The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls:
A Selection of Recent Studies

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A. Introductions and General Surveys


The Hebrew language of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) is rather a closed book for most biblical scholars. Thus, for example, Emerton’s compendious survey of studies in Biblical Hebrew from the 1980s and 1990s overtly excludes this area from discussion (p. 185). Even within DSS scholarship, linguistic study is somewhat marginal: Fitzmyer has no section dedicated to it. Nonetheless, the situation is improving slowly. Abegg’s article represents a data-rich introductory grammar of the orthography and morphology of the DSS; it also includes some creative insights (e.g., into the “distributive construct” and verbal forms preceded by waw), although Abegg’s inclusion of 4QMMT (see §B) in his corpus is questionable. The article by Muraoka, probably the greatest living scholar of biblical languages, assumes a higher level of background knowledge and is, correspondingly, less data-intensive, but covers more ground and especially more problem areas; it represents an up-to-date and scholarly synthesis of the Hebrew of the DSS in its many aspects. For a less detailed, more general overview, see Sáenz-Badillos, supplemented by the works of Kutscher. Qimron’s work is a highly condensed reference grammar (contrast Abegg) with a strong lexical component. Muchowski (Qumran Hebrew as a Spoken Language) “is a critique of the thesis that...QH was a fully living, naturally developing dialect” (from a summary by Andrzej Zaborski; cf. §C.5, below).

B. Non-Literary Texts and the Copper Scroll

literary Hebrew texts of the first century BCE to sixth century CE, arranged on linguistic principles; the corpus includes the Copper Scroll and Bar-Kochba letters. Yardeni’s study is typical of Israeli erudition in this field, but atypical in its accessibility to non-Hebrew-speakers. Her work excludes the Copper Scroll and does not go beyond the end of the Bar-Kochba Revolt (135 CE), but includes Aramaic texts. Although grammar is not covered, the texts are presented in transcription, translation (Vol. A), and translation (Vol. B), with the different sections of documents clearly labelled, and there are extensive essays on paleographic matters (in Hebrew in Vol. A, translated into English in Vol. B, accompanied there by an extensive bibliography). Vol. B includes combined Hebrew-Aramaic concordances, with detailed lemmatization. From these, we can see, for example that whereas the relative še- is attested 78 times, šer is not attested once. In the concordances of personal names, Yardeni signals names of Greek or Roman, Edomite, and Babylonian provenance, women’s names, and fathers’ names (in forms like Simon bar-Jonah).

A few items not included by Yardeni are to be found in DJD 38, which presents texts from several sites in the Judaean Desert beyond Qumran (xv), including 8 biblical texts (3 from Numbers, albeit one with just four words), 2 literary texts in Hebrew, and, from Jericho (Jer), possibly five deeds or letters (Jer9-11, 14-15). Jer9 r11 records the name Domitianus Caesar; Jer11 abounds with characteristically post-biblical usages: possessive šel, or sellbmp (19 times in Yardeni; habbayit sellmp), demonstrative hallzp (10 times in Yardeni; habbayit hallzp); in the same text, we find Jehoseph, whose name recurs in the many more Aramaic texts from Jericho; note the characteristic spelling with -eh- found in the Bible only at Ps. 81:6, but widespread in early post-biblical sources (see DCH 4.155a-b; Yardeni: yhwsp 53 times; ywsp 7 times; ywbsp once); Jer11 also contains the verb F’hahzmr “to restore,” which, like the participial noun šuttap at Jer15 3a3, is attested for the first time in Ben Sira. A curiosity that arises from Jer1, a fourth-century BCE Aramaic list of loans, is that the only person referred to not as “son of” but by his profession is Shelemiah “the carpenter” (naggārā). The other Jericho material all appears to date from the first and early second centuries CE (Jer7ar and Jer16gr both include a date) up to the Bar-Kochba revolt (132-35 CE). At least seven texts (excluding Jer1) are in Aramaic and 18 are in Greek, an interesting snapshot of the linguistic map of Judea at the time (see Porter). There are six more Greek and two more Aramaic texts in the volume.

XHev/Se 6 (M. Morgenstern, DJD 38), presented as an “Eschatological Hymn,” includes an unedited use of the article (’hārīsonim “to the first ones”), the form z’bäl (?) for MT z’bul “majesty of,” the Aramaism tiqqum “foundation” (rather than “correction”), and the collocation hereb ga’awatnā “the sword of our pride” (cf. Deut. 33:29).

A phylactery (XHev/Se5; M. Morgenstern and M. Segal, DJD 38) is particularly interesting in that it embodies 29 unique readings vis-a-vis the biblical source texts, ten of which the editors regard as representing “Variants in Orthography and Morphology,” for example, the very rare spelling (in Hebrew texts) m’ for mh (ma “what?”) (Exod. 13:14); the otherwise unattested ’ezkārōn with prothetic aifer is found for MT zikkārōn “memorial” (Exod. 13:9); finally, the form y’si ’im (?) for MT yōs'im (Exod. 13:4) may
reflect forward assimilation of the shewa to the vowel of the plural morpheme, or the reading may be instead 'y'sō'îm, using the pa'ol participle (see DJD 38.184).

Although Alan Millard pays relatively little attention to the DSS, among other elements of this impressive survey is a discussion of the relationship of the formulations of MMT and those of the NT (213-23) and a detailed survey of first-century CE epigraphic and other sources (including the NT) for the four languages used in the holy land at the time of Jesus (84-153; cf. Sáenz-Badillos, 166-73).

DCH is mentioned in this section because of its great utility as a tool in the study of pre-Mishnaic post-biblical texts (Ben Sira, Scrolls, non-literary texts) and extra-biblical texts (inscription). Through its exhaustive analysis of all this material as well as of the Bible, the DCH clearly displays the distribution of words and meanings across the different Hebrew corpora.

C. Collected Language Studies


Articles with primary reference to the language of the Scrolls may be grouped as follows (the number in each case refers to the first page of the article).

1. Syntax: M.F.J. Baasten, HDB, 1 (verbless clauses containing pronouns; Baasten distinguishes between logical subject and predicate and psychological theme and rHEME); HSS, 25 (verbless clauses with prepositional predicate); DW, 1 (yeš / en clauses; T. Muraoka, HDB, 92 (catalogue of verb-plus-preposition structures); HSS, 188 (“be” plus participle; M.S. Smith, HSS, 278 (participle used as main verb); DW, 256 (indefinite absolute used as finite verb) (see also Smith's The Origins and Development of the Waw-Consecutive: Northwest Semitic Evidence from Ugarit to Qumran [Scholars Press, 1991]; E. Qimron, HDB, 175 (“cohortative” and “jussive” forms); S.E. Fasberg, DW, 94 (syntactic features in DSS biblical mss.); W.T. van Peursen, DW, 215 (conditional sentences).

2. Morphology: E. Qimron, SSS, 244 (the noun-pattern tiqtolet/taqtalā); M. Bar-Asher, DW, 12 (development of biblical qal and nifal forms into piel, pu’al, and hitpael; noun-pattern qatālān).

3. Lexicology and phraseology: M. Bar-Asher, DW, 12 (influence of early targumin on DSS Hebrew); J.F. Elwolde, SSS, 77 (Hodavot miscellanea). J. Joosten, SSS, 146; DW, 126 (influence of later forms of Hebrew on citations of biblical texts in DSS and on LXX translations); M. Kister, DW, 137 (kā’ar/kā’ar “be ugly,” “despise”; hiššīm “hand over”; pervasive influence of Aramaic in 4QMMT; māzūr “catapult”; gīḇārā “wisdom” [: “strength”; cf. Isa. 11:2; Job 12:13; Prov. 8:14]; hadā’dē herēs “rays of the sun” [: “jagged edges of clay” at Job 41:22]; miqre/moqrē “one who has a nocturnal emission”; rēšēp “bird,” “demon”; gibbāl “kneading, creation”; nisba = sībah “praise”; ekklēsia (Matt. 16:18) = sōd “community,” “foundation.”)

Kister emphasizes that new usages frequently emerge not in a natural linguistic way but via processes of interpretation, often midrashic, of the biblical source texts; J. Kugel, DW, 166 (“tī’ūdā “testimony/admonition”; ḥāmām sī’ār “utter praise”); S. Morag, DW, 178 (“yəḥad “community,” gōrāl “decision, decree,” “group,” “battle,” hārābām “the learned ones” [with reference to the addressing of Jesus as “rabbi”]; serek “set of rules,” “military unit,” “list,” text); G.W. Nebe, HDB, 150 (in German: Aramaic-influenced Hebrew of three Nahal Hever documents; also grammar); M. Pérez Fernández, SSS, 205 (“because for the priests it is appropriate to,” “you know that” in 4QMMT).

4. Bible-related: C. Cohen, DW, 40 (superior DSS variants in Isa. 1-5); J.F. Elwolde, DW, 65 (DSS ruqūmā and Ps. 139:15 ruqūqāmī / LXX he ᦠhupostasis mou).

5. Status of DSS Hebrew: J. Blau, DW, 20 (comparing “Middle Arabic” practices, DSS morphological peculiarities may reflect literary preferences not a different spoken vernacular); J.F. Elwolde, HDB, 17 (lexical similarities of the different ancient Hebrew corpora); A. Hurvitz, DW, 110 (DSS do not clearly represent the vernacular Hebrew of their authors); E. Qimron, DW, 232 (DSS Hebrew represents Jerusalem area vernacular; Copper Scroll features are inconsistent with those of Mishnaic Hebrew, which is an essentially northern dialect; there are no obvious Mishnaisms in later books of the Bible; DSS Hebrew retains many morpho-syntactic features earlier than those found in the Tiberian tradition of BH); W.M. Schniedewind, DW, 244 (for ideological reasons, DSS writers deliberately employ archaizing forms).

D. Non-Biblical Literary Texts


Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea,

DJD 30, an edition of 4QPseudo-Ezekiel and 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah (4Q383, 385-390), includes seven pages of linguistic presentation; for the two works, the editor notes fifteen forms or meanings previously only known from tannaitic literature or Aramaic; of particular interest is the form hmmm, interpreted by the editor as hemen “from,” previously only known in suffixed forms: hemenni, etc. (However, others have interpreted hmmm as the proper noun Haman!)

DJD 36 includes an edition, by S.J. Pfann, of the Rule of the Congregation (in which “the priest” takes precedence over the “messiah of Israel”) that combines nine fragmentary Cave 4 witnesses with the well-known 1QSa (1Q28). Two additional fragments of 4Q269 are provided by J. Baumgarten, who suggests that the original name of the Damascus Document might have been “The Final Midrash of the Torah.” On a much smaller scale, the two fragments of 4Q313 (Pfann) supplement our witnesses to 4QMMT. The volume also contains editions of two texts that have provoked much debate: 4Q285 (P. Alexander and G. Vermes), where at 7:4 the editors defend the interpretation of whmytw as whhemitō, “and the Prince of the Congregation ... shall put him to death” (not whemiti, “and they will put to death the Prince of the Congregation”); and a Qumran ostracon (F.M. Cross and E. Eshel) from “the mid-first century CE,” with a vigorous defense of the reading of line 8 as âukmallotō layyahad “when he fulfills (his oath) to the community.” A third ostracon represents a scribal exercise in the Hebrew alphabet. Three other alleged writing exercises are found in the volume. 4Q331-3 (J.A. Fitzmyer) and 4Q468e (M. Broshi) are four (of very few) DSS that name contem-

Between a fifth and a quarter of the DSS are biblical manuscripts. For most users, DJD 16 is of value for following up the variants registered in DSSB for the Ketuvim. Although over half the work is taken up by 24 Psalms manuscripts, a more immediately useful work for Psalms study is that of Flint, which gives a psalm-by-psalm listing of variants from all the DSS (not just those from Cave 4), notably the Great Psalms Scroll from Cave 11. However, Flint’s work has no discussion of textual variants and omits orthographic variants altogether; with regard to both aspects, DJD 16 is extremely useful; it also includes 4QPs* (4Q98f), not found in Flint. Flint and Alvarez present much of the linguistic and textual detail of DJD in a format that is assimilable by Hebrew non-specialists. For a detailed study of Ps. 151A, see Smith. An example of an exegetically significant Psalms variant is the possible reading at Ps. 22:17 “they have bound my hands and feet,” rather than MT’s “like a lion’s are my hands and feet” (cf. BHS, DCH 4.349; DSSB, 519; M. Kister, DW, 140-41). Further examples of semantically significant variants, all from Proverbs are: 1:32, perhaps mušeket “tranquility of the naive” (ho. ptc. fem.), providing a better parallel with salwā in the next hemistich than MT mšēbat “apostasy of” (contrast DSSB, 595; cf. NJPS); 14:34, apparently, with LXX, “the diminution [heser] of nations is sin,” for the rare MT use of hesed “shamefulness”; 15:28, “(the heart of) the righteous is for humbling [l’anno]” for MT “mediates for answering [yehég la’nōt]” (contrast DSSB, 596). For an extensive listing of the Pentateuch, based on the eminently useful DSSB, see www.geocities.com/Heartland/Pines/7224/Rick/Septuagint/spappendix.htm (compiler R. Grant Jones).

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. Names in bold indicate people who are in some way related to UBS. Other bolding is for quick location of the general topic.

Bible Translation

Carlo Buzzetti. 2001. Traduzione e Tradizione: La Via Dell’uso-Confronto (Oltre Il Biblico «traduttore Traditore»). Edizioni Messaggero Padova. This book is a guide for an independent-study course on Bible translation, aimed at students of theology, exegesis, pastoral studies, and communication.

Julian Sundersingh. 2001. Audio-Based Translation: Communicating Biblical Scripture to Non-Literate People. UBS and SAIACS Press. In a comprehensive discussion of his subject, S. includes treatment of “Linguistic Factors,” “Cultural Factors,” and “Textual Factors in Translation for Audio.” (TOs, see discussion by Phil Noss in Relevant Ramblings LLL.)


Uwe F.W. Bauer. 2000. “Das Sogenannte ‘Idiolekte’ Prinzip der Bibelübersetzung — Wesentliche Charakteristika und Einige Praktische Beispiele.” In „Unter dem Fußboden ein Tropfen Wahrheit“ (Festschrift J.M. Schmidt), H.-J. Barkenings and U.F. Bauer, eds. Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland. B. argues in favor of translation from the “idiom” of the original language to that of the receptor language, an approach that tends to be concordant and retains the literary forms of the source. At the same time, the translation is divided into cola that represent both sense and breathing units.

ANCIENT


“Septuaginta-Übersetzungsprojekts” at http://www.septuaginta-deutsch.de. This site of the LXX German translation project has a number of downloadable descriptions and discussions of the project: “Übersetzung der Septuaginta” (from ZAW 111, 1999 and ZNW 90, 1999); “Die griechische Bibel (AT) deutsch: Zur Begründung eines Übersetzungprojektes,” by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Kraus; and “Septuaginta-Arbeitsstelle in Koblenz.”

Vrej Nersessian. 2001. The Bible in the Armenian Tradition. The British Library; The J. Paul Getty Museum. Illustrated by color plates of illuminations from Armenian Bible manuscripts, this book presents in brief various aspects of the Bible in Armenian, from the basis of the first translation, to the canon, to different recensions and editions, to modern translation efforts. Also considered are the influence of the translation on the Armenian language and culture, commentaries in Armenian, the illuminations and the nature of image veneration in Armenia, and the Bible in Armenian piety and worship.

MODERN

J.L. Blok-van den Boogert. 2001. “Chronicle: A Bible Translation to Be Read Aloud.” In Unless Some One Guide Me... (Festschrift K.A. Deurloo), J. Dyk, et al., eds. Shaker. Chronicles the progress of the ecumenical Dutch translation project (Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling) of the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap and the Katholieke Bijbelstichting, discussing in particular the way the debate about what translation approach to follow heightened public awareness of translation issues.

Su Fang Ng. 2001. “Translation, Interpretation, and Heresy: The Wycliffite Bible, Tyndale’s Bible, and the Contested Origin.” Studies in Philology 98/3:315-338. Ng studies the writings of Wyclif, the Lollards, and Tyndale on Bible translation to suggest that the most significant continuity between Lollardy and the Protestant Reformation (from the late medieval to the early modern period) was the subversiveness of translation, when possession of the vernacular scripture could condemn one as a heretic and vernacular writings other than scripture were perceived as dangerous, and always potentially heretical.

La Bible. 2001. Bayard. La Bible is a new French translation in which poetry (and some prose) is rendered in free verse style and format. For each biblical book, an exegete was paired with a literary writer to produce the translation. The 3200-page volume was prepared in a Catholic context and has been endorsed by the Commis-
sion on Doctrine of the Bishops of France for its cultural and literary value though not for liturgical reading. Gen 1:1 is translated as follows:

Premiers
Dieu crée ciel et terre
terre vide solitude
noir au-dessus des fonds
souffle de dieu
mouvements au-dessus des eaux


Innocent Himbaza. 2001. Transmettre la Bible. Une critique exégétique de la traduction de l’AT: Le cas du Rwanda. Urbaniana University Press. In the first section, H. traces the history of Bible translation in Rwanda from the beginning of the 20th century; the greater part of the book is devoted to a detailed analysis and comparison of the OT translations in the Bibliya Yera (BFBS, 1957) and the Catholic Bibliya Ntagatifu (1990). The study was a Fribourg doctoral dissertation directed by Adrian Schenker.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE AMERICAS REGION


Other professional activity among the Americas Region TOs: Phil Towner gave a paper “Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus” at a conference on Christology held in McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada in June, 2001.


Bible

GENERAL

Two very welcome products from Stuttgart: BHS in paperback (ISBN 3-438-05222-9) and therefore at a lower price; and more significantly, QUEST 2: The Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible (on CD-ROM for PCs), expected next spring, which offers the first public electronic version of the BHS and N-A” critical apparatus, as well as the QUEST database, which allows morphological and syntactic searches of the Hebrew Bible. Also included are the LXX and Vulgate and numerous modern translations and dictionaries, and a taste of the BHQ apparatus (for Megilloth) and of the Editio Critica Maior of the NT (sample from James).

BibleWorks 5 (for Windows). This new version introduces some significant improvements and additions in interface, search functions, and databases, including a BHS transliteration, and BHS with accents. The Version Database Compiler allows users to build their own Bible translations for display and searching in BibleWorks. The user provides a given text in ASCII format with chapter/verse markup and BibleWorks compiles the database and installs it in the program, at which point it can be used just as any of the versions provided. More information at http://www.bibleworks.com.

Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship. 2000. M.C. Korpel and J.M. Oesch, eds. Van Gorcum. The first volume in the series Pericope: Scripture as Written and Read in Antiquity. The series is concerned with the delimitation of textual units in biblical and related writings, and aims to provide Bible translators and exegetes with data concerning such delimitation in the mss of the Hebrew Bible, LXX, Peshitta and the Vulgate. This volume presents papers from a workshop of the Pericope Group, including “The Background of the Sense Divisions in the Biblical Texts,” by E. Tov. The second book in the series is The Structure of the Book of Ruth, by M. Korpel. (TOs, see Relevant Ramblings LLL for a discussion of the first volume by David Clark.)

Families and Family Relations, as Represented in Early Judaisms and Early Christianities: Texts and Fictions. 2000. J.W. van Henten and A. Brenner, eds. Van Gorcum. Topics discussed in these papers include the metaphor of marriage in early Judaism, the brother-sister relationship in Ancient Israel, Hebrew family names, domesticity in Judaism,
kinship in the Pauline churches, and women in John’s Gospel.


The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt. 2000. D.B. Redford, ed. Oxford University Press. 3 volumes. This reference source offers about 600 articles on social, political, religious, cultural, and artistic aspects of ancient Egypt. Also from Oxford last year, The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt (I. Shaw, ed., Oxford University Press), which traces the emergence and development of Egypt from prehistoric roots to conquest by the Roman Empire.


David M. Carr. 2000. “Untamable Text of an Untamable God: Genesis and Rethinking the Character of Scripture.” Interpretation 54/4:347-362. The instability of the multi-voiced, multi-valent texts of the Bible is a virtue that makes the Bible flexible enough to function as scripture for very different communities and individuals partly because its texts can not be reduced to any one of their traditions. Not only is the text untamable, but interpreters can be counted on to expand that untamability by reading it in varied ways. One approach to interpretation compatible with the image of “untamability” is to emphasize the persuasive, rather than coercive, character of interpretation.

**BIBLICAL LANGUAGES**


Vincent de Caën. 2001. “Hebrew Linguistics and Biblical Criticism: A Minimalist Programme.” Journal of Hebrew Scriptures 3. Outlines a proposal for analyzing “natural diachronic processes” to explain the grammatical variation in Biblical Hebrew independent of the literary paradigm. The results should suggest a new alignment of texts and sources and a better understanding of the chronological layers of BH. As a first approximation a fivefold stratification is proposed, considerably refining the traditional term “early Biblical Hebrew.” The most interesting conclusion is the priority of Deuteronomy within the five books of Moses. Another result is the sorting of composite books like Psalms by linguistic criteria. dC. hopes to produce a three-volume study (morphology, syntax, and lexicon). (from pub. abstract)

http://www.purl.org/jhs


**OT**

Korah, M. Abegg on Paul, and R. Wall on Rahab (James 2:25).


Addresses the question of boundaries between literary units and analyzes the devices that BH narrative uses to connect consecutive units.

G.J. Wenham. 2001. Story as Torah. T & T Clark. Explores how the OT aims to teach ethical behavior through stories, focusing on Genesis and Judges, specifically on the way the authors portray their protagonists.

James Adair. 2000. An Inductive Method for Reconstructing the Biblical Text: Illustrated by an Analysis of 1 Samuel 3. Department of Ancient Studies, University of Stellenbosch. Analysis of the translation technique, grammatical/ stylistic-literary/ theological characteristics of the ancient versions must be performed before they can be used for the reconstruction of biblical texts through retroversion. The proposed method is demonstrated on 1 Samuel 3.

Adrian Schenker. 2001. “Comment l’histoire littéraire, canonique et textuelle concurrent toutes les trois dans la première phase de l’histoire du texte de la Bible.” Ricerche Storico Bibliche 13/1:87-94. This volume publishes papers from the 9th Convegno di Studi Veterotestamentari (1999) on the subject of the tension between text and canon. S. describes the situation of multiple forms of the Hebrew text and their reflection both in the MT in the form of parallel texts, and in the ancient versions. He emphasizes the need, in such a situation, for literary analysis to be part of the work of textual criticism.

NT


Harm W. Hollander. “The Words of Jesus: From Oral Traditions to Written Record in Paul and Q.” Novum Testamentum 42/4:340-357. Examining the words of Jesus quoted in Paul’s letters and Q, H. attempts to establish the conditions that led to the transition from the oral transmission of Jesus’ words to the textual traditions.


Bruce W. Longenecker. 2001. “Linked Like a Chain: Rev 22.6-9 in Light of an Ancient Transition Technique.” New Testament Studies 47/1:105-117. Rev 22.6-9 exhibits an elaborate structure. Fundamental to its structural complexity is the rhetorical technique of ‘chain-link’ construction, discussed by both Lucian of Samosata and Quintilian. Appearing in at least three other passages in the Johannine apocalypse, this transition device involves a back-and-forth (AbaB) arrangement of ideas that has not been adequately appreciated in modern scholarship. (pub. abstr.)

Three collections of New Testament manuscript images that are available on the Web are:


David J. Townsend and Thomas G. Bever. 2001. Sentence Comprehension: The Integration of Habits and Rules. MIT Press. Using sentence comprehension as a case study for all of cognitive science, the authors offer an integration of symbolic-computational and associative-connectionist approaches. The first emphasizes the formal manipulation of symbols underlying language behavior, and the second concerns the intuition that most behaviors consist of accumulated habits.

Jared Diamond. 2001. “Deaths of Languages.” Natural History 110/3:30-38. Reviews the situation of language loss in the world, using the extinct Ostrogothic language as an example of what has already been lost, and the minority Frisian language as an example of what can still be saved. He compares the high visibility and respect experienced by speakers of Frisian with fading identity, now and historically, of many American Indian language groups.

The Rosetta Project at www.rosettaproject.org:8080/live/ is a global collaboration of language specialists and native speakers working to develop a contemporary version of the historic Rosetta Stone. In this updated iteration, the goal is to create a meaningful survey and near permanent archive of 1,000 languages to be a platform for comparative linguistic research and education as well as a functional linguistic tool that might help in the recovery of lost languages in the future. The “thousand language archive” is an ongoing, interactive site for non-commercial use. It appears to have a Genesis excerpt in each of 1,195 languages.

http://www.yourdictionary.com is a valuable resource for general language work, including links to hundreds of interlingual dictionaries. It lists over 260 languages with links to online dictionaries. New languages and dictionaries are constantly being added, along with grammars, and other language resources on the Web.

Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion. 2001. J.F. Sawyer and J. Simpson, eds. Pergamon. This one-volume encyclopedia of 300+ articles covers religious scripts, texts, use of language, beliefs about the origins of language, the interaction of religion and linguistics, biographies of over 100 scholars in language and linguistics, including Gene Nida and Kenneth Pike (both entries by R. Longacre), and a glossary of linguistic and religious terms. Phil Stine has an article on modern Bible translations, and John Elwolde contributed the entries “Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish” and “Computers and Religious Studies.” An entry on SIL was written by J. Bendor-Samuel.
SBL, Denver, November 2001

The Bible Translation Section of the Society for Biblical Literature had two lively sessions at this year’s U.S. meeting in Denver, Colorado in November, with a large contribution from UBS and friends. Lénart de Regt gave a critique of Robert Alter’s translation of Genesis, considering how Alter dealt with Hebrew syntactical inversions, politeness strategies, and other nuances. John Ellington challenged Schleiermacher’s dichotomizing of translations as either domesticating or foreignizing. Phil Noss and Peter Renju gave a joint paper evaluating the Kiswahili scripture translation by Mwalimu Nyerere in poetic form. Phil Stine offered a historical and contemporary assessment of Eugene Nida’s contribution to translation theory, and Freddy Boswell looked at some unusual attempts to translate literary form. In the Masoretic Studies session, Harold Scanlin reviewed evidence in the case of the 19th C Shapira controversy over the authenticity of a Hebrew manuscript.

In the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media Section, a panel discussion on experiments in new media translation followed a screening of the ABS video “The Neighbor.” Among the panelists and respondents were Gregor Goethals, Fern Lee Hagedorn, and Tom Boomershine.

The SBL and the American Bible Society have jointly initiated the Bible Technology Group, an effort to develop a common XML format for electronic texts of the Bible for the benefit of scholars, Bible societies, translators, publishers, software vendors, lay persons, etc. OSIS, Open Scriptural Information Standard, is the formal name for the first project of the Bible Technology Group, which met in Denver for two days prior to the SBL meeting. Details can be found at: http://www.bibletechnologies.org

An important milestone was also celebrated at the SBL meeting: The official publication of all the Dead Sea Scrolls is now complete. Emanuel Tov spoke about the last ten years of the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project, during which time he was editor-in-chief and the great majority of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert volumes were published.

Thanks to Daud Soesilo for the photos

Conference — Call for Papers

Holy Untranslatable? Translating Sacred Texts

This one-day conference at the University of Warwick May 11, 2002, aims to draw together people working in the fields of literature, theology, medieval and early modern history, translation, linguistics, cultural and media studies, and any other relevant areas to discuss the implications of translating sacred texts in terms of exegesis, teaching, and reception. It is hoped that delegates will offer papers from historical and contemporary perspectives. Proposals for papers of 20 minutes are invited on the following areas: untranslatability, poetic transfer, text to screen, religious language, exegesis vs. translation, cultural problems, motives for translating, the oral tradition, translating metaphor, gender issues, linguistic problems, domestication vs. making strange, manipulation through translation, Humanism, multiple source texts. It is hoped that a publication will result from the proceedings. Abstracts of about 300 words for 20 minute papers should be sent by 30th January 2002 to Dr. Lynne Long, Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.