

**Review: Laurence M. Vance, *A Brief History of English Bible Translations*, Florida, Vance Publications, 1993**

A brief listing of English Bible translations

As of the book's publishing date, history had produced three hundred and one English translations of either the Old, New or both testaments! Questions arise: Why so many? What were the motivations? Most importantly (and demanded by the Law of Non-Contradiction) which one is God's preserved word in the English tongue, for contradictions are plainly evident between all?

The original autographs were written in Hebrew (OT) and Koine (or common) Greek (NT). No original autographs exist today (or if they do haven't been found and would be impossible to identify and verify).

NT Greek papyri (so named because they were written on paper from the aquatic papyrus plant) were copied into Latin by innumerable persons. The collection of these papyri and codices (papyri collected into books) are called 'Old Latin' manuscripts (they were also called Vulgar, or 'common' translations).

The scholar Jerome first translated the original tongues into Latin and his bible was called the Latin vulgate, becoming common only after the 13<sup>th</sup> century, before this the term applied to the Old Latin bible (translated c150AD). There were no standard Hebrew or Greek texts in existence then.

The foundation Hebrew text came from the Hebrew bible of Daniel Bomberg in 1516-17. It contained full vowel points and accents, dispelling the idea Hebrew has no vowels. A second edition by Ben Chayyim in 1524-25 became known as the Masoretic Text.

The foundation Greek texts came from the Complutensian Polyglot and scholars Erasmus, Colinaeus, Estienne (aka Stephanus), Beza and the Elzevir Partners (Abraham and Bonaventure).

A Spanish Catholic Cardinal Ximenes used Jerome's work to create the Complutensian Polygot (polyglot meaning many-languaged book - in this case Greek, Hebrew and Latin in parallel). It was named so because it was translated in Alcalá, Spain – Complutum in Latin).

Desiderius Erasmus used the Polyglot, the Latin Vulgate and various papyri to create five editions of the NT. The third edition was the first to contain I John 5:7. The second of seven editions of Elzevir has been coined the 'Textus Receptus', or Received Text. It was created in 1633 (after the AV).

In English until the AV were nine translations: Wycliffe Bible (1382), Tyndale NT (unfinished), Coverdale Bible (1535), Matthew's Bible (1535), Great/Cromwell/Whitchurch Bible (1539), Taverner Bible (15XX), Geneva Bible (1560), Douay Rheims (1582) and the Bishops' Bible (1568).

\*Wycliffe: Direct from the Latin. In 1428 (or 1415?) burned posthumously by the Whore.

\*Tyndale: Using the Greek NT created an unfinished NT only. Imprisoned in Belgium then strangled and burnt at the stake by the Whore.

\*Coverdale: Used Tyndale's work and also translated the OT.

\*Matthew's: Pseudonym for John Rogers, mostly a revision of Coverdale. Killed by the Whore in 1555 by Queen Mary.

\*Great: 'Authorised' by Cromwell.

\*Taverner: Independent revision of Matthew's.

\*Geneva: Created in Geneva by exiles/Reformers (including Coverdale).

\*Bishops: 'Authorised' by Queen Elisabeth.

\*Douay Rheims: Roman Catholic translation.

### King James Bible

Authorised by a male, King James I (also King James VI of Scotland).

Psalm 12:6: "The Word's of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (emphasis added) has an interesting application here.

N.b. in the following verse (7), it is imperative to understand the masculine third person plural pronoun 'them' is matched with the proximate *feminine* plural noun (i.e. 'the words') and not the distant *masculine* plural noun 'poor and needy'. This practice in Hebrew is called gender discord. This matches a common sense reading and has an established precedent - refer Psalm 119, Joshua 1:7, Leviticus 26:3, etc.

Fifty-four men and Greek/Hebrew speakers were appointed to create the translation, but it is thought only forty-seven worked on the project .

Point 14: “These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text of the Bishop’s Bible (1): Tindoll’s (2), Matthews (3), Coverdale’s (4), Whitchurch’s (5), Geneva (6).

From the nine available, Wycliffe (from Vulgate), Taverner (banned by King) and Douay (Catholic) were excluded, indicating the AV is the seventh bible in line as per Ps 12:6!

Until the Revised Version release in 1881 the AV was unchallenged. The catalyst for change was a culmination of unearthing more manuscripts and comparison with existing New Testament texts (modern science of textual criticism).

Textual criticism uses methods like dynamic equivalence (use of phraseology to convey the meaning of a text in a different language rather than a word for - word formal equivalence method), majority equivalence (finding equivalence via majority of extant manuscripts) and complete equivalence (finding equivalence from all known manuscripts). It (emptily) promises to equip man with tools necessary to discover/correct God’s words, implicitly presupposing God’s word is undiscovered or requires correcting.

From 1655 to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century at least fifteen Greek NT texts were created. Well known authors include John Griesbach, Constantine Tischendorf, Brooke Wescott and Fenton Hort, Richard Weymouth, Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland.

Tischendorf discovered and used Codex Sinaiticus (or ‘Aleph’) (found in a bin at St Catherine’s monastery, the false Mt Sinai in Egypt). Wescott and Hort were members on the Revision Committee of the RV and their NT was based largely upon Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (or ‘B’).

From the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Greek NT was updated with notable editors Aland and (Erwin) Nestle (revising Eberhard Nestle’s work) and a new effort by five scholars called the Aland and Metzger text (this is used by the Whore).

A plethora of English bibles were created with three possible motivations: to sincerely ‘correct’ the text, subversive bias, and money since new versions are protected by copyright and therefore enable product monopolisation via product differentiation (demand curve steepens).

The NKJV was created in 1979. Guidelines included: correcting all departures from the TR, change pronoun forms and verb endings, modernise word meanings, phrases and idioms. The OT foundation texts were *Biblia Hebraica* (based on the Leningrad codex circa 1000 AD), Greek Septuagint, Latin Vulgate , Dead Sea Scrolls and other versions. Ralph Kittel compiled the *Biblia Hebraica*. He was a liberal Nazi and anti-semite.