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Message from the Editor: 150 Years of the Van Dyck Bible

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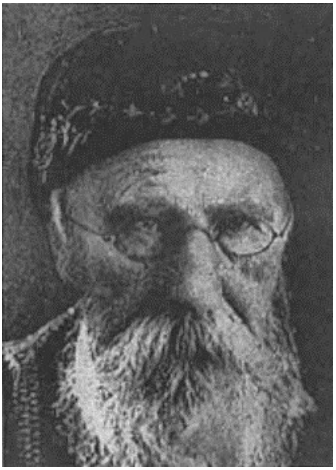

This 2015 volume of the *Cairo Journal of Theology* (*CJT*) opens with four articles on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Van Dyck Bible. Cornelius Van Dyck was a medical missionary sent in 1840 to Beirut, Lebanon, by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Utilizing the previous translation work of Eli Smith and collaborating with local assistants, he translated the Bible into Arabic, completing the task in 1865. The Van Dyck Bible, which is still widely used, has been highly influential and is sometimes referred to as the "Authorized Version" or the "King James Version" of the Arabic-speaking world.

The four articles present various aspects of the issues that surround the Arabic translation of the Bible. Michael Shelley, the director of the Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, provides the reader with a general introduction to Bible translation, reviewing subjects such as biblical inspiration, form criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, the New

[*] The image of Van Dyck on this page has been taken from: Ed Lauber, "An Outstanding Example for Bible Translators," *Heart Language*, August 13, 2014, http://heartlanguage.org/2014/08/13/an-outstanding-example-for-bible-translators/.

Testament canon, and the cultural and linguistic adaptability of the Scriptures. Uta Zeuge-Buberl, who recently received her PhD from the University of Vienna for her dissertation on the work of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missionaries (ABCFM) in Beirut, Lebanon, tells the story of Cornelius Van Dyck's work in Beirut and specifically his work on the famous Bible that bears his name. Joshua Yoder, ETSC's New Testament professor, places Van Dyck in his own time, reviewing the state of the art of textual criticism in the nineteenth century and Van Dyck's decision to base his translation of the Bible on the version that scholars refer to as the Textus Receptus. John Daniel, ETSC's instructor of Greek who has worked on the "New Van Dyck" translation project, presents the specific issues that confront those who would produce a modern translation of the Bible in colloquial Arabic.

We hope that you will enjoy reading these four articles. As noted, they open the 2015 volume of the *Cairo Journal of Theology*. The volume continues with two book reviews by myself: Rodney Stark's revisionist history of the West, which highlights the importance of the Christianity for the rise of the West and the success of modernity; and Philip Jenkin's account of the religious aspects of World War I, a war that he argues redrew the religious map of the modern world. During the year, we hope to add more articles and book reviews to this 2015 volume. Please, check http://journal.etsc.org for the latest additions.

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The Scriptures Matter: Authority, Content, Canon, and Translations of the Bible

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The Bible's Central Place in Christian Faith and Practice

For Christians the Scriptures matter. Their sacred texts, commonly known as "the Bible,"[1] have a central place in forming Christian faith and practice. The Bible contains numerous writings from a period covering more than a thousand years and written or compiled by numerous people. It is divided into two main parts. Christians most often call the first part "the Old Testament" but sometimes refer to it as "the Hebrew Scriptures" because it was originally, for the most part, written in Hebrew.[2] For Jesus and the very first Christians this part of the Bible was their Scriptures. What Christians call "the New Testament" did not yet exist during the lifetime of Jesus.

Christians speak of the Bible as "sacred" or "holy," which means it has an important place in God's purposes for humanity. They commonly speak of the Bible as the Word of God, which means that Christians throughout the world consider it an authoritative book for faith and practice. Many believe the Bible is authoritative because God inspired it, but what does the word *inspire* mean? New Testament scholar Craig Koester writes,

[1] The English word "Bible" derives from the Greek word *biblion*, which means "book." See Craig Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 9. This short book is an excellent introduction to much of what this essay covers.

[2] Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26; Daniel 2:4b–7:28 are written in Aramaic, a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew. See *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), vol. 1, s.v. "Aramaic".

> The word *inspired* is used in the Bible itself (2 Timothy 3:16)[3] and is included in official statements of many Christian groups, including Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches. Yet the Bible itself does not say *how* the inspiration took place and Christians have developed different positions on this issue. Some declare that each word of the Bible was communicated to the biblical authors by God. Others hold that the message was inspired but the actual words were not. Still others suggest that inspiration refers to the authors of the Bible, not to its words or message.[4]

Another way to talk about the Bible's authority is to say it has authority for Christians because it witnesses to God, what God has done by creating and caring for the creation, including humanity, and most especially what God has done through Jesus Christ. In fact, the New Testament identifies Jesus as the Word of God. Thus, "Christians believe that the words of the Scriptures are authoritative because they are primary witnesses to the *Word*, Jesus Christ."[5]

The Bible as a Library

The Bible is usually found in the form of a single book, but in reality it is a collection of many documents. For that reason, it has been likened to "a great library containing many books that were written at different times and places by different people."[6]Among Christians there is some difference about how many books are in this library. The Bible used by Protestants contains sixty-six individual books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New Testament. The Bible used by Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches have additional books.

Like a library, the Bible is divided into different sections. The larger section is called the Old Testament, the other is called the New Testament. "A 'testament' is a written expression of

[3] The Greek word is *theopneustos*, which means God-breathed or breathed into by God.

[4] Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible*, 12.

[5] Ibid., 14.

[6] Ibid., 17.

someone's will, and the Old and New Testaments express the will of God for people."[7] What Christians call the Old Testament is for Jews their entire Bible. Christian Bibles, on the other hand, also contain the New Testament, a collection of documents written between 50 and 110 C.E.

The Old Testament

Christian Bibles usually group the books of the Old Testament into four categories: the Pentateuch/Law, the Historical Books, the Poetical and Wisdom Books, and the Prophets. Much of the material in the Old Testament circulated orally before it was written down. Altogether, the collection of books in the Old Testament was written over a span of about one thousand years. As Koester says, the books of the Old Testament

> provide a panoramic view of God's dealings with his people over many centuries. These texts celebrate the wonder of God's creation and the joy of Israel's liberation from slavery. They portray the anguish of Israel's apostasy and God's own relentless quest to win his people back again, by disciplining them in exile and graciously liberating them once more. Through its stories and songs, prophecies and proverbs, the Old Testament bears witness to the faithfulness of God and helps people in every age discern what it means to be God's own people.[8]

The New Testament

As already mentioned, for Jesus and the earliest Christians, the Old Testament was their Bible. Eventually, new documents written by early Christians were recognized as authoritative writings that witness to what God has done in Jesus Christ and what it means to be his followers. The formation of the four New Testament Gospels occupied a period of fifty to sixty years after the time of Jesus, roughly the years 30–90 C.E. What was the process that lay behind their formation?

[7] Ibid., 18.
[8] Ibid., 40.

A couple of days after Jesus' death his disheartened disciples believed something extraordinary had happened: the one who died on a cross was now alive. They believed that God raised him from the dead. This was a transforming event. The disciples began to recall with fresh vividness what Jesus had said and done. All this was news they could not keep to themselves. It was "good news," which is what the word *gospel* means, and it had to be shared with others. They shared it first with fellows Jews in Palestine. Then, as the New Testament book of Acts tells us, they soon realized this news had significance for the whole world. They thus moved beyond the borders of Palestine into the larger world. They told the story of what Jesus had done and what he taught, and the whole story was colored by what they believed happened in his death and resurrection.

For the first few decades, this story was shared orally. That is, the written Gospels we now have were not written immediately. The story was told through preaching, teaching, and worship within the community of believers that was forming. It was also shared with people outside the community and given as verbal instruction to new believers. As this information about Jesus was told and retold, it was shaped into common patterns that made it easier to remember. New Testament scholars, through the discipline known as "form criticism," try to discern what forms or patterns the material had in the oral period. For instance, as we study the Gospels we find units of material, such as parables, miracle stories, and sayings of Jesus. In the shape in which we have them, they were easy to remember and share.

Eventually, information about Jesus that was shared orally was drawn together in written form in the New Testament Gospels. However, not all this oral material was recorded in the Gospels. We find evidence for this in the New Testament itself. Near the end of the Gospel of John, we read, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book" (20:30).[9]

[9] The Bible translation used in this essay is the *New Revised Standard Version*.

A further branch of Gospel scholarship is called "source criticism." It seeks to discover what larger blocks of material than forms lie behind the New Testament Gospels. For instance, it is widely thought that the Gospel of Mark was the first Gospel to reach its final form, and it is commonly held that Matthew and Luke drew upon Mark extensively, and often almost verbatim, in writing their Gospels. Each, however, also has material unique to his version. At the beginning of his Gospel, Luke refers to other accounts, apparently written, of Jesus' story:

> Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. (1:1–4)

A third branch of New Testament scholarship is known as "redaction criticism."Each Gospel was originally composed for a particular context. Redaction criticism seeks to discover the special interests, emphases, and concerns that led each Gospel writer to write a Gospel for his context.

New Testament scholarship is painstaking work. To the novice, and even to those of us who have had some training in it, it seems to involve a lot of trivial detail. However, the careful and meticulous study of the Gospels does not affect their broad structure as literature that seeks to tell a story that the writers believed to be vitally important for the whole world. As John says at the end of his Gospel, "these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

Yet, if the teaching of Jesus was one, then we might expect only one Gospel. Why are there four? Perhaps the best response to this question is that the writing of the Gospels was bifocal. By this we mean that the writers composed their Gospels looking back *to* Jesus but *from* the concerns and emphases of their own

context.[10] They sought to demonstrate how Jesus could be good news in their situation. That is, each Gospel was written with a particular community and situation in mind and to explain how Jesus was relevant to that situation.

Yet, it might further be asked, why four Gospels and not more? Certainly there were more situations and contexts in the early church than four. The early church thought about this question, and in fact more than four Gospels circulated among early Christians, accounts claiming to present an authentic picture of Jesus. The early church excluded other possibilities, because they were judged to have interpreted the story of Jesus in a questionable or unacceptable manner.

What does this teach us about the Christian understanding of the Bible as revelation? Generally, Christians do not see the Bible as a verbatim record of what God spoke through the prophets. They talk about God through the Holy Spirit working to inspire and guide the biblical writers, but they were not simply passive instruments; they were actively involved in the process.

What about the Epistles, the other major part of the New Testament? These are personal correspondence. They are letters from early Christian leaders—Paul, Peter, James, and John—addressed to cities and small churches in them or to individuals. How can these be considered divine revelation? By New Testament criteria, such letters are not incompatible with revelation. They were part of the life of the developing church. They educated new believers in the meaning and responsibilities of discipleship. They were part of the same world in which the Gospels were formed, but they had a different purpose. Their purpose was not to tell the story of Jesus. Rather, they were written to give spiritual and moral education in what it means to be Christian.[11]

[10] Kenneth Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim: An Exploration* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 83.

[11] For further explication, see Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 249–53, and Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 92–99.

Paul's letters predate the written Gospel portraits of Jesus. Written between the years 50 and 60 C.E., his letters were composed during the oral period of Gospel formation, described briefly above, when information about Jesus was being passed around orally, not yet in a final written form. However, Paul's letters presuppose the information about Jesus that was developing into the Gospel portraits. His call to new Christian communities to imitate Jesus makes sense only against this background. How Christians live, and what they do, is based on who Jesus was and is.

One of the loveliest New Testament passages, Philippians 2:1–11, calls on the Philippians to be ruled in all their actions by "the mind of Christ." Paul then describes what he means by praising Jesus' self-giving. Of course, this could only make sense in light of the Gospel material about Jesus that was circulating orally. So we see that the Epistles supplemented the Gospels in embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior. These two different types of literature presented a joint witness, the one a narrative account of Jesus' story, the other having a pastoral function of nurturing the new Christian communities in what it means to be followers of Jesus.

How are these letters relevant now after their time and outside their context? Their original destination was specific. They were very personal. Why should they be included in the New Testament? The answer is that they should be seen as offering precedents that can be interpreted for ongoing guidance in other times and places. The situations the apostles handled in these letters continually recur. These letters still have value because the guidance they offer was based in real human situations, not in hypothetical cases.

The New Testament Canon

The collection of the New Testament writings into what Christians call the "canon" took several centuries to be finalized. The final collection as we have it today goes back to the fourth century, but even then the final collection only recognized

documents long-established among Christians. What is the canon?

The New Testament contains twenty-seven writings known as the New Testament Canon. Canon is a Greek word that means "measuring rod."[12] The writings of the New Testament were selected from many other early Christian writings as having a special status. They were accepted as the authoritative expression of the faith passed on from the time of the apostles. They are the standard against which other teachings and writings are to be measured.

The formation of the canon took more than three centuries, though most of the New Testament books were recognized as authoritative by the late second century. Through a process of consensus, the four Gospels were so acknowledged early, along with the thirteen Epistles of Paul and the book of Acts. By the late fourth century, the church in Europe and North Africa reached agreement about the books of the New Testament as the developing consensus received the endorsement of ecclesiastical councils. The process took a little longer further east in the Syrian church, spilling over into the fifth century.[13]

Two factors stimulated this development. One was the precedent of the Old Testament, which by the time of Jesus enjoyed general acceptance among the Jews as a body of sacred, authoritative writings. As already mentioned, the Old Testament was the first scripture of the Christians. However, second, the teachings of Jesus and his apostles naturally came to have a dominant place in the life of the early church. They were continually referred to in preaching, teaching, and worship.[14]

After the period of the first apostles, there was a steady growth of writings, both gospels and letters (e.g. the Nag Hammadi collection). These needed to be assessed. Some of these belonged to groups of people judged to be too far outside

[12] Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 15.

[13] Ibid., 23–56; Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible,* 61–63.

[14] Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 57–59; Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 115.

the mainstream of the church. Some of these groups claimed to have special knowledge beyond what the first disciples of Jesus taught (e.g., the Gnostics). To stem the development of such groups, it was necessary to have authoritative scriptures that could be used to measure or assess their claims.[15]

The recognition of this body of Scripture took time. Several criteria were utilized in determining whether or not a document could be accepted. One criterion was apostolic authority. This did not mean that all the New Testament writings were actually written by the apostles, but their contents were attributed to one of Jesus' disciples or their close associates. Other criteria included: catholicity, a document's relevance to the whole church; orthodoxy, a document's agreement with the faith of the church; and traditional usage, whether a document was commonly used in the worship and teaching of numerous churches.[16]

The canonical process began very early. We can even say it began in the time of the apostles as Christians selected material to be used in preaching, teaching, and worship.[17]As the Gospel of John says, not everything he was aware of went into the composition of his Gospel (20:30). Again, the words of New Testament scholar Craig Koester are pertinent here.

> The books of the New Testament take readers on a journey through the ministry of Jesus and the formation of the early church. The texts capture the exuberance of the crowds who awaited Jesus' healing touch and the horror of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. They depict the astonishment of the disciples who witnessed the resurrection and provide glimpses into the joys and challenges confronting the community of faith. Through stories, songs, and letters, the New Testament bears witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ and helps

[15] Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible*, 61–63; Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 115–16; Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 59-72.

[16] Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 67–71.

[17] Brevard Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 16–33, esp. 21.

> Christians of every time and place understand what it means to be Jesus' disciples.[18]

Translations of the Bible

The Christian understanding of Scripture and the desire to disseminate it broadly in other languages can be seen as grounded in incarnational theology. For Christians, God has always been active in history, but the pivotal moment of God's work in history is the person and work of Jesus Christ. They confess that the Word of God was incarnated in Jesus. This not only means that God's Word was embodied in a particular human being but also in the culture and language of that person. Yet, from the beginning, Christians have seen the story of God's activity in Jesus as having relevance beyond his time, culture, and language, and the oral and written telling of that story as capable of being embodied in other cultures and languages. Mission scholar Ulrich Fick writes,

> It is impressive to see how much the written message of God shares and expresses the essence of his incarnation in Christ.
>
> We confess that Jesus of Nazareth was true God and true man. In this dual identity he personified the creator in creation, the infinite in a finite being. Jesus could be misunderstood and misinterpreted like any other human being, because he was fully human, and at the same time people encountered in him the fullness of God which is beyond explanation.
>
> The Scripture which speaks of Christ can be described in exactly the same terms. "The Word became flesh" is the theme of any version of the Bible, not merely in the sense that God condescends to allow us to describe him in anthropomorphisms (what other way do we have to describe a person, even if this person is beyond our ability to describe?), but in the much deeper sense that he enters our thought patterns and speech forms so that we can hear him in our words. . . .
>
> The vulnerability of God in man is continued in the vulnerability of the Scriptures. The Bible can be misunderstood as much as Christ could. The Bible can be misused in a variety

[18] Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible*, 53.

> of ways, just as there are attempts galore to misuse Christ: magically, selectively, nostalgically, or, worse, supporting of our own ideas and goals.[19]

The fact that the New Testament documents were first written in Greek rather than the Aramaic Jesus and his first disciples spoke shows how quickly the message about him moved beyond its first cultural and linguistic context, as his disciples journeyed beyond the confines of Palestine into the surrounding world. As noted by mission scholar Lamin Sanneh, the Apostle Paul was a key figure in this breakthrough.

> Paul formulated pluralism as the necessary outworking of the religion he believed Jesus preached. That pluralism was rooted for Paul in the Gentile breakthrough, which in turn justified cross-cultural tolerance in Christian mission. One idea in Paul's thought is that God does not absolutize any one culture, whatever the esteem in which God holds culture. The second is that all cultures have cast upon them the breath of God's favor, thus cleansing them of all stigma of inferiority and untouchability.[20]

No doubt, the fact that Paul was a Jew who grew up in a Hellenistic cultural context and was able to think and communicate in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek aided him as he moved across cultural and linguistic frontiers. His work, and that of other known and unknown followers of Jesus in this early period of Christian history, served as an important impetus for the Christian recognition of all cultures and their languages as acceptable in God's eyes, making it possible to speak and write about God's work in other languages. This is a quality of Christianity that led Sanneh to write that "the genius of the religion" is its "ability to adopt each culture as its natural destination and as a necessity of its life."[21]

[19] Ulrich Fick, "The Bible Societies—Fruit and Tool of Mission," *International Review of Mission* 70 (July 1981): 123–24.

[20] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Marynoll, Orbis Books, 1989), 47.

[21] Ibid., 69.

There was an important precedent for rendering the record of God's dealings with humanity into other languages. Prior to the time of Jesus, the Old Testament was translated into Greek in what is known as the Septuagint. The subsequent rendering of the Bible—both Old and New Testaments, in part or in their entirety—into numerous languages through the centuries is rooted in the conviction that God respects and can utilize any culture and its language(s) to convey the story and teachings that it contains.[22]

Even with such rationale for rendering the Bible into the many languages of humankind, some will ask, why have there been multiple translations into the same language? We can point to several factors, which revolve around the twin concerns for accuracy and readability. First, previously unknown Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts continue to be discovered, which sometimes, after careful and reasoned comparison, scholars judge bring us closer to the original text than previously known manuscripts did. Periodic new translations strive to take these discoveries into account. Second, scholars continue to learn more about biblical languages and cultures, which help us to understand better the Bible and the contexts to which its writings were originally addressed. Such factors are then taken into account when trying to render the meanings of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words and phrases into modern-day languages. Third, modern-day languages do not remain static. They change over time, as old words take on new meanings, new words enter into usage, and people look for translations that are more readable in light of the contemporary use of their language(s). Some of these changes may occur over a period of centuries, others happen in a matter of decades or less.[23] Fourth, translations in particular languages, such as English, take into account "different kinds of readers, having different degrees and different kinds of exposure

[22] For a good introduction to the history of the transmission of the Christian message through many languages and cultures and some of the interesting ramifications, see Sanneh, *Translating the Message*.

[23] Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible*, 79–80.

to the Scriptures."[24] There are, for instance, readers who have had little or no exposure to the Bible, others who have been taught that they cannot trust the Bible, and others who may seem to be well acquainted with it but find it confusing.[25]Finally, translators not only take into account the biblical languages in relation to their context but the receptive languages in relation to their contexts, for example, their histories, religions, economy, anthropologies, and physical environments. This then impacts how translators seek to convey the meaning of the original texts in ways that make sense in today's terms.

As Sanneh writes, at the root of the Christian desire through the centuries to translate their scriptures into vernacular languages is the conviction that "in Jesus Christ was to be found the message of salvation, a message that was expected to cohere in the vernacular." Christians have "expected the vernacular to be the congenial locus for the word of God, the eternal *logos*[26] who finds familiar shelter across all cultures, but one also by which and in which all cultures find their authentic, true destiny."[27]

Michael Shelley is the director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. He is also the pastor of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Glenwood, Illinois. From 1979 to 2003 he served in Cairo as the pastor of Heliopolis Community Church (1979–1982), a professor at the Dar Comboni Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies (1991–2003), and the director of graduate studies and professor of church history at ETSC (1998–2003). He has also published numerous articles and book reviews.

[24] Eugene A. Nida, "Bible Translation for the Eighties," *International Review of Mission* 70 (July 1981): 133.

[25] Ibid., 133–35.

[26] A Greek word that can be translated as "word." Perhaps the best known New Testament use of it occurs at the beginning of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God. . . . And the *logos* became flesh and lived among us, . . ." (1:1, 14).

[27] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 205.

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"I Have Left My Heart in Syria": Cornelius Van Dyck and the American Syria Mission

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Cornelius Van Alan Van Dyck (1818-1895) was one of the most prominent American missionaries sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) to their mission in Ottoman Syria in the nineteenth century. In studies on Syria's cultural awakening in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *nahḍa*, Van Dyck, or *al-ḥakīm* (the wise) as he was often called, is well remembered as a polymath, who contributed modern textbooks on different subjects to Syria's new educational institutions. Above all he is known for completing the translation of the Bible into Arabic with its first edition published in 1865. Van Dyck's remarkable achievements often overshadow the fact that he actually began as a missionary doctor in Syria, preaching the Gospel while curing the people's diseases. This article will focus on his first thirty years in Syria, which can be marked as a period of transformation and change in his life. Van Dyck slowly distanced himself from the Syria Mission by embracing more liberal views and discovering his love for science and the Arabic language.

On August 13, 1818, Van Dyck was born in Kinderhook, New York, into a family of Dutch immigrants. He studied medicine at the Jefferson College in Philadelphia and took his first job a as teacher of chemistry in a girl's school when he was eighteen years old.[1] Being a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, Van Dyck was sent by the ABCFM as missionary doctor[2] to Syria and

[1] Henry H. Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 2 vol. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), 1:104–5.

[2] In the beginning of the nineteenth century "American medicine ...was hardly 'scientific'; doctors still bled patients for all manner of ailments so that

reached Beirut on April 1, 1840.[3] Before his departure, he neither received theological training nor any introduction into the Arabic vernacular—circumstances that were to change soon after his arrival in Syria.

The Syria Mission repeatedly asked for more missionaries to be sent to improve its efforts with the Syrian Christians and Muslims. The ABCFM, therefore, requested its two missionary doctors in Syria, Cornelius Van Dyck and Henry De Forest, to pursue additional theological training in order to work as preachers.[4] Van Dyck's father, a country doctor, had wished to see his son in the ministry of the church.[5] Realizing the possibility of having a second chance at fulfilling his father's wishes, Van Dyck began studying theological books. But in 1845 he expressed his doubts to Rufus Anderson, corresponding secretary of the ABCFM, saying that he was uncertain whether he should become a minister: "at present my whole heart is drawn towards the sacred office. But the required qualifications, the responsibilities, the magnitude of work are points which make me hesitate."[6] Van Dyck finally received his ordination on January 14, 1846, in ʿAbeih, southeast of Beirut, where the mission had

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[they] had little edge over the native practitioner": Robert L. Daniel, "American Influences in the Near East Before 1860," *American Quarterly* 16/1 (Spring), 82.

[3] *The Missionary Herald* 36 (1840), in Kamal Salibi and Yusuf K. Khoury (eds.), *The Missionary Herald: Reports from Ottoman Syria 1819–1870* (Beirut: Mediterranean Press, 1995), 3:222.

[4] Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish Steamer, April 23, 1844): archive of the ABCFM in Harvard University, Cambridge, MA) 16.8.1, vol. 8. (16.8.1. and 16.8.2. are microfilm sections, accessible in Lamont Library at the Harvard University, the volume number is often followed by an item number in brackets.) Hereafter the ABCFM archive is abbreviated as ABC.

[5] Rufus Anderson, "Memorandum of Discussions with the Missionaries during my visit to the Levant in 1843–1844": ABC 30.10, vol. 3, 34 (located at Harvard Houghton Library, hereinafter abbreviated as HHL).

[6] Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 30, 1845): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 3.1. (142).

established a school and a church.[7] Only one year later Van Dyck wrote to Anderson that he was suffering from feeble health due to the amount of labour—not uncommon among the missionaries at that time.[8] In addition to his sacred office Van Dyck and his friend Buṭrus al-Bustānī, who was employed as a "native assistant" by the mission, were commissioned to establish the new mission seminary in ʿAbeih in 1846.[9] Van Dyck taught geography and biblical studies, whereas Bustānī taught arithmetic, Arab grammar and defining of words.[10] Except for an Arabic grammar[11] and an introduction to arithmetic[12] the missionaries had no Arabic textbooks for the variety of subjects they offered in the mission schools. Only after establishing the American Mission Press in Beirut (AMP) in 1834 and employing

[7] *The Missionary Herald* 42 (1846), in Salibi and Khoury, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, 3:482. For more information on ʿAbeih see also: *The Missionary Herald* 40 (1844), in: ibid., 388–89; Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:107.

[8] Van Dyck to Anderson (ʿAbeih, October 5, 1847): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 5 (314).

[9] *The Missionary Herald* 43 (1847), in Salibi and Khoury, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, 4:2–4. The former Mission Seminary founded in 1837 in Beirut had to close its doors due to the enticement of students by local and foreign merchants and diplomats: William M. Thomson, "The Committee in the results of the Seminary submit[s] the following report" (April 6, 1844): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 1 (23).

[10] Van Dyck to Anderson (ʿAbeih, November 9, 1846): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 5 (315).

[11] The grammar was written by the famous poet and scholar Nāṣif al-Yāzijī (*Kitāb faṣl al-ḫiṭāb fī uṣūl luġāt al-aʿrāb*). It was the first secular book published by the American Mission Press in 1836: Dagmar Glaß and Geoffrey Roper, "Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World, Part I: The Printing of Arabic Books in the Arab World," in *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross-Cultural Encounter*, ed. Eva Hanebutt-Benz and others (Mainz: WVA-Verlag Skulima, 2002), 190–91.

[12] *Kitāb dalīl al-ṣawāb fī uṣūl al-ḥisāb* was a small book written by the native helper Rizq Allah al-Barbārī. It was printed by the American Mission Press in 1837 and used in the Beirut Mission Seminary: Smith, "Report of Works Printed at the Missionary Press in Beirut" (1844): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 1 (28).

competent Syrian helpers were the Americans able to start printing new school material.

Within a few years Van Dyck had acquired such Arabic fluency that he was able to write textbooks on geography, algebra, geometry, logarithm, trigonometry, and natural philosophy for the ʿAbeih seminary.[13] He and Bustānī would sit together for nights on end creating suitable material for their classes.[14] It was a long process, which required a lot of additional studies of the two men "to ensure the necessary accuracy in thus composing text books for [the] future".[15]

In 1851 the ABCFM assigned a new task to Van Dyck. After his colleague Simeon Calhoun was installed as head of the ʿAbeih seminary, Van Dyck, William M. Thomson,[16] and the native preacher John Wortabet were sent to Sidon to establish a new mission station and a native church in Ḥāṣbeiyā, seventy kilometers from Sidon. Van Dyck enjoyed his "pleasant residence" and the "interesting field" in Sidon, but after six successful years as a minister and physician he had to move back to Beirut.[17] Eli Smith, head of the AMP and mission library, had since 1848 been translating the Bible into Arabic with his assistants, Buṭrus al-Bustānī and Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī. When he died in 1857, the project was unfinished. In 1851 the mission had already

[13] Most of these books were compositions of modern American or European and classical Arabic literature. The missionary Henry Harris Jessup later wrote about Van Dyck's book on geography (*Kitāb al-mirʾāt al-waḍīya fī l-kurat al-arḍīya*, first edition in 1852): "His geography of Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, is a thesaurus of graphic description, and full of apt quotations in poetry and prose from the old Arab geographers and travellers. The people delight in it and quote it with admiration. I found it to be one of the best possible reading books in acquiring a knowledge of the Arabic vocabulary." Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:107.

[14] Jūrjī Zaydān, *Tarāğim mašāhīr aš-šarq fī l-qarn at-tāsiʿ ašar, al-juzʾ aṯ-ṯānī 2: Fī riğāl al-ʿilm wa l-adab wa l-šiʿir* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa al-Ḥilāl, 1903), 30.

[15] Van Dyck to Anderson (ʿAbeih, November 9, 1846): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 5 (315).

[16] Thomson was also Van Dyck's father in law: Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, 1:107.

[17] Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 31, 1857): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 5 (344).

considered the possibility of Van Dyck assisting in the translation of poetical parts of the Bible because of his great competency in the Arabic language.[18] After Smith's death it was beyond question that Van Dyck was the only member of the mission able to finish the translation. But he was not at all eager to leave Sidon "for the whirl of the multitude, the case hardened and the dusty roads and lanes of Beirut."[19] As a center of culture and trade, Beirut eventually offered plenty of opportunities for Van Dyck to become more than a missionary doctor.

First, he became the new head of the AMP, which the ABCFM had actually wanted to close since 1844. Rufus Anderson constantly demanded that the printing work should be kept "subservient to the pulpit" and that more efforts should be spent on preaching.[20] Like his predecessor Smith, Van Dyck now had to fight for the AMP's continuance, arguing that the new Arabic Bible had to be printed in Beirut to serve the final goal of the mission.[21] Van Dyck was not hesitant to admit that the press was the "only point where [the] Mission stands ahead of all other missions in the great field."[22] This was obviously a subtle critique of the mission's small success in the areas of preaching and converting. The budget of the AMP was constantly reduced, leaving the financial burden on European and American Bible societies.[23] Van Dyck did not agree with the policy that did not allow the AMP to spend earnings from its book sales on new publications or reprints. In a letter to Rufus Anderson, he argued

[18] Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 8 (4).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872), 1:263.

[21] Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, June 14, 1862): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (498).

[22] Ibid.

[23] Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., vol. 7.2. (515): "The Board has given us the pittance of $1000 perhaps sometimes much less . . . we have never had enough to keep alive anything more than a miserable one."

contentiously that none would have noticed if the AMP spent its income for urgently needed books. He therefore asked:

> [W]ill the P[rudential] C[ommittee] give the permission asked and allow us to print one Hymn Book with clear consciences; or shall we have to do it without such permission and guilt our consciences as we best can?[24]

Van Dyck pointed to the inevitable interconnectedness between the evangelistic and educational work of the mission, which depended on the printing of religious tracts and textbooks.

In 1865 he traveled to the U.S. in order to superintend the electrotyping of the recently finished Arabic Bible.[25] He resided in New York for two years and spent his time well by teaching Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary and using this salary to obtain additional training in ophthalmology[26] and a doctoral degree in theology at Rutgers College in New Jersey.[27] Van Dyck was eventually offered a chair at Union, but after a two-year absence from Syria, he replied: "I have left my heart in Syria and thither I must return.''[28] His missionary colleagues felt relieved, for they had feared Van Dyck would accept a new position in New York. Due to its weak condition, the Syria Mission heavily relied on Van Dyck and his manifold skills.[29]

After his return to Syria in 1867 Van Dyck discovered that the female boarding school, run by the Syrian Protestant Miḫāʾīl

[24] Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, August 30, 1864): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (501).

[25] Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:77.

[26] Lutfi M. Saʾdi, "Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck (1818-1895)", *ISIS* 27 (May 1937), 29. In the early 1860s Van Dyck observed a high rate of eye diseases in Syria. He later wrote an unpublished treatise named *Amrāḍ al-ʿayn*.

[27] *Catalogue of the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, 1836–1936* (New York, 1937). In 1890 he also obtained the degree L.H.D. from the Rutgers College and the degree of LL.D. from the University of Edinburgh in 1892: ibid.

[28] Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:108.

[29] Clark to Van Dyck (Boston, August 15, 1866): ABC 2.1.1, vol. 31 (HHL).

ʿAramān,[30] had severe financial problems. Hence, the ABCFM wanted to transform it into an American boarding school with an American staff. But Van Dyck opposed an "Americanization" of the Syrian institution: "I call it a failure, and I'd rather shut it up or give the building to the Syrian Protestant College than to try to make an Americanized female boarding school of it."[31] He pointed to the ABCFM's original aim to encourage indigenous Protestant institutions to become self-supporting.[32] Van Dyck's position on the matter was clear: He wanted the ABCFM to withdraw slowly from the mission field in Syria, in order to clear the way for an independent Syrian Protestant community. The ABCFM finally agreed to support the institution's independence by organizing different funds. The female boarding school eventually became American after it had come under the auspices of the Presbyterian Women's Board of Missions.[33]

The aforementioned Syrian Protestant College (SPC), an American institution of higher education, was established under an independent Board of Managers in 1866. While still residing in New York, Van Dyck accepted the chair as medical professor and established the medical department with his former missionary colleague John Wortabet, a Syrian Protestant. When Van Dyck had to justify his new position before the ABCFM, he mentioned the low salaries of the missionaries of the Syria

[30] ʿAramān replaced Bustānī in the Mission Seminary in ʿAbeih after 1850: *The Missionary Herald* 46 (1850), in Salibi and Khoury, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, 4:112.

[31] Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 15, 1868): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (515).

[32] Since the 1840s Rufus Anderson propagated the "three-self-program", which stood for a "self-governing", "self-supporting" and "self-propagating" indigenous Protestant community: Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1869), cited in R. Pierce Beaver (ed.), *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1967), 97.

[33] Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:225–26. The female seminary later became the American School for Girls, now known as the Lebanese American University: Daniel Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus: Written to His Wife Abby and Their Four Children During Their Visit to Amherst, Massachusetts, 1873–1874* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1993), 237 (no. 16).

Mission, which compelled them to take additional jobs.[34] Even though he requested to receive a lower salary from the college than his colleagues, the ABCFM criticized Van Dyck's additional job at the SPC. Van Dyck replied that he would work more for the college if the ABCFM would be willing to reduce his salary, small as it was.[35]

In 1870 the Syria Mission was transferred to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions because the ABCFM could no longer maintain all of its mission enterprises due to budgetary constraints. In spite of his discord with the ABCFM, Van Dyck wrote in a farewell letter to his former employer:

> When requested a year or more since, to leave the mission and devote myself to work in the Syrian Protestant College, I replied: "No! I have served the Board thirty years, and the connection has been one in which I have enjoyed great happiness in my work, and I hope to die in its service."[36]

Several farewell letters were printed in the sixty-sixth volume of the *Missionary Herald*, the periodical of the ABCFM. Interestingly the *Missionary Herald* omitted a phrase from Van Dyck's letter. It quoted "Now the tie is severed!..." [37] but did not add "and the question of remaining in connection with the Mission is an open one."[38]

In 1870 Daniel Bliss, president of the SPC, announced in his annual report that Van Dyck would now be able to obtain a full professorship.[39] Van Dyck resigned from his position at the AMP

[34] Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, 24 February 1869): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (519).

[35] Ibid.

[36] Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, August 31, 1870): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (520).

[37] *The Missionary Herald* 66 (1870), in Salibi and Khoury, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, 5:254.

[38] Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, 31 August 1870): ABC 16.8.1, vol. 7.2 (520).

[39] Bliss to the Board of Managers (Beirut, June 24, 1870): ABC 16.8.2, vol. 2, 14.

in the early 1870s[40] but still remained in connection with the Syria Mission, preaching from time to time in the mission church.

In the meantime Van Dyck's popularity as a scholar and author in Ottoman Syria had developed independently from the missionary circle. On his fiftieth anniversary of residence in Syria the American missionaries were but one of many congratulants from different religious denominations and institutions. On November 13, 1895, the "Nestor, the veteran of fifty-five years," Cornelius Van Dyck died of typhoid. The American missionary Henry Harris Jessup later wrote: "The whole city felt his death as a personal bereavement, and his funeral was attended by men of all sects and nationalities."[41] *Al-ḥakīm* Van Dyck, who "left his heart in Syria," achieved more than his former missionary colleagues and became widely regarded amongst the Syrians as one of them.[42]

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[40] Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, *Centennial of the American Press, 1822–1922* (Beirut: American Press 1923), 39.

[41] Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 2:613. Until today Van Dyck's grave can be visited at the Anglo-American cemetery in Beirut.

[42] Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 1:107.

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The Greek Texts of Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck

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Eli Smith, the progenitor of what would eventually become known as the Van Dyck translation, began the task of translating the Bible into Arabic in 1848. By the time of his death in 1857 he had completed his translation of the New Testament and overseen the printing of the first sixteen chapters of the Gospel of Matthew.[1] The subsequent fate of Smith's translation is recorded by Henry Jessup:

> At the next annual meeting of the mission after Dr. Smith's death (April 3, 1857), a committee was appointed to examine and report on the state of the translation of the Scriptures as left by Dr. Smith. […] It was found that in the translation of the New Testament, the Greek text followed had been that of [Augustus] Hahn, but in the first thirteen chapters of Matthew, there are some variations from that text according to the text of [Samuel Prideaux] Tregelles and others. . . .
>
> The mission then appointed Dr. [Cornelius] Van Dyck to the work. . . . As the American Bible Society required a strict adherence to the Textus Receptus of Hahn's Greek Testament, Dr. Van Dyck revised every verse in the New Testament, taking up the work as if new. The basis left by Dr. Smith was found invaluable, and but for it the work would have been protracted very much beyond what it really was.[2]

[1] In his last progress report, from April 1, 1856, Smith reported the printing of the first part of Matthew. Translation of the whole New Testament had been completed by the time of Smith's report of April 3, 1855. See Henry Jessup, *Fifty-three Years in Syria* (New York: Revell, 1910), 1:66–76.

[2] Jessup's source is a report on the history of the translation that Van Dyck wrote in 1885 at the request of Rev. James S. Dennis, a member and librarian of the Syria Mission in Beirut. In the report, Van Dyck cites and comments on

The purpose of this short essay is to review the work of Smith and Van Dyck in terms of the progress of New Testament textual criticism during the nineteenth century. By placing the decision to insist on fidelity to the Textus Receptus in its historical context, I hope to show that the Smith-Van Dyck translation was conceived and brought to fruition in a time when textual criticism, though not new, was still developing and had not yet won widespread acceptance. Advances since the mid-nineteenth century in the availability of ancient manuscripts, the techniques of textual criticism, and the quality of the critical texts available have brought with them greater acceptance of the use of textual criticism and the departure from the Textus Receptus or majority text.

The Textus Receptus

The term Textus Receptus originates from a "small and convenient" edition of the Greek New Testament first published at Leiden in 1624 by the Elzevir brothers, Bonaventure and Abraham. In the second edition of this text, published in 1633, the Elzevir brothers asserted: *textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus* ("[the reader] has the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted").[3] As a result of this bit of publicity, the term Textus Receptus ("received text") came into popular use as a term for the type of Greek New Testament text that was most widely disseminated at that time.

Although the Elzevirs derived their text for the most part from an edition published by Theodore Beza in 1565, this text can ultimately be traced back to the work of Desiderius Erasmus, the Dutch humanist who famously debated Martin Luther over the question of free will. Although Beza had access to the ancient

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minutes from the general meetings of the Syria Mission. Jessup quotes the report at length, but in summary form rather than verbatim (*Fifty-three Years in Syria*, 1:66–76).

[3] Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 105–6.

texts found in Codex Bezae and Codex Claromontanus, he did not make much use of them because of the extent to which they diverged from the generally accepted text of his time.[4] Instead, Beza's text largely resembled the fourth edition (1551) of the text published by the Parisian printer and publisher Robert Estienne, also known as Stephanus. Stephanus, starting with his third edition, had begun to favor the text produced by Erasmus for the publisher Johann Froben, first published in 1516. This near exclusive fidelity to Erasmus' text (as found in its fourth and fifth editions) required almost three hundred changes in the editions Stephanus had published in 1546 and 1549.[5]

Erasmus prepared his text on the basis of incomplete and inferior manuscripts. The extent of variation among New Testament manuscripts was not fully appreciated in the early sixteenth century, and Erasmus imagined he could find manuscripts at Basle to send directly to the printer as copy for typesetting. Instead, he found manuscripts riddled with errors that required correction.[6] Erasmus could not find a manuscript with the entire New Testament. He used one for the gospels and another for the Acts and Epistles. Both manuscripts date from no earlier than the twelfth century.[7] These he compared with several other manuscripts in order to spot errors. Erasmus translated the Latin Vulgate into Greek to help him with these difficulties, and thus, as Bruce Metzger puts it, "here and there in Erasmus' self-

[4] Metzger, *Text*, 105.

[5] Marvin R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 57.

[6] Metzger, *Text*, 98–99. A photo of a page of one of the manuscripts used by Erasmus (MS. 2), with Erasmus' clarifications and corrections for the printer written on it, can be seen in plate XV. See also C. C. Tarelli, "Erasmus' Manuscripts of the Gospels," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1943): 155–62.

[7] The Gospels manuscript may date from as late as the fifteenth century, a mere century before Erasmus' own time. See Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 52. For Revelation, Erasmus had only one manuscript (also twelfth century), which lacked the final leaf containing the last six verses and had commentary in Greek that was "so mixed up [with the text] as to be almost indistinguishable" (Metzger, *Text*, 99).

made Greek text are readings which have never been found in any known Greek manuscript—but which are still perpetuated today in printings of the so-called Textus Receptus of the Greek New Testament."[8] Erasmus' level of confidence in his own text can be appraised from the fact that for his fourth edition (1527) he made corrections based on the Greek text printed in the Complutensian Polyglot, which had been published in 1522 soon after Erasmus' third edition left the press.[9]

Although the Elzevirs claimed to give "nothing changed or corrupted," they did not simply reprint any of Erasmus' (or Stephanus') editions but used Beza's, with influence from Erasmus, the Complutensian Polyglot, and even the Vulgate. As a result, their text contained nearly three hundred differences from Stephanus' third (1550) edition, considered the standard for the Textus Receptus in England.[10]

Such figures, however, do not tell the whole story. The chief problem with the Textus Receptus was not that it claimed an immaculate status for a text that in fact was in some degree arbitrary. The chief problem was that it reflected a type of text, sometimes called the "majority text," that many scholars today consider to reflect later developments in the transmission of the New Testament text rather than the original readings of the New Testament books.[11] Although most extant New Testament manuscripts carry this type of text (thus the term "majority text"), this is because most of the New Testament manuscripts that have

[8] Metzger, *Text*, 99–100. A famous case of such interpolation is the so-called *Comma Johanneum* in 1 John 5:7–8 (marked with italics): "For there are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (KJV). Erasmus did not include it in his first edition because he could find it in none of the Greek manuscripts he consulted. However, he was obliged to include the words in his third edition after a manuscript containing the words was produced, though he suspected that the manuscript had been manufactured for the purpose.

[9] Metzger, *Text*, 102.

[10] Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 60–61.

[11] Kurt Aland, "The Text of the Church?" *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 131.

survived into the modern era were copied during the Byzantine period and later, when this particular text had become the standard. The earliest surviving manuscripts, however, do not bear witness to this type of text.[12] Just as the nineteenth century saw the flourishing of New Testament textual criticism, it also saw the growth of the available early manuscript evidence. The more this sort of early manuscript evidence was uncovered without a trace of the majority text type, the less likely it began to seem that this text really represented the original readings of the books.

Eli Smith's Text

What Greek text or texts did Smith use as a basis of translation? In 1854 Smith detailed the state of his library in a report to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The report, however, is focused on the resources used in translating the Old Testament. It does not provide much information on the resources Smith had at his disposal for the New Testament work, textual or otherwise. Thus we turn to a report made by Van Dyck in 1883, related by Isaac H. Hall:

> Dr. Smith adopted no known text of the Greek, but selected from [Constantin von] Tischendorf, [Karl] Lachmann, [Samuel Prideaux] Tregelles, and [Henry] Alford, as he thought fit. He had gone on far with the New Testament when Alford was published; and he stopped until he could go back and compare what he had done with Alford.[13]

This report is problematic, as it seems to represent historical hindsight rather than the texts Smith might actually have had at

[12] See Aland, "Text," 139-143, and Daniel B. Wallace, "The Majority Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the* Status Quaestionis, ed. Bart Ehrman and Michael Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 297–320.

[13] Isaac H. Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius V. A. Van Dyck," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 11 (1885): 279 (originally presented to the Society Oct. 25, 1883), quoting "an account written by Dr. Van Dyck himself and kindly transmitted to me in May, 1883" (276).

his disposal. In particular, although Tregelles published *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* in 1854, the year of Smith's report to the board quoted above, this was merely a survey of previously printed editions of the New Testament and an explanation of his own critical principles. Tregelles did not begin to publish his own text until 1857, the year of Smith's death (he released the text in six parts between 1857 and 1872). Indeed, according to Margaret Leavy, Smith left Beirut in the winter of 1855–56 and was never able to resume his work after that.[14] Smith could not have used Tregelles in his work.

The work of Karl Lachmann, on the other hand, would have been available. Lachmann's first edition was published in 1831 and marked the first time in the modern era that a text had been published based solely on the ancient manuscript evidence, without reference to previously printed editions. Thus the Textus Receptus was completely ignored, to the extent that Lachmann did not even indicate where and how his text diverged from it, though he supplied variant readings from other sources in the margin.[15] Lachmann's stated purpose was to reconstruct the form of the text widely used in the fourth century—he was less sanguine about the possibility of going beyond that. Thus he gave priority to the readings found in the most ancient manuscripts (the uncials) rather than to the readings found in the majority of manuscripts.[16]

It is intriguing to consider that Smith may have used Lachmann's first edition rather than the second, larger edition that began to appear in 1842 (its second volume was not

[14] Margaret Leavy, *Eli Smith and the Arabic Bible*, Yale Divinity School Library Occasional Publication 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale Divinity School Library, 1993), 19, http://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/OccPub4.pdf.

[15] Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 110–11. The first (1831) edition did print Lachmann's departures from the 1624 Elzevir edition in the back—see A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1925), 30.

[16] F. G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3rd ed. rev. and aug. by A. W. Adams (London: Duckworth, 1975), 178.

published until 1950). In the earlier edition Lachmann gave preference to what he called "Oriental" sources such as Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus—the type of text used by the Alexandrian theologian and exegete Origen—as opposed to those he called "Occidental," representing the type of text used in the West from Irenaeus onward. In Lachmann's larger second edition he gave the Western authorities more weight, though the resulting text did not differ greatly from the earlier edition.[17]

As for Constantin von Tischendorf, the famous discoverer of Codex Sinaiticus published eight editions of the Greek New Testament between 1841 and 1872. Smith could feasibly have used one of the early editions. However, only the later editions reflected the evidence of Sinaiticus, which Tischendorf did not discover until 1844 (he only became aware of the existence of the New Testament section of it in 1859). In 1867 Tischendorf became the first to publish the text of Codex Vaticanus.[18] The great age of these two manuscripts, which date from the fourth century AD, and their tendency to agree with each other against the majority text, provided a major impetus for the rejection of the Textus Receptus as representative of a later text type, leading to the publication of a revision of the English Authorized Version and a new Greek text by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, both in 1881 (the former is not based directly on the latter, but reflects it to a great extent).

It is not unrealistic to think that Smith acquired and used the texts published by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Hall writes of Smith's penchant for scholarship:

> But for the collecting of such books as were necessary in order even moderately to furnish the Bible translator, it is the universal testimony that the work was planned and executed by

[17] Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 110–11.

[18] Though it had arrived in the Vatican library by 1481 at the latest, for centuries scholars were granted only limited access to it. Collations were made in 1669, 1720, and 1780, and Tischendorf himself was able to make his own collation in 1866, on the basis of which he published his edition in 1867. It was then formally published in 1868 (though only the New Testament section; the Old Testament did not appear until 1881).

> Dr. Smith—except so far as continued after his death. I do not refer to the Arabic books, for in that respect Dr. Van Dyck's gatherings were much superior; but to the critical and linguistic apparatus, such as are needed and appreciated in the better libraries of Europe and America, but are scarcely valued, or even understood, by the average missionary or clergyman at home. Such a collection, and yet quite moderate in extent, was brought together chiefly by the influence and efforts of Dr. Smith; though how he justified it as a necessity to those who could not see the use of such costly tools of trade, is one of the questions which had better remain unasked.[19]

Smith's interest in acquiring and employing the edition of Henry Alford as soon as it was published reinforces this impression of his habits.

Van Dyck lays great emphasis in his report on Smith's use of the work of Alford, who was Dean of Canterbury and the author of an influential commentary on the New Testament.[20] The time of publication of Alford's Greek testament fits Van Dyck's recollection: the first volume was published in 1849, so Smith would have had ample time to acquire and make use of at least part of Alford's work (the fourth volume was not published until 1861). However, it was not until the fifth edition that Alford rewrote the text and list of variant readings in response to the work of Tischendorf and Tregelles.[21] In the earlier editions, on the other hand, he was influenced to a greater degree by the Textus Receptus.[22] Thus, had Smith indeed been using the texts of Lachmann and Tischendorf, any revision of earlier work that Smith would have done on the basis of Alford would likely have led him back in the direction of the Textus Receptus. It may be that one should understand Van Dyck's phrase "compar[ing] what he had done with Alford" to mean that Smith checked to see

[19] Hall, "Arabic Bible," 284.

[20] Metzger, *Text*, 128.

[21] Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 138. According to Robertson it was the 6th edition (*Introduction*, 35).

[22] Robertson, *Introduction*, 35.

if Alford had dared to make the same departures from the Textus Receptus that he had.

Van Dyck's Text

Curiously, Van Dyck's report of 1885 claims that the committee tasked with reporting on the state of the translation project following Smith's death found that except for the first thirteen chapters of Matthew, where "there are some variations from that text according to the text of Tregelles and others," Smith had followed the Greek text that Van Dyck reported to be the standard for the American Bible Society, that of Augustus Hahn.[23] First published in 1840, Hahn's text reproduced the Textus Receptus, though it did provide alternate readings from scholars such as Johann Griesbach and Karl Lachmann.[24] Despite this, Van Dyck (as summarized by Jessup) reported that he had to revise "every verse in the New Testament, taking up the work as if new," though using Smith's earlier translation as a basis accelerated the work considerably.

However, according to Isaac Hall, Van Dyck did not use Hahn's text for this task, but a reprint of a much older work:

> Here I may say that Dr. Van Dyck informed me orally that the particular variety of the Textus Receptus which he used, by direction, was that of [John] Mill: I think, in some of its English reprints. (Of course the professed reprints vary very much. The Oxford edition of 1836, with its repetitions, is almost the only one that is accurate—correcting Mill's misprints.)[25]

[23] Jessup, *Fifty-three Years in Syria*: "The American Bible Society required a strict adherence to the Textus Receptus of Hahn's Greek Testament" (see the quotation at the beginning of this article). "The first thirteen chapters of Matthew" coincides to a significant extent with the portion of Matthew (sixteen chapters) that had already been printed by the time of Smith's last progress report of 1856.

[24] Vincent, *Textual Criticism*, 115. Vincent also mentions Tischendorf in this connection, but his first text was not published until 1841, too late for Hahn's first edition. A second edition of Hahn was published in 1861.

[25] Hall, "Arabic Bible," 282–83.

A fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, John Mill's "epoch-making" edition of the Greek New Testament was published in the year of his death, 1707.[26] Mill did not deviate from the standard text (as found in Stephanus' 1550 edition) but did include a thorough (for the time) digest of variant readings that he had collected over a period of thirty years from manuscripts, early versions and patristic sources.[27] Thus Mill was likely a source for at least some, and possibly many or all, of the variant readings that Van Dyck eventually was permitted to publish along with his translation.

If it is true that Van Dyck used Mill's edition "by direction" (presumably by direction from the American Bible Society, the organization that had insisted on fidelity to the Textus Receptus), then there is some irony here. Despite his loyalty to the Textus Receptus in his printed text, in his own day Mill had been the subject of criticism from those concerned with the integrity of the New Testament text. His willingness to print approximately thirty thousand variant readings alongside the main text was seen as undermining confidence in the standard text.[28] For the more evidence of alternative readings came to light, the more tempting it became for scholars to think of revising Erasmus' text in light of them.

Conclusion

The preceding account should make clear two things. First, Eli Smith began his translation at a time when pioneering work in New Testament textual criticism was being done. Even the earliest works of text criticism that Smith is alleged to have used

[26] The assessment belongs to Metzger (*Text*, 107). Similarly, Kenyon writes that Mill's edition "remained for a long time the foundation of all subsequent textual study" (*Text*, 175), and Vincent judges that Mill's edition "marks the foundation of textual criticism" (*Textual Criticism*, 67).

[27] Metzger, *Text*, 107–8. Though Metzger states that Mill reproduced Stephanus' text "without intentional variation" (108), Vincent notes that his text did in fact stray from its exemplar in a few places (68).

[28] Metzger, *Text*, 108, citing by way of example Daniel Whitby, *Examen variantium lectionum J. Millii* (London, 1706).

did not start to appear until the 1830s, less than twenty years before Smith began his assignment. The majority would have been only recently published, or in the process of coming out, at the time Smith was working in the 1850s. Second, the latter half of the nineteenth century, which saw the publication of the codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, was a significant period for New Testament textual criticism and the production of a more accurate Greek text of the New Testament. Wider knowledge of these two codices, with their numerous readings in agreement against the Textus Receptus, did much to undermine its primacy.

In 1886, about the time Van Dyck was recalling Smith's work, Benjamin Warfield wrote the following assessment of the progress of textual criticism up to his time:

> Already in Mill's day (1707) as many as 30,000 various readings had been collected; and from [Richard] Bentley and [John Jakob] Wetstein to Tischendorf, Tregelles, and [Frederick Henry Ambrose] Scrivener, the work has been prosecuted without intermission, until it has now reached relative completeness, and the time is ripe for the extimation [sic] of the great mass of evidence that has been gathered…. The scholar of to-day, while beckoned on by the example of the great collators of the past to continue the work of gathering material as strength and opportunity may allow, yet enters into a great inheritance of work already done, and is able to undertake the work of textual criticism itself as distinguished from the collecting of material for that work.[29]

From Warfield's vantage point in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a great deal of the task of collecting variants had already been done, but the task of adequately assessing their import for the New Testament text had only just begun. The publication of Westcott and Hort's Greek text in 1881—and a

[29] Benjamin Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), 21–22; I consulted the 7th edition (1907). Warfield mentions Tregelles and Tischendorf as the two editions to choose between, perhaps giving some indication of why Van Dyck mentioned them alongside Lachmann and Alford as sources of Smith's variant readings.

revised version of the King James Bible largely based on it—represented a large step in this direction in the English-speaking world.[30]

The translation and publication of the Van Dyck Bible occurred at a point when modern textual criticism was still taking shape, when important evidence for the ancient form of the text was still coming to light, and when editions of the Greek text that were wholly independent of the Textus Receptus were just beginning to be printed. In attempting to make use of some of this textual evidence in his Arabic translation, Eli Smith was indeed ahead of his time. In rejecting any departure from the traditional text, the Van Dyck translation that finally emerged was a product of its time.

Postscript

As for the fate of Smith's work, Hall writes:

> From various sources I have learned that the New Testament translation of Dr. Eli Smith was actually not used by Dr. Van Dyck: principally, I understand, because its following an eclectic text would make it at least a little confusing to one who was under orders to follow the Greek Textus Receptus. But I also heard, and am inclined to believe, that the manuscript was burned (I never could learn by whom), and that the few printed sheets or proofs were destroyed. At all events, Dr. Smith's translation of the New Testament was not adopted (or, we may say, it was rejected) by the Bible Society, on account of its underlying text; and I could find no trace of the manuscript copy in Beirut. Nothing would be more natural, in view of the ideas that then prevailed respecting the New Testament text, than for some one to destroy it in holy horror, or as a well-intended but misguided work; for Dr. Smith was much ahead of his times, though apparently not a New Testament critic. I am inclined to think, on the whole, that it was destroyed as if

[30] For an assessment of the importance of Westcott and Hort, see Frank Pack, "One Hundred Years Since Westcott and Hort: 1881–1981," *Restoration Quarterly* 26 (1983), 65–79.

> useless, with tacit acquiescence of all concerned, as one would destroy a first draught after a fair copy was produced.[31]

But in its republication in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* the following tantalizing subscript is attached to Hall's report:

> Since the above article was printed, a note has been received from the author, as follows:
>
> The report that the manuscript translation of Dr. Smith was destroyed, and not used by Dr. Van Dyck, is now contradicted, and seems likely to be proved untrue; and an early opportunity will be taken to publish the matter correctly, as soon as a complete statement on that point arrives from Dr. Van Dyck. It is the belief of those in charge of the mission archives that all Dr. Smith's manuscripts, of all the work he did, are preserved in tin boxes in the library of the mission. The present aspect of the matter is that the story of the destruction of his manuscript translation of the New Testament rests upon the fact that all that was printed of the New Testament under his direction, viz. Mathew i. to end of xvi., was destroyed, for the reason that it did not follow the Textus Receptus. It may be added that some valuable additional reports on the subject of the Arabic Bible by Dr. Smith have recently come to my knowledge, which throw light on the subject, and deserve to be printed in full.[32]

This writer is not aware of any subsequent publication of additional details.

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[31] Hall, "Arabic Bible," 282.
[32] Hall, "Arabic Bible," 286.

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Contemporary Issues and Challenges in the Translation of an Arabic Bible

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There are many contemporary challenges and issues in the field of biblical translation that need more than a single article to discuss adequately. Some of these are general challenges that are associated with the translation of the biblical text in any language, for example: choosing the level of vocabulary; deciding on shifting word meanings; negotiating semantics (that is, understanding words in their context), which often causes scholars to swing between consistency and the variant meanings of the words; and deciding on syntactical equivalents in a target language. Also, scholars must choose the type of translation they want, whether a literary or abstract translation, or something else.

In this article, I will focus on three main challenges that are related to the translation of the Bible into Arabic: (1) the challenges of choosing the text; (2) the challenges of choosing the language; and (3) the challenges of choosing the goals and strategies of the translation.

Choosing the Text

What is meant by choosing the text? Aren't we talking about translating the Bible? Yes, but with regard to the Old Testament, we might choose between the Masoretic text and the Greek translation known as the Septuagint. Scholars, however, are agreed that translating the Masoretic text is really the only option as the Septuagint is an ancient translation.[1]

[1] Though the Old Testament that we have is a translation of the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint still has an important role to play in helping us to understand the Hebrew Text. This is so not only because it was based on older

With regard to the New Testament, we must choose between two main texts. The first is the Textus Receptus, and the second is the Critical Text. Without elaborating on the differences between the two texts or discussing textual criticism, it is clear that the Critical Text should be used for any modern Arabic translation.

Some people think that hiding the Critical Text from laypeople is the best approach because it would be confusing for them to change the language of well-known biblical passages. In addition, they believe that this would raise questions about the authenticity of the Bible among Non-Christians. Today, however, it has become impossible to hide controversial passages and wordings because they are widely available. If the church attempts to deny or hide the problem instead of simply confessing and facing textual difficulties, it will raise more problems than it solves.

Those who would attack Christianity can readily locate well-known Christological verses (Mat. 18:11, 24:36; Luke 23:24; John 6:69; Acts 2:30; Heb. 2:7; 1 John 5:7,8) and compare the versions of these verses they find in the Textus Receptus to those in the Critical Text. When they find differences, they can then fill the internet with non-scholarly attacks that, for the uninitiated or unsophisticated, will seem to undermine the faith. Therefore, we should not hide such differences. Moreover, this is really a minor problem in that the discrepancies between the texts do not affect any core doctrine of the Christian faith. In the case of the Christological verses, they simply reflect early and later expressions of the church's theology of Christ.

The Arabic translation popularly known as the Van Dyck Bible depends on the Textus Receptus while other modern Arabic translations depend on the Critical Text. The latter include the Good News Arabic Bible, the Simplified Arabic Translation, and the Jesuit translation. Where these newer Bible translations differ from the older translations, they may be confusing to the typical

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manuscripts than the Masoretic Text but because it was the source of almost all the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. In spite of its importance, we have yet to see a real attempt to translate it into Arabic.

Arabic reader. Sometimes, to avoid this problem in the case of well-known verses, translators substitute translations from the Textus Receptus or a version of it. For example, there are instances where the Jesuit translation reverts to the Vulgate when the Critical Text might discomfit readers. This of course violates all the translation rules that scholars use to ensure that we have a faithful biblical text.

Because of the felt need among Arabic-speaking Christians for a newer, more colloquial, and more accurate translation of the Bible, the Arabic churches of the Middle East now have an opportunity to produce a Bible translation that is based on the Critical Text. In fact, they might even go beyond the Critical Text to consider other possible texts in the light of how they reflect a later theology. This could positively affect the church, not only in regard to Christology but also in other theological points. (For examples of controversial texts, see the following: Mat. 17:21, 20:16, 22:23; Mark 11:26; John 5:3, 4; Rom. 8:1, 11:6; 1 Cor. 6:20.) As the church enters the new millennium, such research could lead toward a reinvigorated Middle Eastern theology and renewal of the church.

Choosing the Language

Not all Arabophones are Arabs either in ethnicity or culture. Today there are nearly three hundred million native Arabic speakers spread over twenty-seven nations, from Morocco to Oman. We can divide the countries that use Arabic as their official language into five main dialects:

(1) *The Gulf dialect* is widespread in the Arabian Peninsula and southern Iraq. Though the people of this region are mostly Arabs by ethnicity and culture, the more one travels east the more encounters a Persian influence on language.

(2) *The Syrian dialect* includes western Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. This dialect and all its variations reflect the influence of the more ancient Semitic languages, such as Syriac, Aramaic, and Nabataean.

(3) *The Egyptian dialect* reflects the influence of the ancient Egyptian language.

(4) *The Maghreb dialect,* which stretches from the western Egyptian Sahara to Morocco, reflects the influence of the Amazigh language with its different dialects.

(5) *The African dialect* is found in Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Chad, and Somalia. It reflects the influence of Hamitic as well as ancient traditional languages.

Some might think that Modern Standard Arabic could become the *lingua franca* of Arabophones through which Arabic speakers might avoid a diversity of dialects. This is true to an extent. Arabophones call Modern Standard Arabic the "Newspaper language" since it is a correct, modern, and standard form of Arabic. It reflects the standard vocabulary and modern syntax of Arabic speakers with at least a minimum education. Nevertheless, there are a still a number of local differences among those who speak this standard language. Hence, in reading a newspaper in Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia one can see differences in both vocabulary and syntax. Also there is a tendency in modern Arabic literature to mix Standard Arabic with colloquial versions.

Developments in Arabic literature from the Arabic renaissance in the 1930s until now have helped to produce more changes in the language than occurred from the seventh century until the beginning of the twentieth century. Following the pioneers of the Arabic renaissance, the writers of the postcolonial generation continued this trend as did the writers of the last two decades, whose innovations in literature in the areas of subject, genre, and form (syntax and semantics) may have helped—some have argued—to produce the Arab Spring. These rapid and profound changes have presented a large challenge to the church, for there is now a widespread feeling that the church needs to produce a fresh translation of the Bible that reflects the modern era. Those who would undertake this translation should begin by answering the question, which language do we want? Do we want several colloquial Arabic translations, several standard Arabic translations that reflect local dialects, or one translation that reflects a general Middle Eastern language and theology?

The Van Dyck Bible was an attempt to produce a standard Arabic translation for all Arab speakers, but it followed an old Arabic linguistic structure. Moreover, it seemed to local communities to be too general and at the same time too syntactically and semantically odd. Nevertheless, it became well known to many Middle Eastern Christians and, due to its strangeness, helped to create closed Christian communities. The Good News Bible overcame the problem of the old structure but it couldn't avoid the problem of being too general. And the same can be said for the Simplified Arabic translation.

As an example, let's look at the specific case of the Egyptians, who constitute almost one quarter of the Arabophone population. There is no Arabic translation that reflects a pure Egyptian Arabic, and when Arabic translations included Egyptian scholars, they only dimly reflected standard Egyptian Arabic. The standard Arabic in Egypt is simpler syntactically than that of Lebanon and Syria, but it has a wider range of vocabulary due to the influence of the colloquial Egyptian dialect. This was reflected only in the simplified Arabic translation, but the influence is slight. This might be because of disagreements among the translators or simply a reflection of the difficulty inherent in the translation process.

Let's return now to the possibility of producing local colloquial translations of the Bible in Arabic. Though we can divide the local dialects of Arabic into five main groups, there are numerous subdivisions among them that in some cases represent major phonetic, semantic, and syntactic differences. These differences exist not only between cities but even between neighboring villages. Consequently, producing a Bible in colloquial Arabic for a large population is highly problematic. The solution to the problem may lie in selecting the most common dialect in a country, which for Egypt would be the Cairo dialect. However, there are still a number of problems to overcome, including the lack of standard written rules for colloquial Arabic. If for example we consult Wikipedia, we will find that Egyptian Arabic is treated as a separate language, but despite the really great effort of many editors, it is soon apparent

that the standard Arabic vocabulary has merely been replaced by a more colloquial one without any attempt to adjust the syntax.[2] This is simply due to the lack of a standardized colloquial grammar. In addition to these problems, there are a number of basic questions that will have to be answered before a colloquial Arabic translation can be responsibly undertaken. What level of colloquial we are aiming at? How we are going to write it since there are no orthographical rules for colloquial Arabic? Should we use the Arabic alphabet or the Latin alphabet that has been adapted for Arabic use and is now widely used in the social media (internet-based sharing of information)?[3]

Due to all the difficulties noted here and others that could be added, we would be hard pressed at the moment to create a really good colloquial translation of the Bible for Egyptians or the other four major dialect groups. On the other hand, Lebanese Arabic is already largely expressed in the Good News Bible, and Maghreb Arabic is generally reflected in the Sharif Arabic Bible, so perhaps it's time for translators to stop dallying, overcome the obstacles, and produce colloquial translations for all five dialects of Arabic. Egyptians scholars could lead the way by producing an Egyptian Standard Arabic Bible.

Goals and Strategies

Translators of the Bible must take into consideration the cultural context of the people for whom the translation is intended and the appropriate educational level of the intended readers. They must also decide where the translation will fall on the continuum between literalness and dynamic equivalence in translation. Once these goals are set, strategies follow. Translators often begin with creating criteria against which to test the translation as it develops. This will be the work not of one person but a

[2] There is a complete colloquial Maghreb Arabic "darja" translation, but it is inadequate as its considered less a translation than a simplified version.

[3] There have been some attempts in Lebanon to use the Latin alphabet to translate the Bible into Lebanese colloquial Arabic. Also, the Egyptian Bible Society has sidestepped the problems mentioned here by producing an audio version of the Bible in colloquial Egyptian Arabic.

translation team. Unfortunately, in many cases the goals and strategies for achieving them were not always clear in the creation of past Arabic translations.

The Van Dyck translation team had the goal of creating the standard translation for most Middle Eastern Christian communities. In this it largely succeeded. Though other translations appeared at the same time, such as the "Shedyaq" and "Dominican" translations, only the Van Dyck translation was widely used throughout the Middle East and became known as "the King James version of Arabophones." The translations that came afterwards tried to correct or avoid the apparent problems in the Van Dyck. In other words, it became the standard against which others were measured.

More than this, the Van Dyck became for later translators a Meta-Text, a text that operates as a starting point for new translations, a guide that subtly influences the strategies of translators.[4] The Meta-Text of Cornelius Van Dyck was clearly the King James Version, which operated as a template in his mind that affected every aspect of his translation project, from the selection of its general literary level to the most minute decisions of diction and syntax. This is a general tendency in Bible translation and not one unique to the Van Dyck Bible. It is clear, for example, that the Living Book translation used the New International Version as its Meta-Text, the Simplified Arabic Translation used the Easy to Read version, and the Good News Arabic Bible used the Good News Bible. On the other hand, the Jesuit translation did not have an actual Meta-Text, but we can still see other factors that influenced the translation, such as Catholic tradition and the Vulgate Bible. In effect, these functioned as an indirect Meta-Text. Ideally we should produce an Arabic translation that is Meta-Text free, but this would be

[4] The expression Meta-Text was first used by the linguistic scholar Anton Popovič. See Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Study* (Manchester, United Kingdom: St. Jerome Publishing Limited, 1997), s.v. "Meta Text."

very difficult to do even if the translators were to adhere very strictly to previously established goals and strategies.

Some think that a New Revised Van Dyck would be a good solution that would be accepted by most churches. In its day, the Van Dyck Bible represented a triumph of the ecumenical spirit in that it was accepted by most of the Christians in the Middle East. Today, however, producing a revision of the Van Dyck would raise many questions. What is the new translation's translation strategy? Who will accomplish the task? How can we guarantee the integrity of the translation to prevent its being influenced by a Meta-Text or sectarian considerations? Should the Textus Receptus or the Critical Text be used? And even if all these questions could be successfully answered, does the church really need in this twenty-first century a revised Van Dyck Bible?

As old things die, new things are born. We saw the first fruits of a new era begin to appear in the Arab Spring, and we see it still in the shifting balance of power between East and West. We see it also in the current information era, engendered largely by the social media. In this new age facts are relative, and people do not value the news they glean as much for its truthfulness as for its trendiness. People are now able to write what they want and when they want, and above all they want to put their own spin on things—whatever they are. These trends in our post-modern age raise fundamental questions about well-known, well-established translation rules. Is an accurate translation possible? What should the target age of a new translation be? How do we find syntactic and semantic equivalents—and whose equivalents are they? What is the right communication load? What are we to do about Realia—the appearance of the local language of the source in the translation?[5] How do we avoid so mixing the language of the source text with the target text (the translation) that we create a hybrid, what translators call the Third Code?[6] To what extent can a modern translation use contemporary language and syntax without distorting the message? For example, The Message Bible

[5] Ibid., s.v. "Realia."
[6] Ibid., s.v. "Third Code."

prefers "yes, yes, yes" to "Amen."[7] At the surface level it is Realia and Third Code free, but at a deeper level these things are still there. Like the shadows on the wall of Plato's cave, they point to a different reality. After all, "Yes, yes, yes" is inevitably a very thin disguise for "Amen."

In our time the need for a so-called "Thick Translation" has appeared. This is a translation that depends on explanatory introductions, footnotes, and glosses to explain the translated text.[8] These kinds of translations are intended to avoid any misunderstandings that might result from the text coming to us from a different culture, time, and space. This is actually one of the solutions that could be used in Bible translations. The thickness of the translation would remove much of the obscurity and mystery of the various cultural and literary genres of the Bible, and at the same time it would provide a literal translation.

Conclusion

This article has moved very quickly through a number of critical issues that confront those who would undertake a new modern Arabic translation. It should also be said that it has not touched on the huge cultural and social challenges that must also be faced. That's for another day. For now, let's sum up.

The church in the Middle East, first of all, should be frank with itself and with others about the Textus Receptus and the Critical Text. If we are to have a new Arabic translation, it should be based on the Critical Text. This translation should be accurate according to the best translation standards, but it should also present the Bible to readers in a living language that they can easily understand and to which they can readily respond. A pure colloquial Egyptian translation might not be possible at the moment, but let's not shelve the idea. It's a worthy goal. And

[7] It is an English translation that is very free in its use of modern syntax and semantics and includes much youthful language.

[8] Shuttleworth and Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Study*, s.v. "Thick Translation."

who knows what the future may hold? For the present, however, a modern standard Arabic translation that reflects a pure Egyptian dialect and the literary developments of the past few decades in Egypt is a goal well within reach. Such a translation should avoid, so far as humanly possible, Meta-Texts, and, instead, offer a translation that is fresh enough to portray the past in vivid colors while at the same time serving as a starting point for a contemporary Middle Eastern theology. And this Arabic Bible could certainly be a thick translation, for who could deny that the typical Middle Eastern Christian would greatly benefit from a Bible that explains the meaning of the text while not straying from a literal translation. Finally, this translation should be the subject of much discussion before, during, and after its completion so that the full impact of God's word can be felt in our society.

Let's not let politics, culture, or ecclesial pusillanimity get in the way of giving God's people in the Middle East the precious gift of his word in their own heart language. We owe it to ourselves and our children. No excuses. No delay. Let's get it done.

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Review of *How the West Won* by Rodney Stark

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How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity. By Rodney Stark. Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2014. 432 pages. $27.95.

A generation ago, historian Rodney Stark observes, most American colleges and universities eliminated their freshmen courses in "Western Civilization." There was a good reason for this. Fueled by an arrogant ethnocentrism, these courses tended to assume a privileged position for Western culture while ignoring or implicitly deprecating all the others. Clearly this was unacceptable in our pluralistic and arguably more enlightened era. Ironically, the result of the change in policy, Stark writes, is that Americans are "increasingly ignorant of how the modern world came to be. Worse yet, they are in danger of being badly misled by a flood of absurd, politically correct fabrications, all of them popular on college campuses."

Stark is a merry iconoclast who has written a slashing, fun book. He delights in demolishing the false or at least suspect truths that often pass for conventional wisdom on college campuses—and presumably everywhere else, too. His chief targets are not just the inevitable distortions of a campus culture dominated by political correctness. He also takes on falsities that were common even when "Western Civilization" classes were in their heyday, such as the overemphasis on art and literature and the under emphasis on the key importance of Christianity. Most importantly, Stark wants to explain why Western civilization has succeeded in producing the scientific and technological advances of modernity while other cultures have not.

Most people think of the successive empires that existed in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt as the high water marks of developing civilization, but Stark takes a different view. For him they tended to drain essential resources from the huge regions that they dominated, strangling creativity and producing mass misery in order to fund splendid public-works projects (for example, the pyramids). These were largely stagnant cultures that had little use for scientific discoveries or technological innovations. In contrast, the small city-states of Greece produced startling innovations in almost every area: politics, philosophy, literature, and science.

"The ancient Greeks," he explains, "took the single most significant step toward the rise of Western science when they proposed that the universe is orderly and governed by underlying principles that the human mind could discern through observation and reason." Because early Christian thinkers believed in a rational creator, they embraced the Greek devotion to reason. Moreover, they added to this a belief that history is progressive. Together, these ideas laid the foundations for all subsequent Western scientific and technological developments. Other cultures, following different philosophical and theological principles, largely rejected the possibility of either science or progress.

Stark devotes every chapter to correcting common historical misconceptions: the fall of the Roman Empire was not a tragedy but an immense benefit to humankind; there were no "Dark Ages" since this period was one of remarkable technological advance; the "Scientific Revolution" of the seventeenth century was actually not a revolution but a culmination; and so forth. Galloping through history at a break-neck pace, Stark can make some questionable generalizations of his own even while debunking the more widely accepted generalizations that he despises. Nevertheless, this is a thoughtful and needed book. In fact, Stark is often simply popularizing what professional historians have been discovering or debating in recent years—a task, sadly, no longer performed by professors teaching Western Civ.

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Review of *The Great and Holy War* by Philip Jenkins

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The Great and Holy War: How World War I Became a Religious Crusade. By Philip Jenkins. New York: Harper One, 2014. 448 pages. $29.99.

Over the last dozen years historian Philip Jenkins has done more than anyone to popularize ideas about the new demographic configuration of Christianity in the world: the decline of the Church in the West and its rise in the Global South. Especially important is his trilogy of books on this subject: *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (3rd edition, 2012), *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (2006), and *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis* (2007). To this already impressive body of work he has now added *The Great and Holy War*, a book about how World War I was the occasion for a religious revolution that recast the world's religions into their current shape.

The war, which began a century ago on July 28, 1914, was understood by most combatants in religious terms, and religious language and iconography were suffused in the conflict to an extent that today would be inconceivable. Both sides demonized their opponents and used the medieval imagery of knights and crusaders, believing that they were engaged in a cosmic conflict. German Protestant ministers preached that their nation had a messianic role to play in Europe. The French believed that fallen soldiers arose from the dead—"*Debout les Morts*!"—to help their living comrades in arms. Soldiers on both sides reported angels and saints appearing in the midst of battle to help their side. The

Germans often saw the archangel Michael, while the English saw St. George, and the French Joan of Arc. Peasant girls in Portugal famously saw a vision of Mary at Fátima in 1917, but both Russian and French soldiers also saw visions of the Virgin during the war. Above all, this was a time of apocalyptic signs, the most striking being the British success under General Sir Edmund Allenby in capturing Palestine and entering Jerusalem. The crucial battle against the Turks was fought near the hill of Megiddo—Armageddon itself.

Sixty-eight percent of all Christians lived in Europe at the beginning of the war. Today the number of Christians living in Europe as a percentage of population can be counted in the single digits in most European countries. Orthodox Christianity nearly became extinct during the Soviet era in Russia, which began during the war, and numerous Christian communities in the Middle East continue to be threatened with extinction, a process that began with the Armenian genocide of 1915. On the other hand, Christianity in Africa has experienced explosive growth in recent decades, and if current trends continue Africa will have more Christians than any other continent by 2030, a success story that Jenkins traces to the disruptions of the war era. For Muslims the war was traumatic in that they saw the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of the caliphate in Istanbul, loosing the Islamic extremism that continues until today. And of course for Jews WWI was a breathtaking game changer as the Balfour Declaration of 1917 paved the way for the creation of the modern State of Israel.

Quite simply, World War I redrew the religious map of the world. Understanding how this happened and its continuing implications for today is the thrust of Jenkins's lucid, insightful, and always fascinating narrative.