestant and English—possibly the translators of the King James Version.

Over half the cases investigated turned out to be clear-cut Protestant-Catholic differences. The TOB falls consistently into the Catholic column. A complete list of these cases follows:

Protestant

Gen 31.55–32.32

Ex 22.1–31

Catholic (plus TOB)

Gen 32.1–33

Ex 21.37–22.30

<i>Protestant</i>	<i>Catholic (plus TOB)</i>
Num 16.36–17.13	Num 17.1–28
Dt 12.32–13.18	Dt 13.1–19
Dt 22.30–23.25	Dt 23.1–26
Dt 29.1–29	Dt 28.69–29.28
2 Sam 18.33–19.43	2 Sam 19.1–44
1 Kg 4.21–5.18	1 Kg 5.1–32
2 Kg 11.21–12.21	2 Kg 12.1–22
1 Chr 6.1–81	1 Chr 5.27–6.66
1 Chr 12.40	1 Chr 12.40–41
2 Chr 2.1–18	2 Chr 1.18–2.17
Neh 4.1–23	Neh 3.33–4.17
Neh 9.38–10.39	Neh 10.1–40
Jer 9.1–26	Jer 8.33–9.25
Dan 5.31–6.28	Dan 6.1–29
Jl 2.28–3.21	Jl 3.1–4.21
Zech 1.18–2.13	Zech 2.1–17
Mal 4.1–6	Mal 3.19–24

Five additional cases of Protestant-Catholic differences were found. The only thing that distinguishes these from the above is that the Second version (Protestant) sides with the Catholic translations and the TOB.

<i>Protestant</i>	<i>Catholic (plus TOB and Segond)</i>
Ex 8.1–32	Ex 7.26–8.28
Lev 6.1–3?	Lev 5.20–6.23
2 Chr 14.1–15	2 Chr 13.23–14.14
Hos 1.10–2.23	Hos 2.1–25
Nah 1.15–2.13	Nah 2.1–14

In addition to the inclusion of the deutero-canonical material in chapter 3 of Daniel as well as at the end of the book (giving Daniel two more chapters than in Protestant versions) the Catholic translations also differ from the Protestant ones in the division between chapters three and four.

<i>Protestant</i>	<i>Catholic (plus TOB)</i>
Dan 4.1–37	Dan 3.98 (31)–4.34

In chapter 20 of 1 Samuel English Protestant versions (and most African translations in Zaire) stop at verse number 42 while the French Protestant translations (together with Kikongo) add the number 43. The Catholic translations, however, begin chapter 21 with the verse that would be 20.42b or 20.43 in the Protestant versions. And in Job 40 English Protestant versions stop at 24 verses, French Protestants include 28 verses and the Catholics continue to verse 32. The numbering of 1 Sam 20–21 and Job 40–41 is therefore divided three ways:

<i>English Protestant</i>	<i>French Protestant</i>	<i>Catholic</i>
1 Sam 20.42–21.15	1 Sam 20.43–21.15	1 Sam 20.41–21.16
Job 41.1–34	Job 40.20–41.25	Job 40.25–41.26

Nine cases of basic French-English differences were found in the passages investigated. These, however, are divided into three groups—variations on the main theme. In three instances all French versions plus the NAB are opposed to all English translations plus the five African versions in Zaire:

<i>French (plus NAB)</i>	<i>English-African</i>
Is 9.1–21	Is 8.23–9.20
Hos 12.1–15	Hos 11.12–12.14
Hos 14.1–10	Hos 13.16–14.9

In five additional cases Kikongo sides with the French translations and NAB:

<i>French-Kikongo (plus NAB)</i>	<i>English-African</i>
Num 30.1–17	Num 29.40–30.16
1 Sam 24.1–23	1 Sam 23.29–24.22
1 Kg 22.44–54	1 Kg 22.43b–53
Ezek 21.1–37	Ezek 20.45–21.32
Jon 2.1–11	Jon 1.17–2.10

And in two other cases of basic French-English difference the Ostervald version sides with the English translations:

<i>French</i>	<i>English-African (plus Ostervald)</i>
Mic 4.14–5.14	Mic 5.1–15
S of S 7.1–14	S of S 6.13–7.13

Numbering problems in the Psalms

The Psalms are characterized by a slightly different kind of chapter division problem. Most versions follow the MT, but the French Catholic translations acknowledge the numbering system found in the LXX and the Latin Vulgate. What we know as Psalms 9 and 10 in English are combined in Maredsous, for example. The result is a staggering of chapter numbers up to Psalm 113. Then those Psalms numbered 114 and 115 in the majority of versions are incorporated into Psalm 113 in Maredsous. Consequently, from Psalm 114 through 147 (MT numbering) there is still a staggering of one chapter number, but now in the opposite direction. This comedy of errors finds its resolution just in time for all versions to come out with the same number of Psalms overall. Those translations which follow the MT catch up with the others at Psalm 147 which is divided at verse 12 by the LXX and Vulgate. Except for Maredsous, the French Catholic versions (Jérusalem, Crampon, and Pléiade) as well as TOB follow the MT numbering system, but acknowledge the alternative possibility in brackets. The general scheme for chapter number correspondence in the Psalms is as follows:

<i>Masoretic Text</i>	<i>LXX and Vulgate</i>
Ps 1–8	Ps 1–8
Ps 9	Ps 9.1–12

<i>Masoretic Text</i>	<i>LXX and Vulgate</i>
Ps 10	Ps 9.22-39
Ps 11-113	Ps 10-112
Ps 114	Ps 113.1-8
Ps 115	Ps 113.9-26
Ps 116.1-9	Ps 114
Ps 116.10-19	Ps 115
Ps 117-146	Ps 116-145
Ps 147.1-11	Ps 146
Ps 147.12-20	Ps 147
Ps 148-150	Ps 148-150

Added to this already complicated situation is the fact that most French versions count the Psalm titles and instructions as verses, whereas the English versions do not consider them as a part of the numbered text. Frequently, therefore, the French translations have one more verse in the Psalms than the English, and in some cases (Ps 51, 52, 54, 60) the introductory material is so lengthy that it counts as two full verses. Combined with the above chapter numbering problem, there may be considerable difference in reference numbers to verses that are identical in content. The content of Ps 59.5 in Maredsous, for example, corresponds to Ps 60.3 in RSV and Kikongo and to Ps 60.5 in Segond.

Solutions

Given the sad state of affairs in reference numbers in the OT, what can the translations consultant recommend to the translators in his region? As B. F. Price pointed out in an earlier article on this subject (TBT, July 1964, pages 128-130), "one cannot even appeal to 'the Hebrew Bible' as the final authority" in all cases, since there is some disagreement even among printed Hebrew Bibles with regard to chapter division.

Price suggested that the most practical solution to this complex problem would be to "urge that translators adopt the system of chapter and verse numbering used in the particular European Bible familiar to those readers in the language area involved . . .". However, in an age of ecumenical translation projects this becomes impossible. The European Bible familiar to Roman Catholics in Zaire is the *Bible de Jérusalem*, while Protestants have traditionally used Segond's version. As we have seen, these two versions are frequently different with regard to chapter and verse numbers. The problem is made more difficult by the fact that the translations into the major African languages of Zaire (usually based on the English-Protestant numbering system) have attained a certain status and established traditions with regard to numbering. The Kikongo Bible first appeared in 1905, Tshiluba in 1927. Swahili, Lomongo, and Lingala have also been in use long enough to have considerable influence. These translations should probably be considered more important than those in European languages when it comes to chapter and verse division, but at the same time the latter cannot be ignored.

Translators and consultants will probably have to work out their own formula for numbering, taking into consideration all the factors in their

particular situations. The peculiar “mix” of each translation project in an area will have to be taken into account. What is the extent of Catholic participation in the particular project? What are the expected percentages of Protestant and Catholic readers? What is the relative importance of the European translations as opposed to the local African languages familiar to the potential readers of the new translation? When all these factors are carefully weighed, the translators should be able to come up with a solution that is particularly suited to their situation.

Another possible solution for French-speaking areas might be simply to follow the TOB in an attempt to be forward-looking and ecumenical, but it is doubtful whether very many people will be ready to accept such a solution at this point in time.

Whatever tradition of chapter and verse numbering is followed in a new translation, the reader can be made aware of the other alternatives where they exist, if this is considered necessary. This may be done by means of footnotes (as in some editions of the RSV), marginal references (as in the *Bible de Jérusalem*), or a table of correspondences in an introduction.

ABBREVIATIONS

MT	Masoretic Text, the standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament
LXX	Septuagint, the text of an early translation of the Old Testament in Greek
KJV	King James Version (Authorized Version)
RSV	Revised Standard Version
NEB	New English Bible
TEV	Today's English Version
NIV	New International Version
FC	Français Courant (Common Language French)
TOB	Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible (Ecumenical French translation)
NAB	New American Bible

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GENESIS 15: AN EXERCISE IN TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES

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INTRODUCTION

This passage appears to be a simple, straightforward narrative with a fairly clear message. Verses 1–6 are concerned with the important question of Abram's succession. His call, first referred to in chapter 12, was accompanied by the divine promise that he would be the forefather of a great nation. But because he continues childless, Abram's hopes of fulfilling this call seem groundless (verses 2 and 3). Also, because he does not have a son, there is his personal anxiety about not being able to be laid to rest properly by his children (verse 15). God's promise that he will have an heir now gives Abram the assurance he needs about both these matters (verses 4, 5, 15).