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Overview of Bible translations into Arabic Arabic translations of the Bible constitute one of the richest traditions of Bible transmission. Translations of the Bible into Arabic were produced by Arabic-speaking Jews (Rabbanite and Karaite), Christians, and Samaritans. Even though Arabic was spoken by Jews and Christians before the advent of Islam, running Arabic translations of the Bible are attested in manuscripts only from the 9th century CE onwards. So far, no evidence could be adduced that Arabic Bible translations were available at that time. Before that, quotations from the Bible (so-called testimonia) were used in Arabic especially by Christians. The Bible was translated into Arabic from a variety of source languages. These include Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Syriac.[1] Judeo-Arabic translations can also exhibit influence of the Aramaic Targums. Especially in the 19th century, Arabic Bible translations start to express regional colloquial dialects. The different communities that produced Arabic translations of the Bible also used different alphabets to write Arabic. Arabic translations of the Bible are found in Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, and Syriac (Garshuni) script. Arabic versions of biblical books were not confined to their original communities. Especially Coptic Christians displayed considerable interest in Christian and non-Christian versions, which were based on different source languages. Already at an early stage, bilingual or multilingual manuscripts were produced. New translations are still made in the 21st century. The transmission of the Bible in Arabic, hence, spans a history of almost one and a half millennia. There is no general agreement regarding the text-critical value of early Arabic translations of the Bible, but it is often deemed to be small. They might have some importance for secondary translations like the Peshitta or the Septuagint. However, under the influence of New Philology scholarship has recently begun to value early Arabic Bible translations in their own right. Importantly, digitization has increasingly made available manuscript sources, especially those from Saint Catherine's Monastery, the Cairo Genizah, and the Firkovitch collections. Another important resources is the large-scale digitization project of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. Still, there is only a small number of critical editions of Arabic versions of the Bible. Part of what appears to be the oldest Arabic Bible or New Testament in existence was discovered in the 19th century at Saint Catherine's Monastery. The manuscript called Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151, was created in AD 867 in Damascus by someone named Bishr Ibn Al Sirri. Although it is a large, bound book, it only contains the Book of Acts and the Epistles, translated from Aramaic (Syriac). It includes the biblical text, marginal comments, lectionary notes, and glosses.[2][3] Codex Arabicus The Codex Arabicus from Saint Catherine's Monastery is a palimpsest containing (among other texts) John 9:16-38 in Arabic, from around AD 900.[4] The earliest fragment of the Old Testament in Arabic is a text of Psalm 77, found in the Umayyad Mosque. Initially it was dated to the end of the 8th century by Bruno Violet,[5] the scholar who discovered the fragments in 1901.[6] However recent research has paleographically dated this manuscript to late 9th- and early 10th century on the basis of analysis of newly rediscovered photographs of the text.[7][8][9] Most Arabic translations have translated Yahweh (יהוה, the Hebrew name of God (LORD or Jehovah in English / Yǫrios in Greek), as Allāh or al-Rabb (الله / الرب, respectively).[citation needed] These are similar to the appellations utilized by Muslims in Classical Arabic, but the term Ar-rabb is quite distinct from Muslim usage, which normally does not use the definite article, instead predominantly making use of a vocative without an article or affixed possessive pronoun. [citation needed] The Aramaic Mār / Mōr (teacher or lord) is translated as Rabb or Sayyid (سيّد / مار, respectively).[citation needed] There are many cases where an etymological connection exists between an Arabic word and the original Hebrew or Aramaic text, yet it is translated into a colloquial or a commonly used word instead.[citation needed] The Bible texts produced by the Mozarabs which have survived to the present day are the translations of the Gospels, the Psalms and the Canons. It is assumed that the Bible was also translated in its entirety by the Christians of Al-Andalus.[10] Most of the translations date to the twelfth century or later, although a few are as early as the tenth century.[11] One of these manuscripts is still kept at the Qarawiyyin Library in Fez, Morocco. It is a 12th-century Mozarab parchment containing the gospels of John.[12] Ishaq ibn Balask of Cordoba translated the gospels into Arabic in 946.[13] Hafs ibn Albar made a translation of the Psalms in 889.[13] In the 10th century AD Saadia Gaon wrote a Tafsir, an Arabic translation of the Torah and some other Biblical books with a commentary. These were written in Hebrew characters (Judaeo-Arabic). Much of the commentary is lost, but the translation of the Torah and several other books has survived intact, and even serves as part of the liturgy of Yemenite Jews, who read the Torah in the synagogue with each Hebrew verse translated twice: first to the Aramaic targum and then to Saadia's Tafsir.[14] As the language of Saadia Gaon's translation became archaic and remote from common speech, most Jewish communities of the Arab world evolved their own translations of the Torah into their local dialects of Judaeo-Arabic. A traditional translation in Coptic Arabic dated to the 13th century, from the Arabic word for "equivalent." These translations were generally used for teaching purposes rather than for public worship. Evidence for this comes from the Coptic Church published the whole Bible at Rome. Mr. Houssney made a tactical decision to model the translation after the popular NIV and named it "Book of Life, an interpretive translation" (in Arabic, كتاب الحياة ترجمة تفسيرية kitāb al-ḥayāh tarjamah tafsīriyyah). The result was wide acceptance throughout the Arab world. In 1992 it was dubbed the New Arabic Version (NAV) after Living Bibles International merged with International Bible Society, now Biblica. The nearest English translation to the New Arabic Version is the New International Version. Translators consulted various English and Arabic translations and checked thoroughly against the Greek and Hebrew original texts with the aid of a team of scholars. An who advised on the original languages are Dr. Kenneth Bailey, Dr. David King, Dr. Ghassan Khalaf, and Dr. Maurice Seale. This version is the most widely distributed with several million copies in circulation. However a more significant fact about this project is that Christians in the Arab world began to accept the idea of new translations after seeing the importance of a clear and contemporary Arabic style. In 1988 the Jesuit publishing company Dar el-Machreq published a revised version of the 1880 Catholic translation, which has sold more than 60,000 copies between 1988 and 2000.[21] In 1992 the Bible Society, released Today's Arabic Version, a dynamic equivalence translation designed to be as easy to understand as possible. It is also known as the Good News Arabic (GNA) or the Ecumenical Version (الترجمة المشتركة at-tarjamah al-mushtarakah), in that it was produced by an interdenominational team of scholars and church leaders. It was conceived as the Arabic equivalent of the English Good News Bible (also known as the Today's English Version), but is in reality more like the English New International Version. The 1980s in Egyptian Christian found that his Muslim friends could not understand the Bible. He began with a translation of the Gospel of Mark, and their enthusiasm led him to translate the entire New Testament, completed in 1990. This translation was titled "The Noble Gospel" al-injīl ash-sharīf (الإنجيل الشريف). The language is quite simple, with vocabulary deliberately chosen to be common with vernacular Arabic. It is much clearer in many passages than other translations, but it is not very elegant[citation needed]. It uses Arabic proper names and religious terminology understood by most Arabic speakers, rather than foreign names and ecclesiastical terminology found in older translations. The full Bible was published in 2000, and titled "The Noble Book" al-ketab ash-sharif (الكتاب الشريف), also known as the "Sharif Bible".[22] In 2000, Jehovah's Witnesses released their New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (New Testament) in Arabic.[23] The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) was translated and released during the Greek Scriptures as a complete Bible in 2004. In 2005, Syrian Arab author Maz Mallouhi brought together Christians and Muslims to produce a new translation of the Gospels and Acts in Arabic. The result of their collective efforts was published in Beirut in March 2008 under the title The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (المعنى الصحيح لإنجيل المسيح al-ma'nā aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ li'injīl al-masīh). The goal of the project was a translation of the gospel message that would speak clearly to Arabic speakers unfamiliar with church terminology and traditions. The volume, published by Al-Kalima and printed by the Dar al-Farabi publishing house, features a c translation of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts in modern literary Arabic, with footnotes providing cultural background information essential to understanding the text. There is also a collection of 26 articles on related topics of particular interest to Arab readers, as well as introductions to each of the Gospels and Acts, illustrations and maps. The 2nd edition of the Gospels and Acts was published in 2016, with terms for Father and Son following recommended renderings from a committee of experts, and the New Testament Epistles were also published in 2016 under the title "The Book Proclamation on the Apostles of Christ" (كتاب البلاغ على رسل المسيح kitāb al-balāgh 'alā rusul al-masīḥ). A selection of 46 selected Psalms was published in 2017, stylized and presented by the celebrated poet and scholar Dr. Nomeet Odeh, under the title "Psalms of Passion for God", (مزامير عشق للإله, Mazāmīr al-'ishq al-ilāh). In 2019 a collection of stories of the prophets taken from the Old Testament was published with the title Lqd وجد أنبياء ه, ني الله (Lqd wajad 'alā anbiyā'ihi, "The Ancient Prophets") Translation Genesis 1:1–3 (التكوين) and John 3:16 (يوحنا) Saadia Gaon (سعيد بن يوسف غاؤن, N.A. Van Dyck(or Van Dyke)(الكتاب المقدس) אמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור ראה אלהים את האור כי טוב ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החשך ויקרא אלהים לאור יום ולחשך קרא לילה ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד ויאמר אלהים יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל מקום אחד ותראה היבשה ויהי כן ויקרא אלהים ליבשה ארץ ולמקוה המים קרא ימים וירא אלהים כי טוב ויאמר אלהים תדשא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע עץ פרי עשה פרי למינו אשר זרעו בו על הארץ ויהי כן ותוצא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע למינהו ועץ עשה פרי אשר זרעו בו למינהו וירא אלהים כי טוב ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום שלישי ויאמר אלהים יהי מארת ברקיע השמים להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה והיו לאתת ולמועדים ולימים ושנים והיו למאורת ברקיע השמים להאיר על הארץ ויהי כן ויעש אלהים את שני המארת הגדלים את המאר הגדל לממשלת היום ואת המאר הקטן לממשלת הלילה ואת הכוכבים ויתן אתם אלהים ברקיע השמים להאיר על הארץ ולמשל ביום ובלילה ולהבדיל בין האור ובין החשך וירא אלהים כי טוב ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום רביעי ויאמר אלהים ישרצו המים שרץ נפש חיה ועוף יעופף על הארץ על פני רקיע השמים ויברא אלהים את התנינם הגדלים ואת כל נפש החיה הרמשת אשר שרצו המים למינהם ואת כל עוף כנף למינהו וירא אלהים כי טוב ויברך אתם אלהים לאמר פרו ורבו ומלאו את המים בימים והעוף ירב בארץ ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום חמישי ויאמר אלהים תוצא הארץ נפש חיה למינה בהמה ורמש וחיתו ארץ למינה ויהי כן ויעש אלהים את חיתו ארץ למינה ואת הבהמה למינה ואת כל רמש האדמה למינהו וירא אלהים כי טוב ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו וירדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל הארץ ובכל הרמש הרמש על הארץ ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלהים ברא אתו זכר ונקבה ברא אתם ויברך אתם אלהים ויאמר להם אלהים פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשוה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ ויאמר אלהים הנה נתתי לכם את כל עשב זרע זרע אשר על פני כל הארץ ואת כל העץ אשר בו פרי עץ זרע זרע לכם יהיה לאכלה ולכל חית הארץ ולכל עוף השמים ולכל רמש על הארץ אשר בו נפש חיה את כל ירק עשב לאכלה ויהי כן וירא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלהים לעשות אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות יהוה אלהים ארץ ושמים ... 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