

From the Editor

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The context of the world has shifted dramatically since we were preparing the previous issue of *The Bible Translator*. Covid-19 has ravaged societies and nations and economies, and the consequent restrictions in travel, personal contact, and finance have posed new challenges for the work of Bible translation. Long-standing issues of racial prejudice and stereotyping have been thrust into the spotlight by events in the USA, with implications around the globe. Yet Bible translators and those who support them continue to work, and to rely on the groundwork provided by biblical and linguistic scholarship. The August 2020 issue of *The Bible Translator* offers a wide range of papers to such translators, papers that should also prove of interest to textual scholars, theologians, exegetes, and linguists. Written long before the present crisis, they provide stimulus and encouragement for an unchanging task in a changing world.

David Clark concludes his series on vocative usage in the Gospels by examining instances in John's Gospel, including ways in which Jesus addresses God and other people, and the various ways in which participants address Jesus. He concludes with a warning that his three articles have not considered speeches where there is no explicit vocative in the Greek, where some languages may need to supply them in order to fit conversational norms of the language and culture.

Two articles concentrate on different issues relating to Hebrew syntax and semantics. **Peter Goeman** examines the particle *kî* in Deut 4.29, arguing from both Hebrew grammar and context that it should be rendered in English as “when” in this verse rather than the usual conditional “if.” **Peter Schmidt** analyses usage of the word *kōl* in different locations in the Hebrew Scriptures and demonstrates that it may have a wide range of meanings, along with the stereotypical “all” of totality. His concluding thoughts steer the reader towards cross-linguistic comparisons, urging that determining what is possible or necessary in rendering *kōl* needs also to consider the natural constraints of the language.

June Dickie takes us in another direction, bringing together aspects of reception theory and performance theory around the book of Ruth.

She describes performances of the book that led to the identification of significant gaps and ambiguities—logical and contextual—that inform the translator about where additional information may prove necessary.

Izaak de Hulster follows up the first part of his article (April 2020) on pleonastic translation, the adding of synonymous adjectives to metaphorical nouns in order to emphasize meaning that might elude the modern reader. This time he illustrates his methodology with a translation of Song of Songs 7.2-6, after providing some introductory material to the genre of Hebrew love poetry.

Moving to the New Testament, **Paul Riley**'s paper on the uses of *kyrios* in the Gospel of John, though formally a technical paper, is very practical in intent. He discusses both textual and semantic issues for translators, as well as the context faced by many translators of the Bible into minority languages, where pre-existing translations in major languages have already set up expectations. Read alongside earlier material published in this journal (including David Clark's contribution in this issue) there is much stimulus for working translators.

Gábor Harmai looks at both textual and grammatical questions arising from the location of the iota-subscript on the verb form *dōē* in Eph 1.17 and 2 Tim 2.25. The differences occur because the Nestle–Aland (NA) text fills out the manuscript evidence in a slightly different direction from the one taken by the earlier Westcott and Hort (WH) text. The result of reading the verb as optative (with WH) rather than subjunctive (with NA) leads to a subtle distinction in potential translations.

Christopher Wilde explores a linguistic feature—the use of first-person verb forms in an impersonal sense. Arguing for the care needed in cross-linguistic situations, he discusses the translation of some passages in Magar Kham, a Tibeto-Burman language, which shows significant difference in pragmatic force from Indo-European languages like Koine Greek.

Finally, **Richard Pleijel** does a great favour to the non-German-reading translation world, by clearly summarizing and evaluating the content of a German book, edited by Katharina Heyden and Henrike Manuwald, whose title might be rendered in English as *Transmissions of Sacred Texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, the outcome of a conference in Bern in 2015.

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