

think can still be improved. To their credit, the framers of the CSG changed their views once before on what could count for them as legitimate inclusive-language translation, when they were presented with supporting Scriptural and linguistic evidence.¹ It is my fervent prayer that they will do so again, in view of the kind of information presented in this paper.²

Reviews

Brenner, Athalya and Jan Willem van Henten (eds.) *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Authority, Reception, Culture and Religion*. N. Y.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002. (JSOTSup Series 353.) x + 208 pp. US\$115.00. ISBN 0-82646-029-1.

This incredibly expensive little volume is “firmly anchored in the Dutch scene of Bible study and Bible translation” (1). The ongoing new translation of the Bible in Dutch has generated considerable controversy and has been the source of a great deal of reflection about much broader issues of Bible translation in the twenty-first century.³ The book which this situation has generated is made up of seven articles followed by a response to each one, plus an editor’s introduction, an initial article by Sijbolt Noorda on the “Dynamics of Translation” and a concluding article by Adele Berlin, “On Bible Translations and Commentaries,” without any responses.

These articles grew out of a series of workshops organized by the University of Amsterdam, culminating in the main colloquium in May 2000. The impetus for these workshops came from the controversial translation project mentioned above, but the import of the articles presented goes far beyond a particular translation or any single cultural setting. The volume is dedicated to Robert P. Carroll, one of the contributors, whose paper had to be read posthumously because he died just a few weeks before it was to be presented. The contributors represent a wide variety of Christian translators and academics, as well as several Jewish scholars; and more than half are academics in the Netherlands. Some articles are clearly better than others, but overall they present a good picture of the translation scene at the launching of the twenty-first century.

In the initial article, Noorda deals with the sociocultural context of Bible translation and makes the sometimes-neglected point that “[p]revailing tradition constitutes authority and fosters identity” (10). He insists that in cases where a new translation is being done in a language where one already exists, a combination of old and new is required—“enough of the old to guarantee continuation, enough of the new to enable change” (12).

John Rogerson asks, “Can a Translation of the Bible be Authoritative?”—a question that is extremely relevant at the outset of the twenty-first century. He seems to answer it with a qualified yes, although “ecclesiastical sponsorship and

1 See *ibid.*, 312-5.

2 It is sobering to be reminded that the people for whom Jesus and the apostles reserve their strongest condemnation are the conservative religious leaders of the first century who drew the boundaries of their faith too narrowly, not too broadly. See Craig L. Blomberg, “The New Testament Definition of Heresy (or When Did Jesus and the Apostles Really Get Mad?),” *JETS* 45 (2002): 59-72.

3 [For further information on this issue, see K. F. de Blois and T. Mewe, “Functional Equivalence and the new Dutch translation project,” in *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation: A South African Perspective* (Acta Theologica 2002, Supplementum 2; ed. J. A. Naudé and C. H. J. van der Merwe; South Africa: Bible Society of South Africa/University of the Free State), 214-27. -RLO]

execution do not guarantee authoritativeness" (25). He also insists that at present, raw "commercial power" may also have something to do with the authoritativeness of a translation. Judith Frishman's response, "Why a Translation of the Bible Can't Be Authoritative," seems to be less of a response to Rogerson than a review of Arnold Eisen's book *Taking Hold of the Torah* (1997), which is evaluated and extensively quoted.

The next pair of articles were written by UBS colleagues Simon Crisp and Lénart de Regt. Crisp, the sole representative of the Greek Orthodox Church among the contributors, entitles his paper "Icon of the Ineffable? An Orthodox View of Language and its Implications for Bible Translation." He seeks to move beyond Eugene Nida and dynamic, or functional, equivalence, which he considers "a trifle naïve" (38) and overly optimistic about "the possibility of discovering and expressing . . . the original meaning of the biblical text" (39). He lays stress on the role of mystery in the Eastern Orthodox tradition and the limitations of human systems of communication. His view is perhaps best summed up in the following statement: "In Orthodox understanding the text of Scripture functions in a way more analogous to an icon, namely as a window onto another world, rather than as a source of propositionally expressed information" (42). De Regt's very brief response sees the Orthodox position as having a positive influence on the understanding of the translation task: "more careful attention to the range of stylistic and rhetorical possibilities of the receptor language can also be effective in preserving a sense of this distance from the otherness of the text" (52).

Carroll treats the age-old problem of how to handle the Tetragrammaton in translation. While interesting and well written, Carroll's paper presents nothing really new on the subject. But he hopes to raise "larger issues" (55). There is a strong emphasis on the debt every translation owes to all previous translations and, in fact, on the extreme difficulty of deviating from earlier translations—an experience with which all Bible translators can easily identify. In the end, Carroll finds Everett Fox's transliteration of the Name without any vowels to be the lesser of evils. In an intriguing aside, he considers the divine response to Moses in Exodus 3 to be "a piece of evasive wordplay," not a proper name, "but a dismissal of the enquiry of Moses" (62).

Brenner's response is something of a eulogy to Carroll while at the same time attempting to critique his paper. She reminds the reader of the "high relevance to the ongoing Dutch discussion" (66) of the subject he treated. But the Dutch had already found a solution to this problem, for better or worse, before the publication of this volume, a solution that resulted in the resignation of certain members of the translation committee; but the decision was made to follow tradition, as indicated in the Appendix to the Introduction (6-7). This decision poignantly illustrates Carroll's contention that previous translations play a very important role in what is done in "new" translations in the same language.

Perhaps the best give-and-take pair of articles in this volume is that of Lamin Sanneh ("Domesticating the Transcendent: The African Transformation of Christianity") and the reply of Theo Witvliet. Here the reader finds a strong, well-reasoned exposition of the effect of Bible translation on African cultures and a response that is more than a polite academic exercise. Sanneh's article is in many respects a condensation of his helpful and enlightening book, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (1989). He argues that the translation

of the Bible into the vernacular languages of Africa has caused those languages to become “destigmatized” and to receive a certain validation based on the “insight of the incarnation.” Witvliet admonishes Sanneh for not revealing more of his own theological position, but suspects that he identifies himself with James Green, whom he quotes extensively. Witvliet takes issue with Green on the matter of “gradual revelation,” insisting that his statements are “not only unbiblical but also anti-Judaistic” (89). Sanneh’s article ought to be required reading for every person involved in Bible translation in Africa, if not around the world.

The longest article in this volume is that of Jeremy Punt (“Translating the Bible in South Africa”). Nearly half of the printed text is footnote material, with 123 footnotes. The core of Punt’s paper is an evaluation of two relatively new translations of the Bible in South Africa—the New Afrikaans Bible (1983) and the New Xhosa Bible (1996). Because these two were based on dynamic/functional equivalence, Punt takes the opportunity to engage in the now-popular sport of Nida bashing, but he brings nothing really new to this discussion. His statement that “local Christians are often not included in the translation activity” (101) is troubling. Punt has clearly experienced a different Africa from that of certain UBS consultants who have spent a lifetime on that continent without ever having encountered a Bible translation project that did not include local Christians. Wim J. C. Weren’s response to Punt, “Translation, Interpretation and Ideology,” highlights the positive aspects of Punt’s article and provides concrete examples lacking in Punt’s presentation.

Mary Phil Korsak attempts to sort out the thorny issue of dealing with gender issues in translation while at the same time promoting her own translation of the book of Genesis (*At the Start ... Genesis Made New*; Doubleday, 1993). Making use of the RSV and NEB, as well as the translations of Ronald Knox (1949), E. Cady Stanton (1895), and Julia E. Smith (1876), she offers a number of helpful suggestions that might aid translators to avoid pitfalls inherent in Western culture even in the twenty-first century. The use of NEB without any mention whatsoever of REB (1989) causes the reader to wonder whether Korsak is totally unaware of that revision or chooses to ignore it because she disagrees with the changes made. Caroline Vander Stichele’s response, “Murder She Wrote or Why Translation Matters,” is essentially a comparison of Korsak and Julia E. Smith in their approach to translation, the latter being more interested in literalism than in feminism.

The articles by Everett Fox and A. J. C. Verheij run a very close second to those by Sanneh and Witvliet. Fox is well known to the scholarly world for his fascinating translations of the Pentateuch (*The Five Books of Moses*, 1995) and the books of Samuel (*Give Us a King!*, 1999). As he was working on a translation of the books of Kings at the time of the colloquium, his paper deals with the issues and challenges of “The Translation of Elijah” (pun intended), following the approach of Buber and Rosenzweig. He exhibits an impressive command of Hebrew as well as the subtleties of the English language; but he is forced to acknowledge that his translation proposals sometimes stretch the language too far and result in renderings that range from “a slight cost in style” (166) to something that is “not, to say the least, passable English” (167). Verheij takes him to task for claiming special status for the verb *nathan* in the Naboth narrative of 1 Kings 21 because it is, after all, the fifth most frequent verb in the Hebrew Bible. Verheij’s

response also contains a clear exposition of the recent debate between the “Two Schools” of translation in the Netherlands (171). This, of course, has implications for translators around the world.

The final article, by Berlin, is both disappointing and engaging—disappointing because it does not serve as a conclusion to the volume, as the reader might expect from its placement at the end of the book. It does, however, deal with postmodernism and the future of biblical interpretation, and thus it fits well with the reference in the book’s title to the twenty-first century. And it is an extremely well-written and interesting exposition of the fuzzy line between translation and commentary. The following quotation sums up an important but often neglected point: “We often forget that a translation is a form of commentary, especially when it is literal; but when a translation becomes freer, or departs too radically from the literal rendering of the text, it becomes unmasked for what it is—someone’s interpretation” (180-81).

In spite of the fact that this little volume is so firmly rooted in the present-day Dutch Bible translation scene, it will be good reading for Bible translators and translation consultants everywhere. It is unfortunate that probably few will be able to afford it.

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Daniell, David. *The Bible in English. Its History and Influence*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003. xx + 900 pp. £29.99, US\$40.00. ISBN 0-300-09930-4.

This exhilarating book defies brief review. Its author is an Emeritus Professor of English who has edited several of Shakespeare’s plays. But his great love is William Tyndale, whose life he has written, whose works he has edited, and to whose memory this book is dedicated. It contains more references to Tyndale than to any other item in the index. Daniell even finds it necessary to state: “It is extremely unlikely that Handel had any notion whatsoever of William Tyndale ... ” (576).

This preoccupation with Tyndale does not mean that the book is at all narrow in its scope; on the contrary, in some ways it could be said to be too broad. Daniell is at his best in lighting up obscure corners of his vast subject (e.g., the immensely complicated manuscript tradition of the Wycliffite Bibles), and in pointing out where more research still needs to be done. He realizes, e.g., that even this big book cannot include the whole story of the American Civil War (721). But 25 pages on Handel and Pope may seem a little excessive, especially in a survey which disposes of Charles Wesley, with his panoramic vision and total recall of Scripture, in a single page.

Daniell’s enthusiasm for his subject is more than enough to cover a multitude of sins; and indeed the sins are mostly venial. Where he feels the need to set the record straight, he is a campaigner, almost an evangelist. He believes that the (English) Geneva Bible has been underestimated from the time of its publication to the present day, and that the King James Version was largely devised as a national product to compete with that import from abroad. He is critical of KJV’s errors, particularly those set in stone in editions from 1769 on; in any case, as previous research has shown, 83% of KJV NT is Tyndale. The omission in KJV of