Canon Update

Since Harold Scanlin’s 1992 survey of canon research (TT 20), the study of canon has proceeded apace. The act of canonizing and the fact of canons continually raise new questions and persistently resist firm answers to old ones. Far from being a settled topic, canon reaches into many areas, ensuring the vitality and longevity of research and debate—text criticism, orality studies, ideological criticism, apocrypha and LXX studies. The books and articles listed below make up only a fraction of works on canon published since Scanlin’s survey, but represent the unflagging pursuit of answers to the enduring questions of canon.

**General Works**

- Lienhard, Joseph T. 1995. *The Bible, the Church, and Authority: The Canon of the Christian Bible in History and Theology*. Liturgical Press. L. explores the relations among the canon, the church, and authority from a Catholic perspective.
- Schnabel, Eckhard. 1995. “History, theology and the biblical canon: an introduction to basic issues.” *Themelios* 20/2:16-24. Highlights some areas of the current debate: definition of canon, history and the OT canon (rejects the idea of an Alexandrian canon, the OT canon was fixed by the 1st c. CE), and history and the NT canon (including the influence of Marcion and Montanism).

**Canonizing Process**

One area of increased attention, a legacy of James Sanders’ work in the 70s, is the canonizing process. Different understandings of the process have produced sometimes diametrically opposed reconstructions of the socio-historical forces that drove the process.


• van der Kooij, A. 1995. “De canovorming van de Hebreuws bijbel, het Oude Testament. Een overzicht van recente literatuur.” *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 49/1:42-65. Surveys recent literature on the canonization of the Hebrew Bible, focusing on nine issues: the Alexandrian canon; Jamnia; date of the canon’s closing; the Law as the first canon; the status of the Prophets; theodotion’s revision/translation; Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes; canonical approach and canonical criticism; canonical book and textual tradition.

• Steinmann, Andrew E. 1999. *The Oracles of God: The Old Testament Canon.* Concordia Academic Press. The present order and three divisions are probably due to a liturgical development after the destruction of Herod’s temple. There existed an authoritative collection of sacred books before 200 BCE that went through stages of organization and division over the next 300 years and achieved the form of a normative list of books after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

• Davies, Philip R. 1998. *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures.* Westminster John Knox Press. Canonizing involves all the stages from composition, editing, archiving (combining on a scroll) and collecting scrolls into larger units. It is an open-ended process that stops only when definitive canonical lists emerge. While it involves listing, organizing and labeling, a single definitive list is not the purpose of the process. Davies gives his own reconstruction of the lengthy process, interacting in particular with the reconstructions of M. Haran and N. Avigad.


• Carr, David M. 1996. “Canonization in the Context of Community.” In *A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders.* D. Carr and R. Weis, eds. Sheffield Academic Press, 22-64. C. outlines his own reconstruction of what he calls the “Canon Clarification Process”—from the 7th c. to Ezra and from Alexander to the destruction of the Second Temple, a time of diversity of scriptural structures—and describes the situation following the destruction—the formation of the Tanakh in Judaism and the Bible in Christianity.


• Luttikhuizen, Gerard. 1996. “De veelvormigheid van het vroegste christendom: Diversiteit binnen en buiten de canon van het nieuwe testament.” *Tijdschrift Voor Theologie* 36/4:331-347. In the 2nd c. CE there existed several collections of authoritative writings from various traditions about Jesus (Petrine, Johannine, Jewish-Christian reference to James, the Judas-Thomas Eastern Syrian traditions, Mary Magdalene). Contacts between groups led either to mutual enrichment or to hostility. The NT canon took gradual shape in the 2nd to 5th centuries, exhibiting the diversity of 1st-century Christians, a diversity reflected in later church use of the canon.


Appendixes include one on the canon of the OT, early and later canonical lists of the NT, and early mss containing the NT.


T. argues that the NT in its present form is not the product of a centuries-long process but of a particular moment (before the late 2nd c. CE); he surveys the evidence for a homogeneous final redaction of the NT—the nomina sacra, the use of the codex form, the order and extent of contents, and titles.

**Canon Fixing/Lists**


- Brakke, David. 1994. “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria’s Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter.” *HTR* 87/4:395-419. Athanasius’ disputes with other Egyptian Christians over the canon were not only about lists, but reflected conflicts between competing modes of authority, spirituality and social organization. B. shows how canon formation contributed to the establishment of Christianity in Egypt.

- Hill, C.E. 1995. “The Debate Over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon.” *WTJ* 57/2:437-452. Hahneman (*The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*) supports Sundberg’s 4th c. CE dating and Eastern origin for the Muratorian Fragment. H. considers the case unconvincing and the traditional dating (late 2nd to early 3rd c.) to suit the evidence better. With or without the fragment, evidence that the church was operating with the conception of a closed canon by the latter half of the 2nd c. is plentiful.

- Kaestli, J-D. 1994. “La place du Fragment de Muratori dans l’histoire du canon. A propos de la thèse de Sundberg et Hahneman.” *Christianesimo Nella Storia* 15/3:609-634. K.’s textual analysis also supports the 2nd-3rd c. date for the Muratorian fragment (against Sundberg, Hahneman, McDonald): in the fragment, the choices of the different books still need to be justified; books receive different degrees of acceptance; the fragment lacks terminology codified in 4th c. lists. The earlier date also explains the fragment’s defense of the authenticity of John’s Gospel and a reference to 2nd century heresies.


**Orality and Canon**

Alongside the traditional criteria for canonicity of early Christian writings (apostolicity, orthodoxy, antiquity), recent attention has focused on the role of oral tradition and public reading in the process of canonization.

- Baum, A.D. 1998. “Papias, der Vorzug der Viva Vox und die Evangelienschriften.” *NTS* 44/1:144-151. Papias’ (beg. 2nd c.) preference for oral tradition has implications for the development of the canon. B. comments on the superiority of the “living voice” for Greco-Roman authors, the living voice and primary sources (with reference to Eusebius), and the living voice and the Gospels.


- Gamble, Harry Y. 1995. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. Yale University Press. G. also takes up the matter of literacy and reading in the Early Church, concluding that “What counted most [for a document to be considered canonical] was whether the church, in whole or large part, was accustomed to hearing the document read in the service of worship” although “not every document that was liturgically read became canonical.”

Tradition im zweiten Jahrhundert.” ZNTW 85/3-4:234-258. L. considers the relation between oral and written traditions for Papias, Marcion, the Valentinian gnostics, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria. There is no sharp separation of the written tradition and its authoritative oral counterpart until Irenaeus, when the difference between the interpreted text and the interpreting tradition is clear, with a weakening of the influence of the oral tradition.


**Canon and Qumran**

A number of studies deal with the significant impact of Qumran evidence on our knowledge of canon formation, especially in light of the many “rewritten Bible” texts.


**Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical**

- The Parallel Apocrypha. 1997. J. Kohlenberger, III, ed. Oxford University Press. In addition to the texts, the volume has essays on different confessional views of the Apocrypha: Jewish (S. Tanzer), Orthodox (D. Constantelos), Catholic (J. Collins), Anglican (M. Callaway), Protestant (W. Harrelson), and Evangelical (D. Carson).
- Otzen, B. 1996. “Das Problem der Apokryphen.” SJOT 10/2:258-270. Our concept of canon is only found in later rabbinic and patristic writings. The status of the Apocrypha in the Protestant churches resists change, and the idea of translating the LXX as the Bible for the world’s churches is not a realistic solution to the “problem” of the Apocrypha.

**Text Criticism and Canonical Criticism**

Concepts of canon have sometimes determined the goals of text criticism, but now text criticism is changing concepts of canon, and also presents a challenge to the canonical method. The first five articles below all make the same point, from various perspectives and bodies of evidence, that plurality of textual traditions, as well as varieties of canons, require a nuanced text criticism.

• Elliott, J.K. 1996. “Manuscripts, the Codex and the Canon.” JSNT 63:105-123. E. lays out differences in the contents and order of books found in different mss, versions, and editions of the OT and NT. He reflects on the importance of the codex in fixing the NT canon, the fluidity of the contents of the OT, and the differences between canons and between Hebrew, Syriac, Latin and Greek mss of the OT.

**Eastern Canons**

• de Michelis, C.G. 1993. “Canone biblico e apocrifi in Russia alla fine del XV secolo.” Annali di storia dell’esegesi 10/1:9-22. In spite of apparent links to the LXX, the Russian canon was actually formed toward the end of the 15th c. when the Gennadian Bible was championed to oppose heretics seen as “Judaizers.” The Prayer of Manasses and Epistle to the Laodiceans had special significance in the struggle.

• Mikre-Sellassie, G. A. 1993. “The Bible and Its Canon in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.” TBT 44/1:111-123. Even now, it is difficult to determine the exact canon of the Ethiopian Church. M. notes that the Ethiopian canon has two main forms, the Broader and Narrower Canons, each with 81 books but differing in content.


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**Translator’s Workplace 3.0**

TW 3.0, just released in February, includes a significant amount of new material and has some new features, such as the ability to open multiple infobases at the same time, and to have Bibles, exegetical resources and other canonically ordered texts scrolling in parallel with each other.

**New resources in TW 3.0**

**More Bibles** - Nine new or revised English language Bibles including New Living Translation, JB Phillips and the New English Bible, plus Bibles in Dutch, German, Hausa, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian and Swahili.

**More exegetical resources** including Exegetical Summaries of Malachi, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews and 1 Peter; UBS Translator’s Handbooks on Esther, James, Jude; Flora of the Bible.

**More commentaries:** John, Philippians and James.

**More books,** including Man and Message by Kathleen Callow and Teacher’s Manual to accompany Bible Translation by Katy Barnwell.

**More Journals:** Full set of Notes on Translation up to volume 13 (1) with topical index, JOTT, OPTAT, and START; selected issues of The Bible Translator from 1980-98.

**New and revised scripture checklists,** Kritikos 2.0 scripture checking program for Windows.

**Revised Analytical Greek NT** with Tyndale interlinear English gloss and links to lexicons.

**BART:** Also on TW 3.0 is the latest version of the Biblical Analysis and Research Tool. BART provides the BHS and Greek texts in an easily accessible form designed to facilitate exegetical research and discourse studies on the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Recent developments include greatly enhanced facilities for searching. *(BART requires Windows 95 or newer Windows operating systems. For performance reasons it is recommended that TW 3.0 run on a Pentium Processor with a minimum of 16 MB RAM running Windows 95, 98 or NT, and SVGA video.)*

TW 3.0 is comprised of two CDs and costs $50.00. Because of the increase in price, TW 3.0 will not be sent out automatically to the standing order list. To receive it you will need to place a new order through JAARS (computer_sales@sil.org). Please remember that because of copyright restrictions, TW can only be distributed to those involved in Bible translation. This includes those who are training Bible translation personnel, consulting, preparing translation helps and other kinds of work that contribute directly to Bible translation, as well as those who are involved in a specific Bible translation project. When you order, please confirm that you will be using TW in ways that contribute directly to Bible translation, indicating the ways in which you will be using it.

Work has begun on planning future developments for TW. Please send your suggestions to the SIL International Translation Department. Technical queries about TW or BART should be sent to Translator’s_Workplace@sil.org.
## Recent Publications

Inclusion of an item in **TIC Talk** does not necessarily mean we recommend it, or that we have seen it, though in most cases we have. It means that the article or book (sometimes by title alone) looks as if it might be of interest to our readers.

### Bible Translation

#### General

An International Symposium on Africa and the OT was held in Nairobi in October under the sponsorship of Kenyatta University, Catholic University of East Africa and the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway. Representing the UBS, Peter Renju gave a paper entitled “Strategies of the UBS for OT Translation in Africa” and Leonidas Kalugila of the Swahili Study Bible Project gave a paper on “Central Issues of OT Translation in Africa.”

“30 Years Catholic Biblical Federation—Inheritance and Mission.” *Dei Verbum Bulletin* 1999, 52/3. This issue celebrates the 30th year of the CBF, with reports on its significance for the various regions of the world, and an article, “Easy Access to Sacred Scripture for All,” by D. Kosch, which briefly describes the nature and work of the CBF.


R. recounts important influences and events in his 45 years in missions, many of which were spent as a translation consultant with UBS.

#### Ancient


Arie van der Kooij. 1999. “The Peshitta and the Versions: A Study of the Peshitta Variants in Joshua 1-5 in Relation to Their Equivalents in the Ancient Versions.” Uppsala University. E. studies the relationship between Peshitta readings and their equivalent readings in the ancient versions, looking at both text critical issues and translation technique. Among other things, he concludes that, for the purposes of the modern Bible translator, the Peshitta has little to offer apart from where it is unique, and there, other explanations for versional contacts can be given.

M.P. Weitzman. 1999. *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament*. Cambridge University Press. W. argues the Peshitta was put together around 200 CE by a small Jewish community estranged from the Rabbinic majority, and that the community eventually embraced Christianity, bringing the Peshitta with them. In his extensive analysis of the text, he explores the relationship between the translation and the Hebrew, and examines the Peshitta’s historical links with Judaism and early Christianity.


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**MODERN**


William W. Combs. 1999. “Errors in the King James Version.” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 4/Fall:151-164. C. begins: “For those of us who believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the subject of errors in the Bible is not something that is normally confronted head on,” and concludes: The KJV is not the final authority. Faithful translations are all the Word of God even though they disagree at points. In between he gives examples of three types of errors in the KJV: text-based, translational, and transmissional.


These two new English translations of Samuel were reviewed together as “truly superior works” in the *New York Times Book Review*, Nov 14, 1999, 11-12. The reviewer praises Alter’s commentary and his “ability to reproduce the charged music of biblical Hebrew in his English without tumbling the modern language into either an arcane unreadable awkwardness or a user-friendly stylized contemporaneity.”


Peter J. Thuesen. 1999. *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible.* Oxford University Press. T. explores modern Bible translation controversies that first arose during the late nineteenth century, when rapid advances in textual criticism and translation seemed to threaten the inherited historical picture of Jesus. Unable to separate the quest for accurate translation from the quest for the real Jesus, Protestants repeatedly clashed over the rendering of a few key passages. The struggle for an authority that could also confirm the orthodoxy of a translation has helped produced the profusion of ideologically competing English Bibles.

Albert Waldinger. 1998. “A Prophecy for the Jews: Isaiah in Yiddish and German.” *Babel* 44/4:316-335. W. deals with two Jewish translations of Isaiah (Yiddish, by the Yiddish poet Yehoash; and German, by Buber & Rosenzweig), considering the relation of both to the Hebrew and the effect of the act of translation.


Matthew J. Streett. 1999. “The Necessity of Hebrew in the Translation of an Orthodox Old Testament Canon.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 43/3-4:339-358. Appealing to linguistic and text critical principles, and common sense, S. argues for the use of both the MT and the LXX as a basis of translation of the Orthodox canon, with the Hebrew as primary reference where books exist in both languages. Included is a discussion of the use of critical editions and issues in translation.

Musa W. Dube. 1999. “Consuming a Colonial Cultural Bomb: Translating Badimo into ‘Demons’ in the Setswana Bible (Matthew 8.28-34; 10.8; 15.22).” *JSNT* 73:33-59. Using an example from Setswana, D. investigates how native languages were used as a colonizing tool. D. examines the Setswana Bible and colonial dictionaries to show how they were shaped by their time. He also examines how subsequent Bibles and dictionaries reflect the spirit of decolonization, and how native readers developed strategies of resistance.


Internet Resources

Text criticism

URL: http://purl.org/TC

Jimmy Adair has a list of links to other Web sites dealing with textual criticism on the TC Links page, accessible from the TC home page. The direct address is http://purl.org/TC/TC-links.html

Mark Goodacre has a page devoted to NT Text Criticism on his NT Gateway: http://www.bham.ac.uk/ theology/goodacre/textcrit.htm

The University of Michigan papyri collection offers the largest number of fully cataloged papyri (of a wide variety of Greek texts) with translation, including for texts that were originally published untranslated. To date 2,382 fully cataloged texts are available for open-text, simple or boolean searches through the website. Of these texts, about 1,750 come with digital images. For some 1,200 of the documentary texts there is a link to the Greek text of the Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri (DDBDP) at the Perseus server (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Texts/papyri.html). This link, when available, appears immediately after the translation. URL: http://www.lib.umich.edu/pap/

Online journals

The online journal Women in Judaism (http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/journal/index.html) sometimes has articles on Hebrew Bible texts.

Journal for the Study of Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament:
http://newton.uor.edu/FacultyFolder/Hester/Journal/JSRCNTIntro.html

Also, the Wabash Center for Teaching in Theology and Religion has a guide to internet resources that includes a list of online journals selected by the guide’s editor, as well as an index to indexes of online journals and resources. Look under 2. Material types. You may want to explore the many other useful links here, as well. URL: http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/front.htm

Projects

Color Coded Luke is part of James Tabor’s “Jewish Roman World of Jesus” web pages (http://www.uncc.edu/jtabor/index.html). The English text is colored either blue for Q material, or red for Mark material, or orange for Luke’s special material. Tabor teaches at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. URL: http://www.uncc.edu/jtabor/luke.html.

Postmodern Bible – Amos is an online hypertexted commentary with multimedia elements, including photographs of pertinent realia and sites, maps, lexical information, glossaries, commentary, and audio files where the Hebrew or English text is read (the author notes that the English translation—the Temporary English Version!—“is highly ‘literal,’ giving the ‘flavour’ of the Hebrew, it should be read alongside a good recent translation like CEV which gives the sense in contemporary language.” Created by Tim Bulkeley, Carey Baptist College, NZ. URL: http://www.bible.gen.nz/frame.htm

The Biblical and Theological Studies Index (BTSI) is a growing database of resources related to biblical and theological studies; the database is updated every week. BTSI invites contributions from the academic community. For information on how to get your publications included in BTSI follow the appropriate link on the page. URL: http://www.btsi.org
Internet Resources, Projects, cont.

IKTINOS: Institute for Korean Theological Information Network Service. This site provides access to a very detailed online Bible bibliography, with extensive listings of articles for every Biblical book. URL: http://iktinos.swim.org/eda-ba.html

The Context Group: A Project on the Bible in its Socio-Cultural Environment is a working group of international scholars committed to the use of the social sciences in biblical interpretation. The group emerged in the late 1980’s from earlier associations in the SBL and CBA. Members meet annually, usually in Portland, Oregon, to work together on collaborative projects and to offer peer review of individual ones. Newcomers are welcome to the annual Portland meetings. More information at: http://www.serv.net/~oakmande/index.html. Context Group publications can be found at http://www.stolaf.edu/people/kchanson/context.html.

Discussion List

Kata Markon (The Gospel of Mark Discussion List) is a moderated academic e-list dedicated to the scholarly discussion and evaluation of critical questions surrounding the Gospel according to Mark. The purpose of the list is to provide a forum outside of the usual arenas of printed journals and monographs where these questions may be raised, entertained, and debated. Additionally, Kata Markon is intended to be a venue in which those working professionally in the field of Markan studies may post and receive critical responses to papers or ideas that are in the process of development. For a further description of the list, its aim and scope, its protocols, names of moderators, and instructions for subscribing, go to http://metalab.unc.edu/GMark

Language

The West Semitic Research Project provides resources on early Semitic inscriptions. URL: http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/. Follow the “What’s new” link for a list of online articles reporting on the recent find of an early Semitic script.

“Hebrew resources.” This web page has a lot of resources for working with Hebrew. Don’t be frightened off by the mostly Hebrew opening screen. URL: http://www.snunit.k12.il/heb_new.html

St. Jerome Publisher has made available abstracts of articles in its journal The Translator. The latest issue listed (Volume 5/2 1999), a special issue on dialogue interpreting, is guest-edited by Ian Mason. You can find a list of the articles and abstracts attached to them at http://www.mcc.ac.uk/stjerome/periodicals_f.htm

In a recent Americas region newsletter, a list of Web sites pertaining to Language and Language rights is provided:

- Terralingua: http://coular.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html
- Ethnologue: http://www.sil.org.ethnologue/
- Universal declaration of linguistic rights: http://www.troc.es/mercator/dudl-gb.htm
- European minority languages: http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/saoghal/mion-chanain/Failte_en.html
- Clearing House for Endangered Languages: http://www.tooyoo.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ichel.html
- UNESCO site on linguistic rights: http://www.unesco.org/most/ln2bib.htm
Two Bible Translation Discussion Lists

There are now two email discussion lists on the subject of Bible translation. The list run by Wayne Leman has been around for awhile and is a (quite active) public discussion list for anyone with a serious interest in Bible translation. You can join by sending an email message to BibleTranslation-subscribe@listbot.com (no message is necessary) or go to the list’s website http://bibletranslation.listbot.com and follow the directions for subscribing.

A new discussion list with limited membership has just been started. It is open to those who are professionally part of the Bible translation task worldwide, including mother tongue translators, project linguists, translation consultants, exegetes, Scripture-in-Use facilitators, and Branch translation and project coordinators. Discussions will focus on translation theory and practice, especially as it relates to Bible translation. Members are encouraged to post questions about passages of Scripture they are having difficulty translating. This list is not open to the public. You can subscribe by sending a message to bibletranslation-subscribe@onelist.com or go to the list website and click on “Subscribe”: http://www.onelist.com/group/bibletranslation. Subscriptions must be approved by list moderators, but anyone who is a member of any Bible translation organization can expect to be approved.

TIC Talk Delivery

If you prefer, you can receive TIC Talk via email, as an attached file. Send me a message stating what form you’d like the file to arrive in—HTML, Word 6/7 document, or PDF file. All files will be zipped, to reduce download time. When Hebrew or Greek fonts are used, they are SPTiberian and SPlonic, respectively, available free (and becoming widely used in electronic document exchanges) at: http://purl.org/TC/fonts. If you don’t have web access, I can send you the fonts, as well. Email: sarahlind@compuserve.com