Book Review (Extended): *A Guide to Bible Translation: People, Languages, and Topics*

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Noss, Philip A., and Charles S. Houser, eds. 2020. *A Guide to Bible Translation: People, Languages, and Topics*. 2nd ed. History of Bible Translation. Swindon: United Bible Societies. L + 1–1110 pp. ISBN: 978-1545658116. Amazon: $71.99 (Hardback); $61.49 (Paperback).[1]

1. Introduction

A Guide to Bible Translation: People, Languages, and Topics is a general reference resource produced mainly through the joint efforts of the United Bible Societies (UBS) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), with the participation of many people associated with the Nida Institute.

The general editors of the *Guide*, Philip A. Noss and Charles S. Houser, are no strangers to Bible translation. Noss, who holds a Ph.D. in African Languages and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, served as a Bible translator and literature coordinator for 11 years in Cameroon. During his twenty-year tenure with UBS, Noss served as a Bible Translation Consultant, a regional translation coordinator (Africa), and as global translation coordinator. Houser, his co-editor, served for 36 years (1978–2014) as Editorial and Publications Manager with the American Bible Society.

This review will refer to *A Guide to Bible Translation* (2020) simply as the "*Guide*" to facilitate clarity. This will allow us to restrict references to Noss and Houser in this review to specific signed articles that they contribute within the *Guide* itself. References to page numbers indicate the location of material in the *Guide*, unless otherwise specified.

2. A Clarification of the Title of "A Guide to Bible Translation"

The *Guide* defines itself as a "*reference* guide" (pp. xxxi–xxxii, my emphasis) which is a helpful distinction since "Guide" in the title may suggest to some readers that it is a textbook on how to translate the Bible. Rather, *A Guide to Bible Translation* is a single-volume encyclopedia on selected topics related to Bible translation. That is, it is a guide *about* Bible translation, not a primer on how to translate the Bible.[2]

3. The Guide's Intended Audience

Although the *Guide* is not formatted as an introductory textbook to Bible translation, the preface (p. xxxi) does list readers among its intended audience who would also be the likely consumers of an introduction to Bible translation: students and other parties interested in Bible translation, general translation studies, and topics related to the translation of non-

1 Available for import to South Africa from the US. Electronic edition currently available in *Translator's Workplace,* Logos Bible Software (Bellingham, Washington: Faithlife).

2 For readers in search of such a textbook, SIL has produced many procedural materials to aid Bible translators. Barnwell (2020), for example, provides an accessible introductory text for those who are new to Bible translation.

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Judeo-Christian texts that their respective communities view as sacred in linguistics. Those who are new to Bible translation will surely benefit from the synopses that the book offers to other publications in the field. Likewise, university students (and perhaps secondary school students) will find the *Guide* useful, since it contains many articles that summarize important works and concepts that they will undoubtedly encounter in their classrooms. Specialists in the field of Bible translation, in the meantime, will surely appreciate that the *Guide* condenses so much information in one place; and even specialists will almost certainly discover much in this volume that is new to them.

4. Variation in Style

The scope and style of contributions to the *Guide* vary from article to article. Entries range from a few sentences to three or four pages in length. Many articles are written as a general introduction, just as readers would expect in an encyclopedia such as this. Other entries read like articles for peer-reviewed journals, or as short introductions that could serve as *prologomena* to specialized academic treatises.

Among the more technical offerings, Naudé consistently submits entries that stand out in terms of how thoroughly they interact with scholarly sources.[3] Nord adopts a similar approach. For example, her two-paragraph article on "Scenes and frames in Bible translation" (pp. 724–725) interacts with seven scholarly publications, as we might find in a technical paper. Werner offers a survey of the "Science of Bible translation and translation studies" (pp. 725–732) that would be at home in any doctoral dissertation, as would the discussion of semiotics by Cosculluela ("Semiotics," pp. 747–751) that devotes much of its length to a comparison of Pierce and Saussure. Cosculluela extends this article in "Sign" (pp. 760–764) with a similar approach.[4]

Most of the articles in the *Guide*, in contrast to these examples, adopt a less formal tone, in that most contributors employ general exposition and make fewer references to outside sources. Researchers might find these less formal articles useful to get a basic overview of the respective topics those entries cover. Scholarly surveys that summarize the literature thoroughly on a given subject are certainly present, but they represent the exception in the *Guide*.

5. How the Guide is Organized

As its subtitle indicates, the *Guide* is divided into three main sections: "People, Languages, and Topics." The editors introduce each of these sections with three to six pages of general discussion, after which the entries are arranged alphabetically by subject.

5.1 The "People" section

The section on "People" relates the activity of selected individuals to the Scriptures, to Bible translation and distribution, or to the discipline of translation. Although the *Guide* does not organize the "People" entries into subdivisions, the following categories suggest themselves in this section:

3 For examples of articles where Naudé extensively cites and interacts with the pertinent literature, see "Equivalence," pp. 415–422; "Globalization and Localization," pp. 477–481; "Translation Studies," pp. 838–845; and, co-authored with Miller-Naudé, "Agency and Bible Translation," pp. 285–289.

4 The article on "Semiotics" appears to be current up to about 2005, while "Signs" is current to 2006, based on the dates of the literature Cosculluela cites. Her excellent articles may benefit from some light updates to include scholarship from more recent years.

1. Translators and people who have been involved directly in Bible translation.
   a) Translators responsible for ancient versions (e.g., Jerome, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion).
   b) Translators who published early versions in modern vernaculars (e.g., John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Cipriano de Valera, João Ferreira de Almeida).
   c) Notable translators during the missionary movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g., William Carey, Hudson Taylor).
   d) Those involved in contemporary translation work: twentieth century to current times (e.g., John C. Callow)
2. Linguists who have written about Bible translation (e.g., Eugene Nida, John C. Callow, John Beekman, Friedrich Schleiermacher).
3. Linguists whose work in general translation theory has informed Bible translation (e.g., Jacques Derrida, Cicero).
4. Textual scholars and grammarians whose work has shaped the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts that translators use in their work, and how those translators view these texts (e.g., Brook Foss Westcott, Robert Estienne). I have categorized grammarians and text-critical scholars together because those involved in text criticism often contribute to grammar studies, and vice versa (e.g., Luis Alonso Schökel, who is discussed under "Spanish" [pp. 243] and also under "Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons" [pp. 401–402].)
5. Notable enemies of the Bible (e.g., the Roman emperor Diocletian, who has an entry in the "People" section for his ignominious Bible-related activity of decreeing that Christian Scriptures be burned[!]).

Every entry in the *Guide* relates to the task of Scripture translation or Scripture engagement in some way, though these connections are occasionally implied rather than explicit. For example, the entry on Derrida in the "People" section (pp. 21–22) recognizes that his work on Deconstructionism informs translation theory by postulating that perfect translation from one language to another is impossible. The concise article on Derrida (four short paragraphs) does not explicitly relate his work to Bible translation, but it is not difficult to find the implied connection between his general translation theory and Bible translation.

Similarly, the article on Cicero (pp. 16–17) notes that the famed Roman orator "urges translators not to attempt word-for-word translations, but rather to achieve translations that balance the closest grammatical correspondence with the closest sense-equivalent rendering" (p. 17). This approach would not be out of place in any modern classroom where translation principles are taught. Likewise, the *Guide* points out that the Roman poet Horace (p. 30) advocated translating a text in a way that was faithful to the meaning of the original without slavishly feeling the need for word-for-word equivalence. The attention that Cicero and Horace paid to beauty and naturalness in translation, as opposed to formal equivalence, prefigures some of the modern attitudes toward translation.

5.2. The "Languages" section

Just as I identified potential subcategories in the "People" section of the *Guide*, it seems to me that the section on "Languages" can be similarly subdivided. The following categories suggest themselves:

1. Modern languages in which Bible translation has been done (e.g., Spanish, Italian, Mixtec).
2. Ancient versions and early translations (e.g., Latin, Slavonic, Gothic).
3. The languages in which the biblical texts were composed (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic).
4. Ancient languages that inform biblical studies (e.g., Ugaritic, Hittite, Hurrian).

The theme of this section is Bible translation in the languages listed. For instance, the article on "Dakota" (or "Lakota," pp. 107–108) offers only a little demographic information about the language. Most of this entry is about Bible translation into Lakota. The ancient languages that inform biblical studies (see point 4 in the preceding paragraph) are an exception to this general trend, but they represent only about 10 entries out of almost 200 in this section.

A few articles seem out of place in the languages section because they address general topics. For instance, the article on "Indigenous languages" (pp. 151–154) is a general discussion of minority languages, and it mentions translation efforts only in passing. This type of article seems more like the entries in the more generalized "Topics" section. The "Basic language" entry (pp. 87–88) is another such example, though it does discuss the *Parole de Vie* and *La Bible pour enfants* versions in the final paragraph. Other entries that may fit best in the general "Topics" section include "Language endangerment" (pp. 179–180), "Languages of arts and media" (pp. 180–183), and "Speaking in tongues" (p. 262).[5]

5 In an email dated July 20, 2021, the editors noted that they did consider placing these articles in the "Topics" section, but ultimately decided to place them under the "Languages" heading to ensure that they were not "lost among the grand array of translation topics."

5.3. The "topics" section

The "Topics" section is by far the largest part of the *Guide*, covering just under seventy percent of the text devoted to People, Languages, and Topics. This section includes topics on translation theory, grammar, and linguistics, among other subjects. The breadth of these entries defies easy categorization. Therefore, this review will not attempt to catalog the different types of topics as it listed the entries in the "People" and "Languages" sections. Instead, the review will highlight articles from the "Topics" portion by considering similar entries together, as discussion warrants. Hopefully, this provides a natural, organic presentation of the *Guide's* content.

6. The Biggest Strength of the Guide: Its Contributors

Although the *Guide* does a good job of highlighting "People," "Languages," and "Topics" in Bible translation, these categories do not represent its greatest strength, namely, the expertise and experience of its contributing authors. Among the contributions, the *Guide* presents articles by people who have been directly involved in this field as translators, translation project coordinators, regional translation directors, heads of Bible societies, and Bible translation consultants. Several authors in the *Guide*, if not most of them, speak from the experience of having ministered in multiple capacities (e.g., as Bible translators who have also served as project coordinators and regional directors). In the *Guide*, we hear from former heads of Bible societies and translation agencies with extensive knowledge of regional Bible translation efforts. The editors have also done well to include prominent scholars outside the Global West. Hopefully, their inclusion here will introduce readers to voices from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe that they may not otherwise know.

Biographical information on the contributors to the *Guide* is limited to brief sketches for the editors (p. 901); a tribute in memory of Ellingworth (p. vii), who authored many articles in the *Guide*; a statement recognizing the contributions of Ellingworth and Sim (p. xxiv); listings of agency affiliations, if applicable, for those who contribute articles (pp. xxiii–xxvi); and occasional comments that the authors make in their entries regarding their own work in Bible translation. Theoretically, it would be possible to piece together the careers of some contributors from their works mentioned in the *Guide* and listed in the general bibliography (pp. 905–956). For most of the contributors, the *Guide* provides little information regarding the work they have done in Bible translation and academia.

The editors have accomplished a monumental achievement not just in what information they have assembled, but also in *whom* they have engaged to compose it. Potential readers should be told this, I believe, so that they can more fully appreciate the *Guide*. Therefore, this review will seek to highlight a few of the articles that illustrate these bonus features, while also providing a sense of the general content of the *Guide*.

The length of the *Guide* prohibits an exhaustive discussion of its contents. Therefore, I have chosen to highlight articles and authors that I believe show what the *Guide* has to offer overall.

7. Articles by Prominent Scholars in the Topics Section

As mentioned above, *A Guide to Bible Translation* includes articles from some of the most prominent scholars in the field of Bible translation today. For example, in her article on "Genre and Bible translation," Lynell Zogbo readily demonstrates her years of experience teaching on this topic to classrooms not only in her home in Côte d'Ivoire, but also around the world. Zogbo also provides a useful introduction in her article, "Poetry in Bible translation," that should prompt all serious Bible students to seek out the more extensive treatment she offers in her book on the subject, co-authored with Wendland (Zogbo and Wendland 2020).

Ernst Wendland, who is well known for his work on Frames of Reference (FoR) and Literary Functional Equivalence (LiFE), contributes sketches of three to four pages each for both of these models in the "Topics" section (on pp. 454–458 and pp. 567–568, respectively). Although Wendland does not say this in the *Guide*, these articles essentially summarize three of his books (Wendland 2004; 2008; 2011). Undoubtedly, his students at the South African Theological Seminary and Stellenbosch University will find these discussions invaluable, as will any readers looking for an overview on Frames of Reference or Literary Functional Equivalence.

Wendland also contributes articles in the "People" and "Languages" sections of the *Guide*. His article on Martin Luther (pp. 37–40) deals mainly with Luther's translation principles and the Bible he produced. Under the article for "Chewa" (also called "Chichewa," pp. 95–96), a language with which he has worked extensively in Zambia, he updates the overview he provides in his *Introduction to the New Chichewa Bible Translation* (Wendland 1998).

Other authors take a similar approach and surreptitiously distill portions of their published work into brief summaries that are embedded in their articles. For example, though Harriett Hill does not point it out in her article on "Culture and translation" (pp. 392–394), this entry effectively summarizes chapters 4–5 of her book *The Bible at Cultural Crossroads: From Translation to Communication* (2006).

Likewise, it would be difficult to summarize the extensive work of Christiane Nord, the well-known champion of *Skopos* theory. Fortunately, she offers a section on *Skopostheorie* that quietly summarizes this paradigm

in her article on "Functionalism and Bible translation" (pp. 459–462). These are just a few examples of how the *Guide* provides useful synopses of important theories in Bible translation.

8. Experts on Bible Translation in their Respective Countries of Origin

Among the summaries of Bible translation efforts in the "Languages" section of the *Guide*, some of the most detailed treatments are those by authors who write about versions in their respective countries of origin. In this section, I will mention just a few of the articles that I think bring a unique perspective to the history of Bible translation.

To begin, let us consider the overview on Russian Bible translation (pp. 221–225). The editors could hardly have found anyone more qualified to write this summary than Mikhail Seleznev, who currently teaches in the Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities. Seleznev published new translations of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, and Deuteronomy while he was serving as chief editor with the Russian Bible Society (1991–2010) and leading the Russian Bible Society project that produced a multi-volume translation of Old Testament books. He judiciously omits his own participation in the translation, even as he rightly gives prominence to the other members of the team. Similarly, he (humbly) neglects to mention his numerous publications (over 60 articles and books, at the time of this writing).[6] In this instance, even the translator of Seleznev's article, Larissa Shmailo, is a respected poet and author in her own right. Her credentials include work with the American Bible Society.

Even though Seleznev has published works in English, much of his work has been published in Russian, with the result that he is perhaps not as well known in the Anglophone world as he is in Russia. The *Guide* has, therefore, done a great service to the reader by providing his article in translation to acquaint more people with his work. Other translated entries in the *Guide* make articles available in English that might not otherwise garner the attention they deserve.

While Seleznev's four-and-a-half-page article is among the longer entries in this section of the Guide, the article by Peeter Roosimaa (pp. 118–119) on Estonian Bible translation proves that brevity does not preclude quality. In seven short paragraphs, Roosimaa manages not only to summarize 300 years of Estonian Bible translation, but even to pause for a moment to characterize specific numbered reprints (2, 3, 9, and 11) of the limited-edition *Piibel* version, published in the North Estonian dialect. I suspect that this article reflects the research that Roosimaa did for his 2004 doctoral dissertation on the exegetical methods behind the Bible translations published in his native Estonia (Roosimaa 2004). Since this dissertation appears to be available only in Estonian, the *Guide's* readers remain indebted to the translators who have made this article available to a broader readership: Christoph Unger and his wife Külvi, who served for many years with SIL, beginning in the early 1990s. Of course,Christoph Unger is also well-known in his own right as the author of numerous publications on various topics in cognitive linguistics and related areas.

Junko Nakai Suzuki, the author of a forthcoming monograph that focuses on nineteenth-century Bible translation in his native Japan (Suzuki 2022), writes the article on Japanese Bible translation (pp. 165–169). Like Roosimaa, Suzuki also has an eye for detail. For instance, Suzuki relates how the earliest seven (!) Roman Catholic translation projects have no surviving manuscripts, but then describes an exceptional case, where some verses from the Psalms were inscribed in 1585 by the Japanese ambassador to

6 See the listing of publications by Dr. Seleznev at https://www.hse.ru/staff/mgseleznev#sci, accessed June 21, 2021.

the Vatican. This manuscript was subsequently lost and rediscovered twice, finally resurfacing in 2001 (p. 164). This anecdote spans two sentences in Suzuki's four-and-a-half-page article. Certainly, the entry would still be excellent without this comment regarding a four-hundred-year-old Scripture portion. However, such details as these are the pearls of research that decorate some of the more thoughtful articles in the *Guide*.

Bayarjargal Garamtseren, who is now leading the translation team for the Mongolian Standard Version (currently scheduled for publication in 2026) and who has written extensively on Bible versions in Mongolian, lends his expertise to the *Guide* in a meticulous article on that topic (pp. 199–201). Ji-Youn Cho, who has served as a translation consultant with the Korean Bible Society, writes a similarly detailed article on Bible translation in her native Korea (pp. 175–179), as well as a short article on the Korean Bible Society itself (pp. 543–544). Since Cho wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on honorifics (published as Cho 2009), it is also fitting that she contributes the article on honorifics to the *Guide* (pp. 498–500). G. A. Mikre-Sellassie, who has published multiple articles on the Ge'ez Bible in the early history of the Ethiopic church, also enriches the *Guide* by summarizing some of his findings in the article on Ge'ez (pp. 129–131).

In a similar vein, the former directors of translation agencies and Bible societies are ideally placed to write about regional activities. For instance, Borislav Arapović founded and led for many years the Institute for Bible Translation (IBT), which is responsible for bringing Scripture to many languages in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Not only does Arapović write the *Guide's* article on IBT itself (pp. 519–520), but he also writes the entries for Azerbaijani (p. 87), Tajik (pp. 252–253), Tatar (pp. 255–256), Uzbek (pp. 266–267), Serbian (pp. 228–230), and his native Croatian (pp. 105–107). To cite another example, the D. Jonadob Nathaniel, the senior director of translations at the Bible Society of India, writes the *Guide's* articles for 16 of the languages in that region.

Iver Larsen, whose advocacy for Wycliffe Bible Translators in his native Denmark led to the eventual opening of a Wycliffe branch there in the late 1970s, is ideally suited to author the article on Danish Bible translations (pp. 108–109). Similarly, Stein Mydske is an excellent choice to author the article on the Norwegian Bible Society he formerly headed (pp. 627–628), as well as the entry he provides on Norwegian Bible translation (pp. 203–205). Walter Klaiber, former president of the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (1999–2009), renders the same service as Mydske, *mutatis mutandis*, in his articles on Bible societies in Germany (pp. 473–474) and German Bible translations (pp. 132–135). As noted above, these examples are merely representative of the *Guide's* authors and the experience with which they imbue their submissions to the encyclopedia.

9. Articles by People Directly Involved in Bible Translation

Many of the contributors to the *Guide* have been directly involved in Bible translation as translators, advisors, regional coordinators, or in any number of related roles. In effect, these entries preserve first-hand accounts about the process and (often extensive) lists of those involved in the projects where they served. Among these articles written by participants in the translations are "Lingala" (John Ellington, p. 186), "Gwich'in," "Micmac" (L. Watson Williams, pp. 197–198), "Mixtec" (Barbara Hollenbach, p. 198), "Nahuatl" (David Tuggy, p. 201), and Yucatec "Mayan" (written by a member of the advisory board, Rev. Edesio Sánchez-Cetina, pp. 195–197).

The Gwich'in language entry is a good example of one of these hidden gems. In just a few sentences, the author summarizes Bible translation work among this Arctic people group, including the New Testament translation

begun in 1959 by Richard and Susan Mueller of SIL and completed in 2011. According to the entry, this is the "only NT in an Alaskan Athabaskan language to date" (p. 140). Richard Mueller, who was mentioned in the article, then appears as a coauthor in the byline. That is, this brief entry on Gwich'in quietly offers the firsthand testimony of the missionaries who worked on this Bible translation. Many other such gems of firsthand experience remain to be mined from the pages of this book.

John W. Harris contributes an article (pp. 270–271) describing his father Len Harris's work in producing the Wubuy New Testament. This account is especially touching, as it culminates with the Christian community in this language taking the reins and eventually publishing the New Testament and then drafting all of the Old Testament on its own.

The entry on Dutch Bible translations (p. 110) comes from a Dutch Bible translator. Marijke H. de Lang served from 1993–2004 as a translator and exegete on the New Bible Translation (2004) under the Netherlands Bible Society. De Lang also contributes an article on Erasmus (p. 25), the Dutch humanist whose name will forever be linked with the *Textus Receptus* family of Greek manuscripts. Given the connection between Erasmus and the *Textus Receptus*, it is fitting that de Lang is also the author of the entry on the *Textus Receptus* as well (p. 802).

Philip Noss, who contributes 49 articles plus other introductory materials to the *Guide*, is at his best when he writes (pp. 127–129) about the Gbaya language translation project he served in Cameroon. As expected, he names many participants and provides details about the work in Gbaya that an insider would know. This is similar to the discussion that Seleznev offers on the Russian Bible translation he led, as mentioned above. Of course, no Bible translation occurs in a vacuum. Just as everyone who produces a new version must be aware of what translation work has been done before, so also the attention that Noss and Seleznev pay in their respective articles to the details of the Gbaya and Russian translations show that they are eminently qualified to comment on those endeavors.

10. Practical Articles Regarding Publication

Any translation team that has ever struggled with how best to provide paratextual aids to their intended readers will want to study the articles regarding various aspects of publication. Here, Charles Houser shares the insights he gained from his 36 years of publishing experience with the American Bible Society. Among these, I note especially "Formatting and Bible translation" (pp. 449–453) and "Maps in Bibles" (pp. 570–572), which give practical advice on how to approach these issues. The brief addendum the editors attach to "Maps in Bibles" (pp. 572–574) even gives a schematic of where translation teams might wish to place maps throughout their Bibles for maximum effectiveness. In the "Publisher's role in Bible translation" (pp. 677–680), Houser shares not only his insider's perspective on getting a Bible printed and distributed, but also several suggestions for translation teams to make their publication process smooth and effective for reaching their intended audience.

Houser is not the only author with expertise in this subject. Noss brings up some important caveats that translators should consider before they decide to issue "Red letter editions" (p. 692). For a general discussion of various types of paratextual aids, Sim devotes an article to "Supplementary materials" (pp. 778–783). Collaborative articles regarding Bible formatting can be found in "Section headings" (pp. 738–739, by Sim, Houser, and Noss); a discussion of "Illustrations and captions" (pp. 504–507, by Sim and Houser); and a guide to designing "Study Bibles" (pp. 775–778, by Sim, Houser, and Noss). Taken as a whole, these topics effectively cover the introductory issues that Bible translation teams face in publishing and formatting their texts.

11. Thematic Guide to Topics

Since the *Guide* is simply organized by subject in each of its three main sections, the "Thematic guide to topics" in the *Guide's* back matter is a welcome tool to help the reader locate articles by general topic. For instance, under the sub-heading entitled "Translation quality" in this section (p. 963), we find page numbers listed for 10 entries, including topics that will be of interest to translation consultants: "Acceptability," "Clarity," "Equivalence," "Faithfulness," "Naturalness," and "Translation quality appraisal." This format makes it much easier to find inter-related articles than a general index of topics, though the *Guide* also contains a general index.

12. Articles that Require Revision

In any encyclopedia that engages multiple authors to compose a work exceeding one thousand pages in length, it seems inevitable that some errors would creep into the text. *A Guide to Bible Translation* is no exception. The following suggestions are offered in the hope that they will improve the text.

12.1 Aldred

In the brief entry dedicated to Aldred (p. 7), Ellingworth credits him with penning "the first surviving English translation of part of the Bible" circa 950 AD (p. 7). However, the oldest known surviving English translation of part of the Bible is, at present, an interlinear gloss in the Vespasian Psalter, which predates Aldred by at least one hundred years. In fact, in his article on English Bible translations, Ellingworth even notes (p. 114) that the Vespasian Psalter preserves "The earliest surviving biblical text in OE [i.e., Old English]." I suggest changing the entry on Aldred (p. 7) to credit him with "*one of the earliest* surviving English translations of part of the Bible."

12.2 Catalan

In the article on Catalan, Ellingworth outlines Bible translation activity up to 1832, then states, "In more recent times translation work has been largely interconfessional, owing much to Rius Camps [sic] and his colleagues at the Monastery of Montserrat" (p. 94) and indicates that this work led to the 1993 publication of a study Bible (undoubtedly, the *Bíblia Catalana Interconfessional* [BCI]). Two corrections seem to be in order. First, this statement appears to indicate a case of mistaken identity. The shared surname "Camps" has apparently led Ellingworth to confuse Father Josep Rius-Camps with Father Guiu Camps. It is Guiu Camps, the late professor of exegesis at Montserrat, who deserves credit as a major contributor to the 1993 ecumenical BCI translation. Josep Rius-Camps, on the other hand, served as a translator on the *Nou Testament* (1978), which is oriented toward Roman Catholic readership. The name confusion is perhaps understandable, given that both Guiu Camps and Josep Rius-Camps worked on Bible translations, albeit very distinct ones, in the second half of the twentieth century.

Second, the expression "more recent times" seems to indicate "ever since 1832 and up to the present day," since 1832 is the last date in the immediately preceding sentence. If Ellingworth intends to include the entire twentieth century in what he considers to be "more recent times," then it seems strange to describe this phase of Catalan Bible translation as "largely interconfessional" in light of the many Bible translations that were published between 1915 and 1987 for Roman Catholics. During this period, Roman Catholic exegetes produced two New Testaments: (*El Nou Testament*, 1928–1929; and the 1980 *Nou Testament* by Jaume Sidera I Plana). Roman Catholics also published two multi-volume Bibles: *La Sagrada Biblia* (15 vols., 1928–1948) and *La Bíblia: versió dels textos originals i notes pels Monjos de Montserrat* (28 vols., 1926–1987). A one-volume Roman

Catholic Bible appeared in 1968 as *La Sagrada Bíblia, 2nd Edition*. Although it shares the same name as the 15-volume *Sagrada Biblia*, the single-volume *Sagrada Biblia* is a new translation. Though his Bible translation work was not extensive, Frederic Clascar also published Catalan translations for Catholics in the early part of the century: Genesis (1915), Song of Songs (1918), and Exodus (1925). Rather than describing post-1832 Catalan Bible translation as "largely interconfessional," it would be more accurate to note that these activities have been largely Roman Catholic, albeit punctuated by the important publication of some Protestant versions.

Regarding those Protestant Bibles, the author does mention the publication of *La Biblia del 2000* (a Protestant translation also known as the *Bíblia Evangèlica Catalana* [BEC]), and a 2004 critical edition of Exodus and Leviticus. However, he does not mention the 2009 Protestant translation *La Santa Bíblia o les Santes Escriptures* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society). Also absent is the Catalan edition of the New World Translation by the Jehovah's Witnesses (*Traducció del Nou Món de les Escriptures Gregues Cristianes*), published in 2016.

Given the brevity of this article, it is understandable that the author might choose not to mention every Bible translation in Catalan. Nevertheless, it is odd that he does not mention any Roman Catholic Bible translations published in the twentieth century, or the translation by the Jehovah's Witnesses. One hopes that the next edition of the *Guide* will update this article with the correct attribution of the BCI to Guiu Camps and include the information about the additional translations I have mentioned.

12.3 Slavonic

In the article on the Church Slavonic Bible translation, Ellingworth asserts, "What is generally considered the standard version of the Slavonic Bible first appeared in St. Petersburg in 1751 under the auspices of Peter the Great" (p. 237). This statement should be revised to indicate that the Slavonic Bible of 1751 was published under the auspices of Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great, rather than Peter the Great himself.

Although Peter did issue an edict in 1712 to publish a revision of the Slavonic Bible, he died in 1725 before it could be completed. On February 14, 1744, his daughter Elizabeth decreed that the revision be resumed.[7] The new Slavonic version that was published as a result, in 1751, was so connected to Elizabeth's patronage that even modern editions of the Church Slavonic text are still known today as the "Elizabeth Bible." The 1756 revision of the Elizabeth Bible is the basis of the text authorized for use by the Russian Orthodox church today.

I recommend amending this statement in the *Guide* to read: "The text of what eventually became the standard version of the Slavonic Bible first appeared in St. Petersburg in 1751 under the auspices of the Empress Elizabeth. She envisioned it as the fulfillment of the edict her father, Peter the Great, issued in 1712 to revise the Moscow Bible of 1663. The text received by Russian Orthodox Church today, based on the 1756 revision of the 1751 edition, is still called the 'Elizabeth Bible' in honor of her patronage." This represents a slight expansion for the sake of clarity, which seems warranted because the editors mention that readers of the first edition of the *Guide* requested that more information on Slavonic should appear in the revision (p. xxxiii).

Another small discrepancy appears in the discussion of the Church Slavonic Bible in the introduction to the "People" section (p. 4), where the text reads:

7 For the full text of Elizabeth's 1744 decree and an extensive analysis of the revision it launched, see chapter three in Astafiev (1889).

> Early in the 18c., Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, ordered the preparation of what would become the standard Church Slavonic Bible, but he died before it was published. Elizabeth, Empress of Russia from 1741 to 1761, ordered its publication in 1751, and it is accordingly known as the "Bible of Elizabeth." (Nida 1972, 197)

The *Guide* cites page 197 in Nida (1972). However, the information in question is found on page 397 of the source in question. It is worth noting that this citation from Nida supports the emendation I have suggested for page 237 in the *Guide*.

12.4 Ukrainian

The entry for "Ukrainian" identifies the language as "Ukrainian (formerly known as Ruthenian)." As Himka (1996) demonstrates, the term "Ruthenian" in its various spellings has referred to various groups, but never simply to all Ukrainians. I suggest that the editors simply remove the reference to "Ruthenian" in this entry.

12.5 Vuk Stefanović Karadžić

The *Guide* (p. 34) states that the Serbian linguist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić learned to read and write at the monastery at Tronoša. This matches the claim by the Encyclopedia Britannica (n.d.), which causes us to wonder whether this might be the source that Ellingworth consulted for this article. However, Milićević (1971, 120) qualifies this information slightly: While Karadžić did study at the Tronoša monastery, he was initially taught to read and write by his cousin, Jevta Savić Čotrić, who would later become a Serbian national leader. I suggest that the *Guide* mention the initial contribution of Čotrić to his younger cousin's education.

13. Articles that Require Updates

In his Foreword to the *Guide*, Robert Hodgson, Jr. mentions that this encyclopedia was "a decade long in the making" (p. xxvii). If they were composed at the beginning of this decade-long process, this would explain some articles in the languages section that do not record Bibles produced after about 2009 (e.g., Czech, Italian, Spanish). Other entries cover subjects with more recent developments (e.g., Afrikaans). In addition to the article on Catalan that this review discussed above, I believe that the following articles require an update.

13.1 Kurt Aland

The entry on Kurt Aland (p. 6) is current up to the publication of the fourth revised edition of the UBS Greek New Testament. I recommend that this article be updated to include the publication of the fifth revised edition.

13.2 Afrikaans

The article on Afrikaans mentions a "source-language orientated translation, which is expected to be published during the bicentenary of the establishment of a Bible Society in South Africa in 2020" (p. 71). This almost certainly refers to *Die Bybel 2020-vertaling*, which the Bible Society of South Africa launched on November 29, 2020, following initial sales of the new Bible version in October. I recommend that the editors of the *Guide* update this article to reflect the 2020 publication of *Die Bybel 2020-vertaling*.

13.3 Czech

The discussion of Bible translations into Czech (p. 107) is current up to 2004. Since then, several study Bibles and other revisions have been published,

though it is not immediately clear from their various respective websites which of these projects (other than the revised *New World Translation*, 2019) represent new versions of the Bible in Czech. In any case, these new Czech Bible editions merit mention in this article.

13.4 Polish

The entry on Polish mentions that publication of the last two volumes of a multi-volume Bible is "planned for 2016" (p. 215). I suggest that this statement be updated to reflect the current status of this new Polish translation.

13.5 Russian

The article on Russian notes that Adventist Pastor Mikhail P. Kulakov founded the Institute for Bible Translation in Zaoksky, where he published his translation of the New Testament, and began publishing portions of the Old Testament. "At the time of this writing," the article says, the Institute "is planning publication of the entire Bible" (p. 224). I recommend that the editors update this article to reflect that the entire (Protestant canon) Bible was, in fact, finished under the direction of Kulakov's son, Mikhail M. Kulakov, and published in 2015.

13.6 Italian

The article on Italian (pp. 161–163) is current up to 1997. This coincides with the publication date of a summary of Italian Bible translation by Buzzetti (1997), which seems to be the original source of the article.[8] I recommend that future revisions of the Guide update this entry to include discussion of Italian translations after 1997. Among these, the following versions should be noted: *La Sacra Bibbia*, second edition (2008); *La Bibbia di Gerusalemme* (2009); and two translations by the Jehovah's Witnesses (the *Traduzione del Nuovo Mondo delle Sacre Scritture* [2017] and the *Traduzione del Nuovo Mondo delle Sacre Scritture: Edizione per lo studio* [2018]).

13.7 Spanish

The article on Spanish Bible translations ("Spanish," pp. 241–244) is a good example of one of the *Guide's* more extensive treatments. Nevertheless, the last modern version mentioned is a 2010 publication (*La Palabra: El mensaje de Dios para mí*). Since 2010, Spanish has seen at least 12 new versions or significant revisions of older versions. At least a few of these translations merit discussion in the *Guide*. The Reina-Valera, which the article in the *Guide* discusses, has enjoyed acceptance in the Spanish-speaking world similar to the way that the English-speaking world has received the King James Bible. Like the King James, the Reina-Valera has undergone many redactions over its four-hundred-year history. In 2011, a revision was published (the *Reina-Valera Contemporánea*, henceforth RVC) that updates the style in many passages to modern Spanish usage. The RVC also footnotes variants in the New Testament between its *Textus Receptus* Vorlage and the Nestle-Aland Greek Text (27th edition). This marks a noteworthy shift to bring the *Reina-Valera* tradition into closer dialogue with modern text criticism.

The year 2011 also saw the publication of a Messianic New Testament (*El Nuevo Testamento Judío*). The *Biblia Textual, Fourth Edition* (2014) merits mention as a fresh translation, produced by the Sociedad Bíblica Iberoamericana. Notable Roman Catholic editions continue to appear, such as the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América* (of which the New Testament was published in 2015) and the *Biblia Didajé* (2016, with commentary based

8 The Guide indicates that Ellingworth translated a Buzzetti article to produce the entry on Italian, but it does not state explicitly which Buzzetti article he translated. However, of the four works by Buzzetti that the Guide cites in its General References, only the 1997 article appears to be a summary history of Italian Bible translation.

on the English *Didache* Bible). The Watchtower Society of the Jehovah's Witnesses recently published the Spanish edition of the *New World Translation* in 2019.

14. Spelling Corrections

I suggest the following spelling corrections in non-English book titles and personal names:

1) *La traducción bíblica: lingüística y estilística*. In the article on Luis Alonso Schökel, the work cited as *La traducción biblica: lingüistic y stilistica* (p. 7) should be spelled *La traducción b**í**blica: lingü**í**stic**a** y **e**stil**í**stica*.
2) *La Défense et illustration de la langue française*. In the article on Joachim de Bellay (p. 12), the work cited as *Défense et illustration de la langue françoise* should be spelled *La Défense et illustration de la langue française*.
3) *Hebräische Grammatik*. Under the entry for Wilhelm Gesenius (p. 28), the title of his *Hebraische Grammatik* should be spelled "*Hebräische Grammatik*," with umlauts over the "a" in "*Hebräische*."
4) *Paolo de Santa Fé*. The entry for Yajirō (p. 64) lists his Portuguese name as "Paola de Santa Fé." The name "Paula" should be spelled "Paulo."
5) *Atahualpa*. The *Guide* spells the name of the Inca emperor as "Atahuallpa" (pp. 4, 9, 218), probably following the older convention of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I recommend the current convention, following Spanish, that spells the name as "Atahualpa" (with one "l").

15. Minor Discrepancies

In this section, I respectfully list a few places where I believe the *Guide* could improve consistency and clarity.

15.1 Atahualpa

Regarding the ignominious fate of Atahualpa, the *Guide* reads, "The act of tossing the Bible to the ground was deemed to be blasphemy by the Spanish invaders for which the penalty was death" (p. 4). The structure and the subtle use of "which" make this sentence unclear at first glance: The expression "the Spanish invaders for which the penalty was death" suggests that the Spanish invaders suffered the death penalty. Perhaps this sentence could be clarified by the insertion of a full stop: "The act of tossing the Bible to the ground was deemed to be blasphemy by the Spanish invaders. The penalty was death."

The use of "which" instead of "whom" does disambiguate the recipient of the death penalty. However, this requires the reader to pause and disentangle the syntax. It seems smoother to divide the sentence to improve clarity, as I have suggested here.

15.2 Academic titles

Under the main category of "Advisors" in the front matter are three categories: Editorial Committee, Editorial Board, and Advisory Committee. Only the members of the Advisory Committee (pp. xxi–xxii) are listed with their academic titles (e.g., "Prof.," "Dr."). The names in the other categories are listed without titles, even though many of these people hold doctorates and professorships as well. For the sake of consistency, I recommend that the *Guide* either remove the titles of the Advisory Committee or include the titles of everyone listed.

15.3 Unclear labels: "Chinese and Chinese Dialects" and "Gypsy Languages"

A few entries appear under labels that are unclear, such as the entry entitled "Chinese and Chinese dialects." Since China hosts several hundred languages within its boarders, it does not seem proper to speak of "Chinese" as a language. Furthermore, the languages within China so often transcend national boundaries that linguists must resort to labels that reflect this reality (e.g., "Sino-Tibetan"). Therefore, a label such as "Mandarin and other Sinitic languages" or the slightly more durable "Mandarin and other languages in China" would be more consistent with current nomenclature. Such a change would also be consistent with the entry for "Vietnamese and languages of Vietnam" (pp. 268–269).

The entry for "Gypsy languages" stands out because of the often-pejorative use of the word "Gypsy." This unfortunate coloring of the term has led many people to prefer the term "Roma" over "Gypsy." The *Guide* does seem to be aware of this preference, since the entry at "Gypsy languages" redirects the reader to the entry "Romani." Given modern sensitivities to the word "Gypsy," perhaps future editions of the *Guide* could forego putting an entry for "Gypsy Languages." I suggest that the editors simply put an entry in the *Guide* for "Roma" or "Romani" and note in the text of the article that the Roma languages have historically been known under the name "Gypsy," which is becoming progressively obsolete.

Similarly, the general term "Eskimo" is falling into disuse as some groups find it offensive. As John Harris observes in the "Notes on terminology" at the end of his article on "Indigenous languages" in the *Guide* (pp. 151–154), "Inuit" is now preferred over "Eskimo" (p. 154). I suggest that the *Guide* follow Harris's advice by removing the entry for "Eskimo" (p. 118). In my opinion, readers will scarcely miss the entry for "Eskimo," since it merely directs them to "see Inuit, Yupik." The Aleut people should also be included, along with Inuit and Yupik, among the indigenous circumpolar ethnicities previously labeled as "Eskimo."

In defense of the *Guide*, I must concede that the preferred nomenclature of peoples and their languages is often both highly political and constantly shifting. It would be nearly impossible for any reference work of this scope to select names that satisfy all linguists. Nevertheless, the consensus on "Mandarin," "Roma," and the circumpolar people groups seems to be sufficiently well established that these changes seem warranted.

15.4 Kenneth Pike (unclear page references)

The article on Kenneth Pike (pp. 50–52) cites multiple works, but the citations are difficult to follow when the author refers to page numbers only. I suggest that this article list the abbreviated title with the page numbers for each citation it gives.

15.5 English

In the article on English Bible translations (pp. 113–118), Ellingworth calls the Deuterocanonical books "those OT books that have *no surviving basis in the Hebrew Bible* but were part of the LXX and therefore had always been part of the Vulgate" (p. 116, my emphasis). In light of the discovery in the Judean Desert of Hebrew versions of Sirach, portions of Tobit, and part of Baruch, I recommend that the editors of the *Guide* amend this statement as follows, "It [the Douay-Rheims version] was published in 1582 and was followed in 1610 by a complete Bible which included the Deuterocanon, those OT books that *were not included in the canon of the* Hebrew Bible but were part of the LXX and therefore had always been part of the Vulgate."

Ellingworth describes the King James Version (KJV) of 1611 as the "the most widely used of Middle English Bibles" (p. 116), even though he

correctly assigns the KJV to his first subsection on "Early Modern English." To avoid the possible confusion between whether the 1611 King James Bible represents Middle English or Early Modern English, it would be better to rephrase this statement as follows: "…the KJV became in time the most widely used of English Bibles *produced during this period*."

15.6 Logos Bible Software

The introduction to the "Topics" section notes that Logos Bible software is produced by Libronix (p. 277). I suggest updating this sentence with the phrase, "Logos Bible Software, formerly produced by Libronix…" or "Logos Bible Software, currently produced by Faithlife…"

15.7 "Slavic" versus "Slavonic"

The *Guide* occasionally uses the term "Slavonic" when current American usage prefers "Slavic." The term "Slavonic" used to denote both "Church Slavonic" (i.e., the liturgical language) and "Slavic" (i.e., the peoples, languages, and cultures that descend from the eponymous branch of Indo-European). However, modern American use of the term "Slavonic" now denotes the liturgical language (or sometimes Old Bulgarian, also called "Old Macedonian"). British English apparently uses "Slavonic" to include what American English would call "Slavic." Since the *Guide* has consistently used American English conventions elsewhere, I recommend that it use the term "Slavic" instead of "Slavonic" when the liturgical language is not in view.

The "Slavonic Bible Fund" should be named the "Slavic Bible Fund" on page 224. Similarly, the term "Slavonic" should be changed to "Slavic" on page 338. There we read, "For all textual issues, Orthodox churches in Slavonic countries regard the Church Slavonic Bible text as canonical." This sentence illustrates the difference between "Slavic" and "Slavonic," since it requires both expressions. I suggest, "For all textual issues, Orthodox churches in Slavic countries regard the Church Slavonic Bible text as canonical." It is not impossible that the author here does intend the sense of "Slavonic," that is, "Orthodox churches in Slavonic countries" could mean, "Orthodox churches in countries that adhere to the Church Slavonic rite." In this case, "Slavonic" would be the correct word choice. However, it seems more likely that "Slavic" is the intended term. The meaning would then approximately be, "Orthodox churches in ethnically and culturally Slavic countries regard the Church Slavonic Bible text as canonical." Please note that the expression "Church Slavonic" should remain as it stands.

On page 635, we find this statement: "The Church Slavonic translation of the Bible now used in the Russian and other Slav Orthodox Churches goes directly back to the first translation produced by the saintly brothers and their successors." While the expression "Slav Orthodox Churches" is certainly clearer than "Slavonic Orthodox Churches," current usage suggests that "Slavic Orthodox Churches" might be a better choice.

Where the entry for "Belarusan" identifies it as an "Eastern Slavonic language" (p. 88), it should be called an "eastern Slavic language." I suggest that the definite article be added to the following sentence in this entry: "A number of biblical fragments in Old Belarusan appeared in several manuscripts: Vitsebsk Psalter (1492), Chetsi-Minei (1489), and the Vilno Codex…" (p.88). The revision should read, "…the Vitebsk Psalter…"

15.8 Citation of Stephen Batalden in "Confessional and Interconfessional Translations"

On page 381, Omanson cites "Bataldan [sic] 2004, 169–268." The name of this author should be corrected to "Batalden." The article by Batalden does not seem to be listed in the *Guide's* "General References" section, though

the following does appear: Dean, John. 2004. "London Bible House in the 1950s." In Stephen Bataldan [sic], Kathleen Cann, and John Dean, eds., *Sowing the Word: The Cultural Impact of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1804–2004*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 81–96. It is unclear whether this work cited in the bibliography contains the reference cited on page 381 of the *Guide*.

16. Inactive Hyperlinks

The following hyperlinks in the *Guide* are inactive. I respectfully recommend that they be revised or removed.

1) "John Wycliffe." The article on John Wycliffe gives a hyperlink to an edition of the Bible published by his followers (http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/wycliffe, p. 64). This internet link is inactive as of June 23, 2021.
2) "Sign languages." As of June 28, 2021, the hyperlink https://video.deafbiblesociety.com/ismilmo is inactive in the article on "Bible Translation in Sign Languages" (p. 231).
3) "Syriac." The hyperlink http://www.ancientscripts.com/syriac.html (as of June 28, 2021) in the article on "Syriac" (p. 248) is inactive.
4) "Christianity and sacred text." The hyperlink www.americanbible.org/about in the article on "Christianity and sacred text" (p. 342) directs the reader to an active page, but that page does not contain the text that the article cites (as of June 30, 2021).

17. Biographical Sketches for All Contributing Authors

This review has focused much of its attention on the authors who contribute articles to the *Guide* because I believe that their experience and scholarship adds value to this encyclopedia. I suggest that biographical sketches be included in the *Guide* for every author.

18. Relying on the Experts

This review has attempted to point out that the *Guide* is at its best when it enlists the experts. As the editors consider revising the *Guide* for future editions, I recommend that they play to this strength by continuing to seek the assistance of specialists in two ways: first, specialists should assess the changes that this review has suggested to the content of the *Guide*.

Second, if this review is correct when it asserts that the *Guide* is at its best when the experts speak, then it follows that the best practices moving forward should take greater advantage of the scholarship of specialists. Please allow me to illustrate this by pointing out an example of where the *Guide* seems to rely too much on the contributions of a single author.

The late Paul Ellingworth single-handedly authors 85 entries in the *Guide*, not counting the articles he submits in translation or as coauthor with someone else. These articles span all three of its major sections ("People," "Languages," and "Topics"), and they cover a staggering array of subjects. Considering the career that Ellingworth enjoyed in Bible translation and academia (particularly as a scholar on the book of Hebrews), it surprises no one that he was respected for the breadth of his knowledge in many areas.

The sheer scope of these 85 articles almost guarantees that Ellingworth could not equally be an expert in all of them. Take, for example, the corrections this review has suggested in the articles he writes on "Slavonic" and "Vuk Stefanović Karadžić." If Ellingworth was relying on English resources to research these two articles, he can scarcely be faulted if he missed important details. Perhaps if the *Guide* had enlisted specialists in these subjects to pen the articles, some of the discrepancies might have been avoided.

Although no other author contributes as many articles to the *Guide* as the esteemed Ellingworth, he is not the only author who has submitted a large number of entries. For instance, two other authors submit over 50 articles each to this encyclopedia on a range of subjects no less extensive than the entries by Ellingworth. Rather than relying on so few people for so much of its content, I suggest that the *Guide* exploit its strongest attribute and enjoin more scholars to share the load.

Considering the many scholars that do contribute to this encyclopedia, the *Guide* shows every evidence that the editors have invited as many experts as possible to submit articles. Therefore, this recommendation to engage more specialists to write the *Guide's* entries does not imply that the editors have not solicited those contributions. Rather, this review merely recognizes the excellence of those submissions, and encourages the editors to increase this practice of seeking out top scholars in Bible translation to contribute more articles in subsequent editions. Therefore, this review is as much a supplication to ask more scholars to contribute future articles to the *Guide* as it is a call to the editors to accept them.

19. Conclusion

This review of *A Guide to Bible Translation* has selectively attempted to highlight some of the contributing authors and articles that stood out to me as someone who is involved in Bible translation. It has been a pleasure to discover well-written entries by well-respected people in Bible translation and related disciplines. Hopefully, this review has invited its readers to discover the *Guide's* understated excellence on their own.

This review has pointed out a few areas where I believe the *Guide* requires revision or correction. Most of these amendments are not extensive. If the editors accept these suggestions, the changes should be easy to implement, at least in the electronic edition. Assuming that many Bible translation personnel will be accessing the digital text of the *Guide* in *Translator's Workplace* through Logos Bible software, any revisions should appear during the course of regular software updates.

In closing, I enthusiastically invite anyone interested in the field to read *A Guide to Bible Translation: People, Languages, and Topics*. It is my hope that the readers derive as much enjoyment as I did from the wealth of expertise and experience this encyclopedia offers.[9]

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9 A pre-publication draft of this review was shared with the *Guide's* editors, who graciously offered many useful comments toward its improvement. The opinions expressed in this review, however, are my own.

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