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## Book Review

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The Bible Translator

2021, Vol. 72(2) 260–261

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DOI: 10.1177/20516770211033842

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Philip A. Noss and Charles Houser, eds. *A Guide to Bible Translation: People, Languages, and Topics*. Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2019. xl, 971 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-5456-5812-3, \$71.99. Also in paperback and ebook.

The 896-page *A Guide to Bible Translation* was edited by Philip A. Noss and Charles S. Houser and is published by the United Bible Societies through Xulon Press. It is arranged in three sections: (1) People; (2) Languages; and (3) Topics. The last section is by far the largest. Each section is prefaced by a brief introduction which functions as an overview. Some 180 scholars from around the world were enlisted to write the articles, some of which were translated into English from other languages. The *Guide* concludes with an extensive list of publications referenced in the work, a languages index, and a somewhat rudimentary thematic guide. Sections 1 and 2 are illuminated by a smattering of black-and-white illustrations, whereas there are a few scattered diagrams and charts (but no pictures) in section 3.

The *Guide* is an interconfessional work. There are informative lengthy articles on the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and Bible translation. There is no corresponding article on Protestant churches, but the topic is addressed by “Reformation and Bible Translation.” The more general articles “Churches and Scripture” and “Confessional and Interconfessional Translations” expand on all the above. “Women Translators of the Bible” helps to counter a male-centric view of the topic.

The *Guide* may range wider than some of its would-be readers might like with its articles on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Jehovah’s Witnesses and Bible translation, but whether we agree with such groups or not, it is right that their role in Bible translation be recognized. Moving even further afield the *Guide* also covers translations of the

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Qur'an, more correctly termed "interpretations" by Muslims. There are also articles on Buddhism and Hinduism and translation.

"Translation Theory and Bible Translation" is addressed too. The article on "Relevance Theory and Bible Translation" is a succinct introduction to the subject. Aspects of translation methodology and production are covered, as well. Particularly insightful is the article "Revision of Translation."

It is hard to find major fault with this outstanding work, but I would like to select a handful of examples.

"The Editors' Addendum—UBS One-Color Maps, a Case Study" (572–74) seems somewhat cryptic, perhaps as a result of trying to pack a lot of information into a small space.

The article on "Biblicism" seems to me to be somewhat a caricature of those who hold to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. While some who hold that position might defend the *Textus Receptus* and eschew any kind of translation that is not literal, that is certainly not true of all who hold that view. Many are enthusiastic supporters of dynamic and functional equivalence translation and their contribution deserves recognition, not cavalier dismissal.

Some of the *Guide's* readers would question some of the rather assertive claims made about putative sources such as Q for the Gospels (796) and the somewhat polemical remarks aimed at those "without proper knowledge about the complex historical process of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures" (806).

Unfortunately, there is a sprinkling of typos throughout the *Guide*. Hopefully, these can easily be rectified in a future printing. Regrettably, both phrases of Hebrew quoted on p. 681 have been corrupted; this will require more careful attention.

I wish *A Guide to Bible Translation* had been published thirty years ago when I started checking my first Bible translation. All the major themes and issues relevant to Bible translation are gathered together under one roof. This magnum opus needs to be disseminated throughout the entire Bible translation movement. In time will it be translated into other languages? It deserves to be, at least in a possibly abbreviated form.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A second edition of the *Guide* (UBS, 2020) is now available through Amazon Kindle and the Translator's Workplace, and soon to be available from Logos and print-on-demand (from the American Bible Society).—Ed.