

A CHRONOLOGY OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

The following chronology includes events of major importance (through 1961) in the long and dramatic story of Bible translation. The list is necessarily selective and places special emphasis on the background of the English Bible, providing information basic to further study of a fascinating field

1500-500? B.C.—The Old Testament is put into writing.

150-100 B.C.—The Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, according to tradition, by 72 Hebrew scholars, is completed in Alexandria, Egypt. This version contains 45 books, the Alexandrian Canon, used by the early Church, and continues to be the Old Testament Canon of the Latin and Greek Church.

A.D. 52?-100?—The New Testament is written, coming to us in *koiné* Greek, the common language of the time, although some portions may have been first set down in Aramaic, the language spoken by Christ.

A.D. 100?—Formulation of Palestinian Canon of Hebrew Bible at Synod of Jamnia.

A.D. 50-400—First stabilization of New Testament canon of 27 books.

About 400—Jerome completes his final translation of the Bible, the Latin Vulgate, based on the Septuagint and translated from the Hebrew, and other ancient versions.

About 600 to 900—The Masoretic text in Hebrew is developed by the Masoretes, a school of Jewish textual critics. The Masoretic text, used in the Jewish Bible, has been an important reference in preparing translations into other languages.

1382—John Wycliffe completes his translation, the first complete Bible in English.

1456—The Gutenberg Bible, a folio edition of the Latin Vulgate, is printed from movable type, an epochal event that inaugurated the era of printing.

1516—Erasmus completes his translation in Greek.

1522—Martin Luther translates the Bible into German.

1535—William Tyndale issues his English translation, which powerfully influenced all of the English versions that followed.

1535—Miles Coverdale issues his translation dedicated to King Henry VIII.

1537—Coverdale's Bible becomes the first Bible to be printed in England.

1537—Matthew's Bible is produced, based primarily on the Tyndale and Coverdale Bibles.

1539—Coverdale issues the Great Bible, essentially a combination of his own earlier work and Tyndale's Bible. This work was authorized by Henry VIII.

1560—The Geneva Bible, produced by Coverdale, William Whittingham, John Knox, and others in Geneva after Mary became queen. It is the first English Bible to divide the chapters into verses.

1582-1610—Douay-Rheims (Catholic) Bible appears, a direct translation into English from the Vulgate by the Catholic College; the New Testament issued in 1582 at Rheims, the Old Testament in 1609-1610 at Douay, France

1611 —The great King James (or Authorised) Version. Completed by the group of "learned men," all renowned scholars, appointed by King James.

1885—The English Revised Version, Produced by a group of English Biblical scholars, with contributions by a similar group of American scholars.

1901—The American Standard Version issued by the American Committee that had worked on the English Revised Version.

1924—The Moffatt Bible, a complete translation of the Bible into modern English by James Moffatt.

1931—Smith-Goodspeed Bible, a modern speech translation combining the Old Testament prepared under the editorship of J. M. Powis Smith and the New Testament prepared by Edgar J. Goodspeed of the University of Chicago.

1941—Confraternity Version. The New Testament revision was published under the sponsorship of the Episcopal Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This edition represents a revision of the Douay-Rheims-Challoner Version based on the Latin Vulgate.

1945-1949—Knox's Version. Complete Bible translated by Msgr. Ronald A. Knox based on Latin Vulgate. Authorized by Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales.

1952—The Revised Standard Version. Produced by a group of American scholars sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Christ.

1961-The New English Bible. A new translation by a group of British scholars appointed by a committee representing the Protestant Churches of Great Britain, and representatives of the Oxford and Cambridge University presses.