

Such instances are very numerous throughout the text. Worse, however, are problems like 1.22 in *The Jerusalem Bible* (French version), where part of the Hebrew text is given in a footnote with the comment "omitted in the Greek". Then there is 5.1-2 where the whole of the Hebrew text is given in a footnote, for the simple reason that here the (major) Greek addition forms a clear enough bridge between 4.17 and 5.3. The footnote says that the Greek and the Hebrew are in agreement as from verse 3. This is real amalgamation, therefore, to the detriment of the Hebrew text this time.

One should add here that another solution, that adopted by the *Groot Nieuws Bijbel* (the Dutch common language version), is unsatisfactory too - for the same reasons. Here, in the edition that contains the deuterocanonical books, we find only the major sections the Greek Esther added to the Hebrew, and not the full text of the Greek Esther. Not only do we lack all the differences that exist between the two Esthers in the parts they have in common, but we are also left with problems such as the identification of the king who is called Ahasveros in the Hebrew version, and Artaxerxes in the Greek additions.

Concluding, we may say that we found four ways Esther has been treated: the Hebrew version only; the Hebrew version AND the Greek version translated distinctly; one version only (an amalgamated one based on the Hebrew with the major Greek parts inserted); the Hebrew version in full, with the major additions of the Greek version given separately.

The examples given above highlight in a practical way the problems which translators in an interconfessional project could face. All in all, it would seem, out of textual concern, there is no middle way in the translation of Esther, for interconfessional editions as well as for Catholic ones: both source texts, the Hebrew as well as the Greek, have to be treated distinctly and translated as two separate books. Translators of the deuterocanonical books in an interconfessional project should not translate an amalgamated version of Esther, but the Greek version as found translated, for example, in the deuterocanonical books of the TOB, *The Good News Bible* or *The New English Bible*. This recommendation is in fact what has been agreed upon and recommended in the *Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible*.

JAN P. STERK

The names of God in Tok Pisin

It has been very interesting to consider the issues raised by the recent series of articles in TBT-P on translating the names of God. Our experience in one of the national languages of Papua New Guinea may be worth sharing. The language is Papua New Guinea Pidgin English, known as Tok Pisin (talk Pidgin). Many of the words in Tok Pisin have been taken from English, and

this includes the word God, which is even traditionally spelled as *God* rather than *Got*, which would be the expected Tok Pisin spelling. The word “Lord” has usually been translated as *Bikpela*, meaning literally “the Big One” or “the Great One”.

I am not aware of any serious objections to either the word *God* or *Bikpela* alone. However, when trying to translate the expression “the Lord God”, the translators first tried to use *Bikpela God*. But *Bikpela* is also an adjective meaning “big” and in the expression *Bikpela God*, it would usually be understood as “Big God”, as though there were other smaller gods around also.

In the Old Testament, as the recent articles have clearly pointed out, the English word “Lord” often stands for the Hebrew name of God, YHWH, which is usually spelled these days as *Yahweh*. With this in mind, the name *Yawe* was tried in Tok Pisin, but it was felt that most readers did not connect this strange name with God. Eventually, we decided to keep *Bikpela*, but to translate “Lord God” as *God, Bikpela*, literally “God, the Lord”.

The reason for this decision was really only that the words could be used naturally in this order, without the problem of giving a wrong meaning which we had when putting *Bikpela* first. It was not until some people asked if it was right to “turn around” the name and the title in this way that we realized that there was really a deeper reason for doing what we did. In fact, for most speakers of Tok Pisin, *God* is the only God they know, and it seems likely that *God* is understood as the personal name of God, rather than as a class name (see Loewen’s article on “Translating the Names of God” in the April 1985 TBT). *Bikpela*, on the other hand, is a class name—there can be more than one *Bikpela*, though it is recognized that God is the greatest of them and there is no confusion when he is referred to simply as *Bikpela*. Thus, in Hebrew an expression like “YHWH, the God of Israel”, has the personal name first, followed by the class name explaining who he is. And we have exactly the same situation in Tok Pisin when we say *God, Bikpela bilong Isrel*. I suspect that in many other languages which have borrowed the word “God”, we might find that it has been borrowed basically as a personal name, rather than as a class name.

As Loewen also points out in the article mentioned, the translator must be careful to check whether the personal name is also used as a class name — that is, whether it is possible to talk about “the gods of the Egyptians”. We have probably not checked this as carefully as we should in Tok Pisin, and sometimes we may have followed English too closely in expressions like this. However, in most places where the word “god” is used to refer to a god other than the God of Israel, we have used *giaman god*, meaning “false god” or “pretend god”. This type of translation may be a possibility in other languages in which the usual word for God is usually understood as a personal name.