

T♦I♦C TALK ['tɪk tɔk]

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“Reading with” and Related Biblical Conversations: Ordinary Readers and Biblical Scholars around the World

by Nancy Heisey

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Forty years ago biblical scholars of African, Asian, or Latin American origin who were in conversation with North Atlantic biblical scholars could be listed on the fingers of one hand. In theological circles, of course, Latin American liberation theologians, with work rooted in biblical themes, were widely recognized, and the intersecting concerns of black and feminist theologians hinted at the presence of many others outside the guild who might demand to be taken into account in future biblical studies conversations.

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the conversation has dramatically changed. Many North Atlantic universities now boast on their faculties biblical scholars or theologians whose origins are “southern,” and many “northern” academic biblical studies journals and book publishers list a variety of titles by scholars from around the world. A very recent indicator of this change is the Society of Biblical Literature’s announcement of a new online open access series, *International Voices in Biblical Studies*. The first publication in the series, *Global Hermeneutics?: Reflections and Consequences*, may be downloaded from the [SBL site](#).

This article offers a representative list of sources, from 1990-2010, of biblical studies and reflections on approaches to biblical studies from those who have globalized the discourse. Although I’ll occasionally glance at theological writings, comments are primarily on materials that fall within the sphere of biblical studies.

A brief word about geographical-social-political terminology is in order. Regions that in the 1970s were referred to as the “third” or “developing” world, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, are sometimes called the “global South” in contemporary ecclesial circles. What was known in earlier discourse as the “developed” world is now called the “North.” However, these terms are problematic from a variety of perspectives, and in the context of this article they do not assist, for example, in locating Kwok Pui Lan, a feminist theologian of Hong Kong origin who now teaches in the United States, or Gerald West, a white South African biblical scholar born in Zimbabwe. This essay, while considering “southern” geographic or ethnic origin in identifying scholars whose work to include, focuses on publications that represent an intersecting complex of reading goals. First among these goals is that of “reading with,” or joining a conversation between scholars and “ordinary readers” of biblical texts. A second and related reading goal is that of reading “through the eyes of,” that is, acknowledging origin, often “southern,” as a point of departure or intersection with the study. Finally, I will comment briefly on conversations related to reading with a hermeneutic of suspicion or of trust.

[Jenkins](#) emphasizes the role that the Bible plays in the rapidly growing churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These Christians are marked both by “literal” readings and by their willingness to see the text speaking to their situations of poverty, food shortages, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. “Ordinary readers” are more personally encountered and thoroughly studied in [Wit et al.](#), a volume describing a three-year project sponsored by the Uniting Protestant Churches in the Netherlands and the Free University of Amsterdam, and coordinated by an international committee of biblical scholars and theologians. In this project, hundreds of readers from varied communities of faith and from more than 25 countries participated in Bible studies on John 4. The groups first met to study the text, then exchanged reports of that study with a partner group in another part of the world. Some groups completed a third round of commenting back to their partners on the responses they had received. Wit notes a variety of terms that have been applied to the work of ordinary readers: “grassroots readings, *lectura popular*, spontaneous readings, *pueblo*, *povo*, *volkse lezing*.” Such readings have a “spiritual dimension,” shaped by the readers’ expectations that the Bible is a “life-giving and empowering resource.” “Entering the world of ordinary Bible readers is fruitful and necessary,” Wit adds. “It forces Bible scholars into an encounter with the unknown, into an encounter with a counterstrategy that takes place, bypassing the rules of the guild, and often as if exegesis does not exist.”

The interaction between scholars and ordinary readers is not without difficulties. [Abesamis](#) articulates one goal of liberation hermeneutics to move ordinary readers beyond an individualistic understanding of the biblical text as speaking only to personal and future-oriented salvation. Questions can be raised about the power dynamics inherent in the scholarly-ordinary interaction ([Wit et al.](#), 489-90). Rao (in [West 2007](#)) notes scholarly focus on the social location of ordinary readers and wonders whether it is “an imposed given-ness or self-acclaimed.” Kahl (in [West 2007](#)), who chooses the terms “intuitive” rather than “ordinary” and “critical” rather than “trained or scholarly,” evokes the gap between those who read (or hear) Scripture “with the understanding that God directs their mind spiritually to a proper appropriation of a passage within a given life situation” and those scholars “who are not supposed to interpret as the direct Word of God.”

Nevertheless, the insights gained in this interaction have been validated by this stream of scholarly discourse. [González](#) describes the gap between ordinary readers and scholars personally, beginning with the “pre-critical readings” he heard as a boy in a Cuban Methodist congregation. He describes “dry years” during his advanced training in critical biblical/historical

scholarship and distinguished academic career. However, his interactions with Latin American readers influenced by liberation theology's call for small groups to read and study the Bible together in light of their own situation led to a renewed personal sense that, as one of the participants in such a group exclaimed: "¡Ha sido tan buena la Biblia con nosotros!" ("the Bible has been so good to us!").

West, while less personal than González, calls himself a "socially engaged biblical scholar." A key player in bringing the ordinary reader-scholar interface to the attention of the international academic biblical community, through the Society of Biblical Literature West offered a [1996 collection](#) on "reading with," co-edited with Dube. This collection includes articles by African scholars who provide theoretical background, explore the South African context, read "with" women and "ordinary" readers, and discuss inculturation. Articles ([2006](#)) have focused on his work with the members of the Siyaphila Support Group, composed of persons living openly (this revelation itself a critical social issue in southern Africa) with their HIV-positive status. Together with Bongzi Zengele, program director and coordinator of solidarity programs for people living with AIDS of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, West reports how views of the Bible changed through group interaction. Most group members had experienced the Bible as being used negatively against them, or needing "a preacher to make it speak," although one member of a charismatic church reported earlier positive experiences with the Bible. For all of the group, through their Bible studies "what was far off had become close; what had no place now had a place; what belonged to others now belonged to them; what had nothing relevant to say now spoke directly to their condition; what could not be touched or made to speak by them was now in their hands and they could make it speak; what had brought judgment, stigma and discrimination now brought healing, hope and life."

West ([2005](#)) has also represented the Bible study experiences of women victims of domestic violence and persons struggling with food shortages and land security. His [2007 collection](#) brings together other experiences of scholarly-ordinary biblical work from South Africa, Jamaica, white and Mexican immigrant women in northern California, inner-city Sheffield, England, a Washington State (U.S.) county jail, and Brazil. West's corpus reveals and discusses the intersecting and sometimes fuzzy borders between work with ordinary readers, liberation readings, and post-colonial discourse. His [2008 article](#) offers a close reading of Sugirtharajah, Dube, and Segovia, in particular their appropriation of postcolonial discourse in biblical studies. Drawing on an extensive bibliography, West argues that in the (South) African context, biblical studies have continued to be rooted in locally defined liberation commitments (he also draws on the social activist and Christian prophetic engagement of Richard Horsley and Cornel West), albeit making cautious use of postcolonial studies.

Engagement with "ordinary readers" has marked the work of many. [Sugirtharajah 1991](#) presents specific case studies of biblical readings by non-academic groups in Malawi, Nicaragua, Indonesia, South Africa, and China. [Dube 2001](#) offers a collection of 13 articles including conversations with non-academic readers, and, in one case, using African traditional divination practices. [Brenner](#), a feminist scholar who has taught in the Netherlands, Israel, Hong Kong, and the U.S., works from a desire to interact with the biblical text in a way different from traditional biblical scholarship. This work tells the stories of biblical women in a way accessible to lay readers, as if those women were involved in problems well known in the 21st century (e.g. Ruth as a migrant laborer). [Adamo](#) represents approaches to the Bible within the African Initiated Churches. [Irizarry-Fernández](#) offers guidelines to Bible study for Hispanic groups in the United States, based on a methodology developed by Peruvian pastor-theologian Saul Trinidad.

The title of the research by [Wit et al.](#) (*Through the Eyes of Another*) points to a close relationship between interest in ordinary readers and the call for scholars to identify their own perspectives as they comment on the biblical text. The perspectival question has, of course, been before the academy for decades. [Segovia](#), in the introduction to his 1995 collection on social location edited together with Tolbert, provides extensive historical and theoretical background to the emergence of social location as an issue for biblical scholars. Nevertheless, by bringing this issue into conversation with particular readings identified geographically as from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America, Segovia and Tolbert encourage the “northern” guild to “see” biblical texts through “southern” eyes. In [2000](#) Segovia speaks more personally about his movement from “cultural” (i.e., socially located) studies to postcolonial biblical readings.

African scholars have been especially productive, engaging their own inculturation and liberation questions, while interacting with international biblical scholarship. Beginning with the 1940s, [Heisey](#) studies how African and African American biblical scholars were able to engage the biblical studies guild. [Getui](#) presents collected papers from a 1999 symposium on Africa and the Old Testament. An article by Holter in [Adamo](#) includes a list of all dissertations on Old Testament written by Africans 1967-2000. [Bitrus](#) addresses wealth and poverty as mission questions. [Mojola](#) offers an extensive bibliography on Bible translation in Africa. [Okure](#) asks: “What do Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee and the Samaritan woman share in common from their own contexts with those they would likely meet in a ‘homecoming’ visit to Africa?” She evokes, among other specific African settings, the impact of HIV/AIDS, especially on women, as do [Dube and Kanyoro](#), and [Masenya](#), and [Phiri](#), a theologian rather than a biblical scholar. (Phiri contributes an article on Ruth, as well as articles on polygamy, rape, and weddings/*lobola*, in [The Africa Bible Commentary](#)—see below). [Bird et al.](#) invoke the realities of African women who are childless in an article on the Genesis Hagar and Sarah texts. Their volume also includes biblical studies that reflect the situations of Korean “comfort women” and Latin American women forced to cross borders.

Use of postcolonial discourse often accompanies reading through the eyes of those who are part of diasporas or can be identified as “hybrid.” This difference from local rooting, indeed, is cited by West ([2008](#)) as one of the reasons why African biblical scholarship has been less eager to wholeheartedly embrace postcolonial discourse. [Liew](#) “negotiates the pressures to either ‘eurocentralize’ or ‘orientalize’ my reading of the Bible,” and calls for a “double-edged attitude that the Bible and its interpretation are at once both sources of liberation and oppression.” From the perspective of a Chinese American of Southeast Asian background, [Kuan](#) searches for “embodied” ways of reading the biblical text in the church. [Kwok](#) traces her own identity as formerly a colonial subject in Hong Kong as foundation to her readings of Rahab and Paul’s comment on “love between women” in Romans.

Reading through the eyes of those dreaming of and working for liberation, justice, and reconciliation (again, see [West 2008](#)) continues strongly in Latin American settings as well as elsewhere. [Almada](#) associates the suffering evoked in the Fourth Servant Song as a link to the suffering of many people of Latin America. [Vaage](#) collects ten essays translated into English from Protestant and Catholic clergy who publish in the *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana*. These essays reflect the “ongoing struggle to survive and to have a future by the routinely Christian poor majorities under the press of a dominant [Latin American] social order that is otherwise also (still) often characterized as representing Christian civilization.” [Pixley](#) discusses political dimensions of biblical hermeneutics, and [Croatto](#) studies Luke’s portrayal of Jesus as a prophet, noting the absence of “prophet” in the categories honored by

sainthood in the church, and reflecting how often prophets are martyrs in the present as well as the past. (*The Global Bible Commentary*—see below—is dedicated to Croatto.)

Evoking biblical liberation themes together with those of reconciliation occurs frequently in settings where Christians are a minority population. From an Indonesian setting, [Prior](#) suggests that Ecclesiastes can inform Christian responses to their society that are neither “fanaticism” nor “indifference.” [Glaser](#) evokes biblical struggles with Samaritans and Gentiles as useful to Christians living in a world of religious pluralism. [Amos](#) writes with attention to perspectives gained during 10 years living and teaching in the Middle East. The Jacob-Esau sequence in Genesis challenges an approach to reconciliation too hastily built on particularities. From the Pacific Islands, [Havea](#) insists that “committed and advocacy readings” are strengthened by storytelling and relationship-building.

Taking several steps back to get the whole picture, two one-volume Bible commentaries offer an amazing array of biblical scholarship reflecting perspectives from around the world. Both also point to fundamental questions about suspicion and trust with regards to the biblical text, questions that continue to shape the way Bible users interact with scholarship read through “ordinary,” “liberation” or “hybrid/postcolonial” eyes. The *Africa Biblical Commentary* (= ABC; Adeyemo 2006), sponsored by the Association of Evangelicals of Africa, contains “section-by-section exegesis and explanation of the whole Bible as seen through the eyes of African scholars who respect the integrity of the text and use African proverbs, metaphors and stories to make it speak to African believers.” Reflecting both trust in the text and questions about (at least a perception of) inculturation hermeneutic approaches, “the ABC does not speak of a Black Jesus. . . . Instead, the ABC is true to the text and honest to its context both in Bible days and in our day.” The ABC hopes that “reading the Bible through African lenses” will be valuable not only for ordinary African readers, but also for others.

The *Global Bible Commentary* (Patte 2004) collects the work of a wide spectrum of contemporary international Protestant and Roman Catholic (and a few Orthodox) scholars, including many named in this article. (The global commentary and the Africa commentary share no authors.) Designed to encourage North American readers “to read the Bible with others” from around the world, the commentary also reflects on the relationship between ordinary readers and scholars. Patte recounts his own experience, while traveling with Dube, of preaching in a congregation of an African Initiated Church. While for other preachers in the service, the congregation fell to their knees in prayer after the sermon, they did not do so for Patte. When he asked why, he was told, “As is well known, one concludes a sermon with the request, ‘Brothers and sisters pray for me, so that I might better understand the Scripture.’” He then discusses the different approaches to biblical texts of believers and of scholars, concluding that, even though “quite a few commentators would find it difficult to use these words,” their work on the commentary was a way of inviting its ordinary users to pray for them in their interpretive task.

In his recently revised textbook on biblical exegesis, [Gorman](#) urges beginning students in the context of the church to both read “with trust” and listen “to the Other.” The work of listening to the Other, Gorman understands, includes for most exegetical beginners (a particular class of “ordinary” readers?) a new willingness to allow scholarly voices into biblical study. In the context of working out theological ramifications of biblical texts, after several steps of more detailed textual study that he promotes, Gorman points out the problem of use of the biblical text to “condone or promote oppression.” In his list of resources which raise voices against oppression, he includes González, Sugirtharajah, and Segovia. With this article and the following list of works cited, it may be suggested that “reading with” must both include those scholars and push far beyond them. I am grateful for the opportunity to review the breadth of “reading with”

which has entered into the broad scholarly biblical conversation, particularly before I head off to teach biblical interpretation in Ethiopia in August 2010.

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West, Gerald, and Bongzi Zengele. 2006. "The Medicine of God's Word: What People Living with HIV and AIDS Want (and Get) from the Bible." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 125: 51-63.

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Recent Publications

Inclusion of an item in TIC Talk does not necessarily mean we recommend it, or that we have seen it. 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

Ernst R. Wendland. 2009. "The Social Sciences and 'Foreignizing,' Functional Equivalence Bible Translation." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 35(1): 107-129. W. responds to a volume of essays *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation* (ed. D. Neufeld; SBL, 2008), in particular to Rohrbaugh's essay on foreignizing translation. He outlines how a functional equivalence approach and Rohrbaugh's idea of a foreignizing translation might be employed together to produce a version that can satisfy contemporary target audiences, regardless of the language and culture concerned. For an OT example, W. mentions the translation of בְּרִית in the Chewa language of Malawi and Zambia.

Andy Cheung. 2009. "Bible Translation as Cultural Interchange: Rendering the Foreign in Minority Languages." *Evangelical Review of Society and Politics* 3(1): 1-15. C.'s point of departure is L. Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995). Venuti's use of the word "invisibility" referred to the approaches among British and American translators that produced ethnocentric, domesticating translations. While Venuti explored the translation of foreign texts into English, C. considers the translation of the Bible by Western translators into minority languages. Venuti's translation ethics, together with contributions from German functionalists in the form of skopos theory, provides an important reference for the development of vernacular Bibles in minority cultures.

Jonathan Downie. 2009. "Using the Right Bible Translation? A Professional Translator's Perspective on Translation Choice." *Pneuma Review* 12(3): 24-43. D. advocates the use of skopos theory in selecting a translation for a particular situation, and considers the NKJV, ESV, NLT, and The Message from that perspective. His online article ["The End of an Era? Does Skopos Theory Spell the End of the 'Free vs. Literal' Paradigm?"](#) discusses skopos theory and its use in Bible translation at greater length.

D. C. Chemorion. 2009. "Towards a Participatory Approach to Bible Translation (PABT)." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 157-171. The participation of the receptor community in a translation can enhance the community's ownership and acceptance of the translation. However, individuals and organizations engaged in mother-tongue translations of the Bible often involve the members of the receptor community only in secondary and non-technical aspects of the translation process.

On the basis of Nord's functionalist model of translation, C. proposes a "Participatory approach to Bible Translation" (PABT) that can involve the receptor community in technical aspects of the translation.

Jim Harries. 2009. "Pragmatic Linguistics Applied to Bible Translation, Projects and Inter-Cultural Relationships: An African Focus." *Cultural Encounters* 5(1): 75-95. Translation of people and projects needs the same attention as Bible translation. H. argues that translating the Bible but not theological and other curricula for Africa is problematic, and gives advice based on study of the relation between language impact and cultural context related to real-life situations, along with reasons why "inappropriate" missions methodologies these days all too often continue.

C. Lombaard. 2009. "Hide and Seek. Aspects of the Dynamics of Bible Translation." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 1-15. Translation requires a process of deducing and reducing meaning from relative chaos. A proper view of the nature of the Bible text and the theoretical load of exegetical and translation activities must be cultivated among lay translation users, particularly in our age of rising fundamentalisms. This view affords Bible translators a more balanced status than is at times found in circles which regard Bible translation with suspicion.

John Lubbe. 2009. "A New Bible Translation: 'The Syntactic Translation'?" *Old Testament Essays* 22(3): 605-617. The many modern translations and study Bibles have assisted the average user of the Bible, but have also complicated the situation of understanding the text, since the quality of renderings and notes varies. Biblical scholarship needs to provide clearer guidance in the syntactic structure of Hebrew prose and poetry in order to enhance the understanding of the text. A translation that reflects the Hebrew could fill a gap in the research tools available to students of the text.

R. van der Spuy. 2010. "["Showing Respect' in Bible Translation."](#) *Acta Theologica* 30(1): 158-173. Discusses the usage of 2nd person pronouns in languages that distinguish between *you* plural, *you* honorific, and *you* singular forms, and considers the likely influence of the Russian Synodal translation on other translations in the former Soviet Union regarding the use of those pronouns. Problems can arise when the original languages are followed too literally without taking into account the target culture, or due to the translator's perception of the social status of the participants in the discourse.

The Bible and Its Translations: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters with the Indigenous. 2009. J. A. Naudé, ed. (Acta Theologica, Supplementum 12) SUN MeDIA. A number of the essays in this volume are abstracted in this issue.

The Korean Bible Society's *Journal of Biblical Text Research* 24 and 241 (April, 2009) offer the following articles in English (available in pdf format [here](#) [24] and [here](#) [241]):

- Challenges for Bible Translation Today / **Simon Crisp**
- A Case for De-familiarizing 2 Corinthians / **Philip H. Towner**
- Lost in Translation - Revelation 2:12-17: A Case Study for Idioms in Translation? / **Thomas Kaut**
- Singing a Foreign Song at Home: Analogy from Psalm 137 / **Anastasia B.-Malle**
- Translation Strategies and Annotation Policies in two Maltese: Translations of Romans 3:1-8 / **Anthony Abela**
- Exegesis and Translation of Mark for an Audio-Visual Culture / **Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole**
- A Short History of Japanese Bible Translation / **Katsuomi Shimasaki**

- Towards a History of Bible Translation among the Dialects and Ethnic Languages of China / **Simon Wong**

The July 2009 *SBL Forum* features a number of articles on Bible translation:

- [Cultural Myths: Clarence Jordan and the Cotton Patch Gospels / Frederick L. Downing](#)
- [Translation and Narrative: Transfiguring Jesus / Scott S. Elliott](#)
- [A New Thing under the Sun: A Doctor of Ministry Degree in Bible Translation / Roy E. Ciampa](#)
- [The Jewish Quest for a German Bible: The Nineteenth-Century Translations of Joseph Johlen and Leopold Zunz / Abigail Gillman](#)
- [A Reexamination of Phoebe as a “Diakonos” and “Prostatis”: Exposing the Inaccuracies of English Translations / Elizabeth A. McCabe](#)
- [Unavoidable Gender Ambiguities: A Primer for Readers of English Translations from Biblical Hebrew / David E. S. Stein](#)

Toshikazu S. Foley. 2009. *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek: Verbal Aspect in Theory and Practice*. Leiden, Brill. F. integrates translation theory, Mandarin aspect, and Greek aspect for the purpose of formulating a working theory applicable to translating the Bible. The primary objectives are defined in terms of grammatical translation of Greek aspect into Mandarin aspect at the discourse level. The proposed theory is tested in two sample passages from John 18–19 and 1 Corinthians 15. The author provides critical reviews of over sixty Chinese Bible versions, Nestorian, Manichaean, Catholic documents, and a translation written according to the proposed theory.

Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology. 2009. Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda, eds. Eerdmans. Papers from a 2005 symposium provide an assessment of NT translation in terms of textual criticism, translation theory, and theology. Each of the three sections includes theoretical essays on the interface of a given area with particular issues in translation, followed by applications of the theory to the same passage (Luke 16:19-31). Advocates of different positions note the translational implications that follow from choosing a particular textual tradition or type over another. The book concludes with an overall assessment of the field of text criticism and translation studies.

David Clark offers this note on Bertil Albrektson’s *Text, Translation, Theology: Selected Essays on the Hebrew Bible* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2010):

This book is an anthology of ten essays ranging in date from 1963 to 2007. Bertil Albrektson was a leading member of the team that produced the new government-sponsored Swedish translation of the Bible (including the Deuterocanon) that appeared in 2000. In several of these essays he draws on that experience, particularly in regard to textual matters, and it is his textual views (in eight of the ten essays) that will be of most interest to UBS Translation Consultants. In particular he takes issue with Barthélemy and Tov over their unwillingness to accept emendations of the MT in translations designed for popular rather than academic use. As a translator he shares the frustrations that many TCs have felt with HOTTIP when it recommends a reading that makes little or no sense in its context. Every essay is clearly argued, logically rigorous and meticulously detailed. They show a stylistic elegance that is all too rare in academic writing and makes this book a pleasure to read, a great credit to a scholar writing in a language that is not his mother tongue. Moreover, his courtesy towards scholars with whom he disagrees is unfailing. The specific verses on which he discusses textual and exegetical matters in the various essays are Genesis 15.6, Exodus 3.14, 1 Samuel 10.22, 14.41 and Ezekiel 30.16.

A couple of essays deal with matters not directly related to text and translation. The longest piece, taken from his doctoral dissertation, deals with the origins of the theology of Lamentations, and another raises some questions on etymological semantics. Citations in Scandinavian languages are glossed in English, but the often lengthy citations in German are not, so for readers whose German is less confident than the author's, the use of a dictionary will be necessary. Nevertheless this is a most interesting volume, and the only thing I can say against it is that the cost seems disproportionately high for such a slim volume. In our financially straightened times probably not many will feel able to buy it, but if you can borrow or steal a copy from a colleague... (My copy is chained to the bookcase.)

— David J. Clark

Ancient

Tessa Rajak. 2009. *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible and the Ancient Jewish Diaspora*. Oxford University Press. R. posits that, without a Greek Bible, European history would have been entirely different—no Western Jewish diaspora and no Christianity. The Greek Bible sustained Jews who spoke Greek and made the survival of the first Jewish diaspora possible. The translations were a tool for the preservation of group identity and for the expression of resistance. The translations ended up as the Christian Septuagint, taken over along with the entire heritage of Hellenistic Judaism when Church parted from Synagogue.

Septuagint and Reception. 2009. Johann Cook, ed. Brill. This collection consists of papers delivered at the first conference of the Association for the Study of the Septuagint in South Africa. The volume addresses issues touching on the Septuagint in the broad sense of the word, including the Old Greek text (Daniel, Proverbs, Psalms and Lamentations) as well as the reception of the LXX (NT, Augustine and Jerome, etc.).

Larry Perkins. 2009. "Greek Exodus and Greek Isaiah: Detection and Implications of Interdependence in Translation." *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 42: 18-33. Greek equivalencies chosen by translators of the Pentateuch for key Hebrew terms (e.g. *berith* / *diatheke*) became standard for later translators of other canonical material, but merely noting that translators of two books used the same unusual Greek term to render a Hebrew term is insufficient to demonstrate interdependency. P. examines the second translator's process and the contextual factors that may have influenced the second translator's choice before positing interdependence. He argues that Greek Isaiah is influenced by Greek Exodus, but that this is demonstrated primarily in the use of selected materials, actual quotes, and specific allusions to particular incidents in the LXX Exodus narrative.

Siegfried Kreuzer. 2009. "Translation and Recensions: Old Greek, Kaige, and Antiochene Text in Samuel and Reigns." *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 42: 34-51. K. considers the new approach for evaluating the Antiochene text, especially in its relation to the *kaige* recension. The results converge with those of Barthélemy (the Antiochene text as basically identical with the OG, although with corruptions), and of Bodine (the Antiochene text is the best witness for the OG of Judges). If the Antiochene text basically represents the OG, this has consequences for the linguistic characterization of the OG and its translation technique.

Cilliers Breytenbach. 2009. "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah 53 and the Early Christian Formula 'He Was Delivered for Our Trespasses'." *Novum Testamentum* 51(4): 339-351. The translator of LXX Isaiah made use of the widespread Greek notion of delivering somebody unto

a hostile force. If early Christian explication of the death of Jesus drew on Isa 53, it was influenced by its Greek translation.

Jenny R. Labendz. 2009. "Aquila's Bible Translation in Late Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Perspectives." *Harvard Theological Review* 102(3): 353-388. Prior scholarship regarding ancient perspectives on Aquila and his translation, as well as the popularity of his translation in various communities, has drawn conclusions based on overall impressions of ancient Jewish and Christian sources that offer information about Aquila and citations of his translation. When these texts are examined closely and in context, a more nuanced understanding of the history of Aquila's translation emerges.

Sagit Butbul. 2010. "The Rendering of Bird Names in Early Judeo-Arabic Biblical Translations." *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science and Judaism* 10(1): 11-42. The list of unclean birds in Lev 11 provides an example of the difficulty in identifying biblical animals. B. examines the various ways medieval commentators tackled this difficulty, focusing on a Judeo-Arabic biblical glossary found in an early Geniza manuscript. The glossary's identification of most birds differs from those found in other translations.

Modern

Afrikaans

J. A. Naudé. 2009. "'Soos 'n hamer wat 'n rots vermorsel': Die Afrikaanse Bybel van 1933 as vertaling." *Acta Theologica* 29(2): 54-73. N. describes and analyzes the first complete Bible translation in Afrikaans (1933) in terms of the formation of particular cultural, political, and religious identities, and revisits some of the perceptions of the 1933 translation by dealing with issues like the context of the translation, its source text, the translation team, the translation process, and the sociocultural impact of the translation.

J. C. Steyn. 2009. "Die Afrikaans van die Bybelvertaling van 1933." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 130-156. S. explores difficulties encountered by the Bible translators in breaking with the language of the Statenbijbel, and indicates how translators were able to utilize the insights of linguists and language practitioners who were in the process of standardizing the Afrikaans language.

English

Translation That Openeth the Window: Reflections on the History and Legacy of the King James Bible. 2009. **David G. Burke**, ed. SBL; ABS. In celebration of the work of the KJV translators, the authors of this volume, representing a wide range of disciplines and perspectives, examine the cultural and religious monument that is the King James Bible. Looking at the historical context in which the translation was born and evaluating its lasting impact throughout the English-speaking world, the essays open a window on the KJV and its influence throughout the centuries.

French Sign Language

L'Évangile de Luc en langue des signes. 2010. Bibli'O (Alliance biblique française). This summer the French Bible Society issues its first Bible publication in LSF—The Gospel of Luke in dvd format (3 dvds).

German

Mordechai Eran and Yaacov Shavit. 2009. "Jewish Bible in German — Simon Bernfeld's German Translation of the Bible (1903): Between 'Heretic' Scholarship and 'Conservative' Translation." *Beth Mikra* 54(2): 121-152. Bernfeld's 1903 translation apparently was the last of some 16 complete or partial Bible translations into German by Jews during the 19th century. The authors discuss the causes for the many translations and their impact on the shaping of Jewish identity for Jews living in German-speaking regions. They compare Zunz's and other translations with Bernfeld's, and conclude that his translation frequently suggested original interpretations and intended to shape a more readable text for the Jewish reader. His "radical" ideas did not have an impact on his translation, perhaps because of his intended readership. (Hebrew)

Italian

Emidio Campi. 2009. "Giovanni Diodati traduttore de la Bible en Italien." *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 84(2): 219-236. Diodati (1576-1649) translated the Bible into Italian (published in 1607 and 1642) and French (1644). He regarded his translation as part of an audacious project to introduce the Reformation in Venice.

Setswana

J. J. Lubbe. 2009. "'By Patience, Labour and Prayer. The Voice of the Unseen God in the Language of the Bechuana Nation.' A Reflection on the History of Robert Moffat's Setswana Bible (1857)." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 16-32. Moffat's 1857 translation was the first in an African language in sub-Saharan Africa. The translation had an enormous influence, reaching Batswana people in different countries in Southern Africa, and is still held in high esteem by them. The relevant primary sources suggest that one thing that might have made the translation so popular was the daily life and work of Moffat and his wife, who convinced the Bechuana nation to accept and read the gospel in their own language by living the voice of the "Unseen God."

G. West. 2009. "The Beginning of African Biblical Interpretation: The Bible among the Tlhaping." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 33-47. In most forms of post-colonial discourse, the Bible's reception is subsumed under the reception of Christianity. W. argues that the Bible is a separable object of power in the protracted transactions between the Tlhaping people of southern Africa and the explorers and missionaries who first brought Bibles among them. The focus of the article is the visits of explorer William Burchell and missionary John Campbell to the Tlhaping in the early 1800s. A detailed analysis of their journals, diaries and letters, read "against the grain," reveals signs of an emerging indigenous hermeneutic. The Bible took on fresh significations among the Tlhaping that may be considered foundational for subsequent moments in their history.

Shona

Lovemore Togarasei. 2009. "The Shona Bible and the Politics of Bible Translation." *Studies in World Christianity* 15(1): 51-64. T. discusses the political and cultural factors that influenced how the Bible was translated into Shona, from the 1890s to when the first complete Bible was translated into Shona in the late 1940s, and looks at subsequent changes in the Shona Bible to see how translators have responded to cultural and linguistic changes over the years.

Sotho

T. J. Makutoane and J. A. Naudé. 2009. "Colonial Interference in the Translations of the Bible into Southern Sotho." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 79-94. Bible translation in South Africa was initially conceptualized and executed by missionary societies and Bible societies. The authors investigate the nature of the translators' encounters and negotiations between the source text culture and the culture of the target audience. The translation of cultural terms of two translations of the Bible into Southern Sotho are considered (1909 and 1989). The first was published by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society representing colonial empowerment of the dominated target culture by the hegemonic culture of the translators. The second was published by the Bible Society of South Africa and represents a process of indigenization of the source text culture.

Zulu

M. R. Masubelele. 2009. "Missionary Interventions in Zulu Religious Practices: The Term for the Supreme Being." *Acta Theologica* Supp 12: 63-78. The traditional Zulu people used the terms uNkulunkulu (the Great-Great-One) or uMvelinqangi (the First-to-Appear) interchangeably for the Supreme Being. With the translation of the Bible into isi-Zulu, the concept of the Supreme Being was cast into a Christian mold. M. explains these interventions in terms of Toury's work. Using a corpus-based approach, the author analyzes the linguistic choices of the translation to show that the earliest translators adopted the norms of the source text and culture, while in the latest translations adhered to the norms of the target culture.

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Biblical Languages

Hebrew

Cynthia L. Miller. 2010. "Vocative Syntax in Biblical Hebrew Prose and Poetry: A Preliminary Analysis." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55(2): 347-364. Vocatives are intonationally part of a host sentence, but are only loosely linked syntactically with their host sentence and are not integrated into it as a clausal constituent. Previous descriptions of the vocative have considered its internal syntax (e.g., the kinds of constituents that can be used as vocatives). M. considers the external syntax of the vocative with respect to the locations in the host sentence that can serve as a niche for the vocative as an extrasentential element. Special attention is paid to the significant ways in which prose and poetry differ in this respect.

C. H. J. van der Merwe. 2009. "Another Look at the Biblical Hebrew Focus Particle." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54(2): 313-332. Although the most typical semantic function of ׀ג is to signal that an entity *x* must be added to an entity *y* as far as a predication or argument *z* is concerned, in a few instances (in mainly poetic texts) ׀ג does have an affirmative connotation. In a few instances ׀ג also appears to be a near-synonym of ׀. As far as a profile of its uses in terms of frequency is concerned, the most prototypical use (about 50%) is ׀ג + constituent.

C. H. J. van der Merwe. 2009. "The Biblical Hebrew Particle ׀א." *Vetus Testamentum* 59(2): 266-283. M. investigates the syntax and semantics of each instance of ׀א, and describes and compares the most prototypical patterns of use with those of ׀ג. Although the two lexemes are sometimes near-synonyms, the former is prototypically a conjunctive adverb and the latter a focus particle. As far as the semantic potential of ׀א is concerned, five semantic-pragmatic

categories (the most typical of which are labeled as “noteworthy addition” and “affirmation”) are distinguished, as well as the syntactic constructions and translation values that could be associated with each category of use.

Bent Christiansen. 2009. “A Linguistic Analysis of the Biblical Hebrew Particle **נַן**: A Test Case.” *Vetus Testamentum* 59(3): 379-393. The research of Shulman (1999) forms the basis for the proposal that **נַן** represents a previously unidentified syntactical element in biblical Hebrew—the “propositive” particle—whereby a speaker indicates an intention to pursue a particular course of action. Evidence of the propositive mood includes the felicity of **נַן** as a sentence-initial compound element, reduplication of **נַן** within Hebrew clauses, the linguistic vacuum of alternative polite circumlocution, and the need for cogent interpretation of **נַן** when used with deliberative cohortative verb forms.

Ellen van Wolde. 2009. “Why the Verb **בָּרָא** Does Not Mean ‘to Create’ in Genesis 1.1-2.4a.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34(1): 3-23. W. examines the seven usages of the verb **בָּרָא** in Genesis 1, concluding that the verb **בָּרָא** in Genesis 1 does not mean “to create.” Based on internal and external linguistic and textual evidence and on a controlled argumentation, it is likely that the type of action expressed by the verb **בָּרָא** in Genesis 1 is of a very concrete, spatial, and physical character, and can be rendered by “to separate.” An analysis is made of the differences between **בָּרָא** and **הַבְדִּיל**.

Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel. 2010. [“To Create, to Separate or to Construct: An Alternative for a Recent Proposal as to the Interpretation of **בָּרָא** in Gen 1:1-2, 4a.”](#) *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10. Ellen van Wolde has proposed that the verb **בָּרָא** in Gen 1 should be understood as “(to) separate.” The authors argue against the idea, maintaining that it is weak etymologically; it does not take into account that **בָּרָא** is not used with prepositions; an active participle of the verb meaning “creator” occurs in Biblical Hebrew; the “sea-monsters” are not separated from other marine animals; parallelisms and word-pairs indicate the verb was part of a semantic field characterized by “building; constructing; making”; there is no phrase in the OT in which it must be translated as “(to) separate.” An alternative is to render **בָּרָא** with “(to) construct” to indicate that Gen 1 praised the divine construction of cosmos and life, while at the same time avoiding an anthropomorphism that the use of the verb might have raised.

William Morrow. 2010. “‘To Set the Name’ in the Deuteronomistic Centralization Formula: A Case of Cultural Hybridity.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55(2): 365-383. It is difficult to construct a plausible path of transmission for the Akkadian phrase *šuma šakānu* to the Deuteronomistic centralization formula *lškn šmw šm*. M. proposes that the formula rests on meanings of “to set the name” native to Biblical Hebrew. The alteration of the expected Hebrew expression to imitate an Assyrian parallel can be explained with reference to the phenomenon of hybridity described in post-colonial studies.

Robert D. Holmstedt. 2009. “Word Order and Information Structure in Ruth and Jonah: A Generative-Typological Analysis.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54(1): 111-139. H. presents a typological and generative linguistic analysis of the data in Ruth and Jonah, a Subject-Verb classification for Biblical Hebrew, and a Subject-Verb based model of information structure. H. has also written the Ruth volume for Baylor’s Handbook on the Hebrew Bible series (2010).

Yoo-ki Kim. 2009. “The Function of **הֵיטֵב** in Jonah 4 and Its Translation.” *Biblica* 90(3): 389-393. Most modern translations render **הֵיטֵב** in Jonah 4:4 as a predicate. However, traditional grammars take its function as an adverb that modifies the meaning of the verb, suggesting its translation as a degree adverb. Linguistic considerations support the latter option. This line of

understanding opens up a possibility to interpret Yahweh's question in Jonah 4:4 not as a confrontation but as an expression of consolation and compassion toward his prophet.

Greek

Nicholas A. Bailey. 2009. "[Thetic Constructions in Koine Greek](#) with special attention to clauses with εἶμι 'be', γίνομαι 'occur', ἔρχομαι 'come', ἰδοὺ/ἴδε 'behold', and complement clauses of ὁράω 'see.'" Ph.D., Vrije Universiteit. B. investigates how thetic constructions (constructions with a broad focus domain that include the subject and predicate, and function to introduce an entity into the discourse) interact with a number of linguistic issues in Koine Greek, especially in the New Testament.

Michael R. Whinton. 2010. "After Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Neglected Evidence from the Apostolic Fathers." *Journal of Theological Studies* 61(1): 82-109. W. investigates every use of πίστις with a personal genitive in the Apostolic Fathers and includes an exegesis of the texts that may speak of Jesus' own faithfulness. Against the scholarly consensus, he concludes that the Apostolic Fathers did indeed speak of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, as well as of faith as something enigmatically mediated through him.

Jerome Neyrey. 2009. "Lost in Translation: Did it matter if Christians 'thanked' God or 'gave God glory'?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71(1): 1-23. When translating the terms *eucharistein* and *epanein* it is important to recognize (1) the foundational elements of "praise" and "honor" in the use of these terms in antiquity, (2) the "benefactor-client" context in which they usually occur, and (3) the various types of reciprocity embedded in this sociological context.

The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament. 2009. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O'Donnell, eds. Phoenix Press. The essays, collected from recent SBL annual meetings, are grouped under four headings: Linguistics and Pedagogy; Prominence; Discourse Analysis; and Linguistic Investigations. Essay titles:

- Talking to the Dead: Linguistics and Pedagogy of Hellenistic Greek / Jonathan M. Watt
- Adapting Technology to Teach Koine Greek / Rodney J. Decker
- Prominence: A Theoretical Overview / Stanley E. Porter
- A Method for the Analysis of Prominence in Hellenistic Greek / Cynthia Long Westfall
- Prominence in the Pauline Epistles / Randall K.J. Tan
- The Use of Discourse Analysis in Character Studies: Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman (John 3-4) / Steven Gunderson
- A Discourse Analysis of 3 John / Matthew Brook O'Donnell and Catherine Smith
- A Discourse Analysis of Romans 7:7-25: The Pauline Autobiography? / Cynthia Long Westfall
- Is *hoti* an Interpretive Use Marker? / Stephen H. Levinsohn
- Setting Aside "Deponency": Rediscovering the Greek Middle Voice in New Testament Studies / Jonathan T. Pennington
- Towards a Unified Linguistic Description of *houtos* and *ekeinos* / Stephen H. Levinsohn
- Relevance Theory and Biblical Interpretation / Gene L. Green

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News & Notes

Call for Papers

“Orality Studies, Performance Criticism and their Implications for Bible Translation”

Aim: This is a collection of essays that will join the Cascade Books (Wipf & Stock) series entitled Biblical Performance Criticism (on orality, memory, translation, rhetoric, and discourse).

Background of Biblical Performance Criticism: (from the series introduction by Series Editor, David Rhoads) The ancient societies of the Bible were overwhelmingly oral. People originally experienced the traditions now in the Bible as oral performances. Focusing on the ancient performance of biblical traditions enables us to shift academic work on the bible from the mentality of a modern print culture to that of an oral/scribal culture. Conceived broadly, biblical performance criticism embraces many methods as means to reframe the biblical materials in the context of traditional oral cultures, construct scenarios of ancient performances, learn from contemporary performances of these materials, and reinterpret biblical writings accordingly. The result is a foundational paradigm shift that reconfigures traditional disciplines and employs fresh biblical methodologies such as theater studies, speech-act theory, and performance studies. The emerging research of many scholars in this field of study, the development of working groups in scholarly societies and the appearance of conferences on orality and literacy make it timely to inaugurate this series.

Link to Bible Translation: Essays are welcome that deal with any of these orality/performance dimensions as it relates to our specific focus on Bible interpretation, translation, and transmission. Specifically, we seek essays that build on the exegetical insights from orality/performance studies and respond to this question: how does this affect Bible translation?

Details: Contributions should range generally between 5000-10,000 words (although shorter submissions can be considered) and follow the style and formatting recommendations of the Author Guide of Cascade Books (sent on request). The deadline for submissions is October 31st, 2010, and the selection process for this volume will be completed by November 30th, 2010. We envision a publication date of sometime in late 2011. Please email your submission in a Word document as an attached file to either one of the co-editors, [James Maxey](#) or [Ernst Wendland](#).

Call for Papers

“Computers as Translators: Translation or Treason?” Special Issue of *The Bible Translator – Practical Papers*, April 2011

Computers have been part of the Bible translation world for nearly three decades and now have a crucial role in both resourcing translation teams and facilitating many aspects of the translation task. Though most Bible translation projects have not been able to benefit from the high-end machine translation which has developed between major languages, there are an increasing number of programs available to ordinary working translators which aim to speed up or even perform basic translation. These include the statistically driven glossing engine within Paratext and stand-alone programs such as Adapt It. While the provision of computerized resources and translation environments (such as Paratext and Translators’ Workplace) for translators has been almost universally welcomed, the degree to which machines should be used to actually do

translation has been more controversial. Questions have been raised about exegetical assumptions, personnel qualifications, status of base and target text, and implications for the status of the source language scriptures—to name but a few issues.

The Bible Translator – Practical Papers invites papers from a wide range of perspectives for a special issue on this topic. Papers may relate to philosophical and methodological issues, but especially to the experience and practice of using such programs as Adapt It in translation drafting, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, guidelines and warnings. Papers should conform to the normal length and style requirements for Practical Papers, which can be found on the inside cover of this journal and on the website. The intended audience for this series should be kept in mind—working translators, for many of whom English may be a second language. Papers should be sent to the Editor ([Stephen Pattemore](#)) in MS-Word format by October 1, 2010, and will be reviewed by the Editorial Board and selected experts in the field before acceptance.

E-Journals

For an extensive listing of open access scholarly journals online, see the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#).

[MonTI](#) is a peer-reviewed international journal supported by the three public universities with a Translation Degree in the Spanish region of Valencia (Universitat d'Alacant, Universitat Jaume I de Castelló and Universitat de València). It publishes articles that provide in-depth analysis of translation- and interpreting-related matters. *MonTI* publishes one issue each year, first as a hard copy journal and, after a six-month interval, as an online journal. *MonTI* is in its second year of publication, so only the first volume is [available online](#) so far. Some of the articles in that volume, whose theme is “A (Self-) Critical Perspective of Translation Theories / Una visión (auto) crítica de los estudios de traducción,” are:

- Contemporary Hermeneutics and the Role of the Self in Translation / Amrollah Hemmat
- Rethinking Translation in the 21st Century // A vueltas con la traducción en el siglo XXI / Carmen África and Vidal Claramonte
- Old Concepts, New Ideas: Approaches to Translation Shifts / Lea Cyrus
- Postcolonial Studies and Translation Theory / Tarek Shamma
- Understanding the Meaning / Eugene Nida

[TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism](#) is a long-standing (est. 1996) electronic journal dedicated to the study of the textual criticism of the Jewish and Christian scriptures (including extracanonical and related literature). *TC* publishes articles, project reports, and book reviews. Some of the articles in the latest volume (13) are:

- The Gospel of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus: Textual and Reception-Historical Considerations / Peter Head
- Textual Criticism of the Bible in the Spanish Renaissance / Maria Teresa Ortega-Monasterio
- An Evaluation of the Use of the Peshitta as a Textual Witness to Romans / P. J. Williams
- Athanasius's Contribution to the Alexandrian Textual Tradition of the Pauline Epistles: An Initial Exploration / Gerald Donker

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End of TIC TALK 67, August 2010.