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TRANSLATION FOR TRANSFORMATION:
ANDRÉ CHOURAQUI AND HIS TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPELS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS AND THEOLOGY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

JOHN MURRAY KEITH WATSON

SUPERVISOR: DR. ZULEIKA RODGERS

DUBLIN, IRELAND

MARCH 2010

DECLARATION

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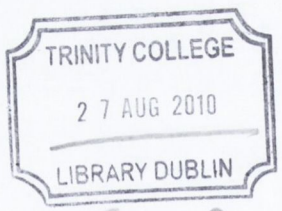

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March 2009

TRANSLATION FOR TRANSFORMATION:
ANDRÉ CHOURAQUI AND HIS TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPELS

John Murray Keith Watson

Although he remains largely an unknown in the English-speaking world, André Chouraqui (1917-2007) was, for much of the twentieth century, a prominent and respected figure in the francophone world, in the Middle East and in Jewish circles worldwide. Born into a Sephardic Jewish family in Algeria, Chouraqui pursued studies in law and rabbinics in Paris, and served in the French Underground during the Second World War. After the war, he quickly became one of the pioneers in Jewish-Christian dialogue in France and, after emigrating to the State of Israel, emerged as its of its leading intellectual, political and social leaders, serving in the cabinet of David Ben-Gurion, and becoming Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem under Teddy Kollek (1965-73). Although Chouraqui was a prolific author on a wide range of subjects, arguably his greatest single accomplishment was his single-handed translation of the Bible into French, first published in the early 1970s, and subsequently revised as *La Bible Chouraqui*. Not only did Chouraqui translate the Jewish Scriptures, but he went on to translate the New Testament as well, and later published his own translation of the Qur'an—quite possibly the only individual to have translated all of the Abrahamic scriptures into a modern vernacular. Raised in the midst of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Chouraqui sought to build bridges between these three faiths, founded on his own unique and unconventional style of translation. Previous studies of Chouraqui have focussed primarily on his Old Testament translations. This study intends to examine some of the distinctive characteristics of his rendering of the four Gospels, and to introduce his work to an anglophone audience.

Chapter 1 consists of an overview of the history of Jewish-Christian relations, demonstrating the radical reversal that has taken place in Christian attitudes since WWII, which created a particular fertile environment for the reception of Chouraqui's translation. Chapter 2 offers a biographical overview of his life, emphasizing key influences and events that helped to shape his attitude toward the Bible, and toward interreligious dialogue. In Chapter 3, the history of previous Jewish translations of the New Testament (or of NT translations into Hebrew) is presented, highlighting both Chouraqui's dependence on earlier scholars and his marked differences from them. Chapter 4 examines some of the linguistic and structural elements which are characteristic of the Chouraqui Gospels, and Chapter 5 highlights the way in which he brings out religious, cultural and social aspects of the text. The sixth chapter looks at the reaction, both positive and negative, to Chouraqui's New Testament work, and addresses some of the critical issues that it raises. Chapter 7 summarizes my conclusions, thoughts about how Chouraqui's particular identity was key to his

interfaith vision, and suggestions for how Chouraqui's work might continue to play a valuable role in the future.

Chapters 1 to 3 build upon previous published scholarship in each of the areas addressed. Chapters 4 and 5 constitute the heart of the originality of this thesis. In them, Chouraqui's translation is compared and contrasted with six other commonly-used French editions of the Bible, to underscore the distinctiveness of his renderings. Where he seems to be postulating about possible Semitic sources or concepts, Chouraqui's translation is compared with the readings of the three major historical translations of the New Testament into Hebrew (that of Elias Hutter, that of Franz Delitzsch, and that of Isaaz Salkinson and David Ginsburg), to determine whether his intuitions are in line with theirs. These comparisons highlight Chouraqui's particular emphases: on etymology and historical linguistics, on consistency in translation, in reproducing aspects of Greek and Hebrew grammar and morphology, and on coining neologisms where necessary to express nuances of biblical language difficult to capture in modern French. They show him to be deliberately re-casting biblical vocabulary in a non-traditional register, and demonstrate his concern to emphasize linguistic, conceptual and theological linkages between the Jewish and Christian faiths, in an effort to promote joint study of the Christian Scriptures.

While this thesis points out some inconsistencies and questionable assumptions in Chouraqui's Gospel translation, it also recognizes the monumental and valuable contribution it represents, both to biblical scholarship and to contemporary interreligious dialogue. The author concludes by offering some suggestions as to refinements that could improve its usefulness and exegetical soundness, so that it can be a springboard for study and discussion by future generations who wish to build upon Chouraqui's extraordinary legacy.

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With gratitude for the life of André Chouraqui, scholar, diplomat, *homme de lettres* and interfaith pioneer. *Z"L*

"Jesus was and always remained a Jew ... Jesus is fully a man of his time, and of his environment—the Jewish Palestinian one of the first century, the anxieties and hopes of which he shared. This cannot but underline both the reality of the Incarnation and the very meaning of the history of salvation, as it has been revealed in the Bible." (Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church;* June 24, 1985, ¶12)

* * * * *

"I have ... concluded without the slightest hesitation that the best method to unravel the meaning of the many obscure passages of the New Testament is through research into the significance of the sayings in question in the ordinary dialect and way of thinking of the Jews." (Bishop John Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ,* 1658, "Introduction to Matthew"; translation from Geza Vermes, *Jesus in His Jewish Context,* 55)

"The doctrine of the gospel hath no more bitter enemies than [the Jews]; and yet the text of the gospel hath no more plain interpreters." (Lightfoot, "Dedication[1]")

* * * * *

"The Bible ... is a Jewish book. It cannot be read, understood, or interpreted unless we enter into the speech, the thought, and the history of the Jews in complete openness, unless we are ready to become Jews with the Jews." (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], 510-11.

* * * * *

"Rien de vrai ne se fait qu'à partir des racines : c'est d'elles que naissent les arbres les plus puissants." (André Chouraqui, *L'Amour fort comme la mort,* 211)

"... faire de nos divergences la richesse de nos échanges plutôt que la cause de nos guerres" (*L'Amour fort comme la mort,* 223)

* * * * *

"Whoever meets Jesus Christ meets Judaism." (Pope John Paul II, *Insegnamenti,* Vol. III/2, 1980, 1272)

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[1] *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica.* Original edition printed by Oxford University Press, 1859, and reprinted by Hendrickson Publishers, 2003; Vol. 2, 5.

Chapter 1 • "L'idée juste au moment juste"

Introduction: Can Fifty Years Make a Difference?

In the variegated tapestry of world history, half a century is a gossamer thread—so thin, many would argue, as to be virtually insignificant, its impact inconsequential as regards the overall direction of events. Even seen within the context of a 2000-year-long interaction—such as that between Judaism and Christianity—fifty years is a relatively short period; how dramatically can the course of a half-century change the face of the world and its future?

Mathematically, and perhaps historically, too, such skepticism can be justified. And yet the history of religions has demonstrated repeatedly how the events of five decades can forever mark, for good or ill, the ages that come after them. It was roughly a half-century that separated the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth from the writing of the first Christian gospels, whose influence unquestionably re-oriented the history, first of the Mediterranean, and then of much of the inhabited world. In just over a half-century, Jerusalem went from being the thriving heart of Jewish religion and culture to a Roman city, its Temple razed, in which Jews were forbidden to dwell. Historians today will agree that, for both Christianity and Judaism, the fifty years from 30 to 80 C.E., and the seventy years from 68 to 138 C.E., were decisive for the development and future character of each faith. Nearly two millennia later, both traditions continue to bear the indelible stamp of what was said, written and done during those times of ferment. Those years form the spiritual DNA out of which contemporary Judaism and Christianity grew.

In a similar vein, it can be argued that the last fifty years of Jewish-Christian interaction have been comparably decisive, though in a dramatically different way. Whereas the last half of the first century saw increasing tension and hostility between the two groups—culminating in the gradual withdrawal and expulsion of Christian

Jews from the larger Jewish spectrum[1]—the fifty-plus years since the Second World War have witnessed a remarkable reconciliation between these alienated religions, and a re-building of bridges and relationships that would have seemed unthinkable to earlier generations on both sides.[2]

In this chapter, I will examine the particular confluence of twentieth-century historical and religious trends which formed the backdrop for André Chouraqui's life, and especially for his biblical translations. Not only did these events and factors influence Chouraqui himself, but they combined to shape an environment in which his model of translation would find an appreciative and interested audience. These trajectories help to explain why he undertook his translations, and how they fit into the larger landscape of religious, and interreligious, dynamics in the second half of the 1900s.

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[1] On this period, see, e.g., Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70-170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006); Martha Himmelfarb, "The Parting of the Ways Reconsidered: Diversity in Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations in the Roman Empire—A Jewish Perspective," in *Interwoven Destinies: Jews and Christians Through the Ages* (ed. Eugene J. Fisher, ed., Studies in Judaism and Christianity; New York: Paulist, 1993), 47-61; Vincent Martin, *A House Divided: The Parting of the Ways Between Synagogue and Church*. Studies in Judaism and Christianity (New York: Paulist Press, 1995); Claudia Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); and Simon C. Mimouni, "L'émergence du mouvement des disciples de Jésus dans le judaïsme des Ier et IIe siècles," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* (1999), 457-71.

[2] See, e.g., the comments of Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, President of the Union for Reform Judaism: "No responsible person could dispute that more progress has been made in Catholic-Jewish relations in the last fifty years than was made in the previous two millennia."("Good News, Bad News: Extraordinary Achievements and Current Tensions in Catholic-Jewish Relations." Address at Assumption College, Worcester, VA, March 23, 2000; online at: http://urj.org/yoffie/archive/cj-relations/). Although Yoffie specifically speaks here of Catholic-Jewish relations, his comments are applicable to the broader Christian-Jewish dialogue as well. For studies on the development of post-war Jewish-Christian relations, and for the relevant documentation, see the section in my bibliography, "On the history of Jewish-Christian relations".

1. Great Men ... Opportune Times ... or Both?

The nineteenth-century Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) famously proposed the "great men" theory of history, according to which history is largely an account of the lives of outstanding individuals whose words and actions changed the course of human affairs.[3] Carlyle's model has been critiqued and considerably nuanced by subsequent authors, who have laid proportionally greater emphasis on the importance of social context and circumstance in the emergence and influence of pivotal historical figures. The nineteenth-century sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) said that such personalities must also be understood in terms of the civilizations and conditions that gave rise to them; without such an analysis, a focus on the individual alone must prove superficial and misleading:

> Given a Shakespeare, ... what dramas could he have written without the multitudinous traditions of civilized life—without the various experiences which, descending to him from the past, gave wealth to his thought, and without the language which a hundred generations had developed and enriched by use? Suppose a Watt, with all his inventive power, living in a tribe ignorant of iron, or in a tribe that could get only as much iron as a fire blown by hand-bellows will smelt; or suppose him born among ourselves before lathes existed; what chance would there have been of the steam-engine? Imagine a Laplace unaided by that slowly-developed system of Mathematics which we trace back to its beginnings among the Egyptians; how far would he have got ... ?
>
> Those who regard the histories of societies as the histories of their great men, and think that these great men shape the fates of their societies, overlook the truth that such great men are the products of their societies.[4]

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[3] "... as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones ; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain ; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodyment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world : the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these." Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* (New York: John Willey & Son, 1866), 1.

[4] Herbert Spencer, "Is There a Social Science?" in *The Study of Sociology* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1894; repr. [n.p.]: Adamant Media Corporation, 2006), 35; "The Social

The determining role of culture, time and place in the development of such "great men" is a theme that the philosopher Sidney Hook (1902-1989) developed in greater depth in his 1943 study *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility:*

> [Man] is dependent for his intellectual power not only upon his biological capacities but upon the society that sets the framework of interest and attention within which doubt and inquiry arise, and that supplies the very words which both inspire and limit the ideas that germinate within him. There is no good reason to believe that if a man with the biological endowment of Newton or Raphael or Napoleon had been born in early prehistory he would have rediscovered fire or created magnificent ornaments and paintings or achieved renown as a warrior.[5]

This modern, more "sociological" school of historical analysis emphasizes equally the character of remarkable individuals, the socio-cultural factors which favoured their success, and the cardinal or "pregnant" moments of history in which they lived, as more accurately reflecting their role in shaping world events. Where one or the other catalyst is lacking, prophetic voices fall upon deaf ears, and the potential for change yields only mockery, frustration, disappointment and apathy. When, however, the right person lives at the right time, when the right ideas meet with fertile circumstances, the results can be revolutionary, and the space of a few years can turn historical probability on its head. In Chapter 9 of *The Hero in History,* Hook explores the helpful distinction

> between the hero as the *eventful man* in history and the hero as the *event-making man* in history. The eventful man in history is any man whose actions influenced subsequent developments along a quite different course than would have been followed if these actions had not been taken. The *event-making* man is an eventful man whose actions are the consequences of outstanding capacities of intelligence, will, and character rather than of accidents of position ... The merely eventful men in history play a role that may be compared to that of the little Dutch boy who kept his finger in the hole of the dikes and saved the town. Without meaning to strip the legend of its glamor, we can point out that almost anybody in the situation could have done

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Organism," in *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative.* 3 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1891), 2:268.

[5] Sidney Hook, *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility* (New York: John Day, 1943), 104.

> it. All that was required was a boy, a finger, and the lucky chance of passing by ... Here, so to speak, one stumbles upon greatness ... The event-making man, on the other hand, finds a fork in the historical road, but he also helps, so to speak, to create it. He increases the odds of success for the alternative he chooses by virtue of the extraordinary qualities he brings to bear to realize it.[6]

Using these categories of Hook's, my research will argue that André Chouraqui was such an "event-making" man, in terms of politics, culture and religion.

Had André Chouraqui not lived when he did—had he not had the personal, educational and professional experiences he did; had not his life led him from Algeria to France, from France to nascent Israel, and from Israel around the world—his translation enterprise would almost certainly have withered on the vine, unappreciated. It would, perhaps, have been an intriguing footnote of history, of interest to scholars of ideas and literature. But it would not have attracted the wide scholarly and popular interest that it has, and would not have sparked study and comment throughout Europe, North America and the Middle East. Had André Chouraqui lived 50 years earlier, almost certainly his work would have been largely in vain; he would have been a man born before his time.

But this was not the case.

Instead, André Chouraqui lived at the confluence of events that shaped the history, politics and religion of the twentieth century: the French colonial enterprise in North Africa; the rise to power of the National Socialists in Germany, the outbreak of the Second World War, the brutal Nazi occupation of much of Europe, and the murder of six million European Jews; the re-birth of Israel as a political entity; and the radical re-thinking of Christian attitudes toward Judaism, in an era of repentance, renewal and interreligious outreach. Not only did these events, experiences and trends leave a powerful mark on André Chouraqui, as a man and as a translator, but they created an atmosphere which both favoured his initiatives and enabled them to become widely known and discussed. While many point to him as a singular individual, and as a

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[6] 154-55, 157; emphasis in original.

modern "Renaissance man," yet his contribution to literature and interreligious dialogue is inextricably bound up with the nine decades (1917 to 2007) in which he lived. To situate and appreciate his work, it is first necessary to sketch out the parameters and trajectory of Jewish-Christian interactions after the Second World War, and then to examine Chouraqui and his life experiences in greater detail against this backdrop.

2. From Constantine to the Shoah: "Deicide," Pogroms and Prayers for Conversion

At its outset, the twentieth century showed few signs, if any, of being an auspicious era in relations between Jews and Christians. Since the time of Constantine onward (and, to a more limited degree, from the late first century), Christianity and Judaism had been locked in a theological duel, in which Christians saw the Jews as recalcitrant, stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the truth and consequences of the Messiah's coming. The Jews, for their part, maintained that Christ was either a false or misled messianic figure, that the Church had misunderstood Hebrew prophecies applied to him, and that the ascription to him of divinity at least risked contradicting the fundamental unity of God.[7]

Despite centuries of oppression, exclusion and violence in Christian lands, Jews in Europe and North America clung tenaciously to their ancestral faith, its

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[7] For an overview of some of the Jewish responses to Christian Trinitarian formulations, see, e.g., Yaakov Y. Teppler, "The *Minim* Say: There are Many Powers in Heaven," in Teppler, *Birkat Haminim: Jews and Christians in Conflict in the Ancient World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 297-347; Peter Ochs, "Trinity," in *Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (eds. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 429-30; Pinchas E. Lapide, "The Battle Over 'Trinity' in Hebrew," in Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (trans. Erroll F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 112-15. Indeed, the second of Maimonides' thirteen principles of Jewish faith emphasizes: "We are told to believe that God is one, the cause of all oneness. He is not like a member of a pair, nor a species of a genus, nor a person divided into many discrete elements. Nor is He one in the sense that a simple body is, numerically one but still infinitely divisible. God, rather, is uniquely one. This second fundamental principle is taught in the Biblical verse: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One' (Deut. 6:4)." Isadore Twersky, ed., A *Maimonides Reader* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 1972), 417-18.

commandments and rituals. To the degree that they even *encountered* Jews, Christians were likely to regard them with a blend of curiosity, suspicion and disdain, convinced that, since the advent of Christianity, traditional Jews were little more than "theological dinosaurs," whose *raison d'être* had ceased to exist centuries earlier, and whose continued presence was quaint at best, and provocative at worst. Of course, many Jews living in predominantly Christian lands had, over the course of centuries, become largely assimilated, and were scarcely distinguishable from their Gentile fellow-citizens. Particularly in Eastern Europe, however, where Jews retained more of the more obvious outward signs of Jewish identity, and tended to cluster together in Jewish neighbourhoods or towns, Jews were often the object of religiously- (and politically-) inspired violence, sometimes spontaneous but more often organized.

Good Friday in particular was a day of dread for many Jews. In some areas, the traditional reading of John's Passion—placing blame for Christ's crucifixion squarely on the heads of Jerusalem's Jewish leadership and populace—tended to lead to attacks on Jewish individuals, homes and institutions.[8] According to many early Christian authors, the Jews were not only an ingrate people,[9] who had rejected the greatest of all

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[8] "The [deicide] charge was particularly evident annually around Eastertime when, especially in the medieval period, Jews had to hide on Good Friday for fear of the mobs who would attack them as 'Christ-killer'." HELEN P. FRY, "Deicide, charge of," in KESSLER AND WENBORN, *Dictionary*, 124.

[9] This charge was traditionally summed up in the Reproaches [*Improperia*], an ancient pastiche of OT prophetic texts and crucfixion-related rebukes which was chanted on Good Friday, during the veneration of the cross. For an English translation of the text, see: ERIC WERNER, *The Sacred Bridge: The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church During the First Millennium* (New York: Ktav, 1984), Vol. 2, 128-29. Some scholars speculate that the *Dayyenu* litany found in the Passover Seder may itself be a Jewish reaction to Christian claims that the Jews were an inherently ungrateful race: "An early Christian diatribe against Jews, by Melito of Sardes, included the following: 'Israel the ungrateful ... How much did you value the ten plagues? How much did you value the nightly pillar and the daily cloud, and the crossing of the Red Sea? How much did you value the giving of manna from heaven and the supply of water from a rock, the giving of Torah at Horeb, and the inheritance of the Land?' (ERIC WERNER, cited in YUVAL, 1999, 104). The *dayenu* prayer responds to this accusation by saying that Israel did indeed feel deep gratitude for God's favors, so much so that, even if he had bestowed on them only one, or only two, or only three (and so on) of the 14, they would have felt that what had been given was sufficient for them to be grateful to him." (Citing I.J. YUVAL, "Easter and Passover as Early Jewish-Christian Dialogue" in *Passover and Easter: Origin and History to Modern Times* [eds. P.F.

God's gifts, but, by pushing for the death of God's incarnate Son, were also guilty of the ultimate crime of *deicide*, of murdering God Himself.[10] The punishment for this conscious rejection of God's plan was the revocation of God's covenants with Abraham and Moses. Instead, the Jewish covenant was transferred to the Christian community, the "new Israel," and Judaism's continued existence was simply as a living witness to the nations of the consequences of their "betrayal".[11]

BRADSHAW AND L.A. HOFFMAN; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999]). See also ERIC WERNER, "Two Hymns for Passover and Good Friday," in WERNER, *Sacred Bridge*, Vol. 2, 127-48.

[10] This longstanding traditional charge is first found, among the Fathers, in Melito of Sardis's late-second-century homily *Peri Pascha* [On the Pasch]: "He who hung the earth was hung; He who fixed the heavens was affixed; He who sustained all was suspended on the tree; the master has been outraged; *God has been murdered;* the king of Israel slain by an Israelite hand" (as cited in DONALD J. DIETRICH, *God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder* [New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers, 1995], 18; italics mine). See also ERIC WERNER, "Melito of Sardis, the First Poet of Deicide," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966), 191-210, and DAVID SATRAN, "Anti-Jewish Polemic in the *Peri Pascha* of Melito of Sardis: The Problem of Social Context," in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews* (eds. ORA LIMOR AND GUY G. STROUMSA; Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 10; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 49-58.

This theme is further expanded upon in Gregory of Nyssa's *Homily on the Resurrection of Christ*: "Slayers of the Lord, murderers of the prophets, adversaries of God, men who show contempt for the Law, foes of grace, enemies of their fathers' faith, advocates of the devil, brood of vipers, slanderers, scoffers, men whose minds are in darkness..." (*PG* 46:685-86; cited in DIETRICH, *God and Humanity*, 20). Similar texts can be found in the writings of many other Church Fathers (Origen, Tertullian, John Chrysostom, etc.); for a more extensive discussion, see EDWARD H. FLANNERY, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Macmillan, 1965) and BERNHARD BLUMENKRANZ, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris: Peeters, 2006). The term used by the Greek-speaking Fathers is θεοκτονος [God-killer]; the corresponding Latin term *deicida* seems to be used first by St. Peter Chrysologus (ca. 380-ca. 450) in his *Sermon 172:* "Judæos (invidia) fecit esse deicidas". "dĕīcīda," in *A Latin Dictionary* (eds. CHARLTON T. LEWIS AND CHARLES SHORT, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879; available online as part of the Perseus Project: www.perseus.tufts.edu). Although early drafts of Vatican II's "Schema de Judæis" included an explicit repudiation of the deicide charge, the term itself was removed from the final version, due to strong pressure from conservative bishops and several Arab states. On the political and religious pressures brought to bear on the bishops, see MAURO VELATI, "The Decree on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," in *History of Vatican II* (eds. GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO AND JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), Vol. 5, 211-21.

[11] See, e.g., the pseudonymous second-century *Epistle of Barnabas*, whose author cautions his readers: "Watch yourselves now and do not become like some people by piling up your sins, saying that the covenant is both theirs [i.e. the Jews'] and ours. For it is ours. But they permanently lost it ... Their covenant was smashed—that the covenant of his beloved, Jesus, might be sealed in our hearts, in the hope brought to faith in him ... Moses received the covenant, but they were not worthy ... Moses received it as a servant, but the Lord himself gave it to us, as a

In Roman Catholic churches throughout Europe, and around the world, the Good Friday liturgy included in its solemn intercessions a particularly caustic prayer titled *Pro Conversione Judæorum*, "For the Conversion of the Jews":

> *Oremus et pro perfidis Judæis, ut Deus et Dominus noster auferat velamen de cordibus eorum; ut et ipsi agnoscant Jesum Christum, Dominum nostrum. Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui etiam judaicam perfidiam a tua misericordia non repellis: exaudi preces nostras, quas pro illius populi obcæcatione deferimus; ut, agnita veritatis tuae luce, quae Christus est, a suis tenebris eruantur.* (Let us pray also for the faithless/unbelieving[12] Jews, that our Lord and God may remove the veil from their hearts, and that they, too, may recognize Jesus Christ, our Lord. All-powerful and eternal God, who does not drive away/exclude from your mercy even the faithlessness/lack of belief of the Jews: hear our prayers, which we offer on behalf of the blindness of that people, so that, having recognized the light of your truth, who is Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness).[13]

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people of the inheritance, by enduring suffering for us." (*The Apostolic Fathers* [EHRMAN, LCL], 4:6,8; 14:4, 23, 65). See also Augustine's famous comparison of the Jews to the Biblical Cain, in his *Reply to Faustus the Manichæan:* "The Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because after killing Christ they continue to till the ground of an earthly circumcision, an earthly Sabbath, an earthly Passover ... To the end of the seven days of time, the continued preservation of the Jews will be a proof to believing Christians of the subjection merited by those who, in the pride of their kingdom, put the Lord to death" (cited in FRANK EPHRAIM TALMAGE, *Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* [New York: Ktav, 1975], 30-31).

[12] Many translations into European vernaculars rendered the Latin *perfidis* by "perfidious" or a similar term (French *perfides;* Italian *perfidi,* etc.), etymologically related to the Latin adjective. Unfortunately, the word "perfidious" often took on a more sinister meaning in many of these languages, a meaning that went considerably beyond the literal sense of the original Latin adjective. "Rather apologetically, Msgr. [John] Oesterreicher argued that the term did not mean 'perfidious,' but rather 'unfaithful, non-believer'. This point of view is supported by some other authors, whom he cited. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the meaning of the Latin term, which is not 'incredulous' or 'non-believer,' but 'against the faith'. The Jew, therefore, is worse than the pagan, for the Jews knows the 'truth,' but stubbornly refuses to acknowledge it ... [T]he common conception of the Jew was that of a *stubborn* and *deliberate* unbeliever, one who knew the truth and yet denied it. The danger of the Jew was precisely that he was a 'witness,' however unwitting, to Christian 'truth,' that he possessed the sacred scriptures that were the foundation of that belief, the he was of the very people of the Christian Savior in the flesh, and yet denied all of this." NORMAN ROTH, "Church and Jews: Jewish Perfidy," in NORMAN ROTH, ed., *Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2003), 167-68. The reference is to OESTERREICHER's article *"Pro perfidis Judæis,"* in *Cahiers sioniens* 1 (1947), 85-101.

[13] It is worth noting that, on July 7, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI, by the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum,* reinvigorated the use of the pre-Vatican II (1962) Latin Mass, whose Good Friday liturgy included this prayer. After strenuous opposition from various Jewish and Jewish-Christian groups around the world, the pope personally rewrote the prayer and published a new version in February 2008, whose English translation is: "Let us pray also for the Jews. May our God and Lord enlighten their hearts, so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all people ... Almighty and everlasting God, who desires that all people be saved and come to the

This Good Friday prayer, although prayed only once a year, was, nonetheless, representative of a much larger stream of theological thinking and teaching that the French Jewish historian Jules Isaac[14] was later to characterize as "the teaching of contempt" [*l'enseignement du mépris*]. From the late first century onward, Christians had inveighed against the Jews for their refusal to embrace faith in Jesus as Messiah, a fact that Christians attributed either to stubbornness or spite. The Jews, as a covenant people, were perceived to have lost their status, and had become a religious curiosity, their city and holy place razed by the Romans (as God's instruments); exiled from the Holy Land, they were condemned to be eternal wanderers and outsiders because of their heinous crimes.[15] These themes, woven together in various combinations, and

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knowledge of the truth, mercifully grant that, when the fullness of the nations enters into your Church, all Israel may be saved. Through Christ our Lord. Amen." Needless to say, the revised prayer remains theologically problematic for many, and has not served to resolve the underlying questions. In a May 14, 2008 letter, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone clarified that the intention of the prayer was strictly eschatological, and was not intended to promote proselytizing of Jews (http://www.sidic.org/en/docOnLineView.asp?class=Doc00604).

For more background and discussion on this issue, see the Web site of Boston College's Center for Christian-Jewish Learning:

http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/topics/1962_missal.htm

[14] Isaac (1877-1963), a prominent French Jewish historian, lost his wife and daughter in the Holocaust. He spent the war years in hiding, studying Christianity in depth and attempting to understand the reasons that had led to the widespread Christian hatred of Jews. His later writings (*Jésus et Israël*, 1948; *La genèse de l'antisémitisme*, 1956; *L'enseignement du mépris*, 1962) and his leadership in post-war Jewish-Christian dialogue, were key catalysts in the Christian re-thinking of Judaism after WWII. See ANDRÉ KASPI, "Jules Isaac and His Role in Jewish-Christian Relations," in *Jews, Catholics, and the Burden of History* (ed. ELI LEDERHENDLER; Studies in Contemporary Jewry 21; New York: Published for the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry by Oxford University Press, 2005), 12-20.

[15] This motif is exemplified, e.g., in the "Rhythm Against the Jews" composed by the poet-monk St. Ephrem of Syria (ca. 306–373): "To-day the vineyard of the well-beloved is barren and scattered among the nations, and lo! the tramplers treat it contemptuously, for it is made a mock and is broken down! The hedge thereof that was rejected hath fallen; to-day it is removed and destroyed: and its high tower to-day hath the voice of the cry shaken down as Jericho, which was ruined at the voice of their trumpets! ... The great vineyard that was fruitless did the beasts of the forest feed upon: for it yielded not grapes, but wild clusters, and the Lord of the vineyard was wrath, and kindled fire in the branches thereof ... To-day the glory passed away from the people of Israel, and they stand among the nations ashamed, as Cain was, at their unnatural deed! To-day the breaches are multiplied in the dwellings of Jacob in every quarter, seeing the Workman that builded her walls hath now destroyed her corner-stones! To-day let the synagogue sing this song among the people, He hath brought upon us a great mourning, the Lord hath left me desolate, and the Lord hath forgotten that I am his heritage, and bath reckoned me as a stranger,

stressed differently by different authors, would form the basis of a stream of polemical literature that came to be known as *"adversus Judæos"* ("against the Jews").[16] Although particularly virulent instances of this genre are to be found in the works of patristic figures like Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 315-403) and John Chrysostom (347-407), its theological roots are certainly to be found in the still-intra-communal polemics of Paul's letters, Acts and Hebrews, in the second half of the first century. The more than 1500 years that separated these authors from their nineteenth- and twentieth-century heirs had done nothing to diminish the harshness of such comments, which had become the fodder of much Christian theology and preaching. Subtly but relentlessly, anti-Judaism become a constitutive tenet of Christian belief and practice, surfacing in more or less sophisticated, more or less explicit, ways. What began in the early centuries of Christianity had become, by the end of the nineteenth century, the stock terminology of Christian polemics against the Jews—even of Christians who had never met a Jew.

3. Theological Roots of Exclusivist Soteriology

The nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of European exploration of previously "unknown" continents, including large parts of Africa, South America and

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and as a widow that is bereaved!" St. Ephrem of Syria, *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian* (trans. J.B. Morris; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847), 64-65. The same ancient stereotype is reflected, almost 1500 years later, in the influential Italian Jesuit-run newspaper *La Civiltà cattolica* in 1897: "1,827 years have passed since the prediction of Jesus of Nazareth was fulfilled, namely, that Jerusalem would be destroyed ... that the Jews would be led away to be slaves among all the nations, and that they would remain in dispersion until the end of the world ... according to the Sacred Scriptures, the Jewish people must always live dispersed and *vagabondo* (vagrant) among the other nations, so that they may render witness to Christ, not only by the Scripture ... but by their very existence. As for a rebuilt Jerusalem, which might become the center of a reconstructed State of Israel, we must add that this is contrary to the predictions of Christ himself, who foretold that 'Jerusalem would be downtrodden by the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled' (Luke 21:24), that is ... until the end of the world." *La Civiltà cattolica,* Vol. 10 (May 1, 1897), 257-70, as cited in Anthony John Patrick Kenny, *Catholics, Jews and the State of Israel* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 23.

[16] See Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The *Adversus Judæos* Tradition in the Church Fathers: The Exegesis of Christian Anti-Judaism," in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation* (ed. Jeremy Cohen; New York: New York University Press, 1991), 174-92.

Asia. Following closely in the footsteps of the explorers were missionaries from various Christian churches, who sought to proclaim the Gospel message to the "heathens" of these lands. Although some of these missionaries demonstrated a surprising sensitivity to local cultures, languages and beliefs,[17] nevertheless, they were primarily guided by a series of theological "canons," fundamental presumptions which dictated the direction and content of Christian interaction with non-Christians.

First was the scripturally-rooted understanding of Christ as the sole and exclusive mediator of salvation for the human race. In John 14:6, Jesus had clearly taught, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," and in Acts 4:12, Peter, in his first post-Pentecost speech, was unambiguous in his proclamation of the risen Christ as the only path to the salvation God was offering: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved".

The second missionary "canon"—especially in Catholic circles—was summed up in the Latin axiom, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (Outside the Church, [there is] no salvation). First stated in this form in the mid-third century by St. Cyprian of Carthage in his *Epistle 73 to Jubianus,*[18] and by Origen in his *In Jesu nave ("Extra hanc domum, id*

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[17] These missionaries were often the first to record indigenous languages in written form, to prepare grammars and dictionaries, and to engage in (admittedly primitive) ethnological study. Examples include the work of William Boyce in the Xhosa language of south-east Africa, Lancelot Threlkeld in Australia, and of numerous Anglican and Catholic missionaries among the Inuit and other native tribes of northern and western Canada. See Otto Zwartjes and Even Hovdhaugen, eds. *Missionary Linguistics = Lingüistica Misionera: Selected Papers from the First International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, Oslo, 13-16 March, 2003.* Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science 106 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004); E.F.K. Koerner, "Missionary Linguistics in the Americas: The 'Heroic Period'," in *Essays in the History of Linguistics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 103-144; Donat Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada, 1845-1967: Esquisse historique* (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 1995).

[18] English text in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, transls. and eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers.* Volume 5 [this epistle is numbered 72 in this edition] (Originally published at Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885); as reproduced online at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.iv.lxxii.html

Especially since Vatican II, this apparently strict axiom has been interpreted in a considerably broader manner in Catholic circles; e.g., Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (On

est extra Ecclesiam, nemo salvatur"),[19] this teaching was upheld, restated and reinforced by Fathers of the Church, popes and several councils. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) taught in its first canon: "There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation,"[20] and the famous 1302 bull *Unam Sanctam* of Pope Boniface VIII left no doubt about the matter: "We declare, announce and define that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff".[21] This dictum, sometimes nuanced but never rescinded, remained a guiding principle of much Catholic missionary activity well into the mid-twentieth century. Needless to say, it effectively precluded any type of interreligious (and even inter-church) collaboration.

Thirdly, there is the teaching succinctly expressed as "Error has no rights". Although not always expressed in exactly these terms, a series of magisterial pronouncements by Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X and Pius XII certainly communicated the notion that no one could rightfully defend any religious,

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the Church): "Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things, and as Saviour wills that all men be saved. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel" (¶16; online at the Web site of the Vatican: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html).

[19] *PG* 12:841-42. It should be pointed out that, in other places (such as his *Peri Archōn),* Origen holds to the hope that, in the end, all people will attain salvation (*apokatastasis pantōn,* or "final restoration of all things"). This highly controversial position, repeatedly condemned in subsequent centuries, has recently found a more sympathetic hearing among theologians. For more on this, see Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 47-60, and Brian E. Daley, "Eschatology," in John A. McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 95-96.

[20] H.J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1937); as reproduced online on Paul Halsall's "Medieval Source Book": http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.html.

[21] Ernest F. Henderson, transl. and ed. *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1916), 437.

philosophical or political teachings that were demonstrably contrary to the truth of the Gospel and, therefore, erroneous:

> "Liberty of worship" ... is not liberty at all but the depravation of liberty and the servitude of a soul abandoned to sin.[22]

> [Among condemned errors:] Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true ... Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation, and arrive at eternal salvation ... Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ ... The Church has not the power of defining dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only true religion.[23]

> ... that which does not correspond to the truth and to the moral norm has objectively no right either of existence or of self-propagation or of action.[24]

These experiences and streams of thought congealed in a less-than-subtle theological disdain for Jews on the part of many Christians. To the degree that Jews insisted on remaining Jews, they would remain *personæ non gratæ*, obliged to endure their subjugation, both because of the inherited guilt of their ancestors, and because of their own refusal to convert in the present. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that on January 25, 1904, when Theodor Herzl was received in a Vatican audience by Pope Pius X, his request for papal endorsement of the fledgling Zionist enterprise received a chilly and unequivocal response:

> We are unable to favour this movement. The Jews have not recognized our Lord; therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people ... We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem, but we could never sanction it. If you come

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[22] Pope Leo XIII, *Acta Leonis XIII* 8, 229-30 (as reproduced by Kevin J. Flannery, SJ, online at: http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Dossier/00MarApr/doctrine.html)

[23] Pope Pius IX, *Syllabus of Condemned Errors*, an appendix to the Pope's encyclical *Quanta cura* (Dec. 8, 1864), ## 15-17, 21; as available online at: http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P9SYLL.HTM

[24] Pope Pius XII, *AAS* 45 (1953), 799, as reproduced by Flannery online; see above. For a study of this school of thought, and its gradual evolution in Catholicism, see John Courtney Murray and J. Leon Hooper, *Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*. Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); Raymond Lafontaine, *The Development of a Moral Doctrine: Religious Liberty and Doctrinal Development in the Works of John Henry Newman and John Courtney Murray* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2001).

> to Palestine and settle your people there, our churches and priests will be ready to baptize all of you.[25]

Such was the theological climate at the dawn of the twentieth century, in Catholic circles certainly, but, to a lesser degree, in many other Christian denominations as well.

The question of a direct causal link between Christian anti-Jewish polemics and Nazi anti-Semitism is a vexed one. Some scholars see a clear ideological trajectory from the New Testament to *Mein Kampf*, such that Hitler was simply a natural outgrowth of Christianity, and National Socialism a logical corollary of Christian teaching.[26] Others argue that the Nazi racist hatred of Jews proceeded from very different principles (concerned more with eugenics than with religion), drew more upon certain mythic themes in German folk literature and music, and that the majority of Nazi leaders were

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[25] *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl* (ed. RAPHAEL PATAI, 5 vols.), Vol. 4, 1602-03; as cited by SERGIO MINERBI in *The Vatican and Zionism: Conflict in the Holy Land, 1895-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 100-101.

[26] E.g., JAMES CARROLL, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002); DANIEL JONAH GOLDHAGEN, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002); JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN, *Who Killed Jesus?: Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995). ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER, in her now-classic 1974 book *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), phrases the issue in a particularly sharp form: is anti-Semitism the necessary consequence of Christology? "Is it possible to say 'Jesus is the Messiah' without, implicitly or explicitly, saying at the same time, 'and the Jews be damned'?" (246). In this context, it is difficult not to reflect on the widely-cited conversation between Hitler and two ranking German Catholic prelates in 1933: "... in a face-to-face meeting with [Osnabrück] Bishop Berning and Monsignor Steinmann, on April 26, 1933, Hitler touched upon the Jewish Question and stressed the fundamental agreement between Nazism and Catholicism. reminding the prelates that the church always had regarded the Jews as parasites and had banished them into the ghetto. He innocently stated that he was merely doing what the Catholic Church had espoused and done for 1,500 years. The reaction of the two church dignitaries to these words is not known." MORDECAI PALDIEL, *Churches and the Holocaust: Unholy Teaching, Good Samaritans, and Reconciliation* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2006), 46. Hitler claimed merely to be doing in a more efficient and systematic fashion what the Christian Church had been attempting to do for 1500 years. See also JOHN TOLAND, *Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography* (New York: Anchor, 1976), 311; GÜNTER LEWY, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 274-75.

not practicing Christians (many, in fact, had an intense hatred of Christianity, though it was often revealed only in private).[27]

> In obliterating the Jews, Hitler, like Wagner, hoped to eradicate all traces of their humane values and their God, the God of Israel, creating in their stead a terrifying world based on ruthless instinct and man himself as his only God. Once the physical, racial and spiritual presence of the Jews had been removed, Christianity completely divorced from its Jewish roots would itself be the more easily obliterated or simply subverted into a disguised paganism, as happened with the German church.[28]

However, almost no one today would deny that centuries of rhetoric portraying Jews as qualitatively different (and almost sub-human), and of practices denigrating and humiliating Jews, did, in fact, provide more than fertile ground in which the seeds of anti-Jewish racism could spring up and flourish. Historians differ as to the degree of

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[27] See, e.g., FRIEDRICH WILHELM FOERSTER, *Europe and the German Question* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940); DANIEL GASMAN, "Monism and National Socialism," in *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Pubishers, 2004), esp. 166-68. Gasman reports Hitler's opinion that Christianity was "an invention of sick brains; one could imagine nothing more senseless, nor any more indecent way of turning the idea of God-head into a mockery" (167). An excellent and nuanced overview of the Nazis' ambivalent relationship toward Christianity can be found in RICHARD STEIGMANN-GALL, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and in KATHLEEN HARVILL-BURTON, ed., *Le nazisme comme religion: quatre théologiens déchiffrent le code religieux nazi, 1932-1945*. Québec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006.

[28] MARGARET BREARLEY, "Hitler and Wagner: The Leader, the Master, and the Jews," in *Patterns of Prejudice* (Institute of Jewish Affairs) 22:2 (Summer 1988), 3-21; citation from p. 19. See also JACK R. FISCHEL AND SUSAN M. ORTMANN, "From Anti-Judentum to Anti-Semitism," in FISHEL AND ORTMANN, *The Holocaust and Its Religious Impact: A Critical Assessment and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 43-93. " 'The fact that German anti-Semitism had evolved into anti-Christianity must be considered a highly significant symptom,' said the Russian Orthodox Catholic theologian Nikolai Berdyaev [*Christianity and Anti-Semitism*, 2]. This basic anti-Christianity of German Nazism is something that is almost totally overlooked by popular historians and journalists. Though Nazi ideologies had proclaimed anti-Christian doctrines ever since the party was formed in 1919, only anti-Semitic slogans were stressed in world headlines. Yet the Nazis wanted to obliterate Christianity as much as they wanted to expunge Judaism. In the Nazi view, Christianity represented a danger because it weakened the Aryan strain of blood through proselytization. They held that 'Aryan Christianity' had been betrayed by St. Paul; they contended that Christian churches were a sham and a fraud; and they preached that the Catholic Church was the most dangerous of all because it was both Jewish and international. The Nazis taught that National Socialism was the only true gospel, the sole faith and salvation of the German people, and that Hitler was the sole savior. This gibberish is incorporated in official Nazi works from which stemmed both anti-Semitic and anti-Christian doctrines ... Hitler's aim was to eradicate all religious organizations within the state and to foster a return to paganism." MAX I. DIMONT, *Jews, God and History*. 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin/Signet, 2004), 396-97.

direct responsibility they place on the shoulders of Christian teachings. Even formal Christian declarations, however, admit the significant role that a long legacy of anti-Jewish thought and speech played in laying the groundwork for that tragedy:

> In the historical process leading to the *Shoah*, it is important to acknowledge the primary role, if not direct then indirect, played by false anti-Jewish stereotypes constantly perpetuated among Christians. Indeed, in spite of (and in part because of) the Jewish roots of Christianity, together with the fidelity of the Jewish people to the One God throughout their history, the "original parting of the ways" begun in the second half of the first century led to separation, then to animosity and long-standing hostility between Christians and Jews. While not denying the social, political, cultural, and economic influences in the long history of misunderstanding and often antagonism between Jews and Christians, a main cause of the conflict lay in the realm of religion. This is not to say that a direct line of cause and effect can be drawn between these expressions of anti-Judaism and the *Shoah*, because the Nazi plan to annihilate the Jewish people had other sources. It is a well-attested fact among historians that a centuries-long tradition of anti-Judaism—which in various degrees affected Christian doctrine and teachings, theology and apologetics, preaching and liturgy—prevailed among Christians until Vatican Council II. This soil nurtured the poisonous plant of hatred for Jews with its legacy of serious consequences ...[29]

> ... In the Christian world ... erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their alleged culpability have circulated for too long, engendering feelings of hostility towards this people. They contributed to the lulling of consciences, so that when the wave of persecutions inspired by a pagan anti-Semitism—which in essence is equivalent to anti-Christianity—swept across Europe, alongside Christians who did everything to save the persecuted even at the risk of their lives, the spiritual resistance of many was not what humanity rightfully expected from the disciples of Christ.[30]

The ground-breaking 2001 statement *"Dabru Emet,"* published by the National Jewish Scholars' Project[31] and subsequently endorsed by dozens of prominent Jewish

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[29] French Bishops' Conference, "The Drancy Declaration of Repentance"; September 30, 1997; English translation online at the Web site of the Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne [SIDIC]: http://www.sidic.org/en/docOnLineView.asp?class=Doc00474

[30] Pope John Paul II, "Address to a Vatican Colloquium on the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Christian Milieu"; October 31, 1997; text from *L'Osservatore Romano* (November 5, 1997, 1), as cited in *A Story of Shalom: The Calling of Christians and Jews by a Covenanting God* (ed. Philip A. Cunningham; New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 94.

[31] http://www.icjs.org/what/njsp/dabruemet.html

scholars and religious leaders[32] walks a very fine line between positing a direct causal relationship between Christian teaching and Nazi atrocities, and absolving Christianity entirely:

> Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon. Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out ... But Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity. If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians. (Point 5)[33]

It may never be possible to calculate the exact proportion of Christianity's moral responsibility for the rise of Nazi racism, and for the Holocaust. It is beyond question today, however, that centuries of anti-Jewish Christian teaching had conditioned European Christian minds to think the worst of their Jewish neighbours, and had contributed to a desensitization of Christian consciences in the face of increasingly repressive and violent anti-Jewish measures.

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[32] http://www.icjs.org/what/njsp/signers.html

[33] A similar assertion, contained in the Vatican's 1998 document *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana), sparked considerable criticism at the time from scholars, both Jewish and Christian: "*... We cannot ignore the difference which exists between anti-Semitism, based on theories contrary to the constant teaching of the Church on the unity of the human race and on the equal dignity of all races and peoples, and the long-standing sentiments of mistrust and hostility that we call anti-Judaism, of which, unfortunately, Christians also have been guilty.* The National Socialist ideology went even further, in the sense that it refused to acknowledge any transcendent reality as the source of life and the criterion of moral good. Consequently, a human group, and the State with which it was identified, arrogated to itself an absolute status and determined to remove the very existence of the Jewish people, a people called to witness to the one God and the Law of the Covenant. At the level of theological reflection we cannot ignore the fact that not a few in the Nazi Party not only showed aversion to the idea of divine Providence at work in human affairs, but gave proof of a definite hatred directed at God himself. Logically, such an attitude also led to a rejection of Christianity, and a desire to see the Church destroyed or at least subjected to the interests of the Nazi State. It was this extreme ideology which became the basis of the measures taken, first to drive the Jews from their homes and then to exterminate them. *The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity and, in pursuing its aims, it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute her members also.*" (Section IV; my italics)

4. Personal Impact on Chouraqui

These, then, were the events, the trends, the sentiments and the prejudices which formed the backdrop for the first half of André Chouraqui's life. Chouraqui, who had grown up alongside many Catholics in French-governed Algeria and been educated in French schools, was a 22-year-old university student at the outbreak of the Second World War. He witnessed the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Christian France and in his colonial homeland; he experienced the marginalization of France's Jewish community, culminating in the fall of 1940, when the Vichy régime formally stripped French and French-Algerian Jews of their citizenship and their rights.[34] As a member of the *maquis,* he was all too aware of the reports of gross atrocities being committed by the Nazis in their concentration camps and, although he recounts how energetically some Christian pastors cooperated with the Resistance[35], nevertheless he was struck that such a predominantly Catholic country could bear such animus toward its Jews, and could turn its back on them in their hour of most dire need. Like Jules Isaac, Chouraqui's bitter wartime experiences left him with profound questions about the roots of the Christian hatred of the Jews—and committed to overturning it.

The public revelation of the full extent of the *Shoah* in the years immediately following the war provoked a tremendous *crise de conscience* on the part of many European Christians. It could no longer be denied that many Christians had actively collaborated with the Nazi death-machine; beyond that, however, were the many millions who seemingly turned a blind eye to the atrocities and did nothing, either to

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[34] Robert B. Satloff says that the Vichy edict revoked the citizenship of 98.5% of Algerian Jews who had possessed it. *Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 106. The French Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld estimates that 115,000 Algerian Jews were affected by this decree. Serge Klarsfeld, Susan Cohen, and Howard M. Epstein, *French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 14.

[35] André Chouraqui, *L'amour fort comme la mort: Une autobiographie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990), 321.

protest or to protect those whose lives were threatened.[36] How could such behaviour be squared in any way with the clear-cut teachings of Jesus Christ, about active compassion for the vulnerable and weak (cf. Matt 25:31-46), and about love of neighbour as the obligatory corollary of love of God (cf. Matt 19:19; 22:34-40 and pars.)? The surviving Jews were left incredulous at the broad involvement of Christians in the Nazi persecutions, and Christians themselves were left to ponder their guilt and grapple with their shame.

It was in this context of moral ambiguity, suspicion and self-examination that, in 1946, the International Council of Christians and Jews was established. In the summer of 1947 (July 30-August 5), the nascent ICCJ organized a historic interfaith conference in Seelisberg, Switzerland, probably the first significant international gathering of Jews and Christians since the war's end.[37] During this colloquium, the participants considered a dossier of materials which had been prepared by Jules Isaac, examining the correctives necessary to rectify the distorted Christian view of Jews and Judaism.[38] Their final statement (which has become known as the "Ten Points of Seelisberg") pointed the way toward a fundamental reorientation of Christian thinking

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[36] It is particularly instructive to realize that Yad Vashem has succeeded in gathering documentation on only slightly more than 22,000 Righteous Gentiles, non-Jews who protected or aided Jews during the Holocaust (http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/statistics.html). While this is certainly not the actual total, nevertheless this number was out of a population of between 475 and 500 million inhabitants during the war years—at most, a ratio of 0.005% (Robert C. Ostergren and John G. Rice cite the European population as being 512.5 million in 1950; *The Europeans: A Geography of People, Culture, and Environment*. Texts in Regional Geography [New York: Guilford Press, 2004], 95). As Yad Vashem itself acknowledges on the above Web site, such statistical averages can be deceiving, since the situation of Jews differed significantly from one European country to another.

[37] See James K. Aitken, "Seelisberg Conference," in Kessler and Wenborn, eds., *Dictionary*, 399; Paul Démann, "De Seelisberg à Vatican II," *Sens*. Nouvelle série, n° 305 (février 2006), 77-84; Alexandre Safran, "Mes souvenirs de la Conférence de Seelisberg (1947) et de l'abbé Journet," in *Judaïsme, anti-judaïsme et christianisme: Colloque de l'Université de Fribourg, 16-20 mars 1998* (Saint-Maurice, France: Éditions Saint-Augustin, 2000), 13-22.

[38] A more in-depth version of Isaac's study, comprising eighteen points of needed revision, would form the basis of his ground-breaking 1948 critique, *Jésus et Israël* (Paris: Albin Michel).

on a number of major theological and historical issues.[39] We know from their surviving correspondence[40] that Isaac and Chouraqui had already been discussing the proper approach to these issues for several years. In a letter of September 10, 1945 (just a year after the liberation of France, and only four months after the end of the war), Chouraqui wrote to Isaac:

> Ce qui nous rapproche des chrétiens n'est-il pas plus important que ce qui nous en sépare ? Et l'heure d'un rapprochement judéo-chrétien, d'une réunion, n'aurait-il pas sonné avec celle de nos millions de martyrs communs ? ... Jésus et Israël me semblent infiniment plus proches que ne le croient les Juifs et habituellement les Chrétiens.[41]

Chouraqui clearly believed that, in the wake of the horrors of the war, the only viable path forward lay in a concrete dialogue between Jews and Christians, in breaking down the walls of misunderstanding, ignorance and prejudice that had traditionally kept the two faiths at arm's length. It is not surprising to learn, then, that Chouraqui was, with Isaac, one of the founding fathers, in 1948, of the French *Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, a new (and novel) national organization intended to bring Jews and Christians together in discussion, mutual comprehension and friendship.[42] It was thus

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[39] See the Appendix in GREGORY BAUM, *The Jews and the Gospel, A Re-Examination of the New Testament* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1961); text online at: http://sidic.org/en/DocOnLineView.asp?class=Doc00029
"...Cette entente ne se fit pas spontanément et il fallut vaincre bien des réticences chez les catholiques. Jules Isaac insistait pour que l'Église catholique abandonnât définitivement l'accusation de déicide ... Ses partenaires catholiques acceptaient volontiers la responsabilité de l'enseignement de leur Église dans la propagation de l'antisémitisme mais souhaitaient curieusement que les juifs reconnussent leurs torts envers le christianisme. Le refus de la délégation juive, qui estimait à n'avoir rien à reprocher au judaïsme, fut clair et net, ce qui provoqua une suspension de la commission. La proclamation commune que sont les 'Dix points de Seelisberg' fut élaborée dans un débat houleux. Ce dérapage de départ dans le rapprochement judéo-chrétiens témoigne d'un antijudaïsme vivace... " DANIELLE DELMAIRE, "Antisémitisme des catholiques au vingtième siècle: de la revendication au refus" in *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (ed. KAY CHADWICK ; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 38.

[40] ANDRÉ CHOURAQUI, *Le destin d'Israël: Correspondances avec Jules Isaac, Jacques Ellul, Jacques Maritain et Marc Chagall; Entretiens avec Paul Claudel* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2007).

[41] CHOURAQUI, *Destin*, 24.

[42] The AJ-CF's statement of purpose reads: "L'A.J.-C.F. a pour tâche essentielle de faire qu'entre Judaïsme et Christianisme, la connaissance, la compréhension, le respect et l'amitié mutuels se substituent aux malentendus séculaires et aux traditions d'hostilité qui ont trop souvent marqué leurs relations à diverses périodes de l'histoire. Elle veut, en particulier par un dialogue fraternel

not only Chouraqui's bitter experience of the war, but also the network of his personal and intellectual connections in France, which placed him in a situation to participate centrally in the birth of this new and very different interaction between European Jews and Christians.

Chouraqui's friendship with Jules Isaac would also link him, though indirectly, with one of the other major turning-points of modern Christian-Jewish history: the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Isaac's books—*Jésus et Israël* (1948), *Genèse de l'antisémitisme* (1956) and *L'enseignement du mépris* (1962)—had distilled down years of careful historical and theological analysis of key Christian claims. He had, however, failed to secure any reforms in Catholicism as a result of a 1949 meeting with Pope Pius XII.[43] With the 1958 election of Cardinal Angelo Roncalli as Pope John XXIII, Isaac saw the potential for possible dialogue with a former Vatican diplomat who had distinguished himself in his wartime efforts to protect and save threatened Jews. When, in January 1959, Pope John announced the convoking of an ecumenical council of all the world's Catholic bishops to modernize Catholic life, Isaac's hopes were lifted. On June 13, 1960, he had an audience with the Pope, in which he presented a synthesis of his findings. The octogenarian historian asked the octogenarian Pope that the upcoming Council take a firm stand against anti-Semitism, and reform traditional anti-Jewish teachings and prayers in Catholic life. "May I leave with some hope?" Isaac asked as he departed; "You have a right to more than just

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et une coopération active, éviter le retour des erreurs, des fautes et des crimes passés, et combattre l'antisémitisme et l'antijudaïsme dans toutes leurs manifestations. Elle exclut de part et d'autre toute espèce de prosélytisme et ne vise aucunement à une fusion des religions ou des Églises. Elle ne demande à personne de renoncer à ses croyances. L'A.J.-C.F. attend de chacun de ses membres une totale loyauté d'esprit dans les échanges et dans la recherche de la vérité, afin de développer des liens fraternels et de faciliter des actions conjointes pour le bien de tous."
(http://www.jcrelations.net/fr/?item=2473)

[43] See "Isaac's 1949 and 1959 Papal Audiences," in MICHAEL PHAYER, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 204-05.

hope," the Pope famously replied.[44] Isaac's research, placed into the hands of Cardinal Augustin Bea[45] and a team of Catholic theological experts, would provide the foundations for one of the Council's most hotly-argued and eagerly-awaited documents. The original 1962 schema of a "Decree on the Jews" became, via a tortuous and intrigue-riddled path, a conciliar "declaration on the Church's relationship to non-Christian religions," promulgated in October 1965.[46] Entitled *Nostra Ætate* ("In our time"), its tightly-worded paragraph 4 on Judaism was the source of much celebration and some consternation. It was not everything its advocates had hoped for, but it was much more than some of the more conservative bishops were entirely comfortable with.[47] For the first time, the Catholic Church had issued a formal teaching document confirming the status of the Jewish covenant, denouncing anti-Semitism and racism,

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[44] A partial transcript of Isaac's own account of this meeting are available online at the Web site of SIDIC (Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne):
http://www.sidic.org/it/reviewViewArticolo.asp?id=690

[45] Augustin Bea (1881-1968), a distinguished German Jesuit biblical scholar and confessor to the late Pope Pius XII, had served as rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute from 1930 to 1949. Although Bea was already over 70 at the time, John XXIII asked him to begin drafting a document for the Council's consideration, and to help steer it through the Council. Appointed a cardinal in 1959, he became one of the great leaders in ecumenical and inter-faith outreach, becoming, in 1960, the first president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. His 1966 book, *The Church and the Jewish People* (London: Geoffrey Chapman) was one of the first post-conciliar attempts to demonstrate the logic behind the Church's apparent *volte-face* regarding the Jews and Judaism.

[47] For a comprehensive history of *Nostra Ætate*'s evolution, see: JOHN M. OSTERREICHER, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: Introduction and Commentary," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (ed. HERBERT VORGRIMLER; London: Burns & Oates, 1969), Vol. 3, 1-136; THOMAS STRANSKY, "The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*," in *America* (October 24, 2005); online at:
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=4431.
See also the lecture by ALBERTO MELLONI, "*Nostra Ætate* and the Discovery of the Sacrament of Otherness" (given as part of the Pontifical Gregorian University's series "The Catholic Church and the Jewish People From Vatican II to Today"); online at:
http://www.sidic.org/it/conferenzaPrint.asp?id=26

[47] It is worth noting that, when the final ceremonial vote of the bishops was taken (on October 28, 1965), the results were 1765 in favour of the document's final version, 10 abstentions, and only 250 against—a vote of more than 87% in favour. See JOHANNES G.M. WILLEBRANDS, *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1992), 42. Hans Küng, who was in attendance at the Council as a *peritus*, or theological expert, cites different (and more positive) statistics: 2312 in favour, and only 88 against (=96.3%). KÜNG, *My Struggle for Freedom: A Memoir* (London: Continuum, 2004), 422.

and rejecting the ascription of responsibility for Christ's death to the Jewish people as a whole. Limited though it might be, it was—as the media and Jewish commentators agreed—a revolutionary step forward in Christian-Jewish *rapprochement.*[48] Subsequent Vatican instructions in 1974, 1985, 1998 and 2001,[49] and complementary documents from many national bishops' conferences,[50] confirmed, expanded upon and clarified the terse language in which *Nostra Ætate* had been written. The tide had definitively turned away from the previous centuries of disdain, abuse and violence, and toward a new relationship of cooperation, mutual esteem and friendship.

5. Additional historical and theological factors

The influence of Jules Isaac, and of Chouraqui's friendship with him, cannot be underestimated in the unfolding of these events. However, it was not a simple tangent that led from Jules Isaac and the *Shoah* to a renewal of Christian-Jewish relations. Other historical and theological factors played a contributing role in this dramatic turn-around, and should not be overlooked.

Among these were two significant trends in the first half of the twentieth century in Christian circles, and especially in Catholicism. The first of them was the

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[48] "However inadequate, theologically, the statements may have seemed from a Jewish perspective, there is no gainsaying their profound contribution to a more open atmosphere in the relations between Jews and Christians." Arthur Gilbert, *The Vatican Council and the Jews* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1968), 219; "If nothing else came out of Vatican Council II other than what took place in Rome on September 28 and 29, 1964 [i.e. the main debate on *Nostra Ætate*], the Council more than justified its existence in terms of Jewish interests." Marc H. Tanenbaum, "A Jewish Viewpoint" in *Vatican II: An Inter-Faith Appraisal* (ed. John H. Miller, CSC; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press / New York: Association Press, 1966), 356.

[49] Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews [CRRJ], "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *'Nostra Ætate'*" (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Dec. 1, 1974); "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Jun. 24, 1985); *We Remember: A Reflection on the* Shoah (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 16, 1998); Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002).

[50] These statements (from the bishops of France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Canada, the United States, Poland, Germany, Brazil, Italy, Australia, Switzerland, Spain, Lithuania, Great Britain and Israel) are available in several languages on the SIDIC Web site:
http://www.sidic.org/en/docOnLineCat2.asp

budding Biblical movement within Catholicism. Although the chill of the Modernist crisis[51] had provoked considerable reticence on the part of Catholic critical exegetes, nevertheless research in the Bible continued to progress, slowly and patiently, in places like Jerusalem's *École Biblique.*[52] Muted encouragement of Catholic Biblical study by Popes Leo XIII (*Providentissimus Deus,* 1893) and Benedict XV (*Spiritus Paraclitus,* 1920) gave way in 1943 to a strongly-worded endorsement of critical exegesis by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu.* With the growth in Bible reading and study by Catholics came both a new familiarity with the Old Testament, and a new generation of young Catholic scholars with significant competence in the study of Hebrew and Judaism—some of whom had lived and studied in Israel. From the 1940s onward, Catholics took an increasing interest in Scripture, and Catholic exegetes became full-fledged members of the guild of Biblical experts.[53] More and more, they

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[51] The Modernist crisis, roughly spanning the first two decades of the twentieth century, was a period in which the official Catholic Church reacted dramatically to the perceived excesses of critical biblical inquiry on the part of some Catholic scholars, whose writings were thought to be tainted with rationalism, anti-supernaturalism or liberalism. A number of prominent theologians—including Dominican Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange [1855-1938], founder of Jerusalem's École Biblique—fell at some time under suspicion of Modernism, and were either dismissed or temporarily removed from their posts. In his 1907 encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis,* Pope Pius X described Modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies," and, in September 1910, imposed an "Oath Against Modernism," to be sworn by all parish priests, seminary professors and religious superiors; it continued in force until 1967. For an excellent overview of this period and the issues involved, see Marvin Richard O'Connell, *Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the Catholic Modernist Crisis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994) and Lester R. Kurtz, *The Politics of Heresy: The Modernist Crisis in Roman Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[52] Founded by Père Lagrange in 1890, the École is the oldest Catholic institution specializing in graduate-level study of the Bible and Middle Eastern archæology, and is the home of the eminent scholarly journal *La Revue Biblique.* When his name was mentioned in a 1912 Vatican condemnation, Lagrange voluntarily withdrew to France for a year, and even offered to change the École's *Revue biblique* into a review for Palestinian and Eastern studies; see Bernard Montagnes, *Marie-Joseph Lagrange: Une biographie critique* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 247. Montagne's book provides an in-depth study of Père Lagrange's founding of the École, and of his personal struggles during the Modernist crisis; see especially Chs. 2 through 12.

[53] For an examination of this transformation and its consequences, see: Joseph G. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis.* Tesi Gregoriana 50 (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1999); Maurice Gilbert, "Reflections on Catholic Exegesis and Jewish-Christian Dialogue at the Pontifical Biblical Institute," in Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod, eds., *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation.* Studies

engaged and collaborated with their Jewish colleagues, and read articles and commentaries by Jewish authors.

The second trend was the Liturgical Movement, whose roots can be traced to Germany, Belgium and Switzerland in the early years of the twentieth century.[54] These liturgical scholars—several Catholic monks among them—became convinced that the Mass as codified by the sixteenth-century Council of Trent was in need of a careful reform, so as to make its original structure and meaning more evident, and to enable greater participation by the laity. This movement of *"ressourcement"* necessarily implied recourse to the earliest strata of Christian liturgical sources, and a consideration of the reliance of *Christian* liturgical forms upon *Jewish* ones. In both Biblical and liturgical study, the "return to the sources" (using many of the tools of source and redaction criticism) focussed new attention on Christianity's Jewish pedigree, but precisely at the time when the National Socialists were most ambitious to deny or sever any such links.[55]

Chouraqui's own engagement in interreligious dialogue also coincided providentially with the decades immediately following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which, perhaps more than any other single ingredient, have contributed to a wholesale re-thinking of Second Temple Judaism, and the religious and political context out of which Christianity was born and evolved. Although many initial publications posited a much closer linkage between the Qumran commune and the

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in Judaism and Christianity (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 63-77; GERALD P. FOGARTY, *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A History from the Early Republic to Vatican II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

[54] On the Liturgical Movement, see ANDRÉ HAQUIN, "The Liturgical Movement and Catholic Ritual Revision," in *Oxford History of Christian Worship* (eds. GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT AND KAREN B. WESTERFIELD TUCKER; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 696-719; ANDRÉ HAQUIN, *Dom Lambert Beauduin et le renouveau liturgique.* Recherches et synthèses: Section d'histoire 1 (Gembloux, France: Duculot, 1970); BURKHARD NEUNHEUSER, « Il movimento liturgico : Panorama storico e lineamenti teologici, » in *Anàmnesis* I (Turin: Marietti, 1974), 11-30.

[55] See, e.g., SUSANNAH HESCHEL'S recent *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

early Christians than would be commonly accepted today[56], nevertheless these manuscripts have offered vitally important insights into the diversity of Jewish thought and life in the centuries around the lifetime of Jesus. As such, they have contributed richly to the "Third Quest for the Historical Jesus," which has occupied many Christian and Jewish scholars for the last four decades, and in which the Jewishness of Jesus is now a constitutive and firmly-established starting-point.[57]

Chouraqui's work, therefore, cannot be separated from his own singular personal history, and the constellation of events and experiences in which he found himself. It was because of France's colonial presence in his native Algeria that André Chouraqui first encountered European Christians and Christian culture. Those Christian contacts, beginning with the local Catholic kindergarten he attended, continued through his life in Paris, and kindled in him a fascination with Christianity. The experience of the war years raised painful questions for him about the motivation for collaborationist Christians, and for the widespread apathy in the face of Jewish suffering, and yet also spurred him to work with pioneering figures like Jules Isaac, to build bridges with like-minded Christians.

Chouraqui was fortunate to live in an era when Jewish-Christian reconciliation was the order of the day, but also in which Christians themselves were experiencing a new desire to re-discover Judaism and the "Jewish roots" of Christianity for themselves. The post-war *glasnost* between Jews and Christians produced Christians

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[56] E.g.: "The monastery, this structure of stone that endures, between the bitter waters and precipitous cliffs, with its oven and its inkwells, its mill and its cesspool, its constellation of sacred fonts and the unadorned graves of its dead, is perhaps, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity." EDMUND WILSON, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 97-98. See also the controversial 1990s best-seller *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, by MICHAEL BAIGENT AND RICHARD LEIGH (New York: Summit Books, 1991).

[57] See, e.g., JAMES C. VANDERKAM AND PETER W. FLINT. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002); HARTMUT STEGEMANN, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Jesus: A Colloquium in the Holy Land* (eds. DORIS DONNELLY AND JAMES D. G. DUNN; New York: Continuum, 2001), 27-44.

who actively sought out and studied Jewish sources in their research, and who engaged in scholarly dialogue with Jewish experts.[58] International colloquia, and local interfaith dialogue initiatives, encouraged a thawing of the traditional "chill" between the two religions, and established a critical mass of individuals—both on the scholarly and popular levels—for whom Judaism was no longer a relative "unknown," but a dynamic, living conversation-partner, both enriching and challenging traditional Christian interpretations and categories. The Romanian-born Israeli scholar Bluma Finkelstein (herself profoundly skeptical of the concept and motives of "Jewish-Christian dialogue"), nevertheless acknowledges that the post-war era created a very new situation, both psychologically and theologically, for both Jews and Christians:

> En cette fin de XXe siècle ... [u]ne partie du monde chrétien, consciente de sa part de responsabilités dans le nazisme, avait besoin de ce dialogue avec les juifs pour battre sa coulpe. Les juifs d'Europe, les survivants qui devaient continuer de vivre en milieu chrétien, avaient eux aussi besoin de la reconnaissance de cette partie du monde chrétien qui faisait pénitence. Chacun essayait d'exorciser ses propres démons. A ce moment, apparaissait un facteur tout nouveau au XXe siècle : l'écrivain juif. En effet, pour la première fois, les intellectuels juifs ont pris la parole et ont osé dire à haute voix et sans égards ce qu'ils pensaient du christianisme et des chrétiens. Ils se faisaient le porte-parole du peuple juif et de la religion juive. Certains ont mis aussi des nuances dans leur critique, par conviction ou par désir de jeter coûte que coûte un pont entre les deux communautés. Ce fut le cas de Jules Isaac, ensuite d'André Chouraqui. D'autres ont exprimé tout simplement le point de vue du judaïsme

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[58] See, e.g., BENEDICT VIVIANO, "Catholic Perceptions of the Jewish People Since the Second World War," in ROBERT S. WISTRICH, ed., *Terms of Survival: The Jewish World Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 1995), 349-57. "... [I]n the 1950s other Catholic elites felt it important to have a Catholic presence to the new state, e.g. the Dominicans of St Isaiah house (whose superior, Marcel Dubois, was in 1989 made a worthy of Jerusalem), the order of Notre Dame de Sion and the Carmelites of Haifa. Their work continues. Roman Catholic priests and sisters began to study at Jewish universities in Israel and America, as once Gershom Scholem had received his doctorate in a Catholic philosophy programme in Munich ... One concrete embodiment of this new mood is the agreement between the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. According to this agreement, students from the Biblical Institute, who are for the most part the future seminary professors of the Catholic world, spend a semester at Hebrew University, at reduced rates. This arrangement too cannot fail to have its effect." (353-54). See also the personal accounts in JOHN C. MERKLE AND WALTER J. HARRELSON, eds. *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

traditionnel, c'est-à-dire orthodoxe, tels Emmanuel Lévinas, Edmond Fleg ou Arnold Mandel.[59]

In such a changed world, it now became, not only thinkable but desirable, for a Jewish scholar to embark on a translation of the New Testament—a momentous and still radical idea—and the ground was prepared for its reception in Christian and Jewish circles. A quarter-century after World War II, the 1970s and 80s marked a time when a Jewish scholar could translate the Christian Scriptures without the need to apologize, and when Christians were open to the unique contributions that Jewish scholarship could offer to an accurate and informed understanding of their own faith. In so many ways, it was a particularly propitious historical moment, and André Chouraqui would seem to be the right person to engage in such a venture, breaking new ground in the reading of an age-old religious text.

Conclusion

André Chouraqui's long life spanned both the worst and the best of Jewish-Christian relations. At his birth, the entrenched anti-Judaism of Christianity, and the defensive stance of many Jews toward Christians, suggested that the centuries-old gulf between the two faiths was destined to continue largely unchanged. No one could

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[59] *L'écrivain juif et les Evangiles* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991), 10. In this context, Finkelstein's biting but understandable critique is worth citing, precisely because it captures so accurately the very real fears and suspicions of many contemporary Jews when faced with the new phenomenon of Christians insistent on dialogue and friendship: "Reste donc l'utopie de la fraternité interconfessionnelle : ici les gens de bonne volonté peuvent parler de l'entente entre les deux religions, ainsi que de l'attente commune d'un messie hypothétique à la seule condition qu'ils ne touchent pas à l'essentiel. *Personne n'est contre ce dialogue, mais il sera stérile* ... Dans son essai sur Jona, Henri Meschonnic écrit à propos du mythe judéo-chrétien : 'Ce n'est pas travailler contre des amitiés ou des solidarités, au contraire, que de veiller à ne pas maintenir des ambiguïtés théologico-politiques, des occultations, des stratégies déniées, qui ne font que poser un masque aimable sur l'ogre chrétien. Pour le signifiant juif, il a encore les dents du vieux dragon, qu'il sème et qui repoussent.' [*Jona et le signifiant errant*, Gallimard, 1981, p. 93-94] ... La fraternité et l'universalisme au prix des occultations et des mensonges, même si c'est pour « la bonne cause », ne peuvent venir que de la peur d'une vérité trop lourde à supporter. *Faire des choix théologiques en fonction d'un humanisme lénifiant, c'est repousser le vrai problème, anesthésier l'ogre, non le tuer.* Dire vrai c'est faire mal, mais le seul dialogue possible est à ce prix-là. *Entre le judaïsme et le christianisme en tant qu'institutions religieuses il n'y a aucun pont possible. Chercher des ressemblances secondaires et sans intérêt mène à tricher sur le principal qui est dissemblance.*" (12-13; my italics).

have predicted then that, less than twenty-five years later, the more or less traditional anti-Jewish undercurrents of Christian European society would be transformed into a massive flood of hatred, racism, discrimination, violence and state-sanctioned murder in the events of the Holocaust. Chouraqui saw first-hand the atrocities committed by Catholics and Protestants, and by whole nations with long and distinguished Christian pedigrees. He saw ancient polemics take on terrifyingly modern form, and Christian suspicion of Jews converted into moral indifference, that frequently refused to see, and generally refused to act.

The last fifty years of Chouraqui's life, however, were marked by a much different vision of Christianity: a Christianity marked by remorse and self-examination, seeking to atone for the war-time sins of its adherents. Not only did Chouraqui meet that outstretched hand with openness and friendship, but he was himself proactive in helping to change hearts and structures, as one of the early advocates of Jewish-Christian dialogue in Europe. He witnessed the dramatic turnabout that led so many Christian churches to eschew, reform or at least re-think their teachings on Judaism, which had proven to be such a potent and death-dealing ingredient of Nazi barbarity. In the space of less than a half-century, André Chouraqui was able to observe, and play a central role in, what can only be termed a Copernican revolution in Western religion and theology.[60]

The history of the change in Christian attitudes is, however, only half of the story. The other half is the remarkable biography of André Chouraqui himself, which both intersects with this history and helps to nudge it in a new direction. It is the combination of these two histories, one personal and the other institutional, which

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[60] Here again, Finkelstein (10) raises challenging, but important, questions about the impact of the last sixty years of dialogue: "Les questions qu'on doit donc se poser sont d'un tout autre ordre : à quoi bon un dialogue mené par un très petit groupe d'intellectuels ou de théologiens qui ne débouche sur rien de pratique à une plus grande échelle ? Ce dialogue a-t-il changé des mentalités ? Peut-il opérer de vrais changements sur le plan théologico-théorique ou sur le plan religieux des deux côtés ? Est-ce que le monde est plus avancé dans ce domaine qu'il ne l'était du temps d'un Edmond Fleg ou d'un Jules Isaac ?"

constitutes the unique place Chouraqui's work holds in the history of biblical translation and interpretation. In the following two chapters, we will examine in greater detail the life of the translator, and the ways in which his work builds upon, and differs from, that of others who have rendered the New Testament into Hebrew, or have attempted to re-introduce a "Jewish voice" into the Christian Scriptures.

Chapter 2 • The Contours of a Life

Introduction: When Translation Meets Biography

In the case of André Chouraqui, biographical details are not simply an interesting, but ultimately superfluous, scholarly nicety. They are, in fact, the cultural, linguistic and intellectual matrix out of which his particular vision of Biblical translation emerged; only within that matrix can it be properly understood. In Chouraqui's case—more than in that of most other Bible translators—the character and story of the man is so deeply interwoven into the story of the literary work that it becomes nearly impossible to entirely separate them. For, as several commentators have previously noted,[62] it is Chouraqui's own specific history that conditioned and equipped him to undertake such a monumental task, and to yield such a distinctive result.

In the latter part of his life, Chouraqui wrote three separate autobiographies which, although they often cover similar material, do so in very different ways, with differing emphases:

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[62] "... *[I]l ne faudrait passer sous silence les données subjectives de la biographie du traducteur ... [I]l semble que dans le cas précis d'André Chouraqui et de ses traductions de la Bible et du Coran, on se méprendrait si l'on négligeait certains aspects marquants de sa destinée.* Car enfin le projet de rapprocher la traduction française de la Bible de son contexte sémitique antique en rejetant avec intransigeance toute forme de médiation ... est inséparable de l'enracinement d'André Chouraqui au sein de trois cultures : celle du judaïsme sépharade d'Afrique du Nord auquel le contact avec l'environnement arabo-berbère a permis de rester proche de l'arrière-plan méditerranéen et oriental de la civilisation biblique ; la culture française dont André Chouraqui est un représentant prestigieux et au rayonnement de laquelle il a contribué dans le cadre de ses fonctions à l'Alliance israélite universelle et plus récemment au Haut Conseil de la Langue française ; et enfin, la culture hébraïque israélienne renouvelée à Sion ... *L'imbrication de ces trois horizons culturels est sans doute la clé qui permet de comprendre la spécificité révolutionnaire de la traduction de la Bible par André Chouraqui.*" Cyril Aslanov, *Pour comprendre la Bible: La leçon d'André Chouraqui* (Paris: du Rocher, 1999), 12; my italics.

"... une approche biographique révélera les sources de son intérêt et de ses compétences pour les langues et les trois religions du livre et explique comment la traduction des textes sacrés est devenue, chez cet homme à cheval entre trois cultures, une mission de paix et d'invitation à la coexistence." Francine Kaufmann, "Traduire la Bible et le Coran à Jérusalem : André Chouraqui," in *Meta: Journal des traducteurs* 43:1 (March 1998), 144; online at: http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/1998/v43/n1/003294ar.html

Ce que je crois (Paris: B. Grasset, 1979; English translation: *A Man in Three Worlds*, trans. Kenton Kilmer; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984; hereafter *A Man*);

L'amour fort comme la mort: Une autobiographie (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990; hereafter *L'amour*)

Mon testament: Le feu de l'Alliance (Paris: Bayard, 2001; hereafter *Testament)*

Biographical details are also central to the several previous published studies of Chouraqui's work[63], and were included in the significant obituaries published at the time of his death in July 2007.[64] Together with the extremely thorough personal chronology which Chouraqui himself provided on his Web site (six pages, beginning at http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/biog.htm), these sources allow us to reconstruct his life with a fair degree of confidence and detail.

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[63] Among others, see: KAUFMANN, "Traduire la Bible"; CYRIL ASLANOV, *Pour comprendre la Bible: la leçon d'André Chouraqui* (Monaco: Rocher, 1999); FRANCINE KAUFMANN, "Au confluent de trois continents—André Chouraqui," in *Ariel: Revue israélienne des arts et des lettres* 105; online at: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFAFR/MFAArchive/1990_1999/1999/2/Au%20confluent%20de%20trois%20continents%20-%20Andre%20Chouraqui

[64] Among others, see: "André Chouraqui: Bibliographie/Biographie," in *La République des lettres* (July 9, 2007); online at: http://www.republique-des-lettres.fr/1688-andre-chouraqui.php; "Décès de l'écrivain franco-israélien André Chouraqui à Jérusalem," in *Le Devoir* (Montréal) (July 10, 2007); online at: http://www.ledevoir.com/2007/07/10/149963.html; HENRI TINCQ, "André Chouraqui, traducteur et homme politique," in *Le Monde* (July 11, 2007); "André Chouraqui," in *The Times* [of London] (August 8, 2007); online at: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article2217691.ece;



A map of northern Algeria; note the coastal city of Oran, south-west of Algiers
(Map © MapQuest, Inc.; all rights reserved)



A more detailed map of north-west Algeria, showing the region south-west of Oran, including Aïn-Témouchent, André Chouraqui's hometown.
(Map © MapQuest, Inc.; all rights reserved)

1. Chouraqui's Algerian Jewish heritage

Aïn-Témouchent (Arabic for "the spring of the jackal") is today a western Algerian city of more than 90,000 inhabitants, located about 70 kilometres south-west of Oran, and about 60 kilometres north-east of Tlemcen.[65] It had only slightly more than one-tenth of its present population[66] when, on Saturday, August 11, 1917, Natân André Chouraqui was born there, the son of Isaac Chouraqui and Melélia Meyer. In his autobiographies, Chouraqui highlights what he sees as the particular appropriateness of the names given to him by his parents. The three names—drawn, respectively, from Hebrew (*Nathan*, from the Hebrew verb נָתַן, *nātan* "to give/he has given"), Greek (*André*, from the Greek noun *ἀνήρ/ἀνδρός, anēr/andros*, "(of) a man") and Arabic (*Chouraqui*, from the Arabic *al-Charq*, designating someone from the East[67])—combine to yield, roughly, "[God] has given a man from the East". This conjunction of three names, from three different but historically interrelated

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[65] For more on Aïn-Témouchent, see: Louis Abadie, *Aïn-Témouchent de ma jeunesse* (Nice, France: Jacques Gandini, 2004); "Aïn-Temouchent," in Louis Piesse, *Itinéraire historique et descriptif de l'Algérie comprenant le Tell et le Sahara* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1862), 231.

[66] Abadie (21) says that the population of Aïn-Témouchent in 1901 was slightly more than 6,000 people, and that it reached 13,000 only in 1926. I am therefore estimating that in 1917, the population would have been approximately 10,000.

[67] "... it has been my fate to hear, at a meeting of a learned society in London, a gentleman declare, that in Eastern Africa he found a people calling themselves Moors. Maghrabin—Westerns,—then would be opposed to Sharkiyin, Easterns, the origin of our 'Saracen.' ... The learned M. Jomard, who never takes such original views of things, asks a curious question :—'Mais comment un son aussi distinct que le Chine ش aurait-il pu se confondre avec le Syn س et, pour un mot aussi connu que charq ; comment aurait-on pu se tromper à l'omission des points ?' Simply because the word Saracens came to us through the Greeks (Ptolemy uses it), who have no such sound as sh in their language. and through the Italian which, hostile to the harsh sibilants of Oriental dialects, generally melts sh down into s." Richard Francis Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1855), 187. Burton's allusion is to Félix Mengin, *Histoire sommaire de l'Égypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly ... précédée d'une introduction et suivie d'études géographiques et historiques sur l'Arabie, par M. Jomard, Membre de l'Institut de France* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1889), 351, where Jomard states : "Quant aux *Saraceni* (d'où le nom des Sarrasins), il semble qu'on a généralement admis que ce mot venait de *Charq*, c'est-à-dire l'Orient ; *Sarakioun* serait ainsi substitué à *Charqioun*, les Orientaux." (351). "Saracen (L.—Arab.) L. *saracenus*, lit. one of the eastern people. — Arab. *sharqíy*, eastern. — Arab. *sharq*, east, rising sun. — Arab. root *sharaqa*, it rose." Walter W. Skeat, *Concise Dictionary of English Etymology*. Wordsworth Reference (Ware, England: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), 414.

Mediterranean cultures, would foreshadow in many ways the life André Chouraqui would go on to live, as "a man in three worlds". This moniker could be understood in terms of his nationality (in turns, Algerian, French and Israeli); in terms of his daily language (Arabic, French and then Hebrew); and in terms of his interreligious involvements (working closely with members of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths).

The Jewish community in Algeria was a relatively small minority, within a nation that was, by the early 1900s, predominantly French Catholic or Muslim.[68] The family of André Chouraqui were not, however, newcomers to their land. As Sephardic Jews, they (and most of the other Jews of North Africa) boasted of a long and illustrious history in the region, dating back to the persecution of Spain's Jewish population in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[69] The Chouraquis were believed to have left Spain in 1392[70], a full century before the definitive expulsion of Jews in 1492,

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[68] "By 1926 the number of [French] settlers had reached some 833,000, 15 per cent of the population, reaching just under one million by 1954 ... In 1931 the settler population accounted for 69 per cent of the total population in Algiers, 79 per cent in Oran ... Their identity was bound up not only with the sense of being French, but also with a strong attachment to Roman Catholicism. Religious holidays, weddings, baptisms, the weekly mass: these rites separated the settlers from the Jewish and Muslim populations on a day-to-day basis ... Between 1926 and 1936 the Muslim population increased from 6 million to 7.2 million thanks to falling infant mortality and a rising birth rate. In comparison the increase in the settler population was much slower. By 1954 the ratio of Muslims to settlers had reached nine to one. The imbalance between the two populations was striking ..." MARTIN EVANS AND JOHN PHILIPS, "Forced Marriage: French Algeria 1830-1962," Ch. 2 in EVANS AND PHILIPS, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2007), 38, 40. "Algeria was home to approximately 120,000 Jews on the eve of World War II. Concentrated in three cities: Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, Algerian Jewry made up 1.5 percent of the total population." ZION ZOHAR, *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 294.

[69] See, for example, the map "Routes taken by Jews expelled from Spain," on page 260 of the *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*. YOHANAN AHARONI AND SHMUEL AḤITUV, eds. (New York: Continuum, 2003). See also NORMAN ROTH, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), particularly Ch. 8, "Expulsions of Jews". For an analysis of the various "streams" (Spanish/Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Arabic, etc.) which made up the Jewish population of North Africa, see MICHAEL M. LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century: The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), esp. 11-18.

[70] "Mes quatre grands-parents sont nés à Tlemcen. Mes ancêtres, chassés de Judée par les Romains, ont erré à travers la Méditerranée pour s'installer en Andalousie pendant plusieurs siècles. Ils en partirent en 1392 pour vivre à Tlemcen, un royaume indépendant entre l'Algérie et

under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. From the 1400s onward, the Chouraqui name can be found in historical documents from North Africa: an Ephraim Chouraqui chaired the rabbinic court in Tlemcen, and Rabbi Moshe Chouraqui is mentioned as a noted authority in Jewish law in Gibraltar.[71] In the seventeenth century, André's forebear, Rabbi Saadia Chouraqui of Tlemcen (1604-1704), was a respected Renaissance man known as the "Sea of Wisdom," who not only wrote Hebrew poetry and Biblical commentaries, but composed Hebrew treatises on mathematics.[72] From the earliest available records onward, it seems that the Chouraqui family was associated with learning and scholarship, and the young André grew up in a faith-filled home, steeped in the stories of his distinguished ancestors.

Chouraqui's father, Isaac, was a grain merchant and community leader. For several decades, he served as president of the local Jewish congregation, and was a man renowned for his religious piety. It was Isaac Chouraqui who first initiated the young André into the ritual life of Judaism, and, as a devout student of the Bible and the Talmud himself, began to open up for him some of the richness of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages. Even as a child, André was fascinated by the nuances of language, and by the dichotomy he regularly noted between the Hebrew text in his *siddur* and the less-than-satisfactory French translation which accompanied it:

> Ce que je lisais en français correspondait rarement à l'hébreu que l'on prétendait traduire. 'Est-ce donc si difficile à traduire?' me demandais-je, enfant. Une vie, nous le verrons, ne me suffira pour répondre à cette question.[73]

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le Maroc." *Testament*, 13. See also: SIMON SCHWARZFUCHS, *Tlemcen: Mille ans d'histoire d'une communauté juive* (Paris: La Fraternelle/Union nationale des amis de Tlemcen, 1995); SID AHMED DENDANE, "Les juifs de Tlemcen," in DENDANE, *L'Algérie vue de l'intérieur: Étude historique et sociologique* (Paris: Publibook, 2007), 97-106.

[71] *L'amour*, 36-38; "The branch to which I belong did not wait for 1492 and the great expulsion from Spain to emigrate to Tlemcen. Our family had had to flee from Spain after the first persecutions of 1391. At that time, there were living at Gibraltar and then at Tlemcen Scriptural scholars bearing this name ...". *A Man*, 44-45.

[72] *Mone Mispar: An Arithmetical Treatise*. Ed. GAD B. SARFATTI. Texts and Studies in the History and Culture of the Jews of the Orient, Vol. 1. (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1973).

[73] *L'amour*, 54.

Chouraqui's maternal grandfather, Abraham Meyer ("Baba" to young André), was an equally religious man, profoundly steeped in Jewish mysticism.[74] "Dire qu'Abraham Meyer était un homme de foi, c'est encore ne rien exprimer de son adhésion massive, lucide, sans faille et sans détour de tout son cœur, de tout son être, de toute son intensité, à l'Élohim de ses pères".[75] As a boy, André grew up in a family circle where traditional religious faith was paramount ("chez nous, vivre, c'était prier et prier en hébreu même"[76]), and in which the Bible held a particularly privileged place. In gratitude for the safe return of his sons and sons-in-law from the Great War, Abraham Meyer personally commissioned the writing of a new Torah scroll for the Aïn-Témouchent synagogue. In keeping with tradition, the last few hundred letters were sketched in by the scribe, but left to be completed by members of the congregation, for whom it was a tremendous honour to fulfill this *mitzvah.*[77] As the youngest of Meyer's grandchildren, André was given the honour of writing the final letters of Deuteronomy: "Âgé de six ans, je m'appliquai à bien former les lettres hébraïques : telle fut la première Bible à la rédaction de laquelle je contribuais efficacement".[78]

Aïn-Témouchent was, for all of its cultural complexity, a community that was largely ghettoized by language and religion. The French colonial sector looked down on the local Arab-speaking population (colloquially called "the Muslims," although

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[74] *L'amour,* 57.

[75] *L'amour,* 56.

[76] *L'amour,* 74. "L'essentiel se situait dans la vie de l'esprit, présent et palpable dans les parchemins de notre Bible." *L'amour,* 39.

[77] Citing the authoritative interpretation of MAIMONIDES: "It is a positive command incumbent on every Jewish man to write a Torah scroll for himself, as [Deuteronomy 31:19] states: 'Now, write for yourselves this song.' Our sages received the interpretation of this verse as: Write the entire Torah which contains this song [*Ha'azinu*]. Even if one inherits a Torah scroll from one's father, it is a mitzvah to write one alone. *A person who hires a scribe to write a Torah scroll for him, or who buys a scroll which contains errors and corrects it, is considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll. {A person who cannot write a Torah scroll himself or afford to commission a scribe to do so may fulfill the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll by purchasing letters in a scroll written through the contributions of many individuals.}"* (RABBI ARI LOBEL AND PROJECT GENESIS; online at: http://www.torah.org/learning/halacha/classes/class75.html; my italics)

[78] *L'amour,* 62.

Chouraqui says many were actually Berbers who practiced their own traditional tribal religions). The town's Catholic citizens, raised with the anti-Jewish prejudices and stereotypes that were so deeply ingrained in Christianity at the time, viewed the local Jews with a combination of curiosity and disdain. More than once, young André was the victim of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic slurs and beatings at the hands of his schoolmates, who seemed to know only the crudest outlines of Judaism—and all of it negative:

> ... le monde chrétien qui nous entourait nous paraissait hostile. À ses yeux, les Juifs n'étaient que des déicides et l'Islam une imposture née du cerveau malade de Muhammad, l'Imposteur. De tels préjugés étaient enseignés ouvertement. Telle était, en Algérie, plus que partout ailleurs, la brutale réalité qui nous condamnait tous à vivre dans nos ghettos respectifs. Nous cohabitions dans une même petite ville sur un périmètre de onze cent cinquante-neuf hectares et cependant nous ignorions tout les uns des autres—tout, sauf le mépris dont nous étions tous les victimes ...[79]

The conquest of Algeria by the French in the 1830s and 1840s brought with it some of the more blatant anti-Jewish demagoguery that was then current in continental France.[80] In André's youth, anti-Jewish riots broke out in various parts of Algeria, and Aïn-Témouchent's Jewish community feared that such anti-Jewish

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[79] *L'amour*, 91-92. "The exterior world was to me a wound. My Jewish origin told me plainly, in the brutally anti-Semitic atmosphere of colonial Algeria, that I was from *elsewhere*." (*A Man*, 70; author's emphasis).

[80] "[Édouard Drumont, a prominent anti-Jewish journalist and author] ... used the Crémieux Decree as a spearhead for mobilizing the political anti-Semitism that would overlay traditional forms of French anti-Semitism and culminate in the Dreyfus Affair, where the threat posed by Jews was seen to extend to the very heart of the French state. In Algeria this political anti-Semitism focused in particular on the electoral power of the Jewish vote and the claim that this tended to be exercised en bloc and on behalf of the moderate republican party ... As Charles-Robert Ageron, among others, has pointed out, well before the turn of the century '[a]nti-Jewishness had become the common denominator of the Algerian Left.' By the end of the century, and fuelled by the Dreyfus Affairs, a hostility that had manifested itself primarily in anti-Semitic publications and anti-Semitic leagues had taken to the streets: Algiers, Oran, and Constantine in particular, cities where the largest population of Jews lived, witnessed the sacking of Jewish shops, the pillaging of Jewish quarters, and physical attacks resulting in deaths and injuries. Drumont himself was given an ecstatic welcome on a visit to Algiers and in 1898 was elected a city deputy, while the well-known anti-Semite Max Régis was elected the city's mayor." Tyler Edward Stovall and Georges Van den Abbeele, *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 256-57.

sentiments could quickly spread to their town.[81] André's grandfather, Baba Meyer, took matters into his own hands in a highly unusual (but ultimately successful) way: having explained the threatening situation to his employees, he organized and led a mini-parade down the town's main street, shouting out frighteningly accurate parodies of the racist slogans being employed in other towns. The gentle self-mockery of Meyer and company won over their neighbours, and effectively silenced any local racist partisans who were eager to make trouble.[82] Chouraqui comments, not without a sad irony: "Même à l'heure où Hitler triomphera en France, l'antisémitisme de nos voisins chrétiens ne dépassera jamais les limites de ce que l'on appelle la décence".[83]

Despite the underlying religious frictions, and the corresponding need to assert one's own religious identity, Chouraqui recalls his parents as having been quite liberal in their outlook toward both Christians and Muslims. Indeed, it was they who first taught him to appreciate the values and richness of the surrounding culture:

> On pouvait naître, vivre et mourir en Algérie française à peu près sans connaître un mot de français si l'on était « indigène ». Nous vivions plaqués les uns sur les autres sans strictement rien savoir les uns des autres et sans rien vouloir en entendre. Nous étions ségrégués, séparés par une méconnaissance plus inéluctable que si nous vivions sur des planètes différentes ... Mon père fut le premier à me faire comprendre les beautés et les richesses d'une humanité et d'une culture—l'islamique—dont jamais je n'entendis un mot de bien de la part de mes éducateurs français ... L'arabe était la langue de mes grands-parents et de mes parents—comme de tous mes ancêtres depuis des siècles. Nous étions parfaitement insérés dans le milieu musulman dont nous faisions partie intégrante en tant que fils d'Israël, soumis, sous leurs lois, à un

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[81] On this, see Chouraqui's best-selling 1972 book *Letter to an Arab Friend* (trans. WILLIAM GUGLI; Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 10-12.

[82] Curiously, in *Letter to an Arab Friend,* Chouraqui recounts an almost identical episode, which he attributes, however, to an entirely *different* individual: "At this point it is suitable to mention the humor of that ghetto visionary, Saadia Perez, who cleverly squelched the anti-Semites. He led a parade of all his friends and servants, Jews and Arabs, and marched throughout the city singing the virulent anti-Semitic repertory composed by certain Parisian songwriters who wished to spread their hate. Those who laughed that day were on the same side, and humor won the day." (11).

[83] *L'amour,* 93.

> statut particulier, celui du *dhimmi*, de protégé, dont la présence française nous avait débarrassés, en faisant de nous des citoyens à part entière.[84]

His parents, desirous that he should have the best available education, did not hesitate to send him to a local Catholic kindergarten run by Salesian nuns. Although the Sisters sought to inculcate a sense of French national identity in their young charges, Chouraqui remembers his own teacher as being scrupulously respectful of the consciences of her non-Christian students:

> Au jardin d'enfants de la sœur Ubaldine, et bientôt à l'école primaire de la rue Pasteur, tout concourait à faire de moi un parfait petit français, fier de ses origines et de sa culture gauloises ... [N]ous formions un groupe fort hétérogène que la génie de nos instituteurs et de nos institutrices s'efforçait d'éveiller aux valeurs rédemptrices du laïcisme républicain. Jamais sœur Ubaldine elle-même n'eût songé à faire l'apologie du christianisme auprès de ses élèves juifs. A l'heure où les petits chrétiens célébraient les rites ou recevaient les leçons de leur catéchisme, nous étions pris à l'écart et orientés vers une réflexion sur notre propre identité religieuse.[85]

Such religious respect was, however, almost certainly the exception in that period, rather than the rule.

In June of 1924, however, seven-year-old André was physically attacked and chased by a mob of local elementary school children, who yelled anti-Jewish slurs at him as they pursued him through the streets.[86] Safe in his home, he collapsed, trembling and feverish; the initial diagnosis was merely a cold, exacerbated by the terror of the harrowing episode. But the acute pain in his limbs soon made it clear that

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[84] Dendane characterizes the coexistence of Jews and Muslims in Tlemcen thus: "Leurs relations avec les musulmans ont, de tout temps, été empreintes de cordialité voire de convivialité. Il n'y avait aucun problème, de quelque nature que ce soit, entre les deux communautés qui n'en formaient qu'une ... Les juifs formaient une minorité très présente dans le monde artisanal tlemcénien. Ils faisaient en quelque sorte partie du décor et vivaient en symbiose avec les musulmans, dans une parfaite harmonie. Ils étaient comme des poissons dans l'eau qui prennent la couleur du milieu ambiant ... Tout en conservant leurs convictions religieuses et leurs traditions à la synagogue ou à l'intérieur de leur foyer ... certains artisans juifs généralement âgés portaient à cette époque des vêtements arabo-turcs, avec turban torsadé et parlaient arabe avec un accent particulier ..." (97-98); *L'amour*, 72-73. Having said this, however, Chouraqui elsewhere writes: "Mon Algérie à moi était différente de celle des Arabes et plus encore de celle des colons." *L'amour*, 39.

[85] *L'amour*, 74, 81.

[86] Chouraqui recounts these events on pages 81-84 of *L'Amour*.

something other than a cold was involved; a second doctor correctly diagnosed André as suffering from an attack of childhood polio, which would leave his left leg and right arm partially paralyzed. His parents sought out the best doctors and physiotherapists available, having recourse even to renowned faith-healers and traditional (although sometimes unusual) cures.[87] These various treatments, although limited in their success, at least allowed him to walk again; he would, however, have a limp for the rest of his life.

As the son of a prominent middle-class Jewish leader, André's religious education was well provided for, including private tutoring in Hebrew, in preparation for the day when he would become *bar mitzvah.* His curiosity about other faiths continued to grow, however, encouraged by his parents, who had many Muslim employees. As physically segregated as life in Aïn-Témouchent was, his family inculcated in him very early on an openness to, and respect for, Christianity and Islam that would guide the rest of his life.

But the deeply religious world in which he had grown up would be profoundly shaken by the experience of secondary school in Oran, where his identity as a North African Jew of Spanish heritage was gradually but effectively eroded by the strictly secular French school system. Between the ages of 11 and 18, he was re-shaped in a more atheistic mould, taught to view himself as a proud descendant of classical Roman civilization, and as the intellectual heir of French rationalism.

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[87] Certainly the strangest treatment involved a local folk-remedy, which claimed that such paralysis could be cured by placing the patient inside the stomach of a freshly-slaughtered cow. His parents, in desperation, brought André to the local kosher butcher, where he was duly plunged—naked—into the animal's still-steaming body. Recourse to such a treatment may seem quite credulous; nevertheless the results were beyond question: when André was lifted out of the cow's intestinal cavity, he found himself able to walk again: "Son estomac était retiré et ouvert : j'étais plongé dans le chyle dont il était encore plein. Mon corps nu se recouvrait de ses chairs chaudes. L'espoir d'une guérison animait les miens et me faisait tout supporter avec patience. Superstition ? Sans doute. L'essentiel demeure pour moi qu'au sortie de cet ensemble de traitements, je pouvais à nouveau marcher sur mes pieds et retrouver une vie à peu près normale. Pour cela, j'étais prêt à tout, fût-ce à demeurer dans l'estomac fumant d'un taureau sacrifié." *L'Amour,* 84.

> Sa *Bar-Mitsva*, célébrée dans la grande synagogue d'Aïn-Témouchent, en été 1929, marque son dernier lien formel avec les traditions juives. Il continue à jeûner à *Kippour* et à ne pas manger de pain à *Pessa'h*. Mais pour le reste, il devient un parfait petit Français. Il conserve quelques liens avec l'Orient grâce aux cours de langue et de grammaire arabes dispensés au lycée d'Oran. Mais il se passionne pour la littérature occidentale et lit durant les vacances d'été tout ce qui lui tombe sous la main : romanciers, poètes, appréciant particulièrement les romantiques. Quant à Dieu, il est relégué au magasin des accessoires.[88]
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> [F]inis les récits de ma mère sur les miracles et les merveilles de notre famille, de nos ancêtres, de notre peuple ; finies les longues heures de prière entre les genoux de mon père à la synagogue et dans les veillées extatiques où le chant des Psaumes nous arrachait à notre pesanteur, à nos ombres, à nos peurs, pour nous situer dans la lumière ineffable de l'Élohim tout-puissant qui était aussi notre Père. Effacées la langue et la culture des Hébreux. Nous pensions être des Fils d'Israël, oui, des Hébreux, les survivants d'un peuple que des millénaires de persécutions et d'exil n'avait pu éliminer ; dans la pauvreté de nos refuges, sous les crachats et les quolibets, nous demeurions les dépositaires authentiques de la Bible et presque les seuls à la savoir par cœur dans sa langue originale ... La grâce républicaine tendait à faire de nous, Juifs, Arabes ou Espagnols, des vrais Français. Dès le premier cours d'histoire dans les classes de l'école communale, nous chantions à tue-tête la première phrase du Lavisse : « Nos pères, les Gaulois, étaient grands, braves, forts et querelleurs. Leurs prêtres s'appelaient les druides... »[89]

By the end of his secondary school years at the boarding school in Oran, then, André's transformation was complete:

> J'étais prêt à envoyer Abderahmân, Donnat et Mahdad[90] accompagner mes pauvres rabbins dans les oubliettes religieuses et sémitiques, auxquelles la République généreuse m'arrachait pour me permettre de m'épanouir au grand soleil des idéaux révolutionnaires ... [Je me mis] ... à ne plus penser à l'univers de la Bible, à oublier les Psaumes et Isaïe, à délaisser toute pratique religieuse, sauf à ne pas manger de pain à Pâques et à jeûner pieusement le jour de Kippur. Oui, j'avais insensiblement changé de peuple élu, passant de mon Orient originel à cet Occident dont la France paraissait être la lumière et l'espérance.[91]

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[88] KAUFMANN, "Lire la Bible," 4-5.

[89] *L'amour*, 101-102.

[90] Perhaps the authors of his Arabic textbooks?

[91] *L'amour*, 122.

> ... I was not far from Toynbee's opinion that the Jew was an archæological survival, a fossil[92]. As for me, I had become, thanks to the secular and republican culture, a son of the French Revolution, a free citizen of a country whose motto, which had become mine, was Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.[93]
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> Nous devions être fiers d'avoir été généreusement adoptés par la mère patrie que nous arrachait à la barbarie de notre passé, qu'il fût arabe, judaïque ou parfois même catholique. Nous connaissions par cœur notre pays : son hexagone constituait à coup sûr le centre du monde et sa lumière ... C'est ainsi que je changeais de peuple élu, insidieusement et comme sans m'en apercevoir : *Gesta Dei per Francos !* ... Ma chère Bible était reléguée au magasin des accessoires inutiles. Du jardin d'enfants au doctorat d'État, ayant franchi tous les degrés du système éducatif de la France, je ne crois pas avoir entendu citer la Bible à plus de deux ou trois reprises, et encore de manière incidente, à propos de Galilée ou de Voltaire.[94]

2. From Algeria to School in France

In 1934, the young André completed his secondary school education, with a *baccalauréat* in philosophy. However, his leg had never fully recovered from his earlier bout of polio, and so his family arranged for him to be treated at France's La Montagne clinic, known for its cutting-edge techniques in orthopædic surgery. The surgery was an unqualified success, but his convalescence would prove fateful for other reasons as well. The clinic was at the heart of a Protestant missionary enterprise, and André was profoundly moved to encounter young Protestant nurses who had given up comfortable lives in order to care for the sick, or to go overseas and spread the message of Christianity. He was also inspired by their obvious love for, and familiarity with, the Bible: "Quand je leur posais des questions pour mieux comprendre le pourquoi et le comment de leur vocation, elles me répondaient par des citations du Nouveau

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[92] I believe Chouraqui is here citing Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* (originally published in 1922): "We have now noticed, without discussing at any length, the results of religious discrimination in the case where the victims of penalization belong to the same society as the perpetrators of it ... There remains the case where the victims of religious discrimination represent *an extinct society which only survives as a fossil ... [B]y far the most notable is one of the fossil remnants of the Syriac Society, the Jews.*" (from the 1987 edition edited by David Churchill Somervell; London: Oxford University Press, 135; my italics)

[93] *A Man*, 76.

[94] *L'amour*, 108-109.

Testament dont j'ignorais tout, et de la Bible hébraïque qu'elles semblaient connaître mieux que moi".[95]

Among these young women, two in particular became very close friends of André's during his lengthy convalescence: Yvonne et Évelyne, whom he called his "guardian angels". Évelyne and André developed a profound spiritual relationship, based on their shared love of the Bible and their common quest for God's will. For her part, Évelyne was thrilled to discover in André a Jewish patient capable of reading and understanding the Hebrew Scriptures in their original language: "Vous avez le privilège sur les chrétiens de la connaître [i.e., la Bible] sans les déformations de traditions périmées, de manière immédiate, dans sa beauté originelle ... vous en verrez mieux toutes les merveilles !"[96] It was Évelyne, Chouraqui remembered years later, who had been the first to give him a Christian Bible, and whose personal passion for the Scriptures sparked in André a renewed interest in exploring their pages for himself.

After his discharge from the clinic, it was Yvonne who would remain, until early 1939, André's closest friend, soul-sister and regular correspondent. He admired her single-minded, unselfish devotion to the sick, so obviously rooted in her faith in Christ; they spoke honestly about how their respective beliefs overlapped and diverged. This platonic friendship was, however, complicated by her sense of missionary urgency, and her desire to ultimately win André over to her version of evangelical Christianity. As she delved more deeply into her own faith, she increasingly sought to persuade André to join her on this spiritual path. Eventually, Yvonne's growing insistence on André's need for conversion—and his refusal to convert, rooted in a growing commitment to his own Jewishness—led to their going their separate ways:

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[95] *L'amour,* 128.
[96] *L'amour,* 132.

> Mes lettres devenaient pour elle une cause de souffrance, sinon d'agacement. Si j'avais manifesté la volonté de croire, ou le désir de Dieu, elle eût pu poursuivre. Mais, cela n'étant pas, il était devenu nécessaire pour elle d'espacer notre correspondance, laissant à un revoir prochain l'éventualité d'éliminer entre nous cet obstacle ... Par surcroît, je voyais bien que ma judaïté—dans la mesure où elle survivait en moi—choquait son appartenance au Christ, vitale pour elle ...
>
> Elle ne connaissait rien du judaïsme, rien des raisons de la maintenance hébraïque ni du lot de souffrances que nous valait notre destin ... Aussi ne comprenait-elle mon refus de la suivre que comme le résultat d'un atavisme, d'un endurcissement, sinon d'un coupable aveuglement. Je voyais qu'elle était prête à donner sa vie pour obtenir ce qu'elle appelait mon rachat et, d'une certaine manière, c'est ce qu'elle fit jusqu'à son dernier soupir.
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> La voie normale pour Yvonne, la seule qu'elle concevait alors, était la conversion, non seulement de son ami André, mais de l'humanité entière, y compris les Juifs, qui occupaient dans son cœur une place particulière puisque Jésus était juif.[97]

Nevertheless, the experience of this profound spiritual sympathy between the two Christian nurses and their Jewish patient—largely centred upon the text of the Bible—succeeded in drawing Chouraqui back to a renewed curiosity about this book which had formed such an integral part of his early life. It also convinced him that Jews and Christians had much to share with each other in terms of Biblical study, a conviction that would be central to his later interfaith efforts and scholarly publications.

During one Easter vacation, André took advantage of the break from studies to spend an extended retreat in the Saharan south of Algeria, in the oasis village of Ouargla. Here, he not only engaged in prolonged discussions about Islam with local Muslim scholars, but decided to embark on his own personal grappling with the text of the Hebrew Bible:

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[97] *L'amour,* 154, 169, 186. "Ma vie durant, frontalier des religions qui exerçaient sur moi un irrésistible attrait, j'eus à subir les assauts de mes amis chrétiens et musulmans qui souhaitaient, comme Yvonne l'espéra longtemps, me voir faire le saut de la conversion. J'eus même à affronter les assaut d'amis juifs—surtout de la part des plus pratiquants—pour m'engager sous la bannière de l'orthodoxie ou du conservatisme." *L'amour,* 254.

> I rose before daybreak. Seated in eastern fashion, like the rabbis of the oases where I lived, singing my Hebrew Psalms on the terrace of the house where I was staying, in the shadow of the palm trees ... My days included from ten to twelve hours of work, struggling with the Hebrew text of the Bible, which I was trying, by translating it, to understand more deeply. At twilight ... I listened to the Symphony of the minarets, from which sounded the voice of Islam ...
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> When I went off to Paris, where I was to pursue my studies, my atheistic convictions, that my teachers in the boarding school at Oran had tried so hard to implant in me, were shaken. The Bible no longer seemed to me a useless accessory, and God a waning moon. Along the way I had discovered Spinoza, to whom, for a time, I clung, as a midpoint between the atheism of my professors and that new universe, that of the God of the Bible, to whose intoxication I was soon to surrender.[98]

It was to Paris, and to the Sorbonne, that André's path led for his university studies. Philosophy was one of his greatest loves and, to compensate for his lack of classical studies in secondary school, he applied himself energetically to learning Greek and Latin on his own, in order to read the works of the great philosophers in their original languages.[99] The writings of Baruch Spinoza became of particular interest (as alluded to above); here was a keen philosophical mind who seemed to combine the best of Jewish learning with a rigorous critical approach that Chouraqui found appealing, especially as regards Spinoza's (then-novel) approach to the Scriptures:

> ... le *Tractatus theologico-politicus* de 1670 serait pour moi, bien davantage que *l'Éthique*, une source constante d'inspiration. Quand je l'ai lu pour la première fois, je ne savais de la Bible que les bribes apprises lors de mon initiation religieuse, et oubliées depuis. Je compris par la suite que la critique historique des données de la Bible proposée par Spinoza constituait une véritable révolution spirituelle. Au lieu d'accepter aveuglément les traditions des rabbins ou de l'Église, il fondait la lecture de la Bible sur une critique philologique, psychologique et sociologique de son texte. Son œuvre

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[98] *A Man*, 81, 84-85.

[99] "Pour me faciliter l'accès au secondaire, mes parents m'avaient inscrit en B, section où l'on n'étudiait ni le latin ni le grec. Pour combler cette lacune, je commençais à apprendre seul ces langues, qui me permirent par la suite d'accéder à d'autres sources de la culture. Les Grecs et les Latins me devinrent plus familiers, tandis que les Allemands, même Goethe, me restaient désespérément étrangers..." *L'amour*, 137. Needless to say, his studies of Greek (and, to a lesser degree, his familiarity with Latin) would prove an invaluable asset in his later translations of the New Testament into French.

> complétait celle de Richard Simon : toutes deux ouvraient les voies nouvelles de l'exégèse contemporaine.[100]

For the small-town Jewish boy from Algeria, this revelation opened the door to an entirely new way of looking at the Bible. Years of a secular education had taught him wariness of received, "institutional" interpretations, and he had drifted away from the Bible, seeing it merely as a collection of myths and legends. But here was Spinoza, a brilliant intellectual who was bringing the tools of scientific inquiry to bear on the text and meaning of the Bible. It was a significant discovery, one that would continue to inspire Chouraqui's own vision for decades to come.

As a brilliant student, a variety of possible career paths opened before André. Having weighed the options, he and his family decided that he was best suited to study law and, in November 1935, he began his legal studies. He was thoroughly entranced by the political, academic and social life of Paris—but, as he admits, the sinister shadows of growing anti-Semitism were already beginning to appear, presaging the sufferings and horrors to come.[101] Distinctions of religion were almost meaningless in the midst of such a diverse (and largely secular) student body, although some of André's friends were intrigued by his Jewish heritage, and did not hesitate to ask him questions about Judaism. "We felt ourselves at home in Paris, at the University, among our teachers or with our fellow students. Gone, or almost gone, was the obsessive fear of being rejected on account of being Jewish".[102]

Those years of study at the Sorbonne would prove to be the most spiritually transformative of his young adult life. Chouraqui points to February 10, 1937 as a

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[100] *L'amour,* 141.

[101] "The loudest voices to be heard came from Germany. Nazi violence, Hitler's insane speeches, the vile anti-Semitic propaganda of his French emulators disoriented me … The Hitlerian influence began to make itself felt in France. Political parties appropriated Hitler's slogans and Goebbels' anti-Semitic propaganda. Newspapers such as *Candide, Gringoire, l'Action Française,* poured out a poison which, paradoxically, acted as a stimulant on us." CHOURAQUI, *Letter to an Arab Friend,* 44.

[102] *A Man,* 88.

particular *kairos* moment: he experienced what he describes as an "illumination"[103]—a moment of mystical insight which radically convinced him, once and for all, of the reality and presence of God in the universe, and in his own life. This experience of the Ineffable completely reoriented him. Now he became increasingly absorbed in studying the Bible and its commentaries, and in struggling with the subtleties and complex riches of Biblical translation. The Bible literally became his companion, and its words and ideas permeated almost every waking moment:

> The Bible was always with me, and my meditations on it left me as though bleeding with desire and love. I wasn't content with just reading it: I sang on awaking, along my ways, about the house, and as I went to bed.[104]

> Depuis mon séjour à la clinique de La Montagne et la rencontre de mes amies, la Bible ne me quittait plus. Ce livre, l'Élohim qui s'y révélait, me séduisait ... La lecture de la Bible en français me convainquait de ce que les traductions dont je pouvais disposer étaient fort éloignées des textes originaux que je lisais en hébreu.[105]

> The Bible had conquered me, laid me open, pierced me, and it held me. Its verses, read and reread a thousand times, were forever new. At the thousandth reading it will seem to me that I was discovering a text for the first time and I would be astonished as I began to understand it. All lovers of the Bible have this experience, encountering pages they feel they have never seen before, even though, in fact, they know them by heart.[106]

Immersed in a predominantly Catholic Christian culture, Chouraqui found a new stimulus in the way in which the stories and images of the Bible had taken shape in the art and architecture of the great cathedrals, and in so much of the musical heritage of Europe:

> J'avais perdu ma morgue en face des problèmes religieux : ceux-ci posaient désormais au vif de ma conscience. Ils étaient rendus plus aigus par ce que je découvrais en Europe : les cathédrales, les églises, la musique religieuse, l'art chrétien, les couvents et les monastères où tant d'hommes et de femmes d'élite priaient de jour et de nuit le Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob, l'Élohim de mes ancêtres. Quel choc pour le petit barbare que j'étais, au sortir de mes

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[103] *A Man,* 98; *L'amour,* 206.
[104] *A Man,* 100.
[105] *L'amour,* 202, 205.
[106] *A Man,* 103.

> déserts coloniaux, d'être littéralement cerné par une culture dont j'ignorais tout ou dont je n'avais qu'une connaissance livresque.[107]
>
> Generally on my bike, alone or with friends, I set myself to making an inventory of a civilization, the European, whose essential wellsprings and highest realities had been hidden from me by the bookish education I had been given. Paris became the centre from which I went forth on my expeditions ... I went from country to country, from town to town, to satisfy my craving for the treasures of their humanity, their museums, their places of prayer ... the Italy of Fra Angelico and of St. Peter's in Rome ... More thrilling still was the pilgrimage I made in France ... There I discovered, to my amazement, the secret that my secular teachers had so completely hidden: that France is a Christian land, whose language I could better understand—even the language of its atheists—under the arches of Notre-Dame, Vezelay, Moissac, or Chartres.[108]
>
> Christianity itself took on, in my view, an altogether different aspect. In Algeria, I had never set foot in a church, and had never had any contact, even the most superficial, with any true Christians ... All of a sudden even this seemed changed. I admired the cathedrals that served as landmarks along my roads, the sacred music and the liturgies; I loved the Gregorian chant, whose origin stemmed from the Temple of Jerusalem, like the chants of our Eastern synagogues. I came to know Christians who had nothing in common with the racists or with the medieval persecutors of my Jewish brothers in Europe.[109]

3. Chouraqui's rediscovery of Judaism

Despite his obvious appreciation for much of Christianity, however, Chouraqui had no intention of abandoning the faith of his ancestry. In fact, his years in pre-war France actually did much to kindle in him a consciousness of—and a passionate re-commitment to—his Jewish identity. This re-awakening was in part a reaction to his contact with Christians, whose faith challenged him to think more seriously about his own, and in part by his discovery of a stream of Jewish thinking which explored the Bible outside traditional interpretations and categories. But it was also sparked by the steadily rising tide of anti-Jewish rhetoric, public demonstrations and violence, which Chouraqui already sensed were the harbingers of much darker times for Europe's

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[107] *L'amour*, 167.
[108] *A Man*, 88.
[109] *A Man*, 89-90.

Jews. If he was to suffer—and perhaps die—on account of his Jewishness, he wished to deliberately unite himself to the faith for which he might one day perish:

> It took ... the shock of my discovery of God, through my encounter with Christian and Muslim spirituality, and the trauma of the Hitlerian persecution, to pull me back to my Jewish well-springs. Since Hitler wanted to take my life because I was Jewish, at least I wanted to die with my eyes open, knowing what it means to be Jewish.[110]

André's *teshuvah* led him to take further concrete steps. In late April of 1937, he wrote to the director of France's rabbinical seminary (L'École rabbinique de France), asking to be admitted to its course of studies. Although he did not wish to become a rabbi, he was in search of teachers who could help him to embark on a systematic, in-depth study of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish literature. The seminary's head, Chief Rabbi Maurice Liber[111], welcomed André's passionate interest, although with some perplexity: why would a brilliant young law student (he was not quite 20) seek rabbinic studies, if he had no intention of becoming either a rabbi or a cantor?

> Je n'avais sûrement pas la vocation de devenir un rabbin. Pour l'instant, je voulais seulement faire retour à mes sources, lire la Bible dans le texte, savoir

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[110] *A Man*, 75. "I was forced anew to seek out my origins and probe more deeply into their significance. Since 1933 I had become conscious of my Jewishness due to Hitler. The Bible, insofar as it is recognized as a Holy Book, the Hebraic language venerated as a sacred tongue, and the synagogical liturgy, were for me only a past from which I had thought myself liberated. In the broadest sense of the term, I had become a young Westerner of French culture, convinced of the depth of his roots in modern society ... The challenge which I had to face, that of Hitlerian racism, pursued a certain image of the Jew. It was the Jew I tried to rediscover in myself."*Letter*, 44, 45.

[111] Liber (1884-1956) was a Polish-born scholar who taught Jewish history at Paris's École rabbinique, and Talmudic and rabbinic studies at the École pratique des hautes etudes; from 1932 to 1951, he served as president of the École rabbinique. Among his publications are: *Rashi* (trans. Adele Szold; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1906); "Les Juifs et la convocation des États Généraux (1789)," *REJ* 63 (1912): 185-210; 64 (1912): 89-108; 65 (1913): 89-133; 66 (1913): 161-212; "Napoléon Ier et les Juifs: La question juive devant le Conseil d'État en 1806," in *REJ* 71 (1920): 127–47 and 72 (1921): 1–23, 135–62; "Sur les origines de la prière publique dans le judaïsme," *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études—Section des sciences religieuses* (1933-1934); *Maïmonide (1135-1204): L'homme d'action* (Fondation Sefer, 1935). For more on Liber's life, see: Robert Sommer, "La doctrine politique et l'action religieuse du grand-rabbin Maurice Liber," in *Revue des études juives / Historia Judaica* 125:1-3 (Jan.-Sept. 1966), 15-17; and Georges Vajda, "Maurice Liber (1884-1956)," in *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études—Section des sciences religieuses* (1956-1957): 26-28. See also Sommer, *Bibliographie des travaux du Grand-Rabbin Maurice Liber (1884-1956)* ([Paris?]: Mouton, 1960).

> ce qu'était ce judaïsme qui nous valait la persécution de Hitler et le mépris de ses émules.[112]

André's obvious zeal, his scholastic aptitude—and the fact of his family's reputation, known even in French circles—gained him admission and he began remedial Hebrew classes. In October, his rabbinic studies, properly speaking, began. Side-by-side with his legal courses, André engaged in the study of Scripture and Talmud, renewing and furthering his familiarity with the Hebrew of his childhood, and gradually gaining fluency in Aramaic as well.

Although he found the seminary itself somewhat down-at-the-heel[113] and some of its courses unoriginal or overly orthodox for his tastes, nevertheless the years of his rabbinic studies left André Chouraqui with a deep admiration for the wealth of Jewish erudition which never left him. They also enabled him to study under some unquestioned masters, whose creativity and penetrating thought rewarded his efforts. He particularly cites his admiration for Georges Vajda (1908-1981)[114], a prominent scholar of Scripture and medieval Jewish sources who was one of André's favourite professors in this period because of his methodology, which required the contextualizing of a passage before it could be properly translated:

> Georges Vajda était notre professeur de Bible. Originaire de Hongrie, son accent se reconnaissait dès qu'il ouvrait la bouche. Il était, à coup sûr, l'un des

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[112] *L'amour,* 166, 211-217.

[113] "Notre école se trouve encore au 9 de la rue Vauquelin, dans une vieille maison qui me parut poussiéreuse, avec ses parquets non cirés et ses murs qui n'avait pas connu de longtemps la couleur d'une peinture fraîche. Auprès des bâtiments flambant neufs de la Cité universitaire, la crasse des murs sentait l'abandon et de vieillissement, comme je le vis par la suite dans bien des séminaires de toutes les religions." *L'amour,* 213

[114] Among Vajda's works: *Introduction à la pensée juive du Moyen Âge.* Études de philosophie médiévale 35 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947); *Jüdische Philosophie* (Bern: Francke, 1950); *L'amour de Dieu dans la théologie juive du Moyen Âge* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957); *Album de paléographie arabe* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1958); *La transmission du savoir en Islam (VIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983); and his translation of *Al-Kitāb al-Muḥtawī de Yūsuf al-Baṣir* (ed. David R. Blumenthal; Leiden: Brill, 1985). In 1980, Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati edited a tribute volume, *Hommage à Georges Vajda: Études d'histoire et de pensées juives* (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), and in 1981, G.E. Weil edited a collection of Vajda's own writings, which was published as *Mélanges Georges Vajda: Études de pensée, de philosophie et de littérature juive et arabe* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981). See J. Sublet, "Bibliographie de Georges Vajda (1908-1981)," in *Arabica* 29:3 (1982): 315-29.

> meilleurs hébraïsants de sa génération. Sa compétence n'était pas moindre en arabe et dans les autres langues sémitiques qu'il maîtrisait. Son enseignement de la Bible était d'une extrême rigueur. Il n'admettait aucun à-peu-près dans l'analyse grammaticale ou historique d'un texte qu'il fallait d'abord situer dans son contexte chronologique, géographique et spirituel. Auprès de lui, la Bible s'éclairait d'une tout autre lumière, plus dense, plus vraie que celle dont l'auréolait la piété chrétienne ou rabbinique. *J'avais enfin découvert la source inépuisable de mes enchantements : la Bible serait à jamais la compagne d'élection de ma vie.*[115]

In a poignant admission, Chouraqui writes in retrospect that, had he and his fellow-students been able to guess at the fate that awaited many of these same professors, they would, almost certainly, have taken those studies—and their own friendships as students—more seriously:

> Si nous avions su que la plupart des maîtres et des élèves de cette école seraient trois années plus tard déportés et exterminés dans les camps de l'Allemagne nazie, sans doute notre regard sur le réel, et celui que nous jetions les uns sur les autres, eût-il été fort différent ... Les visages de tant de mes amis qui perdirent la liberté avec la vie dans nos exodes ensanglantés, ceux de Sammy Klein, de Samuel Stourdzé, d'Osée Wallach, de René Hischler, d'Aron Wolf et de tant d'autres, ne cessent de hanter mes souvenirs ... Notre joyeuse bande ne pressentait en rien la sort que nous attendait.[116]

Studies at the École rabbinique also permitted André to become acquainted with the varied streams of Jewry from which his classmates were drawn.[117] For the first time, he made the acquaintance of Ashkenazi Jews, whose Germanic and Eastern European style of worship was so different from the Judeo-Spanish and Middle Eastern traditions in which he had been raised. Many of his colleagues, of more Orthodox persuasion, were more passionate than André as regards the demands of

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[115] *L'amour,* 215; my italics. Chouraqui specifically acknowledges Vajda in his dedication to the 1950 edition of Ibn Paquda's *Introduction aux devoirs des cœurs:* "Au professeur Georges Vajda, qui nous prodigua ses conseils et aplanit toutes les difficultés de notre texte" (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer), lxi. Vajda, for his part, thanked André and Colette in the preface to his 1947 work *Introduction à la pensée juive du Moyen Âge:* "Mes remerciements vont ... à Colette et André Chouraqui dont l'amitié fraternelle m'a soutenu, au physique comme au moral ..." (viii).

[116] *L'amour,* 213, 214, 215.

[117] "Les élèves de l'École rabbinique de France venaient de tous les horizons de la juiverie. J'avais pour maîtres ou camarades d'études des originaires de Russie, de Pologne, d'Allemagne, de Belgique, de France, d'Égypte, de Tunisie, d'Algérie, du Maroc et même quelques chrétiens ..." *L'amour,* 214.

Jewish ritual practice; his own interests lay elsewhere: "À dire vrai, plutôt que cet univers de la pratique qui, chez certains, tournait à l'obsession, mon esprit se nourrissait de Bible et des grands textes mystiques de la tradition hébraïque que je découvrais avec ravissement".[118]

André's rabbinic studies were no impediment to his ongoing legal studies at university and, in June 1938, he graduated with a *license en droit.* Although he seemed eminently suited for graduate studies, events elsewhere in Europe cast their shadow over his life, both as a student and as a re-committed Jew.

4. The Ravages of War

By Chouraqui's account, none of the faculty at the rabbinic college seriously considered that Hitler's rise to power was anything other than a vagary of German political history, soon to be corrected, with no direct consequences for their own lives or mission.[119] Even the signal devastation of *Kristallnacht,* and the growing territorial aggression of Nazi Germany under Hitler, did not shake the conviction of Chouraqui's French contemporaries that they personally had nothing to fear from the Nazi threat. Chouraqui himself was vacationing with his family in Algeria as the tensions mounted in Europe; recuperating from a serious bicycle accident, he followed with trepidation the unfolding drama in Europe, which threatened to overturn the comfortable university-student life to which he had become accustomed. He had returned to France

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[118] *L'amour,* 216-17. " 'You're too fond of the Bible,' my fellow-student at the Rabbinical School, Oscar Wallach, said to me ..." *A Man,* 102.

[119] "[For Chief Rabbi Liber,] ... l'émancipation et l'intégration dans les nations avaient résolu le problème juif. Le sionisme était une erreur politique et la nazisme un accident du parcours ... Le point de vue official du Consistoire des Israélites de France et d'une grande partie du rabbinat, avec en tête le directeur de notre école, était, à tout prendre, que Hitler était un détail de l'histoire, que la France éternelle vaincrait l'Allemagne pécheresse, que le problème juif n'existait plus depuis que les Juifs avaient été émancipés ... Le grand rabbin Liber en était si convaincu qu'il n'évoquait jamais ces problèmes ..." *L'amour,* 213-14.

to continue his rabbinic studies[120] when, on September 3, 1939, France and Britain formally declared war on Germany.

The first months of the war were a time of great anxiety, uncertainty and fear. For André, however, they also marked the beginnings of a relationship that would mark his life forever. The young woman's name was Colette Boyer, and, at the insistence of a mutual friend, she and André met on November 11, 1939. Colette was a gifted pianist and composer who was, however, often confined to bed with a grave form of tuberculosis. While Chouraqui was immediately struck by her beauty and intelligence, their initial conversation quickly revealed a depth of religious-mystical questing that resonated with his own; she confided in him her sense of a contemplative/monastic vocation.[121] It was not long before they had become intimate friends, their discussions always focussing on the things of God, and on the Bible. Colette, nominally a Catholic, was thrilled to discover that André was Jewish and skilled in Biblical study; she herself had arrived at a determination to study Hebrew on her own, in order to better understand the Bible.[122]

Colette's personal sufferings had also given her a deep sensitivity for the sufferings of others, and she felt a particular solidarity with the Jews.[123] What originally began as a friendship quickly progressed to what Chouraqui describes as a

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[120] "Pendant la période sombre de la seconde guerre mondiale, l'École se replie, en 1940, à Vichy pour quelques mois; puis à Chamallière (près de Clermont-Ferrand) de 1941 à juillet 1942. En octobre 1942, elle est transférée à Lyon, où elle est dissoute en 1943. Elle connaîtra une semi-clandestinité jusqu'en 1945, puis reprendra normalement ses activités." (École rabbinique de France—Séminaire Israélite de France; online at:
http://sif.bethalimoud.com/modules.php?name=Historique)

[121] " 'Sans mon état de santé, me disait-elle, je serais déjà dans un couvent.' " *L'amour,* 245; "Sa vocation, elle la savait depuis toujours contemplative ... me quitter pour épouser Dieu, en adoptant une vie contemplative dans tel couvent qui voudrait l'accueillir." *L'amour,* 276.

[122] "À sa manière, Colette, à Paris, faisait le même choix que moi : ayant compris l'importance de l'hébreu pour la compréhension de la Bible elle s'était mise à l'étude de cette langue qui lui faisait mieux pénétrer ces textes qu'elle découvrait pour la première fois."*L'amour,* 246.

[123] [In a later discussion with a rabbi in Algeria:] "Je sais surtout quel sort les peuples chrétiens font aux Juifs. Comment ne serais-je pas du côté des persécutés, même au risque de ma vie ? Pensez-vous que je pourrais vivre en me solidarisant du quelque manière que ce soit avec les persécuteurs du peuple dont Jésus est aussi le fils ?" *L'amour,* 292.

relationship of two soulmates. They saw themselves as spiritual brother and sister,[124] and they soon realized that they were destined to be married. Even when separated by distance, they maintained an often daily correspondence, and André declared that, so far as he was concerned, Colette's health condition constituted no obstacle to their union. He returned home to Algeria for the spring break of 1940 and, despite protests from family and friends (who implored him to seek safe passage to the United States), he decided to return to Paris in late May 1940; he felt compelled to stand alongside his French and Jewish friends in the battle that was ready to erupt. And he desperately wanted to be with Colette, whatever might happen.

In June of 1940, France was invaded by both the Germans and the Italians.[125] Having remained as long as he judged prudent, André now took Colette with him on his bicycle, and they joined the interminable convoys fleeing Paris. He eventually brought Colette to the safety of her sister's home near Orléans, and set out alone in the hope of finding some way back to Algeria. Colette came to meet him in Marseille, and their parting there was bitter and emotional, neither knowing if they would ever see each other again. Having arrived in Algeria, André waited several agonizing months for news from her, and was stunned when, on November 8, he received word that Colette was pregnant; would he agree to take responsibility for both mother and child? He sent her the money for the boat trip to Algeria, all the time wondering how he would support them.

Colette and André sought to marry in a Jewish religious ceremony, but the local Algerian rabbi attempted to discourage them: if Colette were to convert to Judaism, it would obviously place both mother and child in harm's way. Colette was insistent: although formally baptized a Catholic, she had never interiorly considered herself a

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[124] "Nous étant reconnus pour frères et pour époux, nos lettres ne cessaient de découvrir notre émerveillement aux sources de l'amour" *L'amour,* 248. Chouraqui titled Ch. 5 of *L'amour* "Ma sœur, mon épouse".

[125] On these events, see, e.g., JULIAN JACKSON, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); WINSTON CHURCHILL, *La chute de la France,* vol. 3 of *La deuxième guerre mondiale* (Paris: Plon, 1965).

Christian,[126] and her intensive studies of Hebrew and of Judaism with André had convinced her that her path to God lay in embracing the Jewish faith. Rabbi Rouche[127] finally conceded, agreeing to lead Colette through an accelerated course preparing her for conversion. When she stood before the board of three rabbis who were to examine her on her knowledge of Judaism: "L'ayant interrogée, ils constatèrent qu'elle connaissant le judaïsme aussi bien, sinon mieux, que la plupart de nos mères et de nos sœurs". Her conversion ceremony took place on December 10, 1940.[128] On December 23, Colette and André were married in a traditional Jewish ceremony (the circumstances dictated that the usual civil marriage was inadvisable, since such a public act could only further compromise Colette's safety).

In the meantime, the collaborationist Vichy government had been proceeding with the implementation of the Nazis' anti-Semitic directives. France's Jews became subject to increasingly strict limitations and, in Algeria, the Crémieux decree of 1870 (conferring French citizenship on its Jewish citizens)[129] was revoked; *les Juifs* were no longer *des Français*, and could no longer hold broad categories of jobs in political, social

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[126] "À l'âge de douze ans elle avait refusé de faire sa première communion catholique." *L'amour,* 246. [In a later dialogue with an Algerian rabbi, concerning her desire to convert to Judaism:] "—Mais vous êtes chrétienne ? —Je suis d'origine catholique, mais, dès mon plus jeune âge, j'étais en révolte contre maints aspects de cette religion … Ma sœur aînée avait fait sa communion catholique. Quand arriva mon tour, je refusai. Aujourd'hui, j'ai rencontré le Dieu de la Bible et je peux le suivre sans rien avoir à abjurer, puisque, formellement, et malgré mon baptême, je n'appartiens à aucune Église." *Ibid.,* 292.

[127] Rabbi Isaac Rouche, who Chouraqui credits (*A Man,* 44) with helping him to unravel the distinguished pedigree of the Chouraqui family. Rouche appears to have been a scholar in his own right, having published studies such as "Un grand rabbin à Tlemcen au XVe siècle," in *Revue de la Société de Géographie et d'Archéologie de la Province d'Oran* 57 (1936), 280-6; 64 (1943), 43-72. Chouraqui mentions that Rouche was also the founding director of the Hebrew Normal School in Casablanca (*L'Alliance israélite universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine, 1860-1960: Cent ans d'histoire* [Paris: Presses universitaires de la France, 1965], 335). See David Ṣarfatī and Albert Ḥazan, "Le rabbin Isaac Rouche," in *Les Cahiers de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle* 208 (March 1984), 1-4.

[128] *L'amour,* 293.

[129] See "Crémieux [Décret]," in SERGE BERSTEIN, *Dictionnaire historique de la France contemporaine* (Brussels: Complexe, 1995), 205-07.

and economic life. Chouraqui, realizing that his legal career was now untenable, resigned his position as a barrister on June 14, 1941.[130]

Because of Colette's delicate medical condition, their doctor admitted her to hospital in advance of the expected delivery date. Their daughter was named Emmanuèle, but her health was precarious from birth, and the baby lived only three months.[131] Colette left for a French sanatorium to recover, and André himself returned to France at the end of October 1941, eventually setting out for Clermont-Ferrand, the rabbinical school's new home. Deprivation and hardship were the order of the day and André, anguished after the events of the previous months, threw himself into his studies with a mixture of despair and obsession: "Le choc de mon dépaysement s'atténue dès que je me remets à l'étude, Bible, Talmud, théologies juive et chrétienne".[132] André's studies were, however, overshadowed, first by the medically-necessary abortion of Colette's second child in July 1942, but also by his growing awareness of the atrocities being committed elsewhere against the Jews by the Nazis.[133]

5. Enduring the War and its Repercussions

As 1942 progressed, the situation for France's Jews grew more dire with each passing week. The German army made repeated incursions into Clermont-Ferrand, arresting hundreds of university professors and students, including many of André's classmates and friends. In late June, new government regulations confiscated Jewish properties and began the process of arresting and deporting local Jews; during the

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[130] "So far as I was concerned, after fleeing from Paris at the moment of the downfall, I had gone back to Algeria. The statute concerning Jews withdrew my French citizenship, and expelled me from the bar, at which, as a young lawyer, I had had myself enrolled … The idea of taking my place in a society that had brought me down to the rank of pariah revolted me." *A Man,* 109.

[131] *L'amour,* 297-300.

[132] *L'amour,* 308.

[133] "Des échos de plus en plus précis, de plus en plus horribles me parvenaient des camps de concentration de France et d'Allemagne. Nous cherchions des layettes pour les centaines d'enfants de Juives violentées par les persécuteurs, des refuges pour des milliers de personnes réduits au désespoir." *L'amour,* 318.

early summer, Jews were formally expelled from the region of Clermont-Ferrand.[134] The rabbinical college was disbanded as its students fled or were arrested.[135] In desperation, Chouraqui wrote to the Chief Rabbi in Paris, begging him to protest publicly against these anti-Jewish measures.[136] The "Final Solution" had been decreed, and was rapidly being implemented in occupied Europe.[137]

Eventually, André succeeded in finding a safe refuge for Colette: a doctor friend offered them the use of his family farm in Chaumergeais, both as a home and as a nerve-centre for the covert work André had begun, trying to arrange provisions, safe-houses and passage for Jews and others in flight. In quiet collaboration with the local residents and several local churches, he helped to set up a remarkable supply network that provided food, medicine and baby supplies to mothers, young children and the elderly in safe-houses. A number of local Christian pastors encouraged their parishioners to take in persecuted Jews, especially threatened children, and even used their liturgies to solicit—subtly—the needed shelter and supplies:

> Les pasteurs Leenhardt, Trocmé, Theiss, d'autres encore encouragent leurs ouailles à recueillir les Juifs persécutés. Quand je n'ai pas assez de place pour

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[134] "On June 2,1942, it was announced by the press in the Clermont-Ferrand region that all 'Israelites who were French citizens having come to Clermont-Ferrand and its outskirts after January 1, 1938' were required to gather their identity papers and report to the Special Office of Police Supplies between June 5 and June 10. On the following day, June 3, the 'foreign Israelites' received a similar summons ordering them to report to the same place. Once they showed up, they were told in no uncertain terms that Admiral Platon, a secretary of state in the Vichy government, had decided to expel them from the administrative region of Clermont-Ferrand, which included the départements of L'Allier, Le Puy-de-Dome, Le Cantal, and La Haute-Loire. Some two thousand people were affected by this 'removal decision.' Only a tiny number of students and government employees allowed by the Jewish Statutes, namely, those who were disabled war veterans or war orphans, were granted exemptions." Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II*. The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry series (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001), 72-73. See also Dominique Jarrassé, *Les juifs de Clermont: une histoire fragmentée*. [Clermont-Ferrand?]: Presses universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2000.

[135] *L'amour*, 314-15.

[136] *L'amour*, 317.

[137] See Richard Breitman, "Plans for the Final Solution in Early 1941," in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed and the Re-Examined* (eds. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 187-196; Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution* (London: William Heinemann, 2004).

> mes enfants, le prêche du dimanche dans les temples protestants porte invariablement sur le thème : « Ce que vous ferez au plus petit de ces enfants, c'est à Moi que vous le ferez. » Les cœurs et les portes s'ouvrent si bien que, jusqu'à la Libération, pas un seul de mes enfants, pas un seul de mes réfugiés ne sera perdu. À l'arrivée, à chacune des nombreuses stations où le train omnibus s'arrête, les paysans sont là, un deux, trois, quatre, impatients de voir le visage de leur filleuls. À leurs sourires, je suis assuré que ces enfants ne manqueront de rien.[138]

Chouraqui became a member of the French Resistance cells which were active in the Haute-Loire, passing messages in code and serving as a conduit for the transport of people, food, medicine and other supplies. He also managed to regularly gather groups of Jewish colleagues and friends, who formed underground study-circles (called "l'École des Prophètes"[139]) led by Jewish intellectuals in hiding, such as Jacob Gordin[140] and Georges Vajda:[141]

> Jacob Gordin était un philosophe abreuvé de culture hébraïque depuis sont enfance en Lituanie, pays de haute science biblique et talmudique. Chestov, Dostoïevski, les philosophes et écrivains russes et allemands faisaient partie de son identité intellectuelle. Il excellait surtout dans l'enseignement de la Bible et de cette Cabbale, qui était généralement exclue des horizons du judaïsme français, attaché à la clarté cartésienne davantage qu'aux acrobaties intellectuelles du Talmud ou mystique du Zohar. Il n'était pas ordinaire de voir dans les bois de Haute-Loire des maquisards barbus passer leurs nuits à étudier leur Bible hébraïque, leur Talmud et leur Cabbale, avec les traditions

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[138] *L'amour,* 321.

[139] "... un genre de 'yeshiva' comme nous disons, une sorte d'école rabbinique, d'école de penseurs, qui a fonctionné depuis le printemps 1943 jusqu'à la Libération et encore deux mois après la Libération. Le chef spiritual de cette école était le philosophe Jacob Gordin ..." Pierre Bolle, ed., *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et résistance, 1939-1946 : Actes du colloque du Chambon-sur-Lignon* (Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d'histoire de la montagne, 1992), 444.

[140] Jacob [Jakob] Gordin (1896-1947) was a Lithuanian-born scholar of Jewish philosophy and mysticism who initially studied in Berlin, and moved to Paris to teach during the 1930s. Jacques Eladan, in his 1995 study *Penseurs juifs de langue française* (Paris: Harmattan), says that "Jacob Gordin a renouvelé en profondeur les études juives en France, en substituant au discours sur le judaïsme l'interprétation vivante des textes traditionnels ..." (51). Gordin was particularly influential in shaping the thought of the prominent philosopher and Talmudist Emmanuel Lévinas. On this influence, see: Samuel Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas Between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 200-01, and Lévinas' own remembrances in *Jacob Gordin : Écrits : le renouveau de la pensée juive en France* (eds. Léon Askénazi and Marcel Goldmann; Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), 291ff.

[141] See *L'amour,* 324-327.

> islamiques, auprès de Gordin et avec Vajda. En fait, l'étude et la prière nourrissaient notre action dont elles exaltaient les témérités.[142]

Chouraqui refused to allow the atrocities of war to entirely sideline his academic ambitions or undermine his renewed sense of his Jewish self; his subversive activities began to take on both a *material* and an *intellectual* quality.[143] Under the tutelage of Vajda (one of the leading scholars of mediæval Judaism at that time), Chouraqui began his translation of Baḥya Ibn-Paquda's *Duties of the Heart (Les Devoirs des Cœurs)*, a work of medieval Jewish mysticism in Arabic.[144]

Chouraqui's wartime experiences offered him powerful new insights into religion, and into interreligious cooperation in particular. While he was scandalized and disappointed by the failure of many religious Christians to offer moral or practical assistance to their persecuted brethren, nevertheless he encountered many followers of Christ who were generous and courageous in their efforts, and who saw their work as simply the living-out of their Christian calling. Similarly, he was amazed to see how, in the ranks of the Resistance, religious categories largely fell away or became irrelevant, subsumed in a larger mission which they shared in common. Jews, Catholics and Protestants did not hesitate to fight and die side-by-side with Communists and avowed atheists.[145] Surely, Chouraqui thought, such spiritual and ethical

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[142] *L'amour,* 326-327; *A Man,* 112.

[143] During this period, Chouraqui also renewed an old friendship with the Algerian-born philosopher (and fellow Resistance fighter) Albert Camus, and the two engaged in discussions about God, morality and the Bible. "An important biblical scholar who would later translate the Hebrew Bible into French, Chouraqui helped Camus decipher the significance of the plague in the Bible as he worked on *La Peste* in Panelier, and invited him to his hideout in Chaumargeais, a hamlet in the village of Tence, where they would talk at length about their situation and eat Algerian cuisine." PATRICK HENRY, "Albert Camus, Panelier and *La Peste,*" in *Literary Imagination: The Review of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics.* Vol 5.3 (2003), 383-404; online at: http://litimag.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/5/3/383.pdf. Henry's article cites here HERBERT R. LOTTMAN, *Albert Camus: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 273, and Chouraqui's *L'amour,* 242. See also CHOURAQUI, *Retour aux racines: Entretiens avec Jacques Deschanel* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1981), 32-34.

[144] *L'amour,* 326. See Chouraqui's description of the writing process in *A Man,* 113-115.

[145] *A Man,* 110-11: "[In the ranks of the Resistance,] ... the pariahs that we had become recognized one another, not by their religion, but by the intensity of their suffering, the courage of their fighting, and the boldness of their hope. Among us we counted Jews, Christians, Moslems, and

camaraderie—which was evidently possible—need not be limited to the most harrowing moments of humanity? The months after the liberation of France left him confused and depressed as he grappled with the implications of these questions. Surely such intuitions could form the basis of a new and more fraternal Europe ... but were there men and women willing to embrace these ideas in practice? What he and others had undergone during the war left him somewhat skeptical:

> Even France, the well-beloved France of my studies and of my nightly watching, she to whom I owed my language and my culture, had consented that I should be cast out from her bosom, and that I be reduced to the condition of a pariah. On the parvis in front of Notre Dame, I contemplated the statue representing the Synagogue, blindfolded, and holding a broken sceptre, by the side of her triumphant sister, the Church ... Thirty-three centuries of Mosaic religion, two thousand years of Christianity, came to their climax in the bankruptcy of the Second World War.[146]

6. Return to Algeria—and the Start of a Global Career

As soon as he could, André returned to his native Algeria, where he was named a regional justice of the peace.[147] He continued his legal studies at the University of Algiers, earning in 1946 a further specialization in Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan law.[148] In the summer of 1947, Chouraqui made a friendship that would have a decisive influence on his life and career. He met René Cassin, a distinguished French jurist and humanitarian who was the president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, one of Europe's major Jewish organizations.[149] Cassin, impressed by Chouraqui, hired him on

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freethinkers, ready to offer their lives that freedom might be won and that life might triumph over death ... As night ended and dawn blazed forth, I would be seized again by the same vision of the return, of the liberation, of universal brotherhood, of peace."

[146] *A Man,* 118.

[147] *L'amour,* 348.

[148] *L'amour,* 347.

[149] René Cassin is perhaps best known today as the chief author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Cassin was awarded the 1968 Nobel Peace Prize for his contributions to international law, and especially to the drafting and passage of the Declaration. An excellent capsule biography of Cassin is available at: http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1968/cassin-bio.html

in November of that year as Deputy General Secretary of the AIU; Chouraqui also took on new national responsibilities as Secretary-General of the Conseil pour l'Éducation et la Culture Juives en France (CECJF), working to re-build post-war Jewish life in France and across a ravaged Europe.

Chouraqui's work with the AIU took him literally around the world, nurturing a broad network of contacts with Jewish communities in every corner of the globe. Working hand-in-hand with UNICEF's NGO branch, he inspected educational and other cultural and humanitarian works supported by Jewish organizations, and worked as a spokesperson and liaison for Europe's Jewish communities on the world stage. He was also a public speaker very much in demand, giving conferences and speaking at public events throughout the world.

7. The Beginnings of Chouraqui's Interreligious Leadership

A landmark moment in the history of Jewish-Christian relations occurred in 1948, with the foundation in Paris of the first *Amitié judéo-chrétienne* [Jewish-Christian Friendship Association].[150] Its founders included Jules Isaac, Edmond Fleg[151] and Henri Marrou,[152] and its circle would at various times include Jacob Kaplan (the Chief Rabbi

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In 1965, Chouraqui himself authored a centennial history of the AIU: *Cent ans d'histoire: L'Alliance israélite universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine, 1860-1960* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965).

[150] *L'amour*, 542-544. Chapters of the ACJF would later be established in Aix en Provence, Marseille, Montpellier, Nîmes, Lyon and Lille. On the foundation of the ACJF, see: Catherine Poujol, ed. "Jalons pour une amitié judéo-chrétienne en France: cent ans d'histoire". Compte rendu du colloque sur l'histoire de l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne en France, 18 et 19 novembre 1998 à la Maison de la recherche de l'université de Lille III. (Paris: Archives juives, 1999); Pierre Riché, *Henri Irénée Marrou: historien engagé* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 302-03; Hedwig Wahle, "Hommage aux pionniers du dialogue judéo-chrétien," in *SIDIC*, édition française 30:2 (1973), 2-9 ; available online at: http://www.sidic.org/it/reviewViewArticolo.asp?id=580

[151] Fleg (born Edmond Flegenheimer, 1874-1963) was a prominent French Jewish philosopher, poet, essayist, dramatist and translator. See Odile Roussel, *Un itinéraire spirituel: Edmond Fleg* (Paris: La Pensée universelle, 1978).

[152] Henri-Irénée Marrou (1904-1977) was a French Catholic historian and philosopher, specializing in the history of early Christianity. See Riché, *Henri Irénée Marrou*.

of France),[153] as well as the Catholic priests Michel Riquet[154] and Paul Démann,[155] and the priest-theologian (and later cardinal) Jean Daniélou.[156] From a very early stage, Chouraqui associated himself with this fledgling movement and was a close friend of its leaders, although, as he later acknowledged (in a 1963 tribute to Jules Isaac), its beginnings were met with a great deal of sarcasm and suspicion at the time:

> Lorsque les Amitiés judéo-chrétiennes en étaient à leur débuts, voici une quinzaine d'années seulement, elles suscitaient de part et d'autre bien des sourires sceptiques ou ironiques. Les sages de ce monde haussaient les épaules en se demandant à quoi tout cela menait, chez les uns et chez les autres, on pensait parfois qu'il s'agissait, non pas d'amitié, mais de calcul : calcul des Juifs en vue d'échapper aux sales conséquences de l'antisémitisme ; calcul chez les Chrétiens soucieux de trouver enfin une bonne voie d'accès auprès des Juifs afin de les convertir. Et peut-être bien que pour quelques-uns, l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne n'était que cela. Mais pas dans la vérité et dans la nudité des choses.[157]

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[153] Jacob Kaplan (1895-1994) served as Chief Rabbi of Paris from 1950-55, and as Chief Rabbi of France from 1955-80. See Jacob Finklestone, "Obituary: Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan," in *The Independent* (Dec. 7, 1994); archived online at www.highbeam.com. See also Kaplan, *Le vrai visage du judaïsme* (Paris: Berge-Levrault, 1976).

[154] Riquet (1898-1993), a Jesuit, preached consistently against the Nazis during the war, was arrested by the Gestapo and was interned, first (in 1944) at Mauthausen and later (until May 1945) at Dachau. See the obituary of Riquet on the Web site of the Jesuits of France: http://www.jesuites.com/histoire/riquet.htm, and the comments on Riquet on pages 517-18 in Limore Yagil, *Chrétiens et juifs sous Vichy, 1940-1944: Sauvetage et désobéissance civile* (Paris: Cerf, 2005). See also *Testament*, 80.

[155] Démann (1912-2005) was born into an assimilated Hungarian Jewish family, and converted to Christianity in 1934. In 1944, after theological studies at Louvain, he was ordained a priest of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, and saved a number of Jews during the war. After the war, he set up a centre for Jewish-Christian documentation in Paris, and initiated the publication of *Cahiers sioniens* (1947-55). A participant at the Seelisberg Conference, he went on to publish a number of important articles in Jewish-Christian relations. He left his religious congregation in 1963. See Olivier Rota, "Dépasser les cadres du philosémitisme: La vision œcuménique de Paul Démann," in *Archives juives (Paris)* 40:1 (2007): 117-30, 159. See also "Hommage à Paul Démann," Édition spéciale de la revue *Sens* 305:2 (Feb. 2006), and "Spécial Paul Démann," *Informa-Sion: Bulletin informatifs des religieux de Sion à Paris* 12 (Mar. 2006).

[156] Daniélou (1905-1974) was a renowned French Jesuit theologian and member of the Académie française. A theological consultant at Vatican II, he was named a cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1969. See the biography of Daniélou on the Web site of the Académie française: http://www.academie-francaise.fr/immortels/base/academiciens/ fiche.asp?param=645, and Emmanuelle de Boysson, *Le cardinal et l'hindouiste: Le mystère des frères Daniélou* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999).

[157] "Hommage à Jules Isaac: Conférence d'André Chouraqui (Amitié judéo-chrétienne de Marseille – 17 décembre 1963)"; online at the Web site "Le judaïsme d'Alsace et de Lorraine"; http://judaisme.sdv.fr/perso/jisaac/chouraq.htm

Chouraqui's first-hand experience of the energy and idealism of such post-war interreligious initiatives further reinforced his own sense of the necessity of formal structures for interfaith dialogue and collaboration. He would go on to found, and to actively support, a number of similar organizations on local, national and international levels.[158] In November of 1948,[159] he defended his doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, on the legal aspects of the creation of the state of Israel—certainly one of the first theses dedicated to the birth of the re-born Jewish state.[160]

8. André and Colette: A Painful Parting

Colette's health, never robust, had by this time become increasingly precarious, and she retired to St-Maximin for rest and medical care. In her physical weakness, she turned more and more to a contemplative life of prayer and biblical study. She urged André to move with her to Jerusalem, a city she had long dreamed of, but he realized that the medical facilities of the newborn state were not yet adequate to meet her increasing health needs. They discussed a separation, and Colette began to look toward the Catholic Church, in which she believed she could live her desired way of life, while continuing to maintain her sense of Hebraic identity. In August 1948, they decided to separate—not because of lack of love, but simply because the central loves in their loves were leading them in different directions. The Little Sisters of Jesus (an order of nuns inspired by the French soldier-monk Charles de Foucauld) welcomed Colette (although Jewish and married) into one of their homes. On December 25, 1948, Colette was received into the Catholic Church by the archbishop of Aix-en-Provence,

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[158] These include the World Conference of Religions for Peace (on whose executive committee Chouraqui served from 1974 to 1983), the Israel Interfaith Committee, the Islam-Israel Fellowship of the Root & Branch Association, the Fraternité d'Abraham, and the Comité pour l'Entente religieuse en Israël et dans le monde.

[159] Chouraqui's own online autobiographical notes (http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/biog.htm) say that he defended his doctoral dissertation on Nov. 10, 1949, although *L'Amour fort comme la mort* (656) says that the defence was actually in November of 1948 (and this is the date cited by other sources as well).

[160] *Création de l'État d'Israël*. Thèse en droit (Paris: Université de Paris, 1948).

as André watched—insisting, however, that she was by no means turning her back on her Jewish identity and adherence: "Chrétienne, Colette continua d'être fidèle à Israël dont elle n'abjura jamais la foi".[161] It was a bittersweet parting for André; although he understood Colette's attraction to a contemplative life of prayer and study, nevertheless he found himself initially racked with jealousy, anger and resentment: "Il m'arrivait de penser que ma peine serait moins insupportable si ma femme m'avait abandonné pour un autre homme et non pour ce Dieu qui me la ravissait".[162] With the passage of time, however, Colette and André's relationship began to shift, from that of husband and wife, to that of spiritual brother and sister. No longer spouses, they maintained a surprisingly intimate relationship and a regular correspondence until Colette's death more than thirty years later.

9. The Promised Land Beckons; Literary Beginnings

In July of 1950, André travelled for the first time to Israel. From his earliest childhood, he had nurtured romantic visions of the Holy Land, and especially of the holy city of Jerusalem. The reality was far different. He was traumatized to see how the beauty of Jerusalem had been tarnished by the tragedies of the War of Independence, leaving many casualties on a human level, and tremendous damage on the level of buildings and infrastructure. The ceasefire border divided the city in half; the holy places that had filled André's mind for a lifetime were tantalizingly close—but frustratingly out of reach:

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[161] *L'amour,* 370. Although this may reflect André's understanding of Colette's intention, in fact the Catholic baptismal liturgy in use at the time (from 1614) includes a specific renunciation of Judaism: [Speaking about the pre-Vatican II Roman Ritual:] "... those desiring baptism were asked formally to reject the system of belief to which they formally adhered. Converts from paganism, Judaism, Islam, and Protestantism were all treated alike ... *If he (she) comes from the Hebrews, [the priest] says:* Abhor the Jewish perfidy. Reject the superstition of the Jews." Paul Turner, *When Other Christians Become Catholic* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 39, citing the *Rituale Romanum,* "De baptismo adultorum" (Regensburg: Pustet, 1912), 22; also Dale J. Sieverding, *The Reception of Baptized Christians: A History and Evaluation.* Forum Essays 7 (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001), 28-31

[162] *L'amour,* 369.

> Jérusalem était présente et absente de Jérusalem. Le rêve du retour s'était écrasé contre le mur de béton et de barbelés qui séparait Jérusalem de Jérusalem. Il nous avait fallu vingt siècles pour revenir de tous les horizons de la planète et voir notre élan arrêté à quelques mètres du but. Le cœur frémissant de la ville, la colline du Temple qui en constitue le centre, s'élevait sous nos yeux, mais plus inaccessible que si elle se situait sur une autre planète.[163]

For six years, Chouraqui would undertake several further trips to Israel, each of them rooting his mind and heart more deeply in its ancient soil, until it was only a matter of time before he realized he must make his own *aliyah* to the land from which his distant ancestors had been exiled almost 1900 years earlier.

> Oui, la découverte de Jérusalem fut bouleversante pour moi : cette ville offrait un vin auquel je n'avais jamais goûté ; pour la première fois je me sentais chez moi, pour la première fois j'appartenais à un pays dont le sol ne se déroberait plus sous mes pieds.[164]

> La vision de Jérusalem me frappa avec la violence d'une révélation. Elle mit en moi une détermination absolue, celle de m'associer personnellement à l'œuvre d'édification d'Israël. Chacun de mes voyages m'ancrait davantage dans cette volonté.[165]

The year 1950 also saw the publication of Chouraqui's first two books: his translation (undertaken during his wartime service in the Resistance) of ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*,[166] and a work on the legal situation of Moroccan Jews.[167] Its publication marked the first of many books Chouraqui would write on political and politico-religious themes, marking him out as a knowledgeable, passionate and articulate commentator on some of the most sensitive of twentieth-century topics. With his combination of legal and religious training, he sought to bring to bear on these highly explosive issues the best and most creative thinking, capable of building bridges and fostering justice and reconciliation. For Chouraqui, these were not abstract

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[163] *L'amour*, 418-19.

[164] *L'amour*, 421.

[165] *L'amour*, 422.

[166] *Les devoirs du cœur* (Paris: Desclée, 1950). The preface to the first edition was written by Jacques Maritain.

[167] *La Condition juridique de l'Israélite marocain* (Paris: Presses du livre français, 1950).

geopolitical questions, but matters that were deeply ingrained in his own individual, national and religious histories, and in which he felt a personal stake.

The text by ibn Paquda would equally establish Chouraqui's reputation as a careful and sensitive literary translator. The French Jewish intellectual André Néher wrote: "Entre le traducteur et Baḥya, il y a contact perpétuel, relation de disciple à maître, et la fidélité d'André Chouraqui est spirituelle et mystique autant qu'intellectuelle".[168] Jacques Madaule, a French Catholic historian and politician, said: "Ce texte admirable fera plus que bien des discours pour rapprocher chrétiens et juifs dans une commune adoration du Dieu vivant".[169] And the French Dominican theologian Marie-Michel Labourdette lauded the translator's style and instincts: "C'est merveille que la traduction du texte arabe rende cet accent perceptible ... A. Chouraqui a le rare mérite de nous présenter un texte non seulement français mais beau, écrit dans une langue sobre, pleine, qui s'harmonise admirablement avec l'enseignement donné et, sans aucune enflure, s'ouvre périodiquement au grand souffle de la poésie biblique".[170] Chouraqui's first literary translation, the fruit of years of reflection on language and religion, was an instant success, and his potential in this field was widely acknowledged. Indeed, his translation of ibn Paquda has remained in print for more than half a century, republished most recently in 2002.[171] For those who had eyes to see, however, it was more than merely a beautiful literary production. Chouraqui's choice of a key Judeo-Arabic text from the Golden Age of Spain's Christian—Jewish—Muslim *convivencia* signalled his own vision and hope for a similar modern-day cooperation of the Abrahamic faiths. It was an impulse that increasingly captured his imagination and inspired his activity.

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[168] Cited by Chouraqui on his own Web site: own Web site: http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biblio/paquda.htm

[169] *Ibid.*

[170] *Ibid.*

[171] *André Chouraqui présente et traduit Bachya Ibn Paqûda, Les Devoirs des Cœurs.* 5th ed. (Paris: Bibliophane—Daniel Radford, 2002).

In November 1951, his translation of the Song of Songs was published[172] and, in 1955, an edition of the book of Psalms.[173] However, his biblical translations—hailed for their fidelity and linguistic dexterity—were only part of his growing literary output. In the early 1950s, Chouraqui was named director of the "Sinai" series at the Presses Universitaires de France, where he was responsible for making key works by mediæval and contemporary Jewish authors newly available in French editions. In 1952, Chouraqui published *Marche vers l'Occident : les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord*, the first of several works he would eventually dedicate to the history of North African Jewry. He complemented his translation of ibn Paquda by translating and commenting on portions of a second Judeo-Arabic work, Salomon ibn Gabirol's eleventh-century *The Crown of the Kingdom* [*La Couronne du royaume*].[174] The AIU, in a concession both to Chouraqui's growing reputation and his desire to dedicate more time to travel and work, named him their Permanent Delegate, allowing him a more flexible schedule in his pursuit of the AIU's work. As a speaker much in demand, Chouraqui travelled the globe, visiting Jewish communities and institutions, and building a broad network of relationships with Christian clergy and international political leaders. In the midst of a whirlwind of travel and activism, Chouraqui continued to write and publish. Three of his books were issued as part of the "Que sais-je?" series, published by the Presses universitaires de France (Paris): *L'Etat d'Israël* (1955), *L'histoire du Judaïsme* (1957), and *La Pensée juive* (1965), and would subsequently be translated into several European languages.[175]

10. *Aliyah* and a New Political Life

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[172] Paris: L'artiste, 1951 (Revised version published by Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1953).

[173] Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1955.

[174] *Revue thomiste*, Vol. XX (1952), 403-40; republished in 1956 in *Revue de la pensée juive* n° 1-2, and in 1996 by Éditions Fata Morgana (Saint-Clément, France).

[175] For publication details, refer to Chouraqui's online bibliographies of his works in French (http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biblio/biblio.htm), and of translations into other languages (http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biblio/traduct.htm).

The year 1956 would be a decisive one, both for Chouraqui and for his life's work. From August to November—during the Suez Crisis—he lived in Israel, involved in various meetings and discussions with the Israeli government. With the support of the Israeli leadership, he established on December 29 what he called the "Comité pour l'Entente religieuse en Israël et dans le monde" (Committee for Religious Understanding in Israel and in the World), a group that would work to actively build up relationships of trust and understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims:

> ... j'y allais cette fois, non plus pour les affaires de l'Alliance israélite, mais pour fonder un comité interreligieux groupant juifs, chrétiens et musulmans, le premier du genre dans le pays, à l'image élargie de nos Amitiés judéo-chrétiennes de France, ou des Amitiés monothéistes en Algérie.[176]

Chouraqui met with Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, and was invited to present his ideas during a public lecture in the presence of Israel's president, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. His experiences convinced him that the time had come to finally emigrate to Israel. In 1958, he married Annette Levy, a Liberal Jewish activist and physiotherapist sixteen years his junior, who had first come to know him through his lectures around Paris. Later that year, the couple made their long-anticipated *aliyah:* "Nous ne tardâmes pas à prendre, Annette et moi, la double résolution d'unir nos vies et de fonder notre foyer, non pas à Paris mais à Jérusalem. L'amour, je le redécouvrais à nouveau auprès d'Annette".[177] Initially, André and Annette settled in the Rehov Hovevei Sion area of Jerusalem. However, André had his sights set on a more

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[176] *L'amour,* 423.

[177] After the bitter experience of his separation from Colette, André had interiorly resolved never to re-marry ("Notre amitié se développa en affection et bientôt en un amour qui m'obligea à reconsidérer ... mon refus du remariage ... Un jour ... plus paniqué que jamais, je tentais d'échapper à l'inéluctable amour ...", *L'amour,* 424, 426). As well as being his wife and the mother of his five children, Annette would also take on a major role in the editing and revision of Chouraqui's monumental biblical translation, *L'Univers de la Bible*: "Cette descendante d'Aaron et des lévites ... incarne à longueur de vie une vraie femme de la Bible. Ce titre, elle le méritera très concrètement quand, avec ténacité et efficacité, elle révisera, mot à mot sur l'hébreu, ma traduction de la Bible. Elle est la première et sans doute la seule femme à avoir fait, du début à la fin de la Bible hébraïque, un travail aussi précis et aussi complexe. Sa correction des épreuves de *L'Univers de la Bible* était d'une précision telle que, sur vingt millions de caractères, on n'a relevé à ce jour que deux coquilles !" *L'amour,* 425.

permanent location: a lot on Aïn-Rogel Street—only metres from the Jordanian border, a regular flashpoint of tensions and violence.

> Cette rue possédait en effet quelques terrains vagues dont personne ne voulait parce qu'elle se situait sur la frontière sanglante au bout et en face de laquelle se trouvaient une trentaine de bastions de la Légion arabe ... [Aux yeux de mes amis,] c'était folie de s'établir avec femme et enfants sur cette frontière exposée aux coups de l'armée jordanienne ... Annette voyait bien ce que se passait en moi. Je lui demandai son avis. Elle me répondait dans un sourire : « Nous bâtirons notre maison rue Aïn-Rogel ! » ... Le 5 mars 1963, nous posions la première pierre de notre future maison sur le terrain que nous avions acheté ... Un an plus tard, le 6 mars 1964, jour anniversaire de la naissance d'Annette, nous nous installions dans notre nouvelle demeure.[178]

For both of them, the move to Israel was the fulfillment of a romantic ideal they had jointly nurtured as convinced Zionists. The reality of adjusting to daily life, however, in a new country and a new language, proved challenging:

> Ce pays que je découvrais, émerveillé, dans l'angoisse de ses lendemains, était la terre de la Bible : l'hébreu que je commençais à parler, après l'avoir lu, balbutiant, depuis ma plus tendre enfance, était la langue de la Bible. Nourrisson quadragénaire, je réapprenais, pour la parler enfin, ma langue paternelle, celle du Livre des livres de mes amours premières ....[179]
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> Je connaissais l'hébreu biblique en tant que langue morte : mes connaissances théoriques furent un obstacle plutôt qu'une aide pour passer à la pratique.[180]

After his arrival in Jerusalem, it did not take long for Chouraqui—already well-known among Israel's governing class and cultural élite—to find himself at the heart of the country's political and religious life. A growing friendship with Ben-Gurion led to Chouraqui's nomination as Counsellor for the Integration of Ethnic Communities (1958-63). The issue was near and dear to André's heart as a North African Jew; indeed, he had witnessed some of the discrimination to which many of his fellow Mizrahi immigrants had been subjected.[181] He lobbied for changes to government

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[178] *L'amour,* 432-434.

[179] *L'amour,* 422.

[180] *L'amour,* 431.

[181] Dina Siegel, in her study of the wave of Soviet Jewish migration to Israel in the 1980s and 1990s, compares the relative welcome accorded to Soviet immigrants, versus that given to their North African Jewish predecessors thirty years earlier: "... many Israelis felt that the Soviet Jews

policies, arguing for the necessity of superior-level educational opportunities for the large immigrant populace, as a foundation for Israel's growth, social cohesion and future prosperity.

> À vrai dire, [Ben Gourion] ne cessait d'être intrigué par le mélange qu'il décelait en moi, un Maghrebin typique, un sépharade, docteur d'État de l'université de Paris, qui était néanmoins un Juif authentique, émoulu de l'École rabbinique de France et, de plus, sioniste ! [182]

> Je pris le titre de conseiller du président du Conseil [des ministres] pour la fusion des communautés ... Pour fabriquer mon mélange, j'avais pour composantes des Juifs originaires de cent deux pays du monde, parlant plus de quatre-vingts langues, et représentant pour moitié l'orient et pour moitié l'occident de la planète. Il fallait préparer la fusion harmonieuse de cet ensemble sans précédent pour tâcher d'en faire surgir une nation nouvelle ....[183]

It was a difficult and sometimes thankless task, with almost no resources. Even Chouraqui's push for better educational opportunities for immigrants was met with occasional scepticism from his own colleagues within cabinet, such as Deputy Minister

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received too many privileges and made too many demands. After the initial welcoming enthusiasm, expressions of hostility towards Russian Jews emerged, especially among the North African Jews who had immigrated in the 1950s. This attitude was based on their feeling of relative discrimination. The new immigrants received privileges, including housing, exemption from taxes, various concessions, allowing them to relatively quickly reach the average socio-economic level. They were received more enthusiastically than Jews from Islamic countries had been. The latter recalled how they had been jammed into tents and shanty towns. North African Jews in particular complained that an official pro-Ashkenazi policy was geared at undermining their culture and at making them feel inferior." DINA SIEGEL, *The Great Immigration: Russian Jews in Israel* (New York: Berghahn, 1998), 11. Even David Ben-Gurion, in his own ambitious plans to bring a million Jews to Israel, presupposed a certain hierarchy within the classes of Jewish immigrants: "For the first time, the Jews in Islamic countries were introduced into the political discussion of the Jewish institutions as a single category (called 'Sephardim,' 'Edot Ha'Mizrah,' or 'Mizrahim,' depending on time and context) ... Note that a crucial element of the plan espoused by Ben-Gurion was the distinction it made between European Jews and the Arab Jews ... European Jews would reside in immigrant camps for a period of up to three months, while Arab Jews would be sent to transit camps for settlement in the Negev desert, spending one to two years in the camps ... This segregationist politics of space contradicted another aspect of Zionist logic, namely, the melting pot ideology. The ethnicity-based geographical division established the intra-Jewish ethnic identity as a meaningful and distinct factor, and also as a problem in the structure of Israeli society ever since." YEHOUDA A. SHENHAV, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 31-32.

[182] *L'amour*, 447.

[183] *L'amour*, 450.

of Education Ami Assaf, a *sabra* who was convinced that many of the immigrants suffered from a congenital intellectual inferiority that left them with little hope of educational success.[184]

Perhaps his most intimate and lasting relationship with Ben Gurion, however, centred around the informal "biblical circles" that the Prime Minister regularly held at his residence, to which Chouraqui was invited, during which the country's top biblical scholars and archæologists were asked to share their findings and insights:[185]

> C'est par le canal de la Bible que ma communication avec Ben Gourion était la plus parfaite. Ce livre avait façonné sa pensée dès son enfance : elle ne cessa sa vie durant de lui fournir un corps de références historiques, théologiques et parfois même politiques, qu'il s'ingéniait à appliquer aux situations concrètes dans lesquelles il devait guider son peuple. Quand il constatait les défaillances de son socialisme et de son sionisme, la Bible constituait son ultime terme de références : il y trouvait toujours réponse à ses questions, et plus encore le grand souffle prophétique dont il avait besoin pour surmonter ses difficultés

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[184] "[Abba Eban] mit l'accent sur les lacunes du système d'éducation, où le retard des nouveaux immigrants était perceptible dès leur entrée à l'école primaire à l'âge de cinq ans. Lévi Eshkol l'interrompit et dit en substance : 'Vous me demandez beaucoup d'argent, mais en même temps vous me dites que ces gens ont un retard dès l'âge de cinq ans ! Mais qui me dit que ce retard intellectuel ne commence pas à l'âge de quatre ans, de trois ans ou ... ?' Ami Assaf l'interrompit et compléta sa pensée en ajoutant : 'Ou avant ! Tout le monde sait que ces enfants ont dès la naissance un retard héréditaire ...' C'en était plus que je ne pouvais supporter. Je déclarai qu'il était à peine imaginable d'entendre de telles inepties prononcées au sein du gouvernement d'Israël. Ben Gourion prit à nouveau la parole pour essayer de calmer l'incident et, dans un esprit de conciliation, il lâcha : 'C'est exagéré de parler de retard héréditaire. A voir Chouraqui, on ne saurait le penser, même si tout le monde sait que les Yéménites ont un plafond qu'ils ne peuvent dépasser !' Le Vieux était bien de son temps et de son pays ! ... Le monde arabe—y compris ses Juifs—resta constamment pour lui une énigme qu'il ne parvint jamais à déchiffrer". Chouraqui later wrote to Abba Eban to express his astonishment at these comments, "révélateurs du racisme latent d'une partie de la population originaire d'Europe." *L'amour*, 454-55.

[185] Ben-Gurion himself spoke about this "Bible Study Group": "It meets in my home every other week, and the greatest Bible scholars in Israel participate in it, including those who hold traditional views as well as those with freer and more critical views." David Ben-Gurion, *Ben-Gurion Looks at the Bible*. (Trans. Jonathan Kolatch; Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1972), 114. "I had seen Ben-Gurion bursting with ideas, alert to every event both in Israel and in the world at large. I had watched as he excitedly held forth during the discussions of the Bible study group at his home. His wife Paula, who planned the seating arrangements and saw to the refreshments at these gatherings, would looked [*sic*] on with evident pleasure." Yosef Almogi, *Total Commitment* (East Brunswick, NJ: Cornwall, 1982), 251. See Mordechai Cogan, *Ben-Guryon veha-Tanakh: 'am ve-'artso* [Hebrew] (Be'er-Sheva': Hotsa'at ha-Sefarim shel Universiṭat Ben-Guryon ba-Negev, 1989), esp. the article by Benjamin Uffenheimer, 54-69.

> quotidiennes. Ben Gourion connaissait la Bible comme peu de spécialistes. Il la vivait comme un document d'éternelle actualité ....[186]
>
> Centré sur la Bible, Ben Gourion apprit le grec pour lire Platon dans le texte et l'espagnol pour mieux comprendre Cervantès ... Mais la Bible demeurait sa source d'inspiration essentielle.[187]
>
> Quand Haïm Guevaryahou, l'animateur du mouvement biblique en Israël, lui suggéra de fonder, chez lui, un cercle d'études de la Bible, Ben Gourion n'hésita pas une seconde :
> — Quand donc commençons-nous, et combien de temps dureront les séances ?
> — Une heure et demie, déclara prudemment Haïm.
> — Une heure et demie ? Mais c'est insuffisant ! Le cercle devrait se réunir au coucher du soleil et étudier la Bible jusqu'à l'aube avant de finir son étude par une marche sur les monts de Judée, éblouissants de beauté au soleil levant ! C'est là que la Bible est née, et c'est là où il est possible de mieux la comprendre.
> Notre cercle biblique se réunit pour la première fois le 4 décembre 1958, en présence des meilleurs biblistes du pays ... Nous étions entourés de professeurs d'université et de spécialistes pour lesquels il n'est pas exagéré de dire qu'ils connaissaient la Bible à peu près par cœur ...
> Dès qu'il était question de Bible, le Vieux s'animait, son regard s'allumait : il redevenait le petit enfant de Plonsk qui, entre les genoux de son grand-père, apprenait à lire et à commenter la Bible.[188]

Chouraqui's term as Counsellor lasted for almost six years, ending in 1964, in the wake of Ben-Gurion's own resignation. But he did not in the meantime abandon his twin loves of literature and theology; in 1961, he published a volume of poems, *Cantique pour Nathanaël,* as well as a biography of Theodor Herzl.[189] Whenever his schedule allowed, he continued to lecture widely throughout the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. In the autumn of 1965, he published a historical overview of the

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[186] *L'amour,* 437.

[187] *L'amour,* 439.

[188] *L'amour,* 441-442.

[189] *Cantique pour Nathanaël* (Paris: J. Corti, 1960; a new edition was published by Albin Michel, Paris in 1991); *Théodore Herzl: Inventeur de l'État d'Israël* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1960; English translation: *A Man Alone.* Trans. Yael Guiladi [Jerusalem: Keter, 1970]). A new edition was published as *Un visionnaire nommé Herzl: La résurrection d'Israël,* by Robert Laffont, Paris in 1991.

Alliance Israélite[190]; the book would be awarded the Louis Marin Prize by the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques.[191]

11. Municipal Politics in Jerusalem

September 30, 1965 was a particularly momentous day for Jewish-Christian relations. The Second Vatican Council, convoked by Pope John XXIII, was set to approve a landmark document (*Nostra Ætate)* on Catholic attitudes toward non-Christians, and Chouraqui had been personally invited by the Council's secretary-general, Bishop Pericle Felici, to attend the official conciliar vote on the declaration.

> J'assistai de bon matin à la messe solennelle qui célébrait Jérôme, de tous les saints du calendrier catholique celui qui savait assurément le plus d'hébreu : ce n'est pas par hasard que le document sur les religions non chrétiennes était distribué sous son patronage. Dans le courant de cette journée, j'avais rencontré, en plus du bon pape Jean XXIII, plus de cardinaux, d'archevêques et d'évêques que tous mes ancêtres depuis la création du monde ....[192]

Returning to his hotel after the day's events, André was surprised to discover a series of urgent messages waiting for him, from his friend and political colleague Teddy Kollek in Jerusalem. Kollek was running in the upcoming municipal elections, as a candidate for mayor of Jerusalem; would Chouraqui consent to run as his deputy? Chouraqui was by now a well-known and respected figure among Jerusalem's immigrant groups, for whom Kollek was largely an unknown. There was no time for weighing options; a decision was needed within the hour. Chouraqui, who had only recently stepped down from a demanding role in public office, agreed to Kollek's

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[190] *Cent ans d'Histoire: l'Alliance israélite universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France).

[191] As per Chouraqui's own online autobiography: http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio2.htm

[192] *L'amour,* 464. The text here is somewhat ambiguous. Pope John XXIII had actually died in June 1963, to be succeeded by Pope Paul VI, under whose leadership *Nostra Ætate* was voted on and eventually promulgated. It is possible that Chouraqui is referring here to his *earlier* meetings with John XXIII (i.e. before the pope's death); if Chouraqui is suggesting that he met John XXIII in September 1965, his memory is mistaken, or he has accidentally substituted the earlier pope's name for the latter's.

invitation.[193] Running on a ticket for the new RAFI party, Kollek and Chouraqui were victorious in the October elections, and André became Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem. "Nous avions à résoudre tous les problèmes de toutes les mairies du monde, avec un double handicap : nous étions en Israël et il s'agissait de Jérusalem".[194]

In his capacity as Deputy Mayor, Chouraqui was given the special portfolios of cultural affairs and interreligious matters, roles in which his earlier life experience and fluency in Arabic proved to be particular assets. From his city hall office, he would be at the centre of Jerusalem life through some of the city's most critical and bloodiest moments, notably the Six-Day War in June 1967 that recaptured East Jerusalem and reunited the city, and the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. He writes with particular poignancy of the emotions stirred up by the city's reunification—the boundless rejoicing of its Jewish inhabitants, able once more to pray at the Western Wall, and the despair and fearfulness of some of its Arab citizens, for whom the defeat was a particularly bitter blow. And yet he also highlights personal stories of trust and reconciliation, of friendships renewed and property restored:

> Nous avons le sentiment de vivre un rêve incroyable : dans la lumière éblouissante du printemps, nous découvrons de nos yeux la partie orientale de Jérusalem, celle à laquelle, pendant deux décennies, nous rêvions sans jamais croire que ce rêve deviendrait un jour réalité.[195]
>
> Le 14 juin 1967, jour de la Pentecôte, Jérusalem fut envahie par des pèlerins venus non seulement de tout le pays mais du monde entier, renouant avec une tradition interrompue depuis la destruction du Temple, voici mille huit cent quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans. L'esprit de Pentecôte était visiblement présent au cœur de ces multitudes d'hommes, de femmes, d'enfants venus depuis notre retour de cent deux pays du monde pour ce rendez-vous immémorial, pour donner leurs baisers à ce mur des Jubilations devenu leur fiancée de pierre. Pendant dix-neuf ans, nous montions sur les toits du mont Sion voir de nos

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[193] Chouraqui recounts these events in *L'amour*, 464-66. See also James Feron, "Politics, N.Y. Style, Enlivens Jerusalem Race," in *New York Times* (Oct. 9, 1965), 6: "The R.A.F.I. list is half Ashkenazi, or Jews of European derivation, and half Sephardic or North African and Near Eastern derivation. Number two on the R.A.F.I. list behind Mr. Kollek is Prof. Andre Chouraqui, an Algerian Jewish intellectual and former special advisor to Mr. Eshkol on immigration affairs."

[194] *L'amour*, 468.

[195] *L'amour*, 483.

> propres yeux cette ville inaccessible. Et voici que nous y étions, pensant vivre un rêve deux fois millénaire mué en réalité. Le Mur semblait être devenu lui-même prière pour ceux de son peuple qui avait oublié ce que prier voulait dire.[196]
>
> Jérusalem hébraïque donnait le spectacle paradoxal d'une cité abandonnée par sa population juive qui se promenait pendant ce temps dans la ville arabe. Dans nos rues, les Arabes découvraient avec étonnement et non sans bouleversement ce que les Juifs avait fait de leur côté. Les badauds s'assemblaient aux carrefours pour admirer les feux de signalisation qu'ils n'avaient jamais vus encore. Les amateurs d'art se pressaient dans les musées, les commerçants dans les magasins pour comparer les prix, tous s'étaient habillés du mieux qu'ils pouvaient : une atmosphère de fête régnait dans toute la ville délivrée, croyait-elle, du spectre de la guerre ... Les anciens se retrouvaient après une absence de vint ans dans les places, les rues, les maisons de la ville ... Des Juifs recherchaient dans la Vieille Ville des marchands arabes auxquels ils devait, depuis 1948, de petites sommes qu'ils n'avaient pas pu payer : le remboursement se faisait à la joie de tous. Des Arabes, de lourdes valises à la main, étaient en quête de leurs anciens voisins juifs, dont ils avaient fidèlement gardé, pendant deux décennies, les effets qu'ils leur rendaient. Des familles juives retrouvaient une fille, une tante, une cousine qui, mariée à un Arabe, avait vécu dans la Vieille Ville ... Durant cette journée comme pendant les jours qui suivirent, il n'y eut pas un seul incident.[197]

Chouraqui's eight years in municipal politics were, as he himself described, a blend of triumphs and heartbreak, of idealistic vision and often frustrating bureaucracy and incomprehension. In the wake of the '67 war, he penned his provocative and still-influential *Lettre à un ami arabe,*[198] which gained him a reputation among more hard-headed Israelis as hopelessly naïve and politically unrealistic. As he himself commented with sad irony, "Le mur de béton était abattu : il sera plus difficile de démolir le mur invisible qui sépare encore dans Jérusalem Juifs, chrétiens et musulmans".[199] Nevertheless, he continued to hold out for the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Israel and its Arab neighbours, and, in 1967, was one of the

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[196] *L'amour,* 486-87.

[197] *L'amour,* 490-91.

[198] Paris: Mame, 1969; a new edition was published in 1994 by J.C. Lattès (Paris). In 1971, Chouraqui published a companion volume, *Lettre à un ami chrétien* (Paris: Fayard). Both books have subsequently been translated into several other languages.

[199] *L'amour,* 485.

founders of the *Fraternité d'Abraham,* one of the first national interfaith groups in France to bring together leaders of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths.[200] Chouraqui was the first municipal leader to gather the heads of Jerusalem's religious communities together to discuss their needs, and to explore possible areas of collaboration; it was an unprecedented meeting, and occasioned a little discomfort (and some curiosity) on the part of the attendees:

> Chargé dans notre conseil municipal des relations intercommunautaires, interreligieuses et étrangères de la ville, dès que le calme fut revenu, j'invitai toutes les communautés religieuses, chrétiennes et musulmanes à se réunir dans notre mairie. C'était la première fois dans l'histoire de Jérusalem qu'une telle réunion avait lieu. La ghettoisation de la ville était presque parfaite. Du côté chrétien, des communautés de onze confessions différentes, pour la plupart, n'entretenaient aucune relation entre elle. La fermeture était encore plus hermétique entre chrétiens et musulmans. Nous rencontrions les chefs de ces communautés pour la première fois, mais, fait paradoxal, c'était la première fois que la plupart d'entre eux se rencontraient au cours d'une réunion amicale. Je leur dis que cette mairie était la leur et qu'elle se tenait à leur disposition, avec l'ensemble de ses services, pour les aider à résoudre leurs problèmes municipaux. J'observais l'effet sur les rabbins de Méa-Shéarim

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[200] "La Fraternité d'Abraham a été créée en 1967 à la suite du concile Vatican II (1962-1965) convoqué à l'initiative du Pape Jean XXIII. *L'écrivain André Chouraqui, avait été envoyé à Rome comme observateur au concile par René Cassin, président de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle. Au cours d'entretiens avec le père Daniélou, ils formèrent le projet d'une entreprise fraternelle de compréhension réciproque entre juifs, chrétiens et musulmans.* De retour en France, accompagnés du R.P. Michel Riquet et de l'homme de lettres Jacques Nantet, ils en soumirent l'idée au recteur de la grande mosquée de Paris Si Hamza Boubakeur (père du recteur Dalil Boubakeur) qui y adhéra. C'est ainsi que naquit le 7 juin 1967 à la grande mosquée de Paris, la Fraternité d'Abraham (association laïque, loi de 1901) dont Jacques Nantet devint le premier président. Les plus hautes autorités religieuses françaises de l'époque soutinrent l'initiative et rejoignirent le premier comité de parrainage: le grand rabbin de France Jacob Kaplan, le président de la Fédération Protestante de France Jean Corvoisier, le cardinal Feltin, archevêque de Paris, le président de la Cultuelle Musulmane de France Chérif Lakhdari. Notons aussi entr'autres l'appui et la participation du rabbin Léon Askénazi, des abbés Henri Cazelles et André Haïm, du pasteur André Dumas, du rabbin Josy Eisenberg. Ont rejoint ultérieurement le comité de parrainage : en 1977 S.E. le cardinal Roger Etchegaray, ancien président du conseil pontifical « Cor Unum » et du conseil pontifical Justice et Paix ; le pasteur Maury, ancien Président de la Fédération Protestante de France ; puis l'Ayatollah Mehdi Rohani, chef religieux de la communauté chiite en Europe ; le prince Mounir Hafez ; Mgr Jérémie, ancien Président du comité interépiscopal orthodoxe de France ; le cheikh Abbas El Hocine, alors recteur de la Mosquée de Paris. Enfin, depuis 1994, le Grand Rabbin René Samuel Sirat, ancien Grand Rabbin de France et le docteur Dalil Boubakeur, recteur de l'institut musulman de la mosquée de Paris." (From the Web site of the Fraternité d'Abraham; online at: http://www.fraternite-dabraham.com/Default.asp?ID=110524&IDR=110531; my italics)

> de cette invitation pacifique de notre commune par tant de prêtres et de religieuses, d'imams et de cadis. Le vieux rabbin Poroush était comme fasciné par les religieuses qu'il approchait pour la première fois d'aussi près : « Ah, si les filles d'Israël pouvaient être habillées aussi chastement que ces sœurs ! » me dit-il avec un éclair de jalousie dans le regard.[201]

Among Chouraqui's final acts as Deputy Mayor was to visit the bereaved families of Israeli soldiers killed in the 1973 war, to extend the condolences of the city and offer its support to the survivors. Later that same year, he would reflect on the history and vocation of the Holy City in his book, *Vivre pour Jérusalem*.[202]

12. The Genesis of *La Bible Chouraqui*

Chouraqui's potent experiences of two eventful terms in Jerusalem politics left him exhausted, and perhaps somewhat disillusioned. In 1973, he stepped down permanently from elected office, to dedicate himself to two initiatives that were particularly close to his heart: the urgent promotion of interreligious dialogue and understanding, and preparing a new translation of the Bible, which would enable him to apply the ideas and reflections culled over a lifetime of fascination with, and study of, this Book:

> J'avais soif de silence. Me retirant de la vie politique, libéré de toute fonction officielle, je pourrais mieux me consacrer à la traduction de la Bible, ainsi qu'à la diffusion des idées que défendaient mes derniers livres, mes inlassables appels lancés dans le monde entier, à la paix entre les fils d'Abraham.[203]

It was around this same time that Chouraqui's friend Jacques Deschanel (an editorial director at Éditions Desclée) proposed that André prepare his own translation of the entire Hebrew Bible. It was not the first time such a suggestion had been made; twenty years earlier, following upon the success of Chouraqui's translations of the Psalms and the Song of Songs, Jacques Madaule[204] had made a similar request, which

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[201] *L'amour*, 498.

[202] Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1973.

[203] *L'amour*, 502.

[204] Madaule (1898-1993), a French intellectual, historian and prize-winning author, was a disciple of Jules Isaac and one of the original members of the Amitié judéo-chrétienne.

Chouraqui had declined at the time, feeling himself unready for such a major undertaking. But now, in his mid-fifties, rooted in the land of the Bible and with a wealth of time at his disposal, he decided to take up the project, and did so with astonishing vigour and single-mindedness.

> The compulsion to translate seized me when I was a child in our synagogue of Aïn-Témouchent, where I tried to penetrate the meaning of the Hebrew Bible and of our prayers, following them in bilingual editions. As an adolescent, to translate meant for me to penetrate the meanings of the ancestral heritage that my parents were struggling to bequeath to me. Then came the time of making comparisons between what I understood the texts to mean and what the translations said of them. For my guidance, I re-established the meaning of words and the harmonies of the rhythms as they resounded in my head, in a radically Frenchified Hebrew. Thus were born my translations of Bahya Ibn Paqûda's *Duties of the Heart*, of the Song of Songs and of the Psalms. My vocation as a translator would probably have stopped there if I had not come to settle in Jerusalem. My project of translating the Bible could be achieved, now that I had under my feet the earth of the Prophets and of the Apostles, and that I could converse with the Bible in the language in which it was written. Now that Hebrew had become once more my mother tongue, I could see more clearly the defects of my previous translations; they were smothered under a cloak of customs, embroidered through thousands of years, so that the forms and meanings of the original text could hardly be recognized ... A revolution was needed, if, by that term, one understands a return to the origins. Yes, to liberate man, we must begin by liberating the word.[205]

> Cette nouvelle familiarité immédiate avec la Bible s'accompagne du sentiment aigu que tout ce qu'il avait vécu, jusque là, le préparait à cette œuvre : l'Algérie polyglotte, la rigueur et l'élégance du style et de la réflexion à la française, l'enseignement de l'École rabbinique, les longues périodes de méditation de la Bible et du Coran en compagnie de juifs, de chrétiens et de musulmans, ses retraites dans des séminaires ou au fond du désert saharien, enfin sa rencontre avec l'hébreu et avec les paysages où se déroule la Bible comme réalité vivante et non plus livresque.
> En vingt-huit mois, du 10 avril 1972 au 14 août 1974, André Chouraqui écrit de sa main, à l'encre noire, le premier jet de sa première traduction intégrale des trois parties de la Bible hébraïque (Pentateuque, Prophètes, Hagiographes), et des quatre Évangiles (Les Quatre Annonces). Il traduit seul, en deux ans, des textes mûris en Orient sur plus d'un millénaire, qui ont forgé la conscience occidentale judéo-chrétienne, et dont il souligne l'unité profonde (notamment par l'unification du vocabulaire sémitique commun). Une fois dactylographiés (l'ordinateur personnel est inconnu à l'époque), les tapuscrits sont envoyés à

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[205] *A Man*, 166.

> des spécialistes qui révisent, annotent, critiquent. Remis sur le métier, le texte est revu par Chouraqui, renvoyé à d'autres spécialistes, retouché à nouveau. La première version de la Bible hébraïque et du Nouveau Testament paraît alors en 26 volumes, entre 1974 et 1977, chez Desclée de Brouwer. Le texte est publié nu, sans aucun commentaire, découpé en volumes, en chapitres et en versets qui correspondent à l'usage massorétique et qui retrouvent les titres employés dans la tradition hébraïque : un volume pour la Genèse (devenue : *Entête, Beréchit),* un pour l'Exode *(Les Noms, Chemoth)* et ainsi de suite.[206]

Chouraqui's translation is remarkable for a number of reasons. Firstly, because of the almost unbelievable speed with which it was completed: Chouraqui indicates that he began his translation work in earnest in 1972, and the first part of his translation was published in January 1974, with ten volumes published in that year alone.[207] For long periods during 1974 and 1975, he retreated to the silence of the Cistercian monastery of Latroun, where he dedicated himself to completing his translation of the Old Testament, and—what was perhaps more notable and unexpected—a similar translation of the New Testament as well. By early 1977, Éditions Desclée de Brouwer had published the entire 26-volume *editio princeps* of his biblical version.[208] Certainly, there are few biblical translators, ancient or modern, who could claim to have translated such an enormous corpus of material in such a short span of time.

Secondly, Chouraqui distinguished himself by becoming one of the few Jews in history to have undertaken the translation of the New Testament. More often than not, translations of the New Testament into Hebrew or other Jewish languages had been accomplished, either by Jews-turned-Christians (who intended such translations for missionary purposes), or by rabbis and scholars intent on providing Jews with the

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[206] Francine Kaufmann, "Au confluent de trois continents: André Chouraqui," in *Ariel: Revue israélienne des arts et des lettres* 105 (1999); as published online by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at:
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFAFR/MFAArchive/1990_1999/1999/2/Au%20confluent%20de%20trois%20continents%20-%20Andre%20Chouraqui

[207] See *L'amour,* 670-672. Chouraqui's own chronological appendix to *L'amour fort comme la mort* suggests that the translation was not, however, fully completed by 1974.

[208] *L'amour,* 672.

tools necessary to defend themselves knowledgeably against Christian proselytism. It is possible that Jews at times may have been coaxed (or compelled?) by Christian authorities to prepare such translations for scholarly study or polemical purposes.[209]

Chouraqui, however, did not fall into any of these categories. A modern Jewish scholar, a free citizen of the State of Israel, without the compulsion of external forces, he undertook his translation simply out of a desire to facilitate conversations between Jews and Christians, and to bring home to both groups the fundamentally Middle Eastern and Semitic quality of much of the New Testament. His New Testament translation is, therefore, almost certainly unique in the annals of Jewish-Christian interactions, and, indeed, in the history of literature. [210]

Throughout 1977, Chouraqui travelled throughout the Middle East and Europe, introducing and explaining his new translation, and the principles underlying it. In October, he was delighted to be able to present his 26-volume set to Pope Paul VI, who commented that "It must have required great love to succeed in such a work".[211] In March of 1978, Israeli President Katsir hosted a state reception, at which Chouraqui's translation was publicly presented, introduced by prominent biblical scholars. The level of interest and praise, among exegetes and the general public, was both surprising and affirming; within a few weeks of its publication, the first printing was already sold out.[212]

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[209] On this, see the next chapter.

[210] "J'ai été l'un des premiers juifs à traduire et commenter le Nouveau Testament. Si les rabbins n'ont pas jeté l'anathème sur mon œuvre, je n'en étais pas moins suspect aux yeux de certains. Comment un 'bon' juif osait-il traduire le Nouveau Testament sans risquer la conversion ?" *Testament*, 54.

[211] "Il fallait beaucoup d'amour pour réussir une œuvre pareille" (from the autobiographical section of Chouraqui's Web site; online at: http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio3.htm)

[212] "Le premier volume de cette œuvre paraît en janvier 1974 ; son premier tirage est épuisé en quelques semaines." *L'amour*, 671 ; KAUFMANN ("Au confluent") speaks of "le succès inattendu et immédiat de la Bible Chouraqui ".

13. Helping to Break the Arab-Israeli Deadlock

André was also soon to find himself at the heart of a fascinating and complex geo-political intrigue, which would have wide-ranging repercussions in terms of Middle East diplomacy. In February of 1977, the noted French author and sometime politician Maurice Druon[213] informed Chouraqui that King Hassan II of Morocco wished to meet with André and engage him in urgent discussions about the Middle East.[214] To do so would obviously fly in the face of an unstated but strict taboo which excluded any overtures on the part of the Jewish state toward the Arab world, or any outstretched Arab hands toward Jews and Israel.[215] Surely Chouraqui, as a respected Israeli public figure, would not risk ostracizing himself by such a foolhardy gesture?

Chouraqui consulted with the highest representatives of the relevant Israeli ministries, who forcefully urged him to refuse the invitation; if, they said, the Moroccan leader wished to address a message to the Israeli government, he knew well the address to which he should write. The Israeli president himself (Ephraim Katzir) strongly discouraged such a visit as naïve and potentially harmful, but acknowledged that Chouraqui was free to follow his own conscience; Chouraqui sensed that, despite his official position, the President was personally in favour of such action.

On March 4, 1977, André and Annette Chouraqui arrived in Marrakesh. It had been more than fifteen years since he had last set foot in his native North Africa. Both for Chouraqui and for King Hassan, it was a very risky step to take; they were aware of the passionate reactions their meeting had stirred up among Arabs and Israelis. The

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[213] Druon (1918-) is a novelist and historian, former French Minister of Cultural Affairs, and member of the Académie Française since 1966. See: http://www.academie-francaise.fr/immortels/base/academiciens/fiche.asp?param=634

[214] Chouraqui tells this story in Ch. 5 of *L'amour*, "Les chemins de la paix" (505-515).

[215] For helpful overviews and analysis of the complex political situation in this period, see: Martin Sicker, *The Middle East in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2001), esp. Ch. 18, "The Torturous Road to Camp David, 1967-79," and Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 1999). See also: Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Shimon Peres and André Versaille. *60 ans de conflit israélo-arabe: témoignages pour l'histoire*. Questions à l'histoire (Brussels: Complexe, 2006).

conversation quickly turned to the realities of Middle Eastern politics, and the king's own sense that the moment was ripe for an *entente* between Israel and its Arab neighbours. As Chouraqui later recalled the conversation:

> Soyez mon messager officiel pour assurer votre gouvernement de ce que les États arabes veulent la paix. Les temps du refus d'Israël par les États arabes sont révolus. Plus personne ne nie la légitimité de l'État d'Israël, et plus personne n'en conteste l'existence. Le conflit ne sert plus que les intérêts du communisme mondial ... C'est sur le plan spirituel que nous devons entreprendre notre dialogue afin de mieux asseoir l'œuvre de paix.[216]

The king sought Chouraqui's help to serve as an intermediary between Israel and the leaders of the surrounding nations, to serve as a catalyst for resolving the delicate but important questions of Palestinian refugees and of Jerusalem's status. Chouraqui was certainly sensitive to the issues raised by the king and, over the course of the next several days, they discussed how political and religious leaders might make a new breakthrough possible.

As he prepared to leave the king, however, André dared to make an audacious request: because of the ban on Israeli visitors to Morocco, he and Annette had been obliged to travel using their French passports. However, it was as an Israeli statesman that he had been invited and welcomed. Would the king authorize exit visas for the Chouraquis ... using their *Israeli* passports? The king's response was immediate, and affirmative:

> Le roi réplique aussitôt qu'il ne peut pas mentir à lui-même. Il est vrai qu'il m'a invité en tant qu'Israélien, je sortirai donc de son royaume avec mon passeport israélien. Il ajoute : « Il faut en finir avec les petits jeux de cache-cache, qui sont peut-être de mise quand il s'agit de politiciens, mais qui sont déplacés avec un écrivain connu comme vous l'êtes, venu au Maroc sur l'invitation du roi et qui rencontre ses ministres ... » ... Le roi, sur-le-champ, donne ordre au général Moulay Hafid de régulariser les visas d'entrée et de sortie du royaume sur nos passeports ... nos deux passeports israéliens seront tamponnés à l'entrée et à la sortie du Maroc au timbre du royaume. C'était la

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[216] *L'amour*, 510-11. See also *Testament*, 141-145.

première fois que les passeports israéliens étaient validés aux frontières d'un État arabe.[217]

As expected, the Chouraquis' visit made waves around the world; the *Washington Post* devoted a half-page article to this new and previously unimaginable Israeli-Arab *détente*.[218] In early April, André briefed the Israeli government on what he had gleaned from his Moroccan mission; President Katzir quietly let it be known that he was open to the types of dialogue Chouraqui and Hassan had been envisaging. Moshe Dayan and other high-ranking Israeli diplomats were authorized to undertake preliminary—and top-secret—conversations with several Arab governments.[219] When

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[217] *L'amour*, 512-13.

[218] ABRAHAM RABINOVICH, "Arab King Talks Peace with an Israeli," in *Washington Post*, June 23, 1977, A18. Chouraqui's report of his conversations with the king makes for particularly poignant reading thirty years later: "[Chouraqui's] host was King Hassan of Morocco, who says privately that he aspires to an alliance between the Arab world and Israel along with World Jewry. 'He said that within 10 years of a peace agreement, such an alliance would constitute a world power of the first order,' said the Algerian-born Chouraqui ... Chouraqui said Hassan envisions a Semitic bloc deriving its power from a huge Arab population base and oil resources, combined with Jewish technological, military and financial abilities. The king made it plain that he sees world Jewry—or 'the friends of Israel,' as he put it—as an integral part of such a bloc. 'The king saw such an alliance as a balancing factor on the world scene that could lead toward peace and progress,' said Chouraqui." Surprisingly, Rabinovich's article appeared three months after this visit, since Chouraqui declined to publicly discuss the details of the visit until King Hassan himself had done so—which he did in the early summer.

[219] See, for example, the account in WILLIAM B. QUANDT, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1986), 108-110. "The culmination of the king's effort came in September 1977, at a secret meeting between Hassan and Moshe Dayan. Dayan, at the time foreign minister in the government of Rabin's successor, Menachem Begin, had to disguise himself to enter Morocco. He wore a wig, sunglasses, and a false mustache. Dayan also followed a complicated itinerary before being received by Hassan ... He traveled from Paris on a commercial Moroccan airliner, which landed at Fez, and was then driven to Ifrane for the night. The next day he returned to Fez for a flight to Marrakesh, and finally began his meeting with the king late in the evening ... [Dayan] reported that the king saw himself as having a special role to play in bringing Arabs and Jews together, and that the monarch had accordingly spoken at length both about his own warm relations with the Jews of Morocco and about his commitment to Arab-Israeli reconciliations. Dayan then told Hassan that Israel was interested in direct and high-level contact with Egypt, to which Hassan replied with a promise to investigate the matter. Israel's answer was not long in coming; just eleven days later Dayan was invited to return to Morocco for a meeting with General Hassan Tohami, deputy prime minister of Egypt and personal emissary of Anwar Sadat. These events led to Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem two months later, which in turn spawned the Camp David accords and the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1979." GREGORY S. MAHLER, *Israel After Begin*. SUNY Series in Israeli Studies (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 158.

Jordan showed little interest in such discussions, King Hassan offered his good offices to open negotiations with the Egyptian government. The meetings centred on the broad strokes of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt[220], and Egypt's president Anwar Sadat declared on November 9 that he was willing to travel to Jerusalem and personally present these ideas before the Knesset.[221] On November 13, Prime Minister Menachem Begin formally invited Sadat to Israel and, on November 19, 1977, the Egyptian president landed at Tel Aviv, to almost unanimous astonishment.[222] It was a stunning moment for both nations.

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[220] See "Morocco Reported Seeking Arab Talks After Cairo," in *New York Times* (Dec. 15, 1977), 15: "King Hassan II of Morocco reportedly began diplomatic moves today toward convening an emergency conference of Arab leaders to consider the outcome of the Israeli-Egyptian talks in Cairo. A Government spokesman said that the King had sent messages to other Arab leaders ... King Hassan is known to have played an important backstage role in laying the groundwork for President Sadat's visit to Israel last month, and the King is one of the few Arab leaders to have given his 'full support' to the President ... The King began quiet overtures to Israel in 1976 by inviting Moroccan-born Israelis to visit Rabat. *The former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, André Chouraqui, a union leader, Shaul Ben-Simchon, and others reported on their return that King Hassan fervently desired to be a peacemaker, and unhesitatingly accepted Israel's right to exist.* There are reports that Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel interrupted a trip to the United States in September and flew to Tangier to see Hassan at the King's request. At that meeting, said to have been held Sept. 16, Mr. Dayan reportedly convinced the King that Prime Minister Menahem Begin's Government was keenly interested in a settlement. According to these reports, King Hassan communicated this to Mr. Sadat, and this is believed to have been a key factor in the Egyptian's decision to seek an invitation to Israel." (my italics)

[221] "On November 9, 1977, Sadat made a speech in Parliament that contained what has since become known as the November Initiative. In the course of the speech, he said, 'I am ready to go to the end of the earth, if this could prevent a soldier or an officer from among my sons from being wounded, let alone killed ... and Israel will be surprised when it hears me saying in front of you that I am ready to go to their place, to the very Knesset, and to discuss matters with them.' " YORAM MEYTAL, *Egypt's Struggle for Peace: Continuity and Change, 1967–1977* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), 167.

[222] "Israelis were caught completely off guard by this historic move, including the intelligence community. As noted by then Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, 'Sadat's peace offensive of 1977 was almost as unexpected as the Yom Kippur onslaught.' On 19 November 1977, Sadat arrived in Israel by Egyptian Air to be met by a gathering of Israeli dignitaries, among them his former adversary, Meir. The next day, he addressed the Knesset in forceful language ... Most Israelis were taken aback, wondering what to make of Sadat's visit and speech. By this bold act, Sadat broke a psychological barrier in Israel. For the first time since Israel's establishment, an Arab head of state had spoken to the Israeli nation about peace. Sadat's historic trip touched a chord in Israeli society. Within a few months, Israel witnessed the birth of a dovish movement, *Shalom Ahshav,* or Peace Now. Also, on 8 March 1978, 348 reserve officers and noncommissioned officers, apparently all combat veterans, presented the Israeli government with a letter widely published in daily newspapers. The Officers' Letter urged the cabinet 'to chose the road of peace' rather than

Sadat's openness and enthusiasm for peace with Israel were not, however, shared by the other Arab League nations:

> The reactions of Arab states to the Jerusalem visit differed markedly. Morocco, Sudan, Somalia, and Oman supported the move. Algeria, Libya, Syria, Iraq, South Yemen, as well as the PLO, condemned it in a meeting they held in Tripoli in December 1977. Sadat responded by severing diplomatic relations with these five Arab states. In the middle, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Gulf states were neutral, giving Sadat the benefit of the doubt.[223]

The peace process, however, had gained momentum of its own and, after strenuous negotiations, yielded the historic Camp David accords which were signed by Begin, Sadat and U.S. President Jimmy Carter on March 26, 1979.[224] Their shared courage won them the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize—but it would also cause Sadat his life; he was assassinated in Cairo on October 6, 1981. One of the most momentous turning-points in modern Middle Eastern history—and its foundations had been laid by André Chouraqui's willingness to break dramatically with the political *status quo*, to gamble his reputation and that of Israel at such a critical juncture.

On December 24, 1977, Chouraqui was stunned to hear Israeli radio announcers claiming that he was to be named the next President of Israel.[225] Apparently, Menachem Begin was seeking a distinguished Sephardic Jew to accept the honorary position and, without consulting Chouraqui, government sources had begun to quietly

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establish more settlements or hide behind notions of a Greater Israel. By the end of May, more than a hundred thousand Israeli citizens had added their signatures to the letter." GEORGE WALTER GAWRYCH, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy Between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2000), 251-52.

[223] WILLIAM B. QUANDT, *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1988), 103.

[224] See CARTER's own account of these events, in his book *The Blood of Abraham: Insights Into the Middle East* (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 40-43, and the first-hand accounts of several other participants, in DEBORAH H. STROBER AND GERALD S. STROBER, eds. *Israel at Sixty: A Pictorial and Oral History of a Nation Reborn* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 189-202, "Sadat in Jerusalem and the Camp David Accords". "The Camp David Accords were met by almost universal Arab rejection. In an Arab summit meeting in Baghdad in November 1978 Arab states decided that they would break diplomatic relations with Cairo, suspend Egypt's membership in the League of Arab States, transfer the headquarters of the Arab League from Cairo to Tunis, and boycott any Egyptian company that would do business with Israel if Egypt went further and signed a treaty with Israel." QUANDT, 103.

[225] *L'amour*, 520-525.

leak the news of his nomination, to gauge public reaction. Some Jewish religious groups raised concerns about the candidacy of a man who had such an obvious affinity for both Christians and Muslims. Although Annette did not pressure him one way or the other, André sensed that his own political and social views would put him at odds with the vision espoused by the Begin government. Chouraqui let it be known that, as honoured as he was to be nominated, his biblical translation work required his undivided attention, and that he had no desire to assume yet another official post. In the end, the position was given instead to Yitzhak Navon, who would serve from 1978 to 1983.[226]

14. Scholar, Diplomat, Voice of Reconciliation

The 1970s and 80s were a fruitful and busy time for Chouraqui. He was increasingly sought out to give lectures around the world on religious, biblical and political subjects. In 1979, he published his first "intellectual autobiography," *Ce que je crois,* and met with the recently-elected Pope John Paul II, urging the Holy See's recognition of the State of Israel—a long-time hope of Chouraqui's which would eventually be realized with the December 1993 "Fundamental Agreement" between the two nations.[227] The year 1979 also marked the beginning of negotiations with the Brépols publishing house, to issue a *de luxe* edition of *La Bible Chouraqui;* this would eventually become Chouraqui's 10-volume *magnum opus, L'Univers de la Bible.*

Colette, André's first wife, had never ceased to be an intimate spiritual presence in his life. In the autumn of 1981, she fell gravely ill—her final sickness in a long life of suffering. Providentially, André was in France at the time and, advised of her condition, immediately went to be with her at her home in Lourdes. For the last few

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[226] *L'amour,* 525. See the biography of Navon on the Web site of the President of Israel: http://www.president.gov.il/chapters/chap_3/file_3_3_5_en.asp

[227] "The Vatican-Israel Fundamental Agreement," in *Origins,* 23:30 (1994), 525-28; text available online on the Web site of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/1990_1999/1993/12/Fundamental+Agreement+-+Israel-Holy+See.htm

days of her life, André read her passages from her beloved Hebrew Bible; she died in his arms on October 15, bringing to an end a long, loving but deeply conflicted relationship. André assisted at her burial, praying the Kaddish and the traditional Psalms for a Jewish funeral.

In the autumn of 1982, the first of the 10 volumes of *L'Univers de la Bible* came off the presses of Éditions Brépols. It was a magnificent coffee-table edition, lavishly illustrated with pictures selected by museum curators and biblical archæologists to elucidate the history and culture of biblical times. Unlike the earlier editions, this version incorporated extensive editorial notes, exploring the meaning of the text and unpacking Chouraqui's own translational choices. Extensive sidebars throughout the text exposed his readers to Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions of interpreting key biblical stories and characters. In *L'Univers de la Bible,* Chouraqui sought to combine aspects of a traditional study Bible, a commentary, and an introduction to the biblical commonalities and differences of the three Abrahamic faiths. In the spring of 1983, Chouraqui would be invited to present a copy of the first volume in the set to French President François Mitterand.

With the arrival of 1984, Chouraqui's career as a translator took a new, and perhaps predictable, turn: given his lifelong familiarity with Arabic (his mother tongue), he set out to prepare his own French translation of the Qur'an, to complete his work on the Abrahamic scriptures. The publishing schedule of *L'Univers de la Bible* continued apace, with volume 10 of *L'Univers de la Bible* finally appearing at the end of 1985, marking the completion of Chouraqui's truly monumental *ouvrage*—3000 full-colour photos, and roughly twenty million typeset letters, in a format that was vaguely reminiscent of the *Mikraot Gedolot*[228] (rabbinic Bibles) and the glossed Bibles of

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[228] See, for example, Dr. Eliezer Segal's interactive Mikraot Gedolot Web page at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudMap/MG.html, and the recently published first volume (Exodus) of the Jewish Publication Society's English edition of the Mikraot Gedolot (Michael Carasik, ed. *The Commentator's Bible: The JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot: Exodus* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005]).

medieval Christian Scholasticism. The year was brought to a historic finish with a Vatican press conference presenting his work (Dec. 11) and a private audience (Dec. 12) with Pope John Paul II, during which Chouraqui presented the pontiff with a set of *L'Univers de la Bible,* as well as a memorandum regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. Both the French and Israeli embassies in Rome hosted diplomatic receptions in Chouraqui's honour. Chouraqui's reputation as an author was matched by his profile as a *conférencier* much in demand at colloquia around the world, and as a frequent media commentator on Middle Eastern affairs.

15. Éminence Grise

As Chouraqui entered his 70s, his literary output showed no signs of slowing. In 1990, his second autobiography, *L'Amour fort comme la mort,* was published by Éditions Robert Laffont; it would sell more than 100,000 copies, and would subsequently be re-published twice.[229] At the end of 1990, his new translation of the Qur'an was finally published,[230] making him the first person in modern history (and perhaps in *all* of history) to have translated, largely on his own, the scriptures of the three Abrahamic faiths. Roughly eighteen years had passed since he first undertook the project of translating the entire Bible, and Chouraqui was now firmly established as one of the most noteworthy biblical translators and commentators in the modern world. Awards from the Sorbonne,[231] the University of Louvain,[232] and the Evangelical University of Tübingen[233] confirmed his status in academic circles; once again, a series

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[229] http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio4.htm

[230] *Le Coran: L'Appel* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990).

[231] The University conferred its Henri Hertz prize on Chouraqui in June 1991, for *L'Amour fort comme la mort.*

[232] In February 1992, Chouraqui received a doctorate *honoris causa* from Louvain, together with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian diplomat and political scientist who served as the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, from 1992 to 1997. See the capsule biography of him on the Internet site of the United Nations: http://www.un.org/Overview/SG/sg6bio.html

[233] In May 1993, Tübingen conferred its Leopold Lucas Prize on Chouraqui, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to biblical scholarship. On these events, see the chronology published

of lectures, interviews and appearances on radio and television followed in quick succession. In March 1992, he published his analysis of the diplomatic-religious challenges between Israel and the Vatican in a new book, *La reconnaissance: Le Saint-Siège, les Juifs et Israël.*[234] The book was published at a critical moment, and proved to be prophetic in its push for mutual diplomatic relations, which were, in fact, established less than two years later, on December 30, 1993.[235]

On December 15, 1994, at the Élysée Palace, Chouraqui was honoured by the French Republic, when President François Mitterand inducted him into the French Legion of Honour, with the rank of Commander.[236] It must be have a particularly bitter-sweet occasion for a man who had always taken such pride in his French identity, but who had never forgotten the pain of being summarily disowned by France during the war. On October 3 of that same year, André suffered a severe stroke, but was eventually able to return to his home and re-commence his schedule of activities. On December 18, the city of Jerusalem conferred its highest municipal honour on Chouraqui, naming him *Yakir Yerushalayim*, "Worthy [Citizen] of Jerusalem / Treasured Jerusalemite".[237]

Despite a punishing schedule of lectures, interviews and conference interventions, Chouraqui did not abandon his intellectual, literary and translational activity. He edited for publication a series of 80 letters written in Judeo-Arabic by his grandfather, Abraham Meyer, during the First World War,[238] as well as a Hebrew commentary on Psalm 119 that had been composed by his distinguished ancestor

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on Chouraqui's Web site, beginning at http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio4.htm and continuing to /bio6.htm

[234] Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992.

[235] See footnote 158.

[236] The French Ministry of Culture named him "Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres" in May 1996.

[237] On this, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakir_Yerushalayim . See also the section of the City of Jerusalem's Internet site devoted to this award [in Hebrew]:
"יקיר ירושלים" נוהל למתן עיטור; http://tinyurl.com/9wys3v

[238] Published as: *Chroniques de Baba: Lettres d'Abraham Meyer, mon grand-père, à ses fils 1914-1918* (Éditions Bibliophane, 1998).

Saadia Chouraqui in Algeria in the seventeenth century.[239] *Ton étoile et ta croix*, the chronicle of his extraordinary relationship with his first wife and "spiritual sister" Colette, would be published in 1998, incorporating extensive excerpts from their decades-long correspondence.[240]

Increasingly, Chouraqui's work was drawing the attention of scholars and specialists in the fields of linguistics and biblical study. On March 4, 1999, the Centre international de recherches et études transdisciplinaires [CIRET] (a branch of the École normale supérieure de Paris) sponsored a day-long conference on his work, entitled "La Célébration du Nom: Réflexions autour de l'œuvre d'André Chouraqui".[241] Later in 1999, the first major scholarly work on Chouraqui's biblical translation was published: Cyril Aslanov's *Pour comprendre la Bible: la leçon d'André Chouraqui*.[242] Aslanov, an Associate Professor of French and Romance Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, offered the first book-length study, both of Chouraqui's distinctive translational philosophy and techniques, and also of how Chouraqui fit within the broader historical stream of Jewish translations of the Bible, from Aquila to modern European translators like Martin Buber and Edmond Fleg.[243] On January 6, 2000, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem sponsored a colloquium on his work, at which ten French and Middle Eastern linguists and literary scholars gathered to assess

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[239] Chouraqui mentions his work on this translation (into Hebrew) in his chronology for December 1997 (http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio5.htm), but there is no subsequent mention of it actually being published. In an online article about some of his ancestors, André says that Saadia "était par surcroît poète et théologien ... Son commentaire monumental du Psaume 119 ne compte pas moins de 800 pages. *Cette œuvre est en cours d'édition à Jérusalem par le très savant Docteur Menahem Chouraqui, biologiste et rabbin, directeur de l'école de théologie biblique et talmudique, David et Hanna de Jérusalem.*" ("Bernard le Méditerranéen" ; online at: http://www.chez.com/bchouraqui/andre_chouraqui.htm (my italics).

[240] Paris: Rocher.

[241] For summaries of the papers presented at this conference, see: http://www.andrechouraqui.com/etudes/ciret/index.htm

[242] Monaco: Rocher, 1999.

[243] Aslanov's analysis, however, almost completely omits reference to Chouraqui's New Testament work, which Chouraqui himself saw as inextricably related to his larger, overarching project, which included both his Old Testament and Qur'anic translations. Aslanov devotes exactly two pages (out of 210) to Chouraqui's translation of the New Testament ("Les enjeux idéologiques de la traduction du 'Pacte Neuf'," 40-42).

and discuss Chouraqui's methods and impact.[244] A little over two months later, he took part in the March 23 meeting of Abrahamic faith leaders with Pope John Paul II, during that pope's ground-breaking pilgrimage to Israel and Jordan.

Despite his age, Chouraqui did not desist from travelling widely, frequently speaking to political and religious colloquia around the world, being interviewed by the international press, and actively pursuing his work in favour of interreligious harmony and cooperation. In May of 2001, he published his third and final autobiographical work, *Mon testament: Le feu de l'Alliance,*[245] in which he deftly wove together the experiences of a long and remarkable life, and the insights he had gleaned from decades of study and translation of the Abrahamic scriptures. To Chouraqui's mind, it would be his philosophical legacy to the world. Although his writing career was now behind him, his earlier volumes continued to be re-printed, and to be translated into more than twenty languages, including Russian and Japanese, extending the scope of his influence to a readership that was by this point literally worldwide.[246] In March 2007, *Le destin d'Israël* was published,[247] a fascinating selection from sixty years of Chouraqui's discussions and correspondence with major twentieth-century religious and cultural figures, including Jules Isaac, Jacques Ellul,[248] Marc Chagall, Jacques Maritain and Paul Claudel.

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[244] Chouraqui was also the subject of scholarly discussion during 2002 conferences at the Sorbonne ("Interprètes de la Bible") and at the Institut français in Tel Aviv. His work was presented and discussed by Cyril Aslanov, and by Dr. Francine Kaufmann (Associate Professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Israel's Bar Ilan University). See:
http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biog/bio6.htm

[245] Paris: Bayard, 2001.

[246] See "Traductions des œuvres d'André Chouraqui"; online at :
http://www.andrechouraqui.com/biblio/traduct.htm

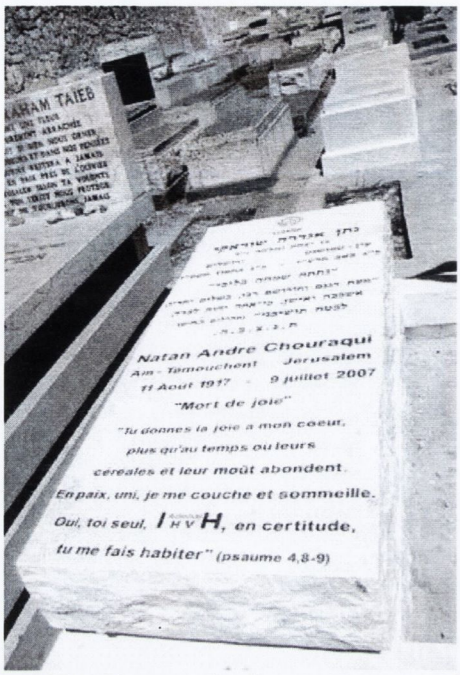
[247] Paris: Parole et Silence, 2007.

[248] Ellul (1912-1994) was a French philosopher, social and legal theorist, theologian and anarchist. In his works (*La Parole humiliée,* 1981; *La subversion du christianisme,* 1984; *Anarchie et christianisme,* 1988, etc.), he argued that anarchy—a wholesale ignoring of the ruling political system—was the option most consonant with the Christian world-view.

16. « Mort de joie »

Le destin d'Israël was to be the last of Chouraqui's books he would live to see published. In the early hours of July 9, 2007, after several months of declining health, André Chouraqui died peacefully at his home in Jerusalem, surrounded by his family, and, in accordance with Jewish tradition, was buried later the same day. His interment was attended by family members and friends, but it was perhaps most indicative of the character of the man that the mourners included not only France's Chief Rabbi *emeritus*, René-Samuel Sirat, but also Chouraqui's friends and colleagues from the Christian community, including Father Émile Shoufani of Nazareth and Brother Yohanan Elihai, a Little Brother of Jesus (of Charles de Foucauld), who, born Jean Leroy, had taken on a new Hebrew identity in 1960, and had remained one of Chouraqui's dearest and oldest friends.[249] Chouraqui's gravestone was engraved (as he had earlier requested in *L'Amour fort comme la mort)*, with an inscription that began with the words "Mort de joie" (loosely, "I have died from/of joy"):

[249] See "En souvenir d'André Chouraqui";
http://www.andrechouraqui.com/actu/hesped-h.htm



(Photograph from: http://www.andrechouraqui.com/actu/hesped-h.htm)

Chouraqui's death brought an outpouring of praise and tributes, moving personal testimonials from friends and former political colleagues, and noteworthy obituaries in many major newspapers. In a letter to Mme Chouraqui, French President Nicolas Sarkozy was eloquent in his praise of the deceased scholar and *homme de la politique*, whom he described as "le grand écrivain et humaniste André Chouraqui":

> L'œuvre que laisse votre époux à la postérité est de première importance. Dans le rapprochement des trois religions monothéistes, il a pris une large part, animé qu'il était par la passion de la fraternité. Sa traduction de la Bible hébraïque et du Nouveau Testament sont, entre autre, l'héritage d'un intellectuel humaniste auquel les hommes en recherche de spiritualité ne manquent pas de se référer.[250]

Israeli President Shimon Peres, who had known Chouraqui for decades and had frequently worked alongside him in political life, called him "a great leader, a great writer, and a great citizen of Jerusalem".[251] Similar tributes were addressed to

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[250] http://www.andrechouraqui.com/actu/temoin1.htm

[251] *Ibid.*, my translation from the French and Hebrew. Peres had also written the preface to the 1972 English translation of Chouraqui's *Letter to an Arab Friend* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press).

Annette and their family from the dizzyingly broad spectrum of Chouraqui's colleagues, friends and admirers: the Rector of the Islamic Institute at Paris's Mosque; the Alliance Israélite Universelle, whose tireless ambassador André had been for decades; the Benedictine Monastery of Maredsous, renowned for its translations and study of the Bible; French Jesuit colleagues; and from Jewish-Christian and other interreligious organizations throughout Europe and around the world. These letters attested both to Chouraqui's qualities as an individual, and to the broad impact of his literary work, his political career and his interreligious engagements.[252]

The London *Times*'s obituary, published on August 8, 2007, spoke glowingly of Chouraqui's dedication to building bridges between faiths, and highlighted the uniqueness and value of his translations in fostering that goal:

> Having grown up in Algeria in an environment where Muslims, Christians and Jews lived side by side and at peace, he believed passionately in the intimate connection between religious cultures. He devoted his life to averting their clash by putting an intense focus on the common features of their scriptures. That placed him in the opposite camp to the American scholar Samuel Huntingdon, whose book on the clash of civilisations dominates much of current debate.
>
> Chouraqui's modern translation of the Koran was first published in 1985. It was hailed by specialist scholars but bitterly attacked by fundamentalists because of his insistence on the tight links between the ideas of God propounded by Islam, Christianity and Judaism. "The reader of the Bible, whether Jew or Christian," Chouraqui wrote in his introduction, "will recognise the name of Eloha (biblical Hebrew for God) in the name of Allah. It is the Eloha of Abraham, of the Prophets, of Jesus, the Apostles and Muhammad."
>
> The special feature of Chouraqui's translation of the Koran, as it was of his previous translations of the Old and New Testaments, completed in 1976, was an attempt to transpose the cadences of the original Arabic or Hebrew into modern French. His formidable skills as a linguist ensured that this brave strategy was largely successful.
>
> Chouraqui's passion for building bridges between the three monotheistic faiths was kindled during his childhood spent in Algeria ... In the aftermath [of the 1967 war], Chouraqui sought to recreate in Jerusalem the links between Muslims and Jews he had enjoyed in his Algerian childhood. His success was inevitably limited and he decided that he could serve his cause better as a

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[252] http://www.andrechouraqui.com/actu/temoin1.htm and temoin2.htm

> writer. "I am a scribe and I am a linguist," he insisted. "I am neither a politician, nor a theologian." Thus it was as a linguist and writer that he began his Bible translations, a year before he retired from his post as deputy mayor.
> He gave as much energy to forging links with Christianity as with Islam. He went to the Vatican to meet Pope Pius XII in 1956, met Pope Paul VI in 1977 and was back in the Vatican to see Pope John Paul II in the decade that followed. He pressed hard for the recognition of Israel by the Vatican, a goal that was finally realised on December 30, 1993. Chouraqui's last decades as a writer were prolific ...[253]

In his obituary written for *Le Monde*, Chouraqui's colleague and fellow translator Henri Tincq referred to him as a "jongleur de mots et de sons," and underscored the eclecticism of Chouraqui's life and literary output, as well as the way in which his childhood experiences had shaped his vision of dialogue as an adult:

> Dans l'Algérie de ses pères, André Chouraqui a puisé son génie des langues et son rêve insensé de paix entre les trois religions monothéistes. Né à Aïn Temouchent, d'un père viticulteur et négociant, d'ancêtres venus d'Espagne et arabisants, il parle arabe avec ses amis musulmans, français en famille, hébreu à la synagogue ... « *Trois langues, trois textes sacrés, trois religions, trois cultures trottaient en permanence dans ma tête* », aimait-il à dire à propos de son enfance ...
> C'est en 1972 qu'il commence à traduire la Bible sur cette terre où elle est née, en restant aussi proche que possible de la langue d'origine, de son rythme, son vocabulaire, sa musicalité, d'où la réputation d'hermétisme de Chouraqui, toutefois démentie par la chaleur de la critique et de l'accueil.
> Son effort consiste à retrouver l'authenticité de la Bible et son intuition première faite de transcendance et d'unité. Il restitue ainsi la force du nom de Dieu - *Adonaï–Elohims* - révélé à Moïse dans le Buisson ardent, traduit - et trahi - de l'Olympe à l'Aventin par les noms de divinités locales : Dieu, qui dérive du latin *deus*, apparenté à Zeus et en grec *theos*. De même que *god* est un avatar de Tor et de Wotan, divinités nordiques ...
> André Chouraqui, jongleur de mots et de sons, se met aussi à la traduction des Évangiles et, en 1977, paraissent les vingt-six volumes de la Bible hébraïque et du Nouveau Testament. Parallèlement à ce travail colossal, il poursuit une œuvre d'historien, d'exégète, d'essayiste, de poète. Éclectique, boulimique, Chouraqui publie des ouvrages sur l'État d'Israël, sur Théodor Herzl, sur l'histoire du judaïsme, sur la renaissance juive contemporaine, puis les huit tomes de *L'Univers de la Bible*, des volumes de poèmes, une pièce de théâtre *Le Procès de Jésus*, puis *Jésus et Paul, fils d'Israël*, un *Ce que je crois*, etc.
> Sa traduction prend tout son sens dans la fraternité des gens du Livre à

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[253] http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article2217691.ece

> laquelle, à Paris et plus encore à Jérusalem, il a toujours aspiré ... Des spécialistes incontestés du Coran le félicitent, mais des fondamentalistes crient au scandale. Les intégristes chrétiens avaient fait de même lorsque ce juif s'était mis à traduire l'Évangile du Christ.
> C'est la première fois qu'un même homme traduit les trois ouvrages sacrés. Chaque mot y est choisi, ciselé selon une gymnastique intellectuelle terrifiante. Une œuvre aussi comme un acte de foi dans la compréhension entre les trois confessions, mais il avait une passion particulière pour la réconciliation entre les juifs et les chrétiens ...
> André Chouraqui, malgré un handicap à la jambe qui l'aura toute sa vie diminué, laissera le souvenir d'un pèlerin de l'alliance des cultures et des religions, présent sur toutes les routes du monde, du Brésil au Japon, dans tous les pays que comptent l'Europe et l'Afrique.[254]

The French-Canadian television network Radio-Canada described him thus:

> M. Chouraqui a écrit plusieurs recueils de poésie, des pièces de théâtre et des essais, portant surtout sur la question juive et l'État d'Israël. Il est cependant surtout connu pour ses nombreuses traductions de textes religieux, notamment celle de La Bible et le Nouveau Testament, publiée en 26 volumes entre 1974 et 1977. Il a aussi traduit en français les Psaumes, en 1956, et le Coran, en 1990. En parallèle à son travail d'écrivain, M. Chaouraqui [*sic*] a aussi été un homme politique important en Israël ... Ses œuvres lui ont valu plusieurs récompenses au cours de sa carrière. Il a notamment reçu la Médaille d'or de la Langue française, décernée par l'Académie française, pour sa traduction de la Bible.[255]

Quebec's Télévision Quatre Saisons [TQS] included in its coverage of Chouraqui's passing some noteworthy comments from the French Minister of Culture:

> Christine Albanel, ministre de la Culture, a rendu hommage à « l'une des consciences de notre siècle, une figure éminente des cultures hébraïques et françaises », « un remarquable homme de plume, tout à la fois écrivain, penseur, dramaturge et traducteur ». Saluant « l'œuvre et les actes de cet homme de Dieu », la ministre a vu en M. Chouraqui un « admirable ambassadeur de la langue française, à laquelle il a offert la plus belle des missions: exalter la spiritualité, la fraternité, et la paix entre les hommes ».[256]

And the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* characterized his translational enterprise thus:

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[254] Henri Tincq, "Nécrologie: André Chouraqui, traducteur et homme politique," in *Le Monde* (online edition), July 11, 2007 (currently available only on a pay-per-use basis).
[255] http://www.radio-canada.ca/arts-spectacles/livres/2007/07/09/004-Chouraqui-deces.asp
[256] Although the original TQS article is no longer available online, the quote is also reproduced on the Web site of Montréal's *Le Devoir* newspaper:
http://www.ledevoir.com/2007/07/10/149963.html

> L'écrivain, qui fut longtemps un traducteur aux phrases élégantes et soignées, abandonne alors son classicisme pour livrer un texte abrupt qui bouleverse toutes les habitudes de traduction et malmène la syntaxe française. Sa démarche a suscité des polémiques et des incompréhensions. La Bible Chouraqui n'est pas toujours facile à lire. Mais pour ses adeptes, elle est traversée par une force poétique et un souffle que n'ont pas les autres traductions.[257]

Yohanan Elihai, who had first met André in October 1948, wrote several days later, for the French Christian-Jewish online magazine *Un écho d'Israël:*

> André aura contribué par ses traductions proches de l'hébreu parfois rugueuses, ou même fantaisistes (on peut ne pas être d'accord ici ou là), et surtout par cette typographie [i.e. IHVH], à réveiller les Chrétiens de langue française et à les faire adopter la tradition juive en ce domaine, cette attitude de grand respect—j'oserais dire d'adoration—que l'on peut adopter quand on rencontre ce YHWH.[258]

Around the globe, Chouraqui's death was marked with sadness for the loss of the man—but also with profound respect and gratitude for the legacy he had bequeathed to the world: the example of concrete, unceasing action to promote interreligious dialogue, to penetrate more deeply into the multiple layers of biblical meaning, and to create a world in which the biblical message was not only *read* and *studied,* but could truly be the template for modern political, social and economic life. Chouraqui combined an idealistic vision with a profound, lived awareness of the best

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[257] Patricia Briel, "Une vie au service de la paix religieuse," in *Le Temps* (July 10, 2007); online at: http://www.letemps.ch/template/societe.asp?page=8&article=211006

[258] Yohanan Elihaï, "André Chouraqui: Un départ discret," in "Un écho d'Israël" (July 14, 2007); online at: http://un-echo-israel.net/article.php3?id_article=4605

In this connection, it is worth noting that, in a June 29, 2008 letter to the world's Catholic bishops, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments explicitly forbade the use of the Tetragrammaton [YHWH/Yahweh] in Catholic liturgy, liturgical music and public prayer. "The venerable biblical tradition of sacred Scripture, known as the Old Testament, displays a series of divine appellations, among which is the sacred name of God revealed in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* (יהוה). As an expression of the infinite greatness and majesty of God, it was held to be unpronounceable and hence was replaced during the reading of sacred Scripture by means of the use of an alternate name: *Adonai,* which means *Lord* … In liturgical celebrations, in songs and prayers the name of God in the form of the Tetragrammaton YHWH is neither to be used nor pronounced". The full text of the document ("Letter to the Bishops' Conferences on 'The Name of God'") is available online at: http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/NameOfGod.pdf

and worst of humanity, an optimism tempered by the realism of the trenches—but which, however, never degenerated for him into either pessimism or negativity.

Because of the extreme variety and rich fabric of his life, André Chouraqui remains a difficult man to categorize or label. He was, in many senses, an authentic "Renaissance man," actively involved in a broad range of disciplines, a man who saw literature, politics and religion as deeply and necessarily intermeshed, and who, in his own life, allowed each to freely influence the others. He was unquestionably a "man of the Book," a "man of the Land," and a "man of his people". But that "people" was always larger for him than simply Israel or Judaism, larger than his Algerian roots or his profound insertion into French intellectual life. Without ever renouncing his faith or his culture, he nevertheless succeeded in being an eminent member of the larger "family of Abraham," showing humanity that *identity* need not mean *chauvinism*, that *faith* need not imply *prejudice*, and that the deepest currents of the religious heart would always seek what they *shared in common*, rather than what *divided* them.[259] It was a profound lesson for the twentieth century. It is to be hoped that his example and writings will provide a similar impetus for such thinking and acting in this still-new twenty-first century.

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[259] Some ancient Jewish traditions, represented by extant targums of the Prophets (e.g. *Tg.Isa.* 11:10-12; 53:4-11; *Tg.Hos.* 14:5-8), seem to understand the "drawing-near of those who are far off/scattered" as a task of the Messiah, or at least a defining characteristic of the Messianic Era (on this, see: JOHN A. DENNIS, *Jesus' Death and the Gathering of True Israel* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], esp. 113-15). "Se il Messia è *ha-meqarew et ha-reḥoqim*, colui qui avvicina i lontani, allora la vita di Chouraqui è una vita messianica." [If the Messiah is he who brings near those who are far off, then Chouraqui's life is a messianic life]. MARCO MORSELLI, *I passi del Messia: Per una teologia ebraica del cristianesimo* (Genoa/Milan: Marietti, 2007), 114.

Chapter 3 • Chouraqui's Intellectual Antecedents: Hebrew and "Hebraized" Versions of the New Testament

Introduction: The New Testament ... in Hebrew?

Depending upon one's perspective, the idea that the Christian Scriptures should exist in Hebrew is either something more or less self-evident and reasonable, or something that is odd, confusing, inappropriate and potentially offensive. For the "parting of the ways" that took place between Christian Jews and their non-Christian coreligionists was not simply a rupture on a *theological* level; it was *also*, in many ways, a distancing on the levels of *geography, culture* and, very importantly, on the level of *language.* Indeed, the divergent paths taken by the Jewish and Christian communities in the centuries since have been deeply influenced by the fact that one group remained—and has remained—faithful to the Hebrew language which was the ancient heritage of both groups, while the other very quickly translated its message into the words and thought-forms of the Greek-speaking world and, not long after that, into the Latin language of the Romans. This Hebrew-versus-Greek dichotomy, which has provided such rich fodder for generations of Biblical scholars, has also marked a theological *boundary* between these two faiths, a linguistic chasm that neither Jews nor Christians were expected to cross: Hebrew and Aramaic for the Jews, Greek and Latin for the Christians—and never the twain should meet.[260]

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[260] The separation between Jewish and Christian communities was never quite as hermetic as this account might suggest. Literary evidence suggests a significant interchange between the two faiths in the early centuries of Christianity (see, e.g., Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003]; Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002]), to the degree that it occasionally solicited sanctions by ecclesiastical authorities; on the decrees of early Church councils condemning practices viewed as dangerously syncretistic, see John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 132-33. There were also groups of Christians who, from a very early stage, preserved their faith in Aramaic, or its sister-language, Syriac. These communities—

It is, therefore, one of the sad ironies of history—a consequence of the primordial schism between *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia*—that translations of the New Testament into Hebrew (or by Jewish scholars) should be necessary in the first place. Although today they can provide an important basis for dialogue, study and healing between the two faiths, yet, more often than not, their origins lie in the bitter polemics and debates which have characterized so much of Jewish-Christian history. Words originally spoken by Jesus in Hebrew or Aramaic (but preserved only in Greek)[261] would be re-translated into Hebrew hundreds of years later, often as a tool enabling

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which often existed in close proximity to Jewish centres—seem generally to have maintained a more cordial and dialogical relationship with their Jewish neighbours (D. DRAGUET, "Syriac Language and Literature," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2003], Vol. 13, 700). The writings of Syriac Fathers of the Church demonstrate familiarity with Jewish midrashic traditions and exegetical methods, and at times the Syriac Church was suspected of "judaizing"—of a kind of uncritical blending of Jewish elements with Christianity in an unorthodox mix (see ROBERT MURRAY, "The Characteristics of Earliest Syriac Christianity," *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*. Dumbarton Oaks Symposium 180 [Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center, 1982]; R.M.M. TUSCHLING, *Angels and Orthodoxy: A Study in Their Development in Syria and Palestine from the Qumran Texts to Ephrem the Syrian* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 70). DAVID G.K. TAYLOR, however, provides an important *caveat* regarding some of the more extravagant claims made in this connection:

> The claims ... of certain scholars that Syriac Christianity is ... a descendant of early Judeo-Christianity, or is an authentic representative of Semitic Christianity ... should be treated with some caution. Such polarized opinions fail to take into account the multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious environment in which Syriac Christianity first developed. TAYLOR, "The Syriac Tradition," in GILLIAN ROSEMARY EVANS, ed., *The First Christian Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Church* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 205-06.

Today, a variety of small Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communities (such as the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East [the so-called "Nestorian Church"] and the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Chaldean rites of the Catholic Church) continue to celebrate their liturgies (wholly or in part) in Aramaic or Syriac. For more detailed historical and liturgical background on them, see: RONALD ROBERSON, CSP, *The Eastern Christian Churches: A Brief Survey*. 6th ed. (Rome: Edizioni "Orientalia Christiana," 1999).

[261] Here, and throughout this study, my focus will be on the four canonical Gospels. Although the writings of Paul are considerably earlier, the fact remains that it is the Gospels which provide the privileged (and almost exclusive) means of access to the life and words of the historical Jesus. The degree to which these *verba Jesu* can be plausibly reconstructed, however, remains a hotly-debated subject among scholars. Since Chouraqui's goal is to underscore the essentially Semitic quality of Christianity, he does so by means of Jesus, whose native language would certainly have been a Semitic tongue (see the later discussion on this question in Chapter 6). Whether a similar presumption can be made regarding the authors/redactors of other parts of the New Testament remains open to question.

Jewish communities to defend themselves against the depredations of Christians, who engaged their leaders in public disputations,[262] and applied heavy theological and social pressures to sway Jews toward conversion. Although some post-Reformation translations were seen primarily as triumphs of philological scholarship, or were intended for purposes of teaching and study, nevertheless the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew—well into the twentieth century—has often been accompanied by a more or less explicit evangelistic purpose. As a result, these translations have been odious to many Jews, and have done more to alienate Jews from Christianity than to bring the two faiths together.

It is precisely this religio-linguistic chasm that André Chouraqui seeks to bridge with his translation of the New Testament. Unlike so many of his Christian predecessors, however, his goal is *not* to foster the conversion of Jews to the Christian faith. It is, rather, threefold:

> 1) to enable Jews to perceive more clearly the degree to which the New Testament is thoroughly rooted in a broadly Jewish world-view, and in Hebrew terminology and concepts dear to them. He therefore seems to hope for the kind of re-evaluation of "Jesus as Jewish" (and of the New Testament as essentially Jewish literature) that has been proposed by numerous other Jewish scholars and authors (especially liberal Jews in Germany, England, and Israel), beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;[263]

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[262] See, e.g., HYAM MACCOBY, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982); ROBERT CHAZAN, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); MARK R. COHEN, "Interreligious Polemics," in COHEN, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 139-61.

[263] Among the more prominent of these figures would be: CLAUDE MONTEFIORE (1858-1938), LEO BAECK (1873-1956), ABRAHAM GEIGER (1810-1874), JOSEPH KLAUSNER (1874-1958), SCHALOM BEN-CHORIN (1913-1999), DAVID FLUSSER (1917-2000) and GEZA VERMES (1924-).

MONTEFIORE, the author of a number of works on Judaism and the gospels (such as *The Synoptic Gospels* [1907 and after] and *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* [1930 and after]) famously argued that, one day, Jews could conceivably come to re-appropriate the New Testament as a monument of Second Temple Jewish literature—without, of course, adhering to its theological content: "[The New Testament] is a book which, in very large part, was written by persons who were born Jews. Its central hero was a Jew. Its teaching is based throughout—sometimes indeed by way of opposition—upon the teaching of the Old Testament." MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*. 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1927), 80. A similar comment was made by the very liberal rabbi LEWIS BROWNE, in his justification for including the teachings of Jesus in his Jewish

> 2) to bring home to Christians, in a thoughtful, consistent manner, how thoroughly Jewish (religiously) and Semitic (linguistically and culturally) the New Testament is, and how incomprehensible it is, if artificially severed from the Hebrew Scriptures. Chouraqui hopes thereby to facilitate a wholesale re-thinking of Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, better-informed and less anachronistic ways of reading and interpreting the New Testament. In this, he is clearly in the lineage of Jules Isaac, the pioneering French Jewish scholar whose war-time research into anti-Jewish Christian teachings was a major catalyst in the transformation of Christian teaching about Judaism.
>
> 3) to provide a translation which largely avoids standard theological language and traditional renderings, to permit a "fresh" hearing of the New Testament, free from the assumptions and "orthodox" interpretations which are often implicit in more mainstream translations.

In some ways, Chouraqui's attempt to "re-Hebraize" the New Testament for contemporary readers could thus be described as a "reverse targum," insofar as the overall purpose of a targum was to make familiar (in Aramaic) what was unfamiliar (in Hebrew).[264] Chouraqui, on the other hand, sets out to take what is (apparently)

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anthology, *The Wisdom of Israel:* "The New Testament has a place in this anthology because it obviously contains much wisdom, and this wisdom is unmistakably Hebraic. Those who uttered it were all born in Israel, and so were virtually all those who recorded it. The fact that they were generally regarded as dissidents, and that their teachings were eventually branded heresies, does not in the least reflect on the essential Jewishness of the spirit animating their lives and words." (New York: Random House, 1945; Modern Library edition, 1956), 147.

Subsequent Jewish studies of Jesus (KLAUSNER's *Jesus of Nazareth* [Hebrew original in 1922; revised and translated subsequently], BEN-CHORIN's *Brother Jesus: The Nazarene Through Jesus Eyes* [German original in 1967 and subsequently translated], FLUSSER's *Jesus* [1997 and after] and VERMES's several works on the socio-religious context of Jesus) have provided a rich foundation of study and reflection upon which Christian scholars have developed the now axiomatic description of "Jesus the Jew," which is central to the so-called "Third Quest" for the historical Jesus. On this, see particularly: JOHN P. MEIER, "The Present State of the 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain," in *Biblica* 80 (1999): 459-87 (NB his conclusion on p. 486, about the theological necessity of affirming Jesus' Jewishness as a consequence of the Chalcedonian definition of the Incarnation), DONALD HAGNER, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of the Modern Jewish Study of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), and AMY-JILL LEVINE, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006),

[264] "Hebrew was of course still understood and used in intellectual circles, especially among theologians. But for the larger part of the Jewish community it became necessary to combine the usual Scripture lessons, which were read in Hebrew in the synagogue, with a translation into Aramaic ... In the worship service, the translation could be made only orally, not read from a scroll; this was presumably to preserve its distinction from the truly sacred text which was in Hebrew." ERNST WÜRTHWEIN, "The Aramaic Targums (ת)," in WÜRTHWEIN, *The Text of the Old Testament* (trans. ERROLL RHODES; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 79. For excellent overviews

familiar and re-present it in a deliberately unfamiliar way. It is, to borrow John Milbank's phrase, "the Word made strange"[265]—striving to re-capture the "foreignness" of first-century Mediterranean texts, so that their readers may approach them with new eyes and ears, appreciating them as products of a very different time, place and mentality—and not, Chouraqui would say, as "Christian" at all (at least not in the usual sense of that term).

Although translational "re-Hebraization" of the New Testament is a modern phenomenon (as we will see toward the end of this chapter), it relies, in fact, on the instincts and labours of centuries of scholars, both Jewish and Christian, who applied themselves to translating the New Testament, whole or in parts, into Hebrew. Any serious attempt to reintroduce a "Hebraic voice" into the New Testament, or to speculate about Semitic words or concepts underlying particular passages, almost inevitably must be informed by, and build upon, these earlier translations. Chouraqui is no exception here, and it is therefore instructive and necessary to spend some time reviewing the history of translations of the New Testament made into Hebrew[266]. Some of these were made *by* Jews, some *for* Jews, some to further the perceived evangelistic imperatives of Christianity, and others for the sheer scholarly challenge involved.

1. Tracing the History of the New Testament in Hebrew

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of the targumic tradition and its significance, see: Roger Le Déaut, *The Message of the New Testament and the Aramaic Bible (Targum)*. Subsidia Biblica 5 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982); Martin McNamara, "Targums" in *IDBSup* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 856-61; and Alejandro Díez Macho, *El Targum: Introducción a las Traducciones Aramaicas de la Biblia.* Textos y Estudios 'Cardenal Cisneros' 21 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1979).

[265] John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

[266] Although it is beyond the specific scope of my study, it should be noted that, in addition to Hebrew editions of the Christian Scriptures, versions were also made into other European Jewish languages, including Yiddish [sometimes called Judæo-German] and Ladino. For details on editions in these languages, consult: T. H. Darlow, Horace Frederick Moule, and Arthur Garland Jayne. *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Originally published in London by Bible House, 1903; reprinted by Kraus Reprint Corp., New York in 1963); and Yaakov S. Ariel, "The Yiddish Translation of the New Testament," in Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880-2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 88-92.

1.1 The First Seven Hundred Years C.E.

One of the most thorough studies of Hebrew translations of the New Testament is found in Pinchas Lapide's *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue.*[267] Lapide's work provides a rich and fascinating inventory of ways in which Hebrew has permeated Christianity since late antiquity and the early mediæval period, especially by means of translations (partial or whole) of the New Testament. He cites (pp. 22-23) three relatively early Jewish texts which seem to demonstrate at least some familiarity with the wording of Jesus' teachings:

1) in tractate *Šabbat* of the Babylonian Talmud (116b), which seems to include an Aramaic paraphrase of Matt 5:17: "The next day, he [R. Gamaliel] brought him a Lybian ass. Said he to them, 'Look at the end of the book, wherein it is written, 'I came not to destroy the Law of Moses nor to add to the Law of Moses'..." [vs. Matt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill"];[268]

2) a mid-ninth-century fragment from the Cairo geniza seems to suggest some familiarity with the Passion account in Matt 27:34, 42-43[269]: "They gave him lime (?) in vinegar, and God will not save him ... in the presence of those who persecute him". An Aramaic passage shortly afterward says that "they called Jesus, the son of Panderas, Father and Son and Holy Spirit" (cf. Matt 28:19);

3) in the mediæval Arabic work *The Duties of the Heart*, by Baḥya ibn Paquda, which was translated into Hebrew by Jehuda ibn Tibbon. The text seems to include a reference to Jesus' teachings about oaths in Matt 5:33-37: "And one of the pious said to his disciples: 'The Law permits us to swear to the

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[267] English translation of the German *Hebraïsch in den Kirchen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976). Trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984).

[268] The context of this passage clearly seems to be speaking of Christians and their sacred texts; in the uncensored text of this passage, Rabbi Meir speaks of the Christian books as אוון גליון, *'wwn glywn*, perhaps "falsehood of blank paper," whereas Rabbi Yochanan refers to them as עוון גליון, *'wwn glywn*, "the iniquity of blank paper" or "sinful/heretical writing" [this is a disparaging rabbinic word-play on the Greek *εὐαγγέλιον, evangelion*, "gospel"]. The equation of these references with the gospels is problematic, however, since the text says that these same writings ascribe equal inheritance rights to sons and daughters—a matter that is found nowhere in the extant gospels.

[269] "They offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it ... 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son." '" (NRSV)

> truth in the name of the Creator. But I tell you not to swear by Him, whether truly or falsely. Say yes or no..."[270]

Scholars continue to debate the degree to which, or if, apparent references to Jesus (=Yeshu?) in the Talmud are, in fact, rooted in either the gospels or history.[271] Claims about Jesus' illegitimacy and of his use of magic, seeming allusions to some of his followers and to his execution, as well as alleged references to Jesus' being punished in boiling excrement,[272] are all highly problematic.[273] The dating of the relevant passages often suggests that it is a much later (or earlier) Jesus who is being referred to, and the tenuousness of the links with the New Testament suggests that they probably do not reflect a firsthand knowledge of the Christian Scriptures, or of the historical Jesus. They apparently represent more indirect acquaintance with traditions or preaching about Jesus, and so their relevance for a study of New Testament allusions in Hebrew is negligible.[274]

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[270] Matt 5:33-37 "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one." (NRSV)

[271] Perhaps most famously in GUSTAF DALMAN's *Jesus Christ in the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and the Liturgy of the Synagogue* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1894; original version in German, 1891) and R. TRAVERS HERFORD's *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903), but also in: JACOB Z. LAUTERBACH, *Rabbinic Essays.* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1951; reprinted by Ktav, 1973, 473-570); MORRIS GOLDSTEIN, *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* (New York: MacMillan, 1950); ROBERT E. VAN VOORST, "Jesus in Jewish Writings," in *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 75-132; and most recently in PETER SCHÄFER's book *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). Some of the least flattering passages were censored by the Church in the 1500s, and are found only in a few surviving manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud or Tosefta that escaped the censors' scissors or bonfires.

[272] See *b. Gittin* 56b-57a. Some of these claims are developed in the mediæval polemic *Toledot Yeshu*. See: WILLIAM HORBURY, "A Critical Examination of the *Toledoth Yeshu*". PhD dissertation. University of Cambridge, 1970.

[273] See, e.g., the position paper issued by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith in February 2003, "The Talmud in Anti-Semitic Polemics"; online at:
http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf

[274] Among other sources, see: http://www.angelfire.com/mt/talmud/jesusnarr.html . Some see significance in the fact that "Yeshu" (and not the more expected *Yeshua'*, with final *ayin)* is the form found in several Talmudic accounts. Some Jews have seen in this anomaly the traditional

1.2. Mediæval Polemics (ca. 700-1400)

From the early mediæval period onward, a number of Jewish polemical works incorporate transliterations and translations of gospel texts into Hebrew.[275] The first of these, the *Book of Nestor Hakkomer*,[276] is situated paleographically and linguistically

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rabbinic acronym for the Hebrew phrase ימח שמו וזכרו ("may his name and memory be blotted out"), a phrase used of those who have persecuted the Jews, or sought to lead Jews astray to the worship of other gods. See, e.g., Sol Steinmetz, *Dictionary of Jewish Usage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 39; M. Eskhult, "Rabbi Kemper's Case for Christianity," in Theo L. Hettema and Arie van der Jooij, eds., *Religious Polemics in Context: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR) held at Leiden, 27-28 April 2000*. Studies in Theology and Religion 11 (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), 161 (citing Rabbi Johan Kemper [1701-1716], of Uppsala University).

[275] "At least one group of Iberian Jewish thinkers certainly did know Latin: anti-Christian polemicists. A survey of Jewish polemical treatises demonstrates clearly that these authors were familiar with Christian sources. As early as 1170, Jacob ben Reuben translated sections of Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio Iudaei et Christiani* into Hebrew in his *Wars of the Lord (Milḥamot ha-Shem)*, and devoted a chapter of his work to New Testament translations and criticism. By the fourteenth century, most likely every Iberian anti-Christian Jewish polemicist knew Latin. Moses ha-Kohen of Tordesillas (c. 1370) peppered his *Support of the Faith (Ezer ha-Emuna)* with Latin words and phrases. Shem-Tov ibn Shaprut (c. 1385) apparently translated the Book of Matthew into Hebrew in order to polemicize against it. Profiat Duran (late fourteenth, early fifteenth centuries) devoted a chapter of his *Disgrace of the Gentiles (Klimat ha-Goyim)* to criticism of Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible." Daniel J. Lasker, "The Impact of Christianity on Late Iberian Jewish Philosophy," in Bernard Dov Cooperman, ed., *In Iberia and Beyond: Hispanic Jews Between Cultures: Proceedings of a Symposium to Mark the 500th Anniversary of the Expulsion of Spanish Jewry* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 176.

"The corpus of early Christian works directed against Judaism is ... rather extensive. Anti-Christian works by Jews, on the other hand, are virtually nonexistent before the twelfth century. One reason for this disparity is that Jews had no internal motivation for writing polemics against Christians; in times or places where Christianity was not a threat, we cannot expect Jews to be concerned with a refutation of its claims." David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzaḥon Vetus with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 7.

[276] Lapide is one of several scholars to have speculated that this "Nestor" may, in fact, be the patriarch Nestorius (born after 351; died ca. 451), whose views were condemned as heretical at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Cyril of Alexandria, one of Nestorius' most ardent opponents, alleged that Nestorius' theological positions were tantamount to the Jewish rejection of the Incarnation, and the portrayal of Nestorius as a Jew was employed by Cyril's partisans in their anti-Nestorian polemics: "When news of Nestorius' deposition reached Constantinople, the *Coptic Acts of Ephesus* report that crowds expressed their joy by shouting, 'Nestorius the Jew!' Four days later, another anti-Nestorian crowd gathered in the Great Church chanting, 'Nestorius and the thirty men are Jews'." Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 217. "It was common to castigate opponents of Nicene orthodoxy as Judaizers, on the grounds that, as Subordinationists, they recognized God the Father, but failed to pay proper honour to God the Son." (in Evagrius Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*. Transl. by

between the sixth and tenth centuries,[277] and incorporates 25 quotations from the New Testament, as well as additional paraphrases and allusions to Christian theological vocabulary.[278] In the mid-twelfth century, the French rabbinic scholar Jacob ben Reuben (ca. 1136-1200) issued a book which has become known under the title of *Sefer Milḥamot ha-Shem* (the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*).[279] In it, he responds in a systematic way (based, he says, upon conversations with a Catholic priest) to the claims made by Christian theologians, primarily through an analysis of relevant scriptural texts. Its eleventh chapter includes 19 lengthy quotations from Matthew's gospel, translated

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MICHAEL WHITBY. Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 7, fn. 11).

[277] In his study of this text, DANIEL LASKER demonstrates that the Hebrew version of *Nestor Hakkomer* is actually based upon an earlier polemical work in Arabic, *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf* ("The Account of the Disputation of the Bishop"), which claims to be a refutation of key Christian beliefs by an early bishop-theologian who converted to Judaism. The Arabic text dates itself to the first quarter of the sixth century, although scholars suggest a ninth- or tenth-century date is more probable; the Hebrew translation is obviously later. "...Even if *Qiṣṣat* is from as late at the 10th century, it is still the oldest complete surviving Jewish anti-Christian polemic. *Toledot Yeshu* has, perhaps, older material, but it is not a polemic *per se* ... Thus, *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf*, eclectic, repetitive and poorly organized as it is, is the first in a long line of Jewish anti-Christian polemical works. It takes pride of place in a thousand-year tradition that continues to this very day ... *Neṣṭor ha-komer* is also a significant work, since it is both the earliest Hebrew anti-Christian polemic extant and one of the first translated works from Arabic to Hebrew ... Later Jewish polemics were also influenced by *Neṣṭor*, usually mediated by Jacob ben Reuben's work [*Milḥamot ha-Shem*] ... In this manner, the arguments first collated by the anonymous author of *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf* and introduced to Christian Europe by the anonymous translator of *Neṣṭor ha-komer* were repeated over and over by Jewish polemicists in their centuries-long battle against Christian missionary attempts." ("*Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf* and *Neṣṭor ha-komer:* The Earliest Arabic and Hebrew Anti-Christian Polemics," in JOSHUA BLAU AND STEFAN C. REIF, eds., *Genizah Research After Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 47 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 117. See also: DANIEL J. LASKER AND SARAH STROUMSA, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*. 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, 1996); ORA LIMOR, "Judaism Examines Christianity: The Polemic of Nestor the Priest and *Sefer Toledot Yeshu*" [Hebrew] in *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 75 (1998), 109-25.

[278] See LAPIDE, 23-25.

[279] See LAPIDE, 25-30. The original title of the work was *Sepher ha-Mekaḥed weha-Meyaḥed (The Book of the Denier and the Affirmer)*. An edition of the *Milḥamot ha-Shem* was published by JUDAH ROSENTHAL in Jerusalem [n.p.] in 1963.

On the polemical works mentioned here, see the extensive bibliographical footnotes in JOEL E. REMBAUM, "Medieval Jewish Criticism of the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin," in *AJS Review*, Vol. 7 (1982), 353-55; also, GILBERT DAHAN, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 345-46, 416, 488-89; and WILLIAM HORBURY, "Hebrew apologetic and polemical literature," in RAPHAEL LOEWE AND NICHOLAS DE LANGE, eds., *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 189-209.

into Mishnaic Hebrew for the benefit of his readers. Ben Reuben's book demonstrates not only an in-depth knowledge of Christian messianic exegesis, but also shows considerable familiarity with patristic literature. It is one of the most significant works of mediæval Jewish-Christian polemic, and would provide source material for a number of later writers in the same vein. Ben Reuben's work is the first known Jewish text to engage in a prolonged, systematic critique of the New Testament.

One of the other great thirteenth-century Jewish polemical works is the *Book of Joseph the Zealous* [*Sefer Yoseph ha-Meqanne'*], written in 1274 by Joseph Official, a member of a distinguished family of French rabbis who were often drawn into public disputations with Christian theologians.

> The Paris manuscript of the book presents an extensive criticism of the New Testament in its last eight pages. It contains forty Hebrew quotations from the New Testament, of one to eight verses each, and eleven quotations from the Latin Vulgate in Hebrew transliteration ... While quotations from Matthew represent the majority (twenty-five in all) and are generally the best translated, five of the remaining fifteen quotations are merely paraphrases of New Testament passages ... Only two passages in Matthew (8:1-4; 28:16-19) are cited by both the of Jakob ben Reuben and the Paris manuscript of Joseph the Zealous, but the differences between them make it quite clear that the latter had no knowledge of the earlier.[280]

Rome's Central National Library possesses a manuscript (MS Or. 53, fragment B) called the *Book of Reproof* [*Spr Hwkwḥ*] which seems to show at least a partial reliance on Official's work, as preserved in the Paris manuscript:

> This later edition of the work contains two chapters devoted entirely to a critique of the New Testament. In the second chapter are found twenty-five passages in Hebrew from Matthew, two from Mark, six from Luke, five from John, and one from Acts—a total of thirty-nine passages ranging from one to nine verses in length ...The lengthier passages are mostly paraphrases, with verses irrelevant to the discussion either condensed or completely omitted. Especially in the translations from Matthew the dependence of the Roman writer on the Paris manuscript is striking, although very few of the Hebrew

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[280] LAPIDE, 31. See also "Joseph ben Nathan Official: Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane," in HANNE TRAUTNER-KROMANN, *Shield and Sword: Jewish Polemics against Christianity and the Christians in France and Spain from 1100-1500*. Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 8 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 90-101.

> translations of the New Testament passages are completely identical in both manuscripts ... The sixth chapter of the Roman manuscript contains ... fifty-nine New Testament passages in Hebrew.[281]

The last half of Lapide's third chapter (pp. 36-52) provides an extensive overview of the presence of New Testament translations in mediæval Jewish texts, although he stresses that Jewish discussions of New Testament texts were not always entirely polemical in tone. "Knowledge of the New Testament and other Christian literature appears in Jewish literature as early as the ninth century, and from then to the twelfth century a friendly exchange of views between Jewish and Christian scholars seems to have been the rule rather than the exception" (36). Great Jewish thinkers and commentators such as Saadia Gaon, Judah ha-Levi and Maimonides all demonstrate a surprising familiarity with the New Testament.[282] The Kimḥis—father Joseph and son David (the esteemed *Radak)*—both composed scholarly works exposing the fallacies of Christian exegesis as defensive armour for their communities in France (36-38).[283]

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[281] LAPIDE, 33-34.

[282] LAPIDE, 36. See, e.g., LEV GILLET's brief but illuminating and intriguing overview of the more positive aspects of mediæval Jewish-Christian interaction, in his *Communion in the Messiah: Studies in the Relationship between Judaism and Christianity* (originally published in 1942; reprinted by Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 1999), 19-22. "Notwithstanding all this, there did exist in the Middle Ages an exchange of thought, an interpretation and even sometimes a genuine dialogue between Jews and Christians ... On the whole Hebrew scholarship proved perhaps the most positive and fruitful common-ground of Christians and Jews during the Middle Ages." (19, 21). See especially the provocative recent book by JONATHAN M. ELUKIN, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages*. Jews, Christians, and Muslims From the Ancient to the Modern World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[283] "Joseph Kimchi ... pursued the broader horizons of biblical meaning that were available through a rationalist approach to exegesis, and he utilized both grammar and rational analysis to refute Christian interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. He wrote *Sefer HaBerit* ("The Book of the Covenant') as an apologetic work proving the truth of Judaism ... Like his father, David Kimchi actively pursued polemics against Christian allegorical interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. Many of these polemical interpretations appear in his commentary on Psalms." MICHAEL A. SIGNER, "Bible, Jewish Interpretations of," in WILLIAM W. KIBLER AND GROVER A. ZINN, eds., *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1995), 125.

1.3. Into the Reformation and Renaissance Periods

One of the more mysterious, confusing and controversial questions regarding Hebrew and the New Testament is the existence of several mediæval manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew entirely in Hebrew.[284] In the late fourteenth century, the Jewish polemicist Shemtob ibn Shaprut incorporated a Hebrew translation of Matthew in his work *'Eben Boḥan* [The Touchstone]. The apparent similarity of some of its wordings with earlier Jewish quotations of Matthew in Hebrew has led some to speculate that it could plausibly be rooted in a much earlier Hebrew Matthew (which some link to the Hebrew gospel of Matthew alluded to by several Church Fathers).[285] Whether ibn Shaprut was himself the author of this text, or whether he himself inherited it from an earlier tradition, remains debated.[286]

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[284] The material below on Hebrew translations of Matthew is largely drawn from George Howard's *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995); Howard is one of the main contemporary scholars of these manuscripts, and this book represents a second revised (and more nuanced) version of his earlier *The Gospel of Matthew According to a Primitive Hebrew Text* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987). See also William Horbury, "The Hebrew Text of Matthew in Shem Tob ibn Shaprut's *'Eben Boḥan*," in William David Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew.* ICC 3 (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997), 729-40.

[285] "The tradition that the Greek text of Matthew was translated from a Hebrew (or Aramaic) original goes back to an early second-century bishop of Hierapolis named Papias, as quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.16). The usual translation of the Greek text is the following: 'Matthew compiled the sayings in the Hebrew language, and everyone translated them as well as he could.' Papias' statement was taken by Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius to mean that Matthew composed his Gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic. But Papias' statement involves more problems than it resolves. What were the *logia* ('sayings')—words of Jesus, OT quotations, or the whole story? Why does Papias say 'Hebrew' when it appears certain that Jesus spoke Aramaic? Were there multiple translations of the Semitic Matthew? ... Furthermore, there is no firm evidence in the Greek text that it was translated from a Semitic original. At any rate, the canonical text of Matthew is and always has been the Greek version." Daniel J. Harrington, "Text and Language," in *Gospel of Matthew.* Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 3.

[286] Matthew Black seems to believe that ibn Shaprut *was* its author, while William Horbury concludes otherwise. "The author of the Hebrew Matthew was probably a certain Shem-Tob ben Shaprut, a famous Jewish polemical writer who flourished in Spain in the fourteenth century." Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts.* 3rd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 295; "... Ibn Shaprut himself does not present himself as a translator in his treatment of the gospels, and is most unlikely to have made a translation of Matthew entirely anew." Horbury, in Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary,* Vol. 3, 730.

In 1537, Sebastian Münster (1488-1552), a noted cartographer, mathematician and Franciscan friar-turned-Lutheran exegete,[287] published at Basel a Hebrew edition of Matthew, entitled *The Torah of the Messiah* [תורת המשיח],[288] based upon a manuscript which he claimed to have received in defective form from the Jewish community:

> In the prefatory letter Munster says that he is issuing the gospel of Matthew "in his native tongue, that is, Hebrew," "not as I found it, torn, among the people of the Hebrews, but reunited by me and brought into one body" (Præf. a 3). This much-discussed statement has been taken to suggest that Munster used a tattered MS, and supplemented or altered its defective text; but Munster, although he may have made editorial changes, probably means primarily that his Hebrew gospel text was divided into sections, interspersed with polemical comment, as in anti-Christian polemical works such as the fourteenth-century *Eben Bohan* of Shem Tob ibn Shaprut.[289]

Münster's work, which he apparently viewed as a useful adjunct to his pedagogical works in Hebrew grammar for Christian students, would be reprinted in Paris in 1551 by the Hebraist Jean Cinq-arbres (Johannes Quinquarboreus[290]), and again at Basel in

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[287] "Sebastian Münster was one of the most important early figures in the study of the Hebrew language. Münster appears to have had personal academic relations with individual Jews, to whom he turned for Hebrew manuscripts and translations. His extensive correspondence with some Jews, most notably Elijah Levita, is well known and reveals a heavy influence of Judaism on his work. Münster's relationship to Judaism, however, revolved around not only his scientific inquiry into linguistics and rabbinics; it seems to have had a rather more personal relationship as well. According to the scholar Heinz Burmeister, Münster had attended synagogue services frequently, was familiar with the practices of German Jews and studied Jewish gravestone inscriptions in both Heidelberg and Basel. A reconstruction of Münster's library reveals that he was acquainted with a significant amount of rabbinic literature … This reverence for Hebraica and certain aspects of rabbinic literature, as well as his personal relations with individual Jews and Jewish communities, intertwined with more contemporary and frequently less friendly views of Jews and Judaism." Dean Phillip Bell, *Jewish Identity in Early Modern Germany: Memory, Power and Community* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2007), 119-20.

[288] The New York Public Library's research collection of rare Judaica (Humanities—Jewish Division) holds a 1557 edition of this work, entitled *Evangelium secundum Matthæum in lingua hebraica, cum versione latina, atque annotationibus Seb. Munsteri ; unà cum Epistola D. Pauli ad Hebræos, hebraicè & latinè.* It is catalogued there as **P (Bible. N.T. Gospels. Matthew. Hebrew-Latin. 1557); see catnyp.nypl.org

[289] William Horbury, *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben Yehuda* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 124.

[290] Quinquarboreus (d. 1587), a native of Aurillac, France, was a noted philologist, and, from 1554, royal professor of Hebrew and Syriac. He authored several works on Hebrew grammar and literature, including *De re grammatica Hebræorum opus* (Paris: Martin LeJeune, 1582) and *Linguæ*

1557 and 1582. The fact that Münster did not distinguish in any way between the original manuscript's text and his own efforts at restoring or completing it, means that its value today, from the perspective of textual criticism, is extremely limited. The original manuscript he employed has since been lost.[291]

In 1555, Jean Mercier[292] edited and issued at Paris a somewhat *different* Hebrew Matthew, with his own Latin translation. The edition, entitled *Beśorat Mattai (The Good*

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hebraicæ institutiones absolutissimæ: Tractatus de syntaxi et poetica Hebræorum (Paris: G. Lebé, 1621). See: F.X. de Feller, *Dictionnaire historique, ou, histoire abrégée des hommes qui se sont faits un nom par le génie, les talens, les vertus, les erreurs, etc.* 2nd ed. (Liège: Lemarié, 1791), Vol. 3, 163-64.

291 See the interesting discussion of Münster's version in Section 10 ("De l'Evangile Hébreu de St. Matthieu, publié par Sébastien Münster et de l'édition de Jean Tilet") of the *Introduction au Nouveau Testament,* by Johann David Michaelis and Jean-Jacques-Caton Chenevrière (Geneva and Paris: [n.p.], 1822), 239-246, in which the authors conclude: "... cette traduction est écrite dans la langue Rabbinique dont se servaient les écrivains Juifs du douzième siècle. Selon toute apparence, cette traduction aura été faite par un Juif converti, afin de donner à ses frères une histoire fidèle du Christ, et pour réfuter les contes absurdes qui se débitaient parmi les Juifs. Si cette conjecture est fondée, comme tout l'annonce, nous pouvons conclure que la traduction fut faite sur la Vulgate, et non sur le Grec, car il est difficile d'attendre la connaissance de la langue Grecque dans un Juif converti du moyen âge ... là où un mot Grec est rendu différemment dans le Latin, les mots Hébreux différent aussi, et que là où differens [*sic*] mots Grecs sont exprimés par le même mot Latin, on se sert dans l'Evangile du même mot Hébreu, et plusieurs phrases indiquent une traduction littérale du Latin, par exemple sur Matth. III. 2. toute personne qui traduira du Grec, rendra probablement *μετανοειτε repentez-vous* par *Shouvou.* Mais au lieu de ce mot nous trouvons dans l'édition de Münster *faites pénitence,* ce qui correspond littéralement à la phrase de la Vulgate ... un examen rapide m'a fourni divers exemples qui confirment l'opinion de Wetstein [Johann Jakob Wetstein, *Prolegomena ad Novi Testamenti Græci Editionem accuratissimam, e Vetussimis Codd. MSS. denuo procurandam ...* ; Amsterdam: Wetstenios & Smith, 1730, 105?] ; il est probable qu'un examen approfondi multiplierait les exemples." (242-43)

292 Mercier (d. 1570) as a young man abandoned his law studies in Avignon to pursue his love of ancient languages. From 1546/7 to 1570, he served as royal professor of Hebrew at the Collège de France, eventually succeeding his own teacher François Vatable. Considered by his contemporaries as one of Europe's most competent Hebraists, Mercier published commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures, studies of Aramaic grammar, Latin translations of the Targum Jonathan on the Prophets, as well as rabbinic commentaries on the Prophets and Decalogue. See "Jean Mercier," in Michel Nicolas, *Histoire littéraire de Nîmes et des localités voisines ...* (Nîmes: Ballivet et Fabre, 1854), Vol. 1, 206-12. "Au jugement de Richard Simon, Mercier «a eu toutes les qualités d'un savant interprète de l'Écriture,» et le célèbre historien de l'Église Schröckh déclare qu'aucun des théologiens de son temps ne fut plus versé que lui dans les langues orientales, ni ne chercha avec plus de soin la vérité. Sa critique est plus judicieuse, plus exacte que celle de la plupart des exégètes de son temps, sa méthode d'interprétation purement littérale; il ne s'attache pas à découvrir dans chaque passage un sens allégorique, il ne poursuit que le sens historique, et il expose avec brièveté et précision le résultat de son investigation. Plus que pas un de ses contemporains, il a contribué à répandre le goût de la langue hébraïque, dans laquelle personne parmi les Chrétiens n'était plus versé que lui, et il a eu le mérite de découvrir le premier la quantité et la mesure des vers hébreux. Rome lui a fait l'honneur de l'inscrire dans son Index."

News of Matthew), was based on a manuscript which he had received from his friend Jean du Tillet, the bishop of Saint-Brieuc.[293] The circumstances of its provenance are somewhat dubious: Du Tillet said that he had "discovered" the manuscript during a journey to Italy in 1553, but the truth may be less scholarly and more nefarious:

> [Mercier and Du Tillet's] text, as H.J. Schonfield pointed out,[294] almost certainly came from one of the books confiscated from the Roman Jews by papal decree in 1553. He well drew attention to the prefatory statement that it was "lately extorted from the Jews of Rome," and to the long Hebrew title claiming that "it was hidden in their cellars, and is now at the last brought forth from the midst of their inner chambers and from darkness".[295]

In the preface, Bishop du Tillet clearly distinguishes it from its earlier "rival," and boasts that his edition is not full of the errors which mar Münster's edition. That scholarly opinion is not united about its alleged superiority is clear from the wide range of evaluations since then, which are cited by Lapide on pages 59-61.

From an early date, scholars not only presumed that Münster's Matthew and du Tillet's Matthew were variants of a single manuscript tradition, but also that both of them ultimately derived from the version in ibn Shaprut's *'Eben Boḥan*. Lapide's careful study, however, satisfied him that neither text relied on the *Eben Boḥan*, but the fact that both Münster and du Tillet share more than one hundred renderings—and many

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Eugène and Émile Haag, *La France Protestante, ou, Vie des Protestants Français qui se sont faits un nom dans l'histoire* (Paris: Joël Cherbuliez, 1857), Vol. 7, 329. See also Bertram Eugene Schwarzbach, "The Eighteenth Century Confronts Job," in *History of Universities* (Oxford) 22:1 (2007): 148.

[293] This manuscript is today preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, as Hebrew MS 132 (the BNF, however, catalogues it as a 19th-century manuscript); see: http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ead.html?id=FRBNFEAD000005532&c=FRBNFEAD000005532_e0000015&qid=sdx_q20

Regarding du Tillet: "... fut d'abord nommé à l'évêché de ſaint Brieux en Bretagne par Henri II. en 1553. mais en 1567. il fut transféré à celui de Meaux ... Il a encore donné une édition de l'évangile de ſaint Matthieu en hébreu, avec la verſion latine, imprimée a Baſle en 1552." Claude Fleury and Jean-Claude Fabre, *Histoire ecclésiastique.* (Paris : P.G. Le Mercier *et al.*, 1737), Vol. 35, 61.

[294] H.J. Schonfield, *An Old Hebrew Text of Matthew's Gospel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927), 3-6.

[295] Horbury, *Hebrew Study*, 125. See also Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews: History* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediæval Studies, 1991), 140-41. What complicates this theory considerably is that the royal permission for its publication—printed at the end of the book—is dated January 29, 1552, or roughly a year *before* the trip to Rome during which du Tillet claimed to have found the manuscript.

of the same errors—makes it highly likely that they ultimately derive from a common tradition:

> A close analysis of their differences reveals that the 16th-century editions, though based on a text like Shemtob's, have been thoroughly revised so that the Hebrew now reads closely to the Christian Greek and Latin Bibles of the Middle Ages.[296]

The presence of a number of Latinisms in Münster's version, together with some decidedly un-Hebraic expressions, suggests that either the original translator—or a subsequent redactor—was not entirely comfortable in Hebrew. Of course, it is today impossible to know with certainty whether these "barbarisms" (as some critics have described them) derive from a faulty manuscript, or from the hand of Münster himself. Although both Schonfield and Howard reject the explanation as overly simplistic, many are convinced that we are basically dealing with related Hebrew retroversions from the Vulgate, which du Tillet and Münster have perhaps "corrected" themselves, in a wooden fashion and sometimes ineptly (see Lapide, 62-63).[297] Du Tillet's version seems to display a more idiomatic use of Hebrew, and somewhat greater familiarity with Jewish customs. He renders the name of Jesus as *yšw* (instead of *yšw'*), and often inserts explanatory expansions; however, "in many instances Du Tillet's attempts at correction are not improvements".[298] A modern, annotated edition of both manuscripts was published in Göttingen in 1879 by Adolf Herbst, under the title *Des Schemtob ben-Schaprut hebraeische*

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[296] George Howard, "Matthew, Hebrew Gospel of" in David Noel Freedman *et al.*, eds. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 874.

[297] Lapide (61) suspects that du Tillet might have had a version of the Münster text before him, and that his version therefore represents his own attempt at correcting and improving that translation.

[298] Lapide, 62.

Übersetzung des Evangeliums Matthaei nach den Drucken des. S. Münster und J. du Tillet-Mercier neu herausgegeben (published by Dietrichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung).[299]

Especially in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, the emphasis on a Bible-centred form of Christianity sparked a renewed interest in the scholarly study of Hebrew.[300] Perhaps the "godfather" of this renewal was the Italian-born Emmanuel

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[299] The French Catholic biblical pioneer Richard Simon claimed, in his 1690 *Histoire critique des versions du Nouveau Testament* (Amsterdam: Reinier Leers) that he had in his possession one of the Hebrew manuscripts of Matthew, and that the notes preceding it clearly indicated that it was prepared by a Jewish author seeking to counter Christianity: "J'ay en MS. une partie de ce même Evangile en Ebreu, qui eſt plus exact & en meilleur ſtile que l'Exemplaire même de l'Evêque du Tillet. Il y a à la teſte de ce MS. quelques vers écrits en Ebreu, qui ſont des preuves évidentes de la haine que les Juifs portent aux Chrétiens. On y découvre qu'ils n'ont traduit cet Evangile que pour le refuter. Le titre eſt exprimé en ces termes ... *C'eſt icy le Livre de Jeſu, qu'on nomme Evangile, qui a été compoſé par Matthieu touchant ce qui regarde Jeſu de Nazareth. Il n'y faut point croire, parce que ce n'eſt que fauſſeté et menſonge.*" (232-33)

[300] "The call of the Protestant Reformation for a return to the 'original original' of the Bible, as this call was put into action by Martin Luther with his translation of the Tanakh from Hebrew into High German ... would make the study of the Hebrew language, of its grammar and vocabulary, a compulsory part of the training of ministers at Protestant academies and universities. But the printing of the Bible in Hebrew also made that text the object of the same kind of philological scrutiny that both the humanistic scholars of the Renaissance and the theological scholars of the Protestant Reformation were applying to the rest of the Bible ... [Johannes] Reuchlin's *On the Rudiments of Hebrew* became the instrument that the biblical humanists, and then the Protestant Reformers and translators, needed to go behind the Vulgate and even behind the Septuagint, to what Jerome had called 'the truth of the Hebrew'. This Christian return to the sources was facilitated by the presence (little known today except to rare book librarians and specialists in early Judaica) of several printed Jewish editions of the Tanakh in Hebrew, long before the Greek New Testament." Jaroslav Pelikan, *Whose Bible Is It?: A Short History of the Scriptures* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 152; "The interest in Hebrew in Protestant circles was not founded on humanistic grounds, as was the case in Italy, nor was it considered a constitutive part of a liberal education, as was the case among German humanists. Rather, it had a theological purpose, clearly formulated by Martin Luther himself. In his opinion, which had immense influence, Hebrew had to be included in the syllabus of pastors and monks for them to grasp properly the sense of the Scriptures. In this conviction he had been confirmed by his friend and collaborator Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) ... On his appointment as professor of Greek at Wittenberg, Melanchthon delivered an address in which he called for the promotion of Hebrew (as well as of Greek and Latin) at the university. In 1546 and 1549 he delivered two speeches in which he pleaded for the study of Hebrew among Christians." Pablo-Isaac Halevi (Kirtchuk), "The Hebrew Language," in Martin Goodman, Jeremy Cohen and David Jan Sorkin, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 501-02. See also, e.g., Allison Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson, eds. *Hebraica Veritas?: Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*. Jewish Culture and Contexts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1983); Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Tremellius (1510-1580) who, born into a Jewish family in Ferrara, later converted and was baptized (initially as a Catholic, although he later embraced Protestantism).[301] In addition to his pioneering work in Hebrew and Aramaic grammar, Tremellius was also an ardent proponent of missionary efforts directed toward the Jews, and composed a Hebrew catechism for Jews who were interested in Christianity, as well as Hebrew translations of some New Testament passages, and key Christian prayer-texts.[302] His translation of the Old Testament into Latin (prepared in collaboration with his son-in-law Franciscus Junius), printed together with Theodore Beza's Latin New Testament translation, became the primary Protestant alternative to the (Catholic) Vulgate.[303] As professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, first at Cambridge and later at Heidelberg, Tremellius' influence was felt throughout Europe, and proved to be the inspiration for a generation of Hebrew scholars and Christian Hebreophiles.

The sixteenth century witnessed the production of Hebrew translations of various *parts* of the New Testament. The Strasbourg scholar Elias Schadäus (b. 1540) prepared Middle Yiddish versions of Luke, John, Acts, and the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews;[304] Schadäus had intended to render the whole New Testament into

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[301] On Tremellius and his contemporaries, see: KENNETH AUSTIN, *From Judaism to Calvinism: The Life and Writings of Immanuel Tremellius (C. 1510-1580)*. St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007); LOUIS I. NEWMAN, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925).

[302] See AUSTIN, 75-79, "The Jewish Mission".

[303] "Historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seem pretty consistent in regarding Tremellius' Bible as the foremost Protestant Latin translation to emerge from the period. F.L. Cross, in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, writes that Tremellius' 'greatest work is his translation of the Old and New Testaments into Latin, from Hebrew and Syriac respectively. This was long the standard Protestant Latin translation of the Bible'. E.I. Carlyle, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, remarks that while it was far from faultless, Tremellius' translation 'evinced very thorough scholarship, and for long, both in England and on the continent, was adopted by the reformers as the most accurate rendering'. Deborah Shuger, in her monograph on the Renaissance Bible, quite simply describes Tremellius as 'the translator of *the* major Protestant Latin Bible'." KENNETH AUSTIN, "Immanuel Tremellius' Latin Bible (1575-79) as a Pillar of Calvinist Faith," in DAVID ADAMS AND ADRIAN ARMSTRONG, eds. *Print and Power in France and England, 1500-1800* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 31; NEWMAN, *Jewish Influence*, 101.

[304] REV. JAMES TOWNLEY (*Illustrations of Biblical Literature, Exhibiting the History and Fate of the Sacred Writings, from the Earliest Period to the Present Century...* Vol. 2 [New York: Carlton and Porter, 1856], 351) says that the text was "in German, in Hebrew characters"—is this a mistake, where

Hebrew, but these plans were thwarted by his death in 1626. In 1573, Fredericus Petri succeeded in translating the gospel excerpts used liturgically on Sundays,[305] and in 1573, he published the Gospel of Luke, which was published in Wittenberg in 1574. Beginning in 1576, the liturgical gospels, according to the use of the German Lutheran church, were translated as *Evangelia anniversaria dominicorum et festorum dierum, germanice, latine, græce et hebraice* by the noted Hebraist and German grammarian Johannes [Johann] Claius [Clajus].[306] The Epistle to the Hebrews was rendered into Hebrew by Conrad Neander in 1586, a variety of New Testament passages by Phillip Gallus in 1588, and the gospel Passion—Resurrection texts by Theodosius Fabricius.[307]

1.4. The Pioneering Work of Elias Hutter

It would not be until the eve of the seventeenth century, however, that a complete translation of all four gospels would be available in Hebrew. Its author, one of the outstanding figures of Renaissance Biblical scholarship and printing, was the German Lutheran theologian Elias Hutter (1553-1609).

Hutter set himself two very demanding goals:

Yiddish is actually meant? This would seem to be confirmed by Jean Baumgarten and Jerold C. Frakes: "It was in this city [Strasbourg] that a missionary pastor, professor of Hebrew language and printer, Elias Schadeus, published a book intended to convert the Jews to Christianity. The book was entitled *Mysterium* (Jost Martin, 1592) and included a translation of the gospels into Yiddish and a treatment of Yiddish grammar, *Ein gewisser Bericht von der teutsch-hebreischen Schrifft*, one of many early treatments of the vernacular." Jean Baumgarten and Jerold C. Frakes, *Old Yiddish Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 48

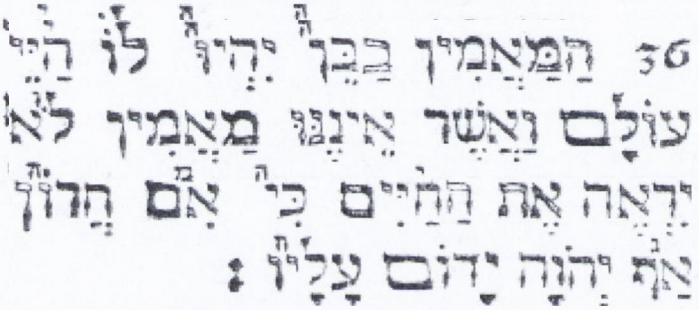
[305] *Besorat ha-keru'ot: Evangelia anniversaria: quae Dominicis diebus et sanctorum festis leguntur, Hebraice conversa per Fridericum Petri.* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato); the New York Public Library's research collection of rare Judaica possesses a copy of this edition. Another edition by Petri by published in Antwerp by Christopher Plantin in 1581; see the scanned edition online at: http://lubna.uv.es:83/Z_9_28/Z_9_28_fich_1.html

[306] Further, corrected editions of Claius' *Evangelia anniversaria* seem to have been published by various Leipzig publishers in 1578, 1593, 1600, 1610 and 1624. A version of Claius' four gospels in Hebrew was apparently published in Leipzig in 1610 (*Quatuor Evangelia Hebraicè);* see: Adam Clarke and Edward Harwood, *A Bibliographical Dictionary; Containing a chronological account, alphabetically arranged, of the most curious, scarce, useful, and important books in all departments of literature, which have been published in Æthiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Chaldee, Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, Samaritan, Syriac, &c. From the Infancy of Printing to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.* Vol. VI. (Manchester: R. & W. Dean, 1804), 218.

[307] Lapide, 65.

(1) to provide a polyglot Bible—in the tradition of earlier polyglots, such as the Complutensian (printed between 1502 and 1517; published in 1522) and Antwerp (1569-1572) Polyglots[308]—but one that would include parallel versions of the Bible in the major Biblical and European languages; and

(2) to be of assistance to students of the Bible, who had limited knowledge of the vagaries of Hebrew morphology. To this latter end, he introduced (beginning with an earlier Old Testament edition in 1587) a typographical innovation: the use of *two* fonts of Hebrew type, one solid (to indicate the letters comprising the triliteral root of the word), and one hollow (to indicate the letters that Hutter calls "servile," those which were "added" for grammatical or morphological reasons). Where one of the radicals has been subsumed into another due to assimilation, Hutter indicates the "missing" consonant by inserting it as a superscript letter at the appropriate point in the word, to enable his readers at least to locate the appropriate term in a Hebrew lexicon (see the sample text below, from John 4:36):



In 1587, Hutter succeeded in publishing at Hamburg a partial Old Testament (as far as the book of Ruth) in this somewhat novel style.[309] The reasons why this multilingual version was not completed are today not clear, although a lack of sponsorship may have been a major factor. In any case, he instead turned his attention to a parallel edition of the New Testament, which he published in 1599.[310]

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[308] Similar major polyglots would subsequently be published in Paris between 1628-1645, by Guy Michel le Jay, and in London, by Brian Walton (completed in 1657). Details on these and related texts can be found in the article by B. Pick, "History of the Printed Editions of the Old Testament, together with a Description of the Rabbinic and Polyglot Bibles," in *Hebraica* 9:1/2 (Oct. 1892-Jan. 1893), 47-116, and "Biblical Interpretation in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in Donald K. McKim, ed., *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 136-38.

[309] *Derekh ha-kodesh ... Hoc est Via sancta, quam non præteribunt immundi, cum sit pro illis ... Sive Biblia sacra: eleganti et maiuscula characterum forma, qua ad facilem sanctæ linguæ & scripturæ intelligentiam* ... (Saxo, 1587).

[310] *Novum Testamentum Dñi: Nri: Iesu. Christi. Syriacè, Italicè, Ebraicè, Hispanicè, Græcè, Gallicè, Latinè, Anglicè, Germanicè, Danicè, Bohemicè, Polonicè. Studio et Laborè Eliæ Hutteri, Germani. Noribergæ. Cumgratia et privilegio Sac: Cæs: Mtis: ad quindecim annos.* M.D.CXIX.

In his history of Hebrew translations, however, Jean Carmignac states that an earlier translation

Hutter's text, which has become known as the "Nuremberg Polyglot," does not possess the artistic elegance of some other editions as regards its Hebrew typography, and is more directed at popular study than at scholarly precision or theoretical correctness.[311] In its own way, however, it remains a work of immense erudition, requiring intensive labour: a true marvel of the printer's art (at least six distinct fonts of type were required to be set by hand, in a complex matrix). Most of all, it is a testimony to the breadth of intellectual curiosity that was the ideal of the Renaissance scholar. In six parallel columns, Hutter provided his readers with twelve language translations:

Column 1: Aramaic/Syriac, with Italian beneath;
Column 2: Hebrew, with Spanish beneath;

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of the New Testament into Hebrew had been prepared around 1360 by the Byzantine monk and humanist Simon Atoumanos (later archbishop of Thebes), but that the manuscript was lost two centuries later in the library of Genoa. (*La Naissance des Évangiles synoptiques.* Paris: O.E.I.L, 1984), 16. Unfortunately, Carmignac provides no source for this assertion. M. Batllori says simply that "... [Atoumanos] dut revenir à Rome en 1381, où *il offrit au pape une remarquable Bible polyglotte,* aujourd'hui à la Marciana." ("La Renaissance grecque à la cour d'Avignon," in *L'humanisme français au début de la Renaissance : Colloque international de Tours (XIVe stage)* [Paris: J. Vrin, 1973], 47; my italics.) The sixteenth-century Jewish convert Sixtus of Siena [Sixtus Senensis] apparently refers to biblical works of Atoumanos in Book 4 of his *Bibliotheca Sancta* (Venice, 1575), 552, s.v. "Simon Iatumaeus"; see fn. 4 in Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, "Fr. Simon de Crète, inquisiteur en Grèce et sa mission en Crète," in Loenertz, *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca.* Series altera. Storia e letteratura: Raccolta di studi e testi (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978), 131.
Townley quotes Paulus Freherus (*Theatrum virorum eruditione clarorum.* Nuremberg, 1688, Vol. 2, Part 4, 1474) as saying that the true pioneer in this field was actually a *different* German, Erasmus Oswaldus Schreccefuchsius [Schreckenfuchsius] (1511-1579), a student of Sebastian Münster in languages, mathematics and cartography. This claim would seem to be buttressed by Melchior Adam's *Vitæ Germanorum philosophorum, qui seculo superiori, et quod excurrit, philosophicis ac humanioribus literis clari floruerunt* (Heidelberg: Typis Johannis Lacelloti, 1615): "Inter alias quoque lucubrationes *Testamentum Novum in Hebraicam linguam primus transtulit*" (300; my italics). Adam notes that it was Schreckenfuchsius who delivered the funeral oration for Münster—in Hebrew. See the scanned version of Adam's entry for Schreckenfuchsius, available online, beginning at: http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/camenaref/adam/adam1/s315.html . Whether it was on account of his Scripture translations, his scientific studies or his theological views, Schreckenfuchsius was included in the Roman *Index of Prohibited Books* (the reason is not specified); cf. *Index librorum prohibitorum juxta exemplar Romanum* (Malines, Belgium: P.J. Hanicq, 1854), 352.

311 "Unfortunately the critical talents of Hutter were much inferior to his pious zeal, which led him to translate and insert in the different versions whatever he regarded as defective in the copies which he possessed, particularly the Syriac ... These unhallowed liberties taken with the word of God can never be too strongly reprehended; and in this instance 'afford a mortifying but instructive lesson to such as undertake the defence of a cause they do not understand: and show the small worth of this Polyglott [*sic*] in a critical point of view'." Rev. James Townley, *Illustrations of Biblical Literature, Exhibiting the History and Fate of the Sacred Writings, from the Earliest Period to the Present Century...* (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1856), Vol. 2, 348-49.

Column 3: Greek, with French beneath;
Column 4: Latin, with English beneath;
Column 5: German blackletter, with Danish beneath;
Column 6: Bohemian, with Polish beneath.

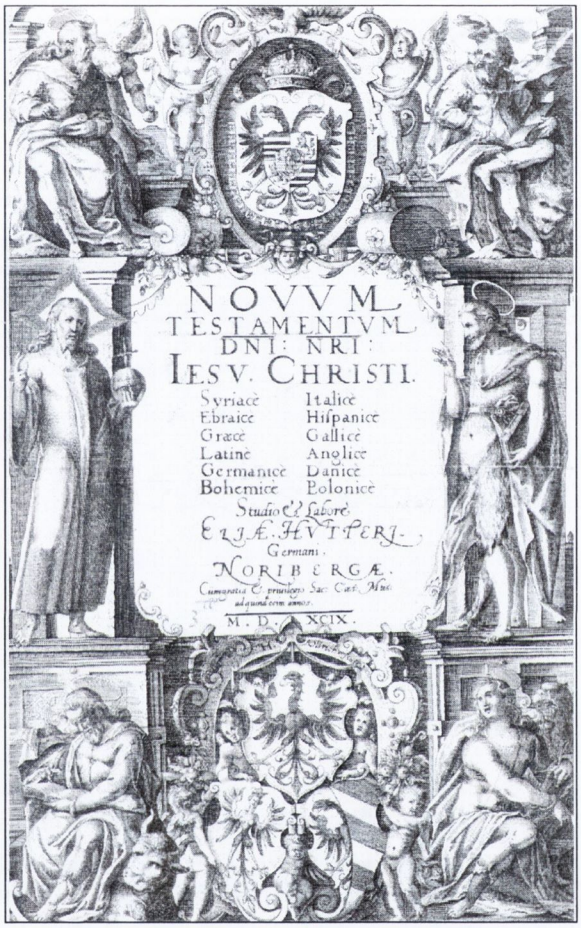

Figure 1: Frontispiece of Hutter's 1599 edition

One of the most striking elements of Hutter's polyglot, however, was the inclusion of a Hebrew translation of the entire New Testament, the first such version to appear in print.

> A serious difficulty, however, presented itself; [Hutter] had no copy of a Hebrew version; and except the Basil [*sic*] edition of St. Matthew's Gospel,[312] could obtain none either from public libraries, or from any private collection, though he offered considerable sums of money for one. (Cujus copia nec in ulla Bibliotheca nec ab ullo hominum, etiamsi multis millibus aureorum redimere voluerim, nancisci potui.) He therefore engaged in the work himself,

[312] Presumably the reference here is to Münster's edition of Matthew, printed at Basel.

> and, by indefatigable application, finished a Hebrew translation of the New Testament in the short space of one year, (*integrum Novum Testamentum*, à capite ad calcem in linguam sanctam divino fretus auxilio, convertendum suscepi ... Converti, correxi, onera domestica, et rei familiaris sustinui, *annuo* temporis spatio *συνθεω* absolvi). Having completed this translation, he printed his New Testament, in twelve languages, at Nuremberg, in 1599-1600 in two vols. fol.[313]

In 1661, William Robertson produced a corrected printing of Hutter's Hebrew New Testament on its own;[314] almost all of the copies were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, so it is an extremely rare find today. Richard Caddick reprinted a slightly edited version of Robertson's work in 1798 in London,[315] and so Hutter's influence continued to be felt, directly or indirectly, well into the nineteenth century.[316] One of the best known successors to Hutter's translation would be that of Franz Delitzsch, who said of him: "His Hebrew translation reveals a grasp of the language rare among Christians, and it is still worth consulting, for in instance after instance he has been most fortunate in striking on precisely the right expression".[317] An 1830 review of the Reverend Thomas Frognall Dibdin's *Library Companion, or the Young Man's Guide, and the Old Man's Comfort, in the Choice of a Library*, suggested that, while Hutter's work was still valuable, copies of it available for consultation were not easily procured:

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[313] TOWNLEY, 347-48; italics in original. Townley also provides details on 348 of the sources for the other versions employed by Hutter.

[314] *Novum Testamentum Hebraicum, emendatum et Castigatum opera et studio Guliel Robertsonii* (octavo edition, Roycroft Press, London).

[315] *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in Hebrew; corrected from the version published by Dr. Hutter, at Nuremburg, 1599; and republished by Dr. Robertson, at London, 1661* (London: T. Plummer). The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* states that Caddick went on to produce a three-volume Hebrew edition of the entire New Testament in 1799-1800. HENRY BRADLY, "Caddick, Richard". Rev. by PHILIP CARTER (London: Oxford University Press, 2004). The (partial) edition of Caddick in the British Library (containing only Matt and Mark) is from 1805, with portions printed in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English. See: http://tinyurl.com/cx3jdt

[316] In the years following his original polyglot's publication, Hutter went on to excerpt and re-publish his Hebrew New Testament text in smaller, more accessible formats (in quarto editions in Nuremberg in 1599 and 1602, and in Amsterdam in 1615).

[317] *Uebersetzungsarbeit*, 27-28, as cited and translated in LAPIDE, 66.

> One of the most remarkable works mentioned by Dibdin as a treasure to be prized by any possessor, is ... the Polyglott [*sic*] Bible of Elias Hutter—"It ranks," says the bookseller, "among the very rarest books in bibliography. There does not appear to exist a single complete copy in any of the foreign public libraries. In English, the one now submitted, is decidedly unique. 'Such is its amazing rarity,' says Clement, 'that to obtain the work complete would be an acquisition requiring the lives of two or three men; owing to its having been printed at the private expense of Hutter, at different periods, and but very few copies struck off".[318]

1.5. Seventeeth- and Eighteenth-Century Translations

Jean Carmignac provides an extensive and helpful overview of Hebrew editions of the New Testament, both before and after Hutter, a number of which are not mentioned elsewhere.[319] To cite some of the more significant of these:

1) a Jesuit named Georg Mayr apparently prepared his own Hebrew translation of the whole New Testament, as a pedagogical tool for use with his students. This version, finished in 1622, was stolen by French revolutionary troupes; Carmignac says it can be found in the French Bibliothèque Nationale, although the BNF's online catalogue lists only a 1695 edition of *Institutiones linguæ hebraicæ* by Mayr in its holdings;

2) Thomas Lydiat (1572-1646) was a noted and controversial Anglican scholar of biblical and world chronology who, in 1612, became the rector of Alkerton, a small rural parish near Oxford where he had been raised. Among his wide-ranging scholarly interests and writings, Lydiat drafted three harmonies of the Gospels, in English, Greek and Latin, for his own personal use; these manuscripts are apparently to be found at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, but are not listed at present in the Bodleian's digital catalogue;[320]

3) Giovanni Battista Giona was born (as Judah Jonah ben Isaac) in Safed in 1588, and served as a rabbi in Israel and in several European cities before converting to Catholicism in Warsaw, in 1625. He went on to become professor of Hebrew, first in Pisa and later at various schools in Rome, including the Propaganda Fide college. In 1650, he was named "Magister in Rabbinicis" of the Vatican library. In that capacity, he produced in 1668 a bilingual version of the New Testament, with his Hebrew translation and the Latin Vulgate on facing pages, with a preface by Pope Clement IX.[321] Although some have criticized Giona's version as influenced more by

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[318] "The Library Companion; or, the Young Man's Guide, and the Old Man's Comfort, in the Choice of a Library," in *The Christian Examiner and General Review*. Vol. 8; New Series, Vol. 3 (Boston: Gray and Bowen, 1830), 334-35; fn.

[319] *La Naissance des Évangiles synoptiques* (Paris: O.E.I.L, 1984), 15-23.

[320] See the entry on Thomas Lydiat by Peter Sherlock, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online).

[321] *Quattuor Evangelia Novi Testamenti ex Latino in Hebraicum sermoneum versa* (Rome: Propaganda Fide). See Gotthard Deutsch and A. Rhine, "Baptista, Giovanni Giona Galileo" in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Online at: www.jewishencyclopedia.com); Lapide, 67-72.

mystical or kabbalistic Judaism, Lapide comments, "Generally it can be asserted that Jona's *Revealed Stones*[322] represents the best and most fluent of all Hebrew translations of the New Testament up to his time. His work combined for the first time a profound knowledge of the biblical language with a positive intention to present a devotional as well as an accurate version of the Vulgate text without a carping undertone as in Ibn Shaprut" (69).


ארבעה אבני הגיליונים
מהתורה החדשה
אשר נעתקו מלשון רומי ללשון עברי
על יד יוחנן הטובל יונה
QVATVOR
EVANGELIA
NOVI TESTAMENTI
Ex Latino in Hebraicum ſermonem verſa
AB IOANNE BAPTISTA IONA:
והרים אותם תרומה לקדוש הכהן הגדול
קלימנתי תשעי יצו
SANCTISS. D. N.
CLEMENTI NONO P. M.
DICATA.
ROMÆ, Typis S. C. Prop. Fidei, Anno M DC LXVIII.

Figure 2: G. B. Jona's Hebrew New Testament

4) throughout the 1600s and 1700s, a number of Hebrew translations were made of individual New Testament books (primarily Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews, those being deemed, presumably, most apt to convince Jews of the truth and superiority of Christianity).

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[322] The Hebrew title which Giona gave to his translation was אבני הגליונים, *'bny hglywnym*, a reference to the stone tablets of the Mosaic Law, which he argued were "revealed" or "made manifest" (*petra manifestata)* in the covenant announced by Jesus. He suggested that אבן גליון ("Stone of Revelation") was actually the title under which Matthew had originally written his Hebrew gospel, to counteract those rabbis who, as a mockery of Christianity, had changed אבן, "stone" to עון, "sin"—this play on words seems to be suggested in the Talmud.

Many of these were made by Jewish converts to Christianity. Gustav Dalman[323] mentions a version made by Ezekiel Rachbi (d. 1772) and an assistant from Germany, and it seems almost certain that this is the same translator mentioned by Carmignac (19) as Ezekiel Raḥibi and by Lapide as Ezekiel Raḥabi, one of the "Black Jews" of Cochin in India, who is said to have translated almost the entire New Testament into Hebrew around 1760, a process which led to his later conversion. Carmignac says that Raḥibi's manuscripts had been transferred to Cambridge, and I strongly suspect that these are the same manuscripts which, according to several older sources, were included in the collection of Indian manuscripts brought back to England by the Reverend Claudius Buchanan, a British chaplain attached to the East India Company around 1800. "Among the 100 Mss. presented by Buchanan to the [Cambridge] Library in 1804 was ... a version of the New Testament rendered into Hebrew by a 'learned rabbi in Travancore' 150 years ago, and containing portions of the Acts and Revelations."[324] In his memoirs, Buchanan wrote: "The translator ... conceived the design of making an accurate version of the New Testament, for the express purpose of *confuting* it. His style is copious and elegant, like that of a master in the language, and the translation is in general faithful. It does not indeed appear that he wished to pervert the meaning of a single sentence; but depending on his own abilities and renown as a scholar, he hoped to be able to controvert its doctrine, and to triumph over it by fair contest in the presence of the world".[325] Solomon Schechter discussed these unusual texts (Oo 1:32 and 16) in an 1893 article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*; he was highly skeptical of some of Buchanan's claims, and dismissive of the overall quality of the manuscripts concerned: "The name of the translator is not given, but Buchanan, in his *Christian Researches* (p. 316), tells us that he was a learned Rabbi ... [Buchanan's] story seems rather doubtful; but whatever the case may have been, we can only say that the translator performed his task very badly, his version being most inaccurate, and his Hebrew style and even spelling betraying an ignorance of the holy language unusual even with the Malabar Rabbi".[326] However, one of the accompanying texts, a chronicle of the Malabar Jewish community, seems to put the lie to these claims:

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[323] "Hebrew Translations of the New Testament," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1908), Vol. 2, 148.

[324] H. Rabinowicz, "Cambridge University Library," in *JQR* N.S. 53:1 (July 1962), 73. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Buchanan gives a somewhat less altruistic portrayal of his manuscript-hunting expeditions: "Buchanan alienated the Jews in Cochin by taking valuable manuscripts by force, and although accounts of his travels were published in literary and religious periodicals, his zeal occasionally overran his discretion." Penelope Carson, "Buchanan, Claudius [1766-1815]," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online.

[325] Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia; With Notices of the Translation of the Scriptures Into the Oriental Languages* (London: Ward & Co., 1849), 121.

[326] "Notes on Hebrew MSS. in the University Library at Cambridge. VI," in *JQR* 6:1 (Oct. 1893), 144-45. Lapide speaks of its "uneven and faulty Hebrew with a strong anti-Christian bias. From the style of the handwriting, the first part is the work of a half-educated rabbinic Jew of Sephardic background; the second part, consisting of Acts through Ephesians and Revelation, was penned by his assistant, who came from Germany ... The polemic tendency, which is well attested in the text itself, is confirmed explicitly by the final words on page 70b of Ms. Oo 1:32, which reads: 'Heaven is my witness that I have not translated this, God forfend, to believe it, but to understand it and know how to answer the heretics ... that our true Messiah will come. Amen.'" (76-77)

אבל זה יחזקאל אינו רבי ומשפחתו רחבי

This Ezekiel, however, is not a rabbi, nor is his family Raḥabi[327]

1.6. The Nineteenth Century

For much of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, those who had undertaken to translate the New Testament into Hebrew (or to transcribe such manuscripts as existed) had done so to demonstrate their own linguistic prowess, to further the scholarly study of ancient manuscripts, or to provide a text which could be used pedagogically, by Christian students of Hebrew. With Claudius Buchanan, however, we see the beginnings of a significant shift in purpose. The nineteenth century would witness—hand-in-hand with expanding colonial empires—a dramatic explosion of missionary fervour[328] in what could be called "the age of the most extensive geographic spread of Christianity".[329] Many new organizations would be established whose explicit and proud goal was the conversion of the "heathen" to Christianity.[330] At least part of Buchanan's hope in bringing back these unusual New Testament manuscripts was that they could provide the foundation for a new and

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[327] *Ibid.*, 143 (Lapide says 142, but is mistaken).

[328] See, e.g., James Patrick Daughton, "The Origins and Traditions of the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Movement," in Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25-55.

[329] K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1941), Vol. 4: The Great Century A.D. 1800 - A.D. 1914: Europe and the United States of America, 1. "The nineteenth century spread of Christianity was due primarily to a new burst of religious life emanating from the Christian impulse ... It was from this abounding vigour that there issued the missionary enterprise which during the nineteenth century so augmented the numerical strength and the influence of Christianity ... Christianity was now taken to more peoples than ever before and entered as a transforming agency into more cultures than in all the preceding centuries ... It is now expanded to include all the globe and all peoples, nations, races, and cultures." Latourette, 1-2, 4.

[330] Often aimed primarily at women congregants, these included the Baptist Missionary Society (founded in 1792), the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society (1799) and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1816). See Stephen S. Maughan, "Civic Culture, Women's Foreign Missions, and the British Imperial Imagination, 1860-1914," in Frank Trentmann, ed. *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 201; see also the historical statistics provided in: "Mathematics of Missions," *Time* (Dec. 9, 1925); online at: www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,728258,00.html

more accurate Hebrew New Testament, for the explicit purpose of evangelizing European Jews:

> This version was transcribed by Mr. Yeates,[331] at Cambridge, by the appointment and at the expense of Dr. Buchanan, chiefly with a view to promote the production of a translation of the New Testament in the pure style of the Hebrew of the Old, for the benefit of the Jews, and in aid of the laudable design for this purpose of the London Society for the conversion of that ancient people".[332]

However, the Hebrew of the Travancore manuscript was judged to be too "rabbinic" (i.e. Talmudic and mediæval) for this purpose. Similar criticisms were raised regarding the purity of Hutter's pioneering Hebrew version, even as revised and corrected by Robertson and Caddick. Consequently, the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews (LSPCJ)[333] decided to embark upon a new translation of their own, based on the *Textus Receptus* rather than the Vulgate, a project that began in 1813 under Thomas Frey and William B. Collyer, in partnership with Judah d'Allemand, "a learned Jew ... from Germany".[334] Between 1813 and 1816, each of the four gospels was published individually, and in 1817 the New Testament was published in its entirety, followed by a second edition in 1819 and a third in 1821. This

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[331] This is clearly Thomas Yeates (1768-1839), a self-taught student of the Bible who would later work for the British Museum. JEAN CARMIGNAC, in his 1982 critical edition of Giona's translation (*Traductions hébraïques des Évangiles rassemblées par Jean Carmignac*, Vols. 2-3 : *Évangiles de Matthieu et de Marc traduits en hébreu en 1668 par Giovanni Battista Iona, retouchés en 1805 par Thomas Yeates* and *Évangiles de Luc et de Jean*... Tournhout: Brépols), credits Yeates with an 1805 revision of Giona's translation which (together with more than twenty other monographs) was left unpublished at Yeates' death. "En fait, cette traduction ... n'est qu'une reprise de celle de Iona ... Il cherche en général à corriger les tournures mishniques de Iona, pour revenir à un hébreu plus biblique. Mais il lui arrive de se tromper et l'on ne retiendra ses suggestions qu'après les avoir vérifiées" (cat.inist.fr/ ?aModele=afficheN&cpsidt=12414914)

[332] HUGH PEARSON, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D.D.* 3rd ed., Vol. 2 (London: Strahas and Spottiswoods, for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1819).

[333] The Society has been known by several variations of this name, including the Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among(st) the Jews, the Church Mission to the Jews or Church's Ministry to the Jews (CMJ). It was an organizing for training Christian missionaries for largely Jewish areas, as well as a producer of evangelical tracts and Biblical versions, of which it distributed hundreds of thousands during its history.

[334] WILLIAM THOMAS GIDNEY, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* (London: LSPCJ, 1908), 55.

version, however, was heavily criticized for some of its idiosyncratic renderings, including the creation of "Hebraic" forms which merely transliterated the Greek, such as *bpṭs* and *bpṭz* for "to baptize" (instead of *ṭbl*), the transliteration of John the Baptist's name as *ywḥnn bpṭyṣṭys* and that of Simon Peter as *šmʿwn pṭr*. Many of the Old Testament citations were not, in fact, taken from the available Hebrew versions, but were retroversions from the Septuagint, sometimes yielding less than elegant (and less than accurate) results.[335]

As these shortcomings became more and more evident, the LSPCJ realized that a thoroughgoing revision of the text was necessary, and this was effected between 1837 and 1838 by Alexander McCaul, aided by three Jewish converts, Johann Christian Reichardt, Stanislaus Hoga, and Michael Solomon Alexander.[336] In 1840, their work was finally published, and it went through a number of further reprintings throughout the 1840s and 1850s.[337]

The London Society's earlier version was revised and corrected by William Greenfield (1799-1831), a linguist of prodigious abilities,[338] on behalf of the British and

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[335] LAPIDE, 79.

[336] Alexander, a former rabbi from Russian Poland, converted to Christianity in 1825, was ordained an Anglican priest in 1827, and was consecrated the first Anglican bishop of Jerusalem in 1841, where he served until his death four years later. See YARON PERRY, *The British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 57-62; ARIE MORGENSTERN AND JOEL A. LINSIDER, *Hastening Redemption: Messianism and the Resettlement of the Land of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 175-77. See the royal license for Alexander's episcopal consecration in: RICHARD BURN, *Ecclesiastical Law*. 9th ed. rev. by ROBERT PHILLIMORE (London: S. Sweet, V. & R. Stevens & G. S. Norton, 1842), Vol. 1, 415eeeee-415ggggg

[337] *Ibid.*; GIDNEY, 152.

[338] "During his study of the Hebrew, young Greenfield, to facilitate his own acquirements, compiled a complete Lexicon of that language, of which he became passionately fond. Having made great advancement in this branch of sacred literature, he next applied himself to the study of Chaldee, and some other of the cognate dialects. The language of the Christian scriptures now engaged his attention; and he prosecuted the study of the Greek as well as afterwards of the Latin ... The extraordinary facility with which he acquired a knowledge of these languages, apparently without labour or effort; and the ease with which he overcame difficulties, that to his class-mates seemed almost insurmountable, are stated to have been truly astonishing. Their fellow-student soon became their instructor ... From Latin, he proceeded to the French; and thenceforward, he thought nothing of encountering the difficulties of a strange language, even when enveloped in a peculiar character." SAMUEL BAGSTER, "Memoir of William Greenfield, M.R.A.S.," in *The Imperial Magazine*, Vol. 4, 2nd series (Jan. 1834), 11.

Foreign Bible Society, and his version appeared in 1831, published in London by Samuel Bagster in an English-Hebrew edition.[339] His work would itself be subsequently reviewed and revised by a team of nine translators (eight of whom were Jewish or came from Jewish backgrounds); their work appeared in 1866 as החדשה כתבי הברית (*ktby hbryt hḥdšh*).

Undoubtedly the single most influential figure in the post-Renaissance history of Hebrew New Testament scholarship was the German exegete, linguist and commentator Franz Delitzsch. Born in 1813, Delitzsch very early in his studies demonstrated a keen interest, both in Hebrew and in rabbinic studies, and particularly in their usefulness for communicating the Christian Gospel among the Jews. He was not, however, satisfied with any of the already-existing Hebrew New Testament translations, and undertook to prepare a version of his own. His initial published drafts (of I Corinthians 13 and, in 1870, of the Letter to the Romans) attracted minimal attention and support. Finally, he turned to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which agreed in 1873 to underwrite the work involved in producing a complete Hebrew New Testament, based not on previous translations, but freshly rendered by Delitzsch. The first edition rolled from the presses in 1877, based on the latest critical Greek texts, including Codex Sinaiticus, which had only recently been brought to the attention of scholars by Constantin von Tischendorf.[340] The Bible Society, however, was uncomfortable with this "liberal" textual basis, and Delitzsch backed down, reverting to the *Textus Receptus* for the second edition (1878). By 1882, it had gone through

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[339] See "Versions in the Languages of Asia: (1) Hebrew Versions," in Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1854), Vol. 2, 48. Bagster gives the background to this translation in "Memoir," 14, and notes that "[i]n preparing this Version, [Greenfield] was indebted to the Rev. Dr. Henderson, Theological Tutor of Highbury College, for the loan of a valuable MS., and he also was allowed to avail himself not only of the translation issued by the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, but of all the criticisms thereon, which had been received by the committee of that society."

[340] "He took counsel with many Hebrew friends during the preparation of the work ... The version was at once admitted to be the best translation of the New Testament into Hebrew ever produced." Edwin M. Bliss, *The Encyclopædia of Missions* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891), 402.

another two editions, each one containing improvements and corrections suggested by Jewish and Christian critics. By 1890, ten editions had been published, each representing an incremental improvement over its predecessors. When, in February 1890, Delitzsch finally succumbed to illness, he was still reviewing materials for a new edition. The substantially improved eleventh edition, completed by his disciple and colleague Gustaf Dalman, was printed in 1892, and would itself undergo three successive revisions.

Dalman differed fundamentally with his mentor about the value of Hebrew for New Testament scholarship, since Dalman was convinced that Aramaic (rather than Hebrew), had been the predominant language in first-century Jewish Palestine, and would thus yield the most fruit in New Testament studies. Dalman argued that Hebrew had been reserved for formal religious and scholarly discourse, and his scholarly career and publications would be heavily influenced by his theories about Aramaic.[341] Dalman's textual work essentially furthered and refined Delitzsch's earlier labours, and so even in its later printings, it continued to be popularly known as "the Delitzsch version". Delitzsch's commitment to Christian evangelism in Jewish circles was further reinforced by his establishing in 1886 of the Institutum Judaicum in Leipzig, a school for the training of Christian missionaries in Judaica, and subsequently known as the "Delitzschianum". Despite his unabashed emphasis on proselytizing Jews, Delitzsch nevertheless maintained surprisingly good personal relations in the world of Jewish scholarship, and, when he died, a number of his Jewish colleagues praised his scholarly rigour, and his defence of the Jewish community against some of the societal anti-Semitism to which they were frequently exposed.[342]

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[341] This contentious topic will be addressed in Chapter 6.

[342] See SUSANNAH HESCHEL's discussion of Delitzsch and Abraham Geiger, in her monograph *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*. Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 194-97. There is, however, a wide spectrum of modern interpretations of Delitzsch's views on Judaism; see JACOB SHAVIT AND MORDECHAI ERAN, "Delitzsch's anti-Semitism in Modern Research," in SHAVIT AND ERAN, *The Hebrew Bible Reborn:*

Delitzsch's version continues its influence today, and is a version commonly found today in Israel, where it is still read and studied.

Another prominent nineteenth-century Hebrew rendering was that produced under the auspices of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) in London, by Isaac Edward Salkinson (1820-1883) and Christian David Ginsburg (1831-1914).[343] Salkinson, born Jewish, had converted to Christianity in his twenties and become an ardent missionary to the Jews. Already in his youth, Salkinson had distinguished himself for his translations of great literary classics (such as Milton and Shakespeare) into Hebrew.[344] Like Delitzsch, he was deeply dissatisfied by the calibre of the available Hebrew New Testaments, which he found a linguistic and literary mish-mash with little to recommend it to anyone steeped in Biblical Hebrew. In 1882, the TBS agreed to back his work—a translation that was to be more consciously "biblical" in tone, although aspects of his style would provoke subsequent criticism.[345] At Salkinson's death, all of

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From Holy Scripture to the Book of Books: A History of Biblical Culture and the Battles Over the Bible in Modern Judaism (trans. Chaya Naor; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 246-55.

[343] See FRED N. REINER, "Ginsburg, Christian David," in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography;* online at: www.oxforddnb.com

[344] On this achievement, see HANNA SCOLNICOV, "The Hebrew Who Turned Christian: The First Translator of Shakespeare Into the Holy Tongue," in PETER HOLLAND, ed., *Shakespeare and Religions.* Shakespeare Survey 54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 182-190; HARAI GOLOMB, "Shakespearean Re-Generations in Hebrew: A Study in Historical Poetics," in AVRAHAM OZ, *Strands Afar Remote: Israeli Perspectives on Shakespeare* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 255.

[345] "In the translation of the New Testament, Salkinson ... attempted to render it into strictly biblical Hebrew, without, however, compromising its Christian message. In its consistent use of the biblical linguistic register, Salkinson's translation was judged by many to be superior to that of Frantz Delitzsch, published not many years earlier. The British missionaries believed the New Testament would have a special appeal for the people of the Book if it could stand side by side with the Old Testament, as though it too were handed down on Mount Sinai." SCOLNICOV, 183; "The translation has been made in classical Hebrew idiom, but in seeking for elegance of language, exegetical and historical correctness, which are always connected with correctness of language, has been lost." BERNARD PICK, "Hebrew Versions of the New Testament," in JOHN MCCLINTOCK AND JAMES STRONG, eds. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1894). Vol. XII, 812; "Salkinson's version was more popular among many people (than that of Delitzsch) because it was more 'Hebrew,' i.e., actually un-Hebrew but truer to the kind of poor taste which delights in the mischievous and finds crudeness and confusion the hallmark of true literary genius.' " DAVID KAUFMANN, "Franz Delitzsch—ein Palmblatt aus Judah auf sein frisches Grab," in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1908), Vol. 1, 290, as translated in LAPIDE, 93.

the New Testament was complete, except for the Acts of the Apostles. This was finished by his colleague Ginsburg, who reviewed and revised the whole, enabling the publication of a first edition in 1886, which has remained in print more or less continuously ever since.[346] Like Delitzsch's first edition, it was based on the current critical Greek text, a decision which the TBS would endorse until the 1960s, at which point they decided to shelve their own Salkinson-Ginsburg, in favour of the second edition of Delitzsch, based on the *Textus Receptus*.[347]

1.7. The Twentieth Century

The revival of the Hebrew language inaugurated by the Zionist pioneer Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the late nineteenth century,[348] coupled with the birth of the modern State of Israel in 1948, produced a situation which many "Bible-believing" Christians saw as the beginning of the fulfillment of key Scriptural prophecies portending the End of Time.[349] The return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland—considered by

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[346] See a first-hand account of Bullinger's engagement of Salkinson, in Juanita S. Carey, *E.W. Bullinger: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000), 86-88. Bullinger (1837-1913), an Anglican cleric and leading dispensationalist writer, served as the secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society for 46 years (this period is covered in Chapter 6 of Carey's biography). Bullinger claims that, as of the turn of the twentieth century, 750,000 copies of the Salkinson-Ginsburg translation had been printed and distributed by the TBS and the Mildmay Mission to the Jews. Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation, or the Apocalypse*. 3rd rev. ed. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1935). Reprint ed. by Cosimo, New York, 2007; 7 fn.

[347] See the TBS's Internet site: http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/articles/heb.asp, and Part 2 of the excellent three-part article by Doug Kutilek on the history of Hebrew New Testament translations, published in the online newsletter "As I See It" (Vol. 9, No. 4, April 2006): http://www.kjvonly.org/aisi/2006/aisi_9_4_06.htm

[348] See, e.g., Jack Fellman, *The Revival of a Classical Tongue; Eliezer Ben Yehuda and the Modern Hebrew Language*. Contributions to the Sociology of Language 6 (The Hague: Mouton, 1973); Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Stefan C. Reif, "Resistance to the Study of Hebrew: The Experiences of Peretz Smolenskin and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda," in William Horbury, ed. *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 293-99; Chaim Rabin, "The Revival of Hebrew as a Spoken Language," in *Journal of Educational Sociology* (Vol. 36, No. 8, April 1963), 388-392.

[349] See, e.g.: Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*. Studies in Cultural History (Cambridge, MA: Bellknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 192-93.

> ... in the prophetic Scriptures Israel is considered [by dispensationalist Christian interpreters] to be the catalyst for the events of the end times. Among religious conservatives, millennial prophecy came into its own in 1948 with the

many Christians to be the necessary prerequisite for Christ's Second Coming—impelled some Christian groups to renew missionary activity among Israeli Jews, convinced that the wholesale conversion of Jews to Christianity would be the catalyst paving the way for Christ's "glorious return".[350] However, Hebrew versions prepared for nineteenth-century European Jews, in a largely classical or Mishnaic idiom, no longer seemed suited to a young new Israel, speaking a Hebrew that, although deeply rooted in Biblical idioms, had taken on a life of its own, and was clearly a distinct language.

Among the efforts to produce modern Hebrew editions of the Christian Scriptures are the *Gospel of John by a Catholic* (produced by the Jewish convert Joshua

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> establishment of the modern state of Israel ... With Israel's founding, affairs in the Middle East took on new eschatological meaning ... [M]illennialist thinkers assumed that a single generation would transpire between the time of Israel's reestablishment and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Although there was disagreement about the length of this "generation of the fig tree," most maintained that it would consist of somewhere between forty and seventy years, leaving the end times to commence somewhere around the close of the twentieth century. In addition, thinkers pointed to other, more specific passages (including predictions concerning wars, earthquakes, and the rebuilding and eventual destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem), all of which were seen as precursors to the end of time. Interpreting current events in the light of these ancient passages, they came to depict virtually every regional conflict of the last half century in eschatological terms." MICHAEL LIENESCH, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 229-30.

[350] A "dispensational premillenialist" interpretation, weaving together Jesus' words in Luke 21:24 ("... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"), Matt 10:23 ("... truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes") and Matt 24:14 ("This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come") with Paul's words in Rom 11:25-26 ("Brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. [26]And so all Israel will be saved"). The "godfather" of this stream of interpretation was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), an Anglo-Irish minister who become a prominent leader within the Plymouth Brethren movement; his vision was popularized in the United States by Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921), author of the best-selling *Scofield Reference Bible,* which proved immensely influential in twentieth-century American Protestant evangelical circles. See YAAKOV SHALOM ARIEL, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America 1880-2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2-3; STEPHEN R. HAYNES, *Reluctant Witnesses: Jews and the Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), especially Chapter 7, "Dispensational Premillenialism: The Jew as Key to the Kingdom," 141-70.

Blum and published in 1967)[351] and the *Gospel of Mark* by Robert Lisle Lindsey (Jerusalem, 1966; second, corrected edition in 1969).[352] Blum's (unpointed) translation was admittedly a rushed affair, and suffered both from idiosyncratic renderings and from fundamental inconsistencies; because of his lack of formation in classical languages, he was forced to rely on Delitzsch's earlier version, and on French and German editions. Lapide calls it "a roughhewn work, linguistically uneven ... it represents an unintegrated mixture of all possible styles ranging from Old Testament usage to modern slang. It offers nothing new toward the solving of vexed problems in the field of theological terminology, but adopts practically all the expressions of Delitzsch-Dalman" (158).

Lindsey was a pillar of evangelical Christianity in Israel,[353] and his work was the result of a much longer process of maturation.[354] Its publication in 1966 had been

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[351] See LAPIDE, 153-158.

[352] ROBERT LISLE LINDSEY, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*. 2nd rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Dugit Publishers, 1969).

[353] Born in 1917, Lindsey pursued graduate studies in languages at Princeton, and received his Ph.D. in 1954 from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1939, he travelled to Jerusalem for the first time, spending fifteen months and seeking to learn more about the people and language of the Holy Land. In 1945 he returned, to pastor the Narkis Street Baptist Church in Jerusalem, a position he held until 1952. After completing his doctorate, he went back to Israel, and remained there, active in pastoral and scholarly work, until 1986, becoming one of Israel's most prominent Christian figures, and a noted Biblical scholar. Together with David Flusser of Hebrew University, Lindsey founded the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, which both explored the Jewish underpinnings of the gospels and propagated Lindsey's views regarding the formation and relationship of Matthew, Mark and John. "During Lindsey's tenure the Southern Baptists became the largest evangelical church in Israel; with a dozen congregations, seven of which were in Arab communities ... Lindsey wrote and published extensively, using in his Hebrew writings an Israeli literary name ... He developed a theory that large parts of the New Testament were written in Hebrew, and later translated into Greek. The primary manuscript, he claimed, was devoid of anti-Semitism." YAAKOV ARIEL, "A Christian Fundamentalist Vision of the Middle East," in R. SCOTT APPLEBY, *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 370-372, especially on Lindsey's role in the "Almond Tree Branch" group. Lindsey died in 1995. See also: YAAKOV ARIEL, "The Ambiguous Missionary: Robert Lindsey in Israel, 1948-1970," in MOSHE DAVIS, ELI LEDERHENDLER, AND JONATHAN D. SARNA, eds., *America and Zion: Essays and Papers in Memory of Moshe Davis* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 185-99; DAVID BIVIN, "Perspective on Robert Lindsey," online at: http://www.jerusalemperspective.com/Default.aspx?tabid=27&ArticleID=1843
See also the analysis of Lindsey's missionary activities in ARIEL, *Evangelizing*, 150-55.

[354] See LAPIDE, 158-66.

preceded by six years of research and translation, and its 1969 second edition (a diglot Hebrew-Greek volume) was a further refinement, reflecting feedback and corrections from Biblical scholars and linguists. Lindsey was more nuanced in his use of Hebrew, employing Biblical Hebrew for most of Jesus' teachings, Mishnaic (and occasionally Qumran) Hebrew for dialogues and debates between Jesus and Jewish leaders, and modern Hebrew for Mark's own narrative portions. Where he was convinced that the Greek represented merely a slight modification of an existing Hebrew idiom, Lindsey attempted to restore the underlying Hebrew. Lapide's evaluation is particularly favourable:

> ... it should be remarked that Lindsey's version is by far the best and most modern in Modern Hebrew today, and that his intentional mixture of styles only rarely disturbs the harmony between the content and its expression. Vocabulary, syntax, and simplicity almost consistently produce the combination of easy comprehension and dignity which he defined as his goal. Biblical students and New Testament scholars in Israel are eagerly looking forward to the Gospel of Luke he has promised, which will not only profit from his experience in translating Mark, but also presumably provide in greater detail the defense for his theory of the priority of Luke.[355]

In 1970, a version of the Gospel of Matthew was issued in Jerusalem, initially translated by convert Joshua Blum (who had earlier attempted John's Gospel), and revised by the French Catholic priest and scholar Yoḥanan Eliḥai [Jean Leroy].[356] Blum and Eliḥai placed their emphasis on readability and clarity, choosing modern equivalents to more traditional Biblical wordings, and breaking down lengthy or complex sentences into shorter ones.[357] Their version was put forward strictly on an

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[355] LAPIDE, 166. Both the German and English versions of Lapide's book were published a decade before Lindsey's death in 1995; Lindsey's intended translations of the other Synoptic Gospels were never published.

[356] *Beśorat Yeshu'a ha-Mashiaḥ lepi Matityahu* (Jerusalem, 1970). For more on the foundational role of Leroy / Eliḥai in the life of the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in Israel, see the Chronology page of the Hebrew-speaking Catholic vicariate in Israel:
http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=12

[357] See LAPIDE, 166-173.

experimental basis, with the intention that a corrected and improved Hebrew version of Matthew would be published at a later date, for use at least in Catholic circles.

The most recent attempt to render the New Testament into (modern) Hebrew is that undertaken under the auspices of the United Bible Societies (UBS). Beginning with a gathering of Protestant representatives in Israel in 1969, the decision was made to embark on a new translation of the entire New Testament. The principles of the translation were honed in the early 1970s, by means of translations of several Pauline letters. In 1976, this new version was published by the UBS, having been prepared by an interdenominational team of translators including Robert Lindsey (Baptist), Magne Solheim (Lutheran), and Gabriel Grossman, OP (Roman Catholic).[358] A further revision was issued in 1991 by the Bible Society in Israel (the local affiliate of the worldwide UBS), for which the BSI was awarded a prestigious literary prize by the Israeli government in 1993.[359] This has now become the standard edition in modern Hebrew, and has been adopted by Hebrew-speaking Catholics for use in their liturgical lectionary.[360]

At the conclusion of the twentieth century, there were thus several mainstream editions of the whole New Testament available in Hebrew (Delitzsch-Dalman, Salkinson-Ginsburg, UBS-BSI), and translations of a number of New Testament books, prepared by individuals. These translations served a dual purpose: as tools for ongoing evangelism among the Jews, and as resources for a significant number of Hebrew-speaking Christians, for both liturgical and devotional use.

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[358] LAPIDE, 226, note 174. Elihai and Blum were both consultants on the translating team (FATHER DAVID NEUHAUS, SJ, one of the chaplains to the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in Israel; personal e-mail; March 10, 2008).

[359] http://www.biblesocietyinisrael.com/who.htm

[360] NEUHAUS, e-mail, March 10, 2008. He notes that many Protestant and Messianic Jewish groups in Israel still prefer the Delitzsch version, which retains a more Biblical-rabbinic flavour.

2. Exploring A New Paradigm of Translation

For much of the post-Renaissance period, it has often seemed that the ideal for many vernacular translators has been to produce a rendering that flows smoothly, and expresses itself beautifully, in the receiving language. Many European translations deliberately aim at expressing the Biblical message in a form that is suitably refined by the standards of their own great literature, that commands respect and lifts the mind, that is truly worthy of such a "classic". Some versions, such as the Jerusalem Bible, are actually the fruit of translators, literary scholars and poets working in concert, deliberately seeking out an idiom that captures the flavour, and draws upon the particular genius, of the tongue in which the translation will be heard.[361] This is, of course, a wholly legitimate option on the continuum of possible strategies, leaning more toward the dynamic-equivalence model, and away from a more form-focussed or word-for-word translation. It privileges the structure and meaning of the *destination* language over that of the *source* language.[362] The result is often a version that, while stately, is quite "comfortable" for the reader or listener, which makes ancient Babylon or first-century Galilee seem surprisingly close to home, and the biblical message

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[361] "A fluent translation is written in English that is current ('modern') instead of archaic, that is widely used instead of specialized ('jargonization'), and that is standard, instead of colloquial ('slangy'). Foreign words ('pidgin') are avoided ... Fluency also depends on syntax that is not so 'faithful' to the foreign text as to be 'not quite idiomatic' ... A fluent translation is immediately recognizable and intelligible, 'familiarised,' domesticated, not 'disconcerting[ly] foreign." Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), 4-5. Venuti addresses how the ideal for many modern European translators and publishers has been to create an "illusion of transparency," the impression that one is reading, not a translation, but the original text itself.

[362] Drawing upon ideas expounded by Friedrich Schleiermacher in an influential 1813 lecture on translation, Venuti defines the options thus: "... to choose between a *domesticating* method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a *foreignizing* method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those value to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (20; my italics). Venuti declares his own preference for a more "foreignizing" tendency since, he says, it "seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation ... [and] can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism." (*Ibid.*). Venuti distances himself (p. 21) from the predominant translational philosophy (Eugene Nida's "functional/dynamic equivalence"), which is rooted in the presumption that human nature, experience and cultures are fundamentally analogous between widely differing ethnic groups, and over long periods of time.

accessible and even familiar.[363] Perhaps the single greatest exception to this tendency has been the King James (Authorized) Version of 1611 which, while embracing the nobility of Elizabethan English, nevertheless clings very closely to the original Greek and Hebrew. The results might strike us as more peculiar in English, had not English itself, over the course of 400 years, incorporated many of those fixed expressions so that today we simply think of them as "Bible English"—quaint, formal but entirely comprehensible. Through the powerful influence of the Authorized Version, English has, in fact, adopted many Hebrew and Greek idiomatic expressions from the Bible into its own vernacular, so that today they are largely seen as part of the pool of literary English.

In the twentieth century, however—and especially in its final decades—there appeared to be a certain uneasiness as regards this situation. Translators of both Testaments, Jews, Christians and others, began to step away from the polished, dynamic-equivalence tradition, and to explore once again what the contours of a more rugged, more literal translation might look like, one that captured more of the flavour of the original biblical languages. Such translations would, of course, be much less "comfortable" and user-friendly; they would require their readers and listeners to struggle at times with words and concepts that were unfamiliar. They would need to "find their way" in a strange new land where anachronisms would be minimized, in which the cultural and linguistic alterity of the text was highlighted. Aesthetics might need to yield to a new historical and social sensitivity—or perhaps a *new* aesthetic was waiting to be born.

2.1. The Buber-Rosenzweig Version

Many scholars today point to the groundbreaking 1936 German translation of the Hebrew Bible by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig (*Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*) as a first dramatic shift away from the more traditional "literary" model

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[363] A "domesticated" version, to use Venuti's categories.

of Bible translating, opening up a new and different path. Working together in the late 1920s, Buber and Rosenzweig sensed a need for a translation that would be markedly different from Martin Luther's sixteenth-century German version, which had acquired both a theological and linguistic canonicity in German culture. Their vision was twofold:

1) to emphasize once more the fundamentally *oral* quality of the Biblical text, through their use of syntax and punctuation, and by breaking the text into literary sense-lines, roughly equivalent to phrases that could be spoken in a single breath; and,

2) to eschew the more usual emphasis of Biblical translators on vernacular readability, in favour of an approach which highlighted the "otherness" of the text, which attempted to reproduce, as far as possible, the structure and flavour of the Hebrew, for readers unacquainted with the Jewish Scriptures in their original language.[364]

> One of the most important presuppositions for restoring the spoken and heard quality of the Bible was the rediscovery of the original power of metaphor through finding, and in some cases even creating, comparable German words. It was this aspect of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible that made it seem strange and contrived to many, especially on a first reading, but it was precisely this which gave it is great power. For it deliberately set out to shock the reader out of the familiar and hackneyed, into the original address and response of the spoken word, and it succeeded in doing this as no Bible translation before or since has done. So far from meaning that Buber and Rosenzweig took liberties with the original Hebrew text, it meant a greater faithfulness—the faithfulness that dares to stand in direct dialogue with the original, rather than allowing the influence of Luther's or any other translation to guide their hand ... It is this faithfulness which resulted in the deliberate strangeness of the language, which by its alien, unusual sounds served, as Rosenzweig said, to trouble the complacency of those who imagine they already possess "the Book." ... From the Septuagint on, all translators had endeavored to transport the Hebrew Bible into their *own* spiritual world. Even Jewish translators and exegetes could not escape these tendencies to modify the Bible to fit Western theological and cultural ways of thinking and speaking. The fundamental direction of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible was the opposite.[365]

This edition of the *Tanakh* would, where necessary, "bend" German syntax and vocabulary to adhere more closely to Hebrew idioms; it would certainly not be easy for

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[364] MAURICE FRIEDMAN, *Martin Buber's Life and Work* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 61.

[365] *Ibid.*, 62-63.

the biblically literate to initially encounter. It would require a certain surrender, a willingness to be stretched in unaccustomed ways, to step out of one's own time and place, and to rediscover the Hebrew Scriptures in a fresh—and hopefully engaging—new form, in which the Bible's *own* voice could shine through more clearly, in syllables that had been moulded to fit a more ancient mentality. "By doing away with 'smoothed-over conceptual language,' by creating a process of defamiliarization, the Buber-Rosenzweig translation sought to produce shocked attention in its readers":[366]

> Like Aquila, their first allegiance was to the Hebrew and Aramaic original. With that goal in mind, they stretched contemporary German—sometimes, it has been argued, taking it beyond the breaking point—to reflect the sounds and structures of that original.[367] Native German-speakers, even those thoroughly immersed in Yiddish language and culture, would have repeatedly stopped to puzzled over what the 'German' text meant, or implied, or suggested. But, as Buber and Rosenzweig forcefully and repeatedly argued, this was exactly their point: the Hebrew Bible is a product of a society chronologically, geographically, and intellectually far removed from ours ... Moreover, the meaning of that ancient text is not always clear; it often exhibits an opaqueness that most modern translations obscure in their commitment to clarity. In sum, Scripture can authentically speak to us today only when its distinctive cadences and characteristics are admitted, articulated and even celebrated.[368]

The first volume of Buber and Rosenzweig's shared effort appeared in 1925, and their collaboration ended in 1929 with the latter's death. It was not until 1936 that the Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Torah was first published, in a Germany that was already becoming permeated with Nazi ideology. Perhaps not unexpectedly, the majority of critics savaged the new translation, which embraced a more consciously *Jewish* form of the text, and which seemed to call into question the authoritative nature of Luther's Bible, an icon of Lutheran religion and of German national pride. Buber

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[366] Leora Batnizky, "Translation as Transcendence: A Glimpse Into the Workshop of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible Translation," in *New German Critique* 70 (Winter 1997), 92.

[367] I think Leora Batnizky captures this dynamic beautifully: "to make the German alien by means of the Hebrew" (*Ibid.*, 87)

[368] Lynne Long, *Translation and Religion: Holy Untranslatable?* Topics in Translation 28 (Clevedon, England : Multilingual Matters, 2005), 56-57.

and Rosenzweig's approach was roundly condemned, and the resulting translation was considered a strange German-Hebrew hybrid that many found awkward or distasteful. Some insisted that its language was excessively "archaized" or "Orientalized," and that these qualities made of it a version destined only for a small élite of intellectuals, rather than for the common people whose *Volksprache* had been the inspiration and guiding criterion of Luther's efforts. Others saw it as minimalistic or overly analytical, its abruptness having lost any sense of the poetry or music of German, and so rigidly focussed on form that it lost much of its emotional impact.[369]

The rise of the Nazis, and the prospect of imminent war, interrupted Buber's work, and in 1938 he emigrated to British Palestine. But the project had kindled an inextinguishable fire in his mind and heart, and he would return to it several times over the subsequent decades, publishing the final volumes of his translation in 1961, only four years before his own death in Jerusalem. By then, the world was a very different place, and the radically changed political, social and literary landscape—coupled with Buber's substantial reputation as a religious philosopher—yielded a more nuanced and receptive appreciation of his work. His translation took on particular significance in light of Buber's explicitation of the essentially *dialogical* nature of human beings. This relationship of differentiation and respect, which Buber famously expressed in terms of the "I—Thou" dyad, is also at the heart of the religious person's interaction with the transcendent Other. Might it not also have ramifications in terms of engagement with an ancient sacred text like the Bible, which can only be properly understood and valued once its specific "otherness" has been

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[369] For an overview of reactions to the Buber-Rosenzweig translation, see: LAWRENCE ROSENWALD, "On the Reception of Buber and Rosenzweig's Bible," *Prooftexts* 14 (1994), 141-65. See also: EVERETT FOX, "We Mean the Voice: Toward a New Translation of the Bible," *Response: A Contemporary Jewish Review* 12 (Winter 1971-72), 32-38; AVIGAIL E. GILLMAN, "Between Religion and Culture: Mendelssohn, Buber, Rosenzweig and the Enterprise of Biblical Translation," in FREDERICK W. KNOBLOCH, ed., *Biblical Translations in Context* (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2002), 93-144; SHAVIT AND ERAN, *Hebrew Bible Reborn*, esp. 355-370, "After Delitzsch: The Bible and Jewish Bible Study in Germany between the Two World Wars".

acknowledged—that is, when it is understood (in some sense) as a "Thou" to be encountered? In a manner anticipating some strands of modern intertextual hermeneutics, could Buber's translational philosophy suggest that the text is a type of "interlocutor" to be engaged, but that this first presupposes a certain "distancing" from the text—an awareness of the cultural and historical gulf which separates us from the Biblical period? As Robert Gibbs said in his discussion of Buber, "The commitment to displaying the difference of the earlier text to its new context reflects the way that dialogue is not about shared experiences, but about the risky bridges that do not reduce difference".[370] Perhaps Buber and Rosenzweig's work demonstrates how certain styles of translation can themselves serve as icons and paradigms of interreligious and inter-cultural dialogue, can "incarnate" the principles that Buber and his disciples had laid down.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, a number of new Biblical translations appeared, which seemed, implicitly or explicitly, to draw their inspiration from Buber and Rosenzweig's style of translation. Perhaps the single best known of these is Everett Fox's volume *The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation, with Introductions, Notes and Commentary.*[371] Fox's translation—the premier volume in the Schocken Bible series—places great emphasis on literary and linguistic fidelity to its Hebrew source, highlighting word-plays in the text, and translating with a directness and ruggedness that has enabled many English readers to discover a new "Hebrew voice" in the Torah in a way previously impossible. Fox is forthright about the debt he owes to Buber-Rosenzweig, and the relation between their earlier translation and his own:

> [The Five Books of Moses] is in many respects an offshoot of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation. I began with their principles: that translations of

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[370] Robert Gibbs, "The Jewish Tradition" in Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, eds. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion.* Blackwell Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 184.

[371] New York: Schocken, 1995.

> individual words should reflect "primal" root meanings, that translations of phrases, lines, and whole verses should mimic the syntax of the Hebrew, and that the vast web of allusions and wordplays present in the text should be somehow perceivable in the target language.[372]
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> [This work] was conceived as an act of homage to the Buber-Rosenzweig translation; at the beginning, I desired solely (and rashly) to bring their accomplishment over into English ... The Five Books of Moses is still very much in the Buber-Rosenzweig tradition. It retains the general approach of its predecessor, exclusive of those principles that are dependent on the form and character of the German language. It is ... the child of Buber-Rosenzweig, with all the links and independent features that a parent-child relationship implies. It may also be seen as an attempt to bring the work of Buber-Rosenzweig into a new era of Bible scholarship, and as an artistic endeavor in its own right.[373]

In the almost fifteen years since its original publication, Fox's translation has gained wide scholarly acclaim for its innovative approach, and has provided a paradigm from which other translators have drawn inspiration.[374]

Robert Alter's twofold background, as a literary scholar and as a professor of Hebrew, has enabled him to produce several recent editions of Biblical books which

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[372] *Five Books*, x.

[373] *Ibid.*, xxii

[374] See the review/interview by KENNETH WOODWARD, "In the Beginning ... the Bible was written in ancient Hebrew, with nary a Thou to be had. Now comes a new vital translation that tries to capture the original flavor," in *Newsweek* (Jan. 15, 1996); archived at www.highbeam.com. Woodward quotes Rabbi Burton Visotsky of Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, as saying: "If God had spoken in English at Sinai, this is how it would have sounded." See also HARVEY BLUME, " 'At the Beginning...': Is Fox Bible Lost (or Found) in Translation?" in *The Forward* (Dec. 22, 1996); archived at www.highbeam.com. The praise, however, was not unanimous. JAMES KUGEL, who, like Fox, has long grappled with the linguistic and literary imperatives of translating the Hebrew Bible, saw Fox's approach as fundamentally misrepresenting the nature and style of Hebrew: "It may be fun for readers who don't know Hebrew to imagine that they are somehow getting closer to the original through such contortions, but actually the opposite is true. This style of translating only succeeds in making the language sound bizarre." *The Great Poems of the Bible: A Reader's Companion with New Translations* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 16. In a 2005 review of ROBERT ALTER'S *Five Books of Moses*, MARTIN SIEFF wrote: "Before Mr. Alter, only Everett Fox among major modern translators of the Bible grasped the cardinal importance of tight fidelity to the original text and the need to seek a 'literally literal' translation to recapture its primary meaning in another language. But Mr. Fox's translation, while true to the minute detail of the Torah, lost its over-all spirit by being conveyed in a truly weird English that makes James Joyce's 'Ulysses' and even 'Finnegan's Wake' seem as accessible as a supermarket tabloid by comparison." "A Powerful Pentateuch: Capturing the Authority and Force of the Bible's First Five Books," in *Washington Times* (Feb. 13, 2005), B08; archived online at highbeam.com.

have been enthusiastically embraced by many students and readers of the Bible.[375] Alter has a deep-seated concern that "there is ... something seriously wrong with all the familiar English translations, traditional and recent, of the Hebrew Bible":[376]

> The unacknowledged heresy underlying most modern English versions of the Bible is the use of translation as a vehicle for *explaining* the Bible instead of representing it in another language, and in the most egregious instances, this amounts to explaining away the Bible ... Biblical Hebrew, in sum, has a distinctive music, a lovely precision of lexical choice, a meaningful concreteness, and a suppleness of expressive syntax, that by and large have been given short shrift by translators with their eyes on other goals. The present translation, whatever its imperfections, seeks to do fuller justice to all these aspects of biblical style in the hope of making the rich literary experience of the Hebrew more accessible to readers of English.[377]

Like Fox, Alter's method is disarmingly simple: he seeks to keep as close to the actual Hebrew as possible, without resorting to the modern penchant for "smoothness," or the temptation to employ synonyms to avoid repetition of the same term in close proximity (a strategy which, he stresses, actually *subverts* the characteristic style of Hebrew thought and writing). Alter acknowledges (p. xii) his affinity both to the work of Fox and, indirectly through him, to Buber and Rosenzweig. While his purpose is similar, it is not strictly identical. The very strangeness of these earlier texts, he argues, makes them better suited to scholarly study than to fluid reading by laypersons, whereas he is more interested in finding a proper register of modern English in which to couch the Hebrew's nuances. Alter's texts have been received enthusiastically by scholars and the reading public alike, held up as examples of a new style of translation that is reflective of more recent literary approaches to the Bible.[378]

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[375] *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999); *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004); *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

[376] ALTER, *Genesis*, ix.

[377] *Ibid.*, xii, xxxix.

[378] "Alter ... is not the only recent translator of the Hebrew Bible attuned to its uncanny power. Another recent English translation of the Five Books of Moses, published in 1995 by the Jewish

Fox and Alter are not alone in their efforts, however. A number of other twentieth-century authors (including Edmond Fleg,[379] Henri Meschonnic,[380] Mary Phil Korsak,[381] and Stephen Mitchell[382]) have attempted, each in their own way, to bring out more explicitly for their readers the "Hebraic" quality of the Hebrew Scriptures. It seems likely that we are witnessing merely the beginning of a new and very different approach to biblical translation, the latestchapter in a history that goes back at least as far as the Septuagint.

3. "Hebraized" New Testaments

Although the endeavour to hew as closely as possible to the original Biblical languages has predominantly involved translators of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, a number of New Testament translators have also striven to incorporate elements of this approach in terms of their work with the Christian Scriptures.

Such an approach has great theological appeal, but also raises very daunting methodological hurdles. On one level, historical Jesus research, enhanced by a half-century of advances in Semitic language study, mean that scholars are today in a better

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studies scholar Everett Fox, also preserves its key words and archaic texture ... [Fox's 'Five Books'] are in some ways truer to the Hebrew—to the full measure of its foreignness—than Alter's. But Alter's translation is better ... [H]is biblical prose is fresher and more immediate ... Alter's largely Anglo-Saxon English—neither overly colloquial nor ornate, musical yet direct—sounds as if it could be spoken today." Judith Shulevitz, "'The Five Books of Moses': From God's Mouth to English," in *The New York Times* (Oct. 17, 2004); archived at www.highbeam.com; "[Alter's] translation is a marvel of clarity that recaptures the easily accessible, straightforward, usually terse brevity of the Hebrew original as no other does. Even the most familiar tales in world religion and culture regain a stunning originality and immediacy in Mr. Alter's hands." Sieff, *Ibid.*

[379] *Le livre du commencement: Genèse* (Paris: Chant Nouveau, 1946 ; Paris: Minuit, 1959); *Le livre de la sortie d'Égypte* (Paris: Minuit, 1963).

[380] *Les cinq rouleaux: Le Chant des Chants, Ruth, Comme ou les Lamentations, Parole du Sage, Esther* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970); *Gloires: Traduction des Psaumes* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001); *Au commencement: Traduction de la Genèse* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2002); *Les noms: Traduction de l'Exode* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2002); *Et il a appelé: Traduction du Lévitique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2005).

[381] *At the Start: Genesis Made New* (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

[382] *The Book of Job* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987); *Genesis: A New Translation of the Classic Biblical Stories* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).

position than ever to hypothesize as to the original wording of some of Jesus' central teachings,[383] and this has an obvious attraction for many Christians, who seek to get as close as possible to the original words—and meaning—of Jesus' message.[384] The fact that these words have been preserved only in Greek translation, however, makes any such project speculative at best, and there is a wide range of opinions among scholars as to the feasibility (or desirability) of such an attempt.[385] The *caveat* of Father Michel Remaud, a specialist in Jewish-Christian studies, must be constantly kept in mind:

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[383] See, e.g., several of the books of James Charlesworth (*Jesus Within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archæological Discoveries* [New York: Doubleday, 1988]; *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* [New York: Doubleday, 1992]; *Jesus and Archæology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006]), of Geza Vermes, of James VanderKam (with Peter W Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002]) and Joseph Fitzmyer (*The Semitic Background of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997]).

[384] This desire is based, at least in part, on the Romantic ideal (dear to many European Protestants of the 18th and 19th centuries) of a "pure" primitive form of Christianity, prior to the Church-as-institution, and thus unmarred by later "Catholic" deviations and accretions which had "corrupted" Jesus' original intentions. The earlier the stratum one can arrive at, therefore, the greater the hope of contact with "pristine Christianity". "The Reformation of the sixteenth century inaugurated an entirely different way of looking at the Church, and therefore a new way to regard Church history ... [T]he churches were now compared, and judged, against the primitive community founded by the first disciples, as described in Scripture ... The 'essential' Christian Church, according to Protestant history, was the apostles' community, characterized by the simplest possible worship and pure doctrine. To some degree, this image was a mirage: the reformers projected their own ideals back on to the primitive Church. It meant, however, that Protestants thereafter wrote the history of the Church between the earliest times and the Reformation as the story of the loss of primitive simplicity. There was variation in precisely when the fall was dated (between the fourth and eleventh centuries) but the principle was the same." Euan Cameron, *Interpreting Christian History: The Challenge of the Churches' Past* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 160-61. Addressing the continuing attractiveness of the Dead Sea Scrolls for religious people, Geza Vermes writes: "I would say, the outstanding characteristic of our age appears to be a desire to reach back to the greatest attainable purity, to the basic truth free of jargon. Affecting the whole of our outlook, it has necessarily included the domain of religious thought and behaviour, and with it, in the Western world, the whole subject of Judaeo-Christian culture and spirituality. A search is being made for the original meaning of issues with which we have become almost too familiar and which with the passing of the centuries have tended to become choked with inessentials, and it has led not only to a renewed preoccupation with the primitive but fully developed expression of these issues in the Scriptures, but also to a desire for knowledge and understanding of their prehistory." *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), xxxiv.

[385] Some scholars argue that Jesus' actual words (*ipsissima verba Jesu*) are today irretrievably lost behind a veil of translation and redactional activity by the evangelists (e.g. Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction:* "[T]hey [the Evangelists] felt free to paraphrase, modify certain terms, and add comments, in order to help their readers understand the 'significance' of what

> ... [Ça] doit toujours être fait avec prudence, puisque les rapprochements proposés sont affectés d'un coefficient allant de « certain » à « possible » ou « intéressant », en passant par tout l'éventail des nuances du probable. Le risque est toujours qu'une lecture hâtive ne fasse considérer comme une certitude ce qui n'est présenté que comme une hypothèse.[386]

In the last twenty-five years, a number of English versions of the New Testament have been published, which set out to correct the widespread lack of consciousness among Christians of the Jewish rootedness and nature of the Christian Scriptures, by translating in a way which makes the Jewishness of Jesus and his context more deliberately visible. They do this in a variety of ways, which include:

1. reverting to Semitic forms of proper names, when judged appropriate;
2. incorporating Jewish religious and cultural terminology, when it seems plausibly to be underlying particular Greek terms or concepts;
3. softening some of the more harsh, generalized polemics against "the Jews," by use of alternative translations or circumlocutions;[387]

Jesus taught. The Evangelists had no obsession with the *ipsissima verba*, for they believed that they had authority to interpret these words for their audience." [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987], 156). Others are more amenable to the possibility of plausibly re-creating at least *some* of Jesus' actual words. Joachim Jeremias was certainly one of the great twentieth-century advocates of such efforts, which are today continued by scholars for linguistic and interpretive purposes, or as a consequence of their belief in the unqualified inerrancy of the Bible (on this latter, see as an example: Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998], 367-72 ["Loss of Jesus' Words"]). Others take more of a mediating position: "Pedantic precision and verbatim quotation do not seem to be [the evangelists'] goals. Yet those same changes warn us against facile accusations that the writers are introducing errors of fact or substance. Just as a modern writer might condense a lengthy discussion and tell of it in his own idiom and in a fraction of the total number of words actually spoken, without being charged with lies, inventiveness, distortion, or deceit, so the Gospel writers must be allowed the same freedom. This is the nature of reportage, even reportage designed to make theological and historical points." D.A. Carson, "Redaction Criticism: On the Legitimacy and Illegitimacy of a Literary Tool," in D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 136.

386 Michel Remaud, "Racines juives: La tente qui n'est pas faite de main d'homme," in *Un écho d'Israël* [Online Jewish-Christian journal], No. 31 (Sept.-Oct. 2006). Online at : http://www.un-echo-israel.net/article.php3?id_article=3244. Although Remaud's caution specifically concerns the use of Jewish sources to "illuminate" Christianity, it is also salutary advice in efforts to "reconstruct" the *vox Jesu*.

387 Such as "the Judeans," "the Jewish leaders," etc. See Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews': A Critical Survey," *NTS* 28:1 (1982), 33-60; Von Wahlde, "The Gospel of John and the Presentation of Jews and Judaism," in Mary C. Boys, David P. Efroymson, Eugene J. Fisher, and Leon Klenicki, eds., *Within Context: Essays on Jews and Judaism in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 67-84; Adele Reinhartz, " 'Jews' and Jews in the Fourth Gospel," in R. Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, eds., *Anti-Judaism and the*

4. incorporating introductory comments or readers' notes which explain Jewish customs, emphasize Jesus' identity as a devout Jew, and/or highlight Jewish concepts or holy days with which Christian readers may be unfamiliar;
5. some draw upon manuscripts which may have some claim to a historical or linguistic connection with early Jewish Christianity, drawing upon Aramaic or Syriac versions and, in the case of James Trimm, drawing upon the so-called "Hebrew Matthew" manuscripts for guidance.

A number of these "Hebraized New Testaments" are the outgrowth of controversial, and often problematic, hybrid movements, such as "Jews for Jesus" or "Messianic Judaism".[388] Others flow from the marked philo-Semitism which has come to characterize large sections of evangelical Christianity in the last quarter-century. These groups, for religious (and occasionally political) reasons, emphasize a fundamental continuity between Judaism and Christianity, and stand in unflinching solidarity with modern Israel and its citizens, on the basis of the promises made to the Biblical patriarchs.[389] While these groups may share a basic desire to strengthen the bonds between Jews and Christians, some of them have been criticized for their active proselytizing of Jews (in Israel and elsewhere), while others have aligned themselves with apocalyptic, dispensationalist schools of thought, in which Jews are either necessary bit-players in a larger cosmic drama, or are doomed to be destroyed at Christ's Second Coming unless they convert wholesale to Christianity.[390] The predominance of these types of thinking in mainstream evangelicalism, and some of the political options to which they give rise,[391] have caused profound reservations, on

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Fourth Gospel (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 213-228, esp. 217-220, "The Johannine Usage of the Term *Ἰουδαῖος*"; David G. Burke, "Translating *hoi Ioudaioi* in the New Testament," *Explorations* [American Interfaith Institute] 9, 1-7.

[388] On the latter group, see particularly Dan Cohn-Sherbok's two recent books on this topic: *Messianic Judaism* (New York: Continuum, 2000) and *Voices of Messianic Judaism: Confronting Critical Issues Facing a Modern Movement* (Baltimore, MD: Lederer Books, 2001).

[389] In its political form, this philo-Semitism is often referred to as "Christian Zionism".

[390] See in particular: Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York: Free Press, 2000) and Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

[391] Most notably, the work of the Reverend John Hagee, pastor of the Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, TX, and the founder of "Christians United for Israel" (CUFI), a large and influential evangelical lobby group in the United States (www.cufi.org).

the part of Jews and other Christians. The literalness with which many Judeophile Christians read the Bible, as well as the espousal of right-wing geo-political positions by their most prominent leaders, has cast a shadow over such translations, and has made them anathema to some Christians, and to many Jews, who see in them merely the most recent expression of an age-old movement aimed at encouraging apostasy and abandonment of traditional Jewish life. The fact that several of these translations have been completed by Jewish converts to Christianity further taints their value in the eyes of some observers.

Among these "Hebraized New Testaments" can be counted:

1) David H. Stern's *Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament That Expresses Its Jewishness* (Jerusalem/Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1989 and subsequently, including as part of the *Complete Jewish Bible*) and its companion volume *The Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992 and subsequently);

2) Phillip E. Goble's *Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha* (AFI International Publishers, 1997; see: http://www.afii.org/);[392]

3) James Scott Trimm's *Hebraic Roots Version New Testament* (Hurst, TX: Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, 2001);[393]

In addition, we could include in this category much of the exegetical work of the "Jerusalem School for Synoptic Research," founded by the Baptist pastor and exegete Robert Lindsey and continued by his colleagues David Bivin, Roy Blizzard, Brad

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[392] Goble's version is a strange amalgam of Hebrew and English, and is certainly not for readers without at least some familiarity with Judaism, and with key Biblical concepts in Hebrew, which it often transliterates rather than translating; e.g. John 1:1-2 "|1|Bereshis (in the Beginning) was the Dvar Hashem [YESHAYAH 55:11; BERESHIS 1:1], and the Dvar Hashem was agav (along with) Hashem [MISHLE 8:30; 30:4], and the Dvar Hashem was nothing less, by nature, than Elohim! [Psa 56:11(10); Yn 17:5; Rev. 19:13] |2| Bereshis (in the Beginning) this Dvar Hashem was with Hashem [Prov 8:30]." (From the electronic text available at: www.afii.org)
James Tabor has also recently undertaken a similar style of translation, with his "Original Bible Project": http://originalbible.com/2005/04 . As of the time of writing, only very limited portions of his "Transparent English Bible" were available for consultation.

[393] I wish to clearly state that my inclusion of these publications and authors in no way constitutes my endorsement of them or their contents. James Trimm's "ministry," in particular, has been beset by serious ethical and legal questions, as well as charges of financial irregularities. I list them simply to indicate a current of thought among some scholars, and some putatively Christian groups.

Young and others. At various points, a number of prominent Jewish scholars have been active members of the Jerusalem School, including the late David Flusser and Shmuel Safrai.

One of the only "Hebraized" New Testaments to be produced in English by someone who was *not* affiliated with a Judeophile evangelical movement is the work of literary critic and translator Willis Barnstone, *The New Covenant, Commonly Called the New Testament* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2002). Barnstone's first volume contains the four gospels and the book of Revelation, "newly translated from the Greek, and informed by Semitic sources" (from the front cover); he intends his translation as "a chastely modern, literary version of a major world text".[394] In addition to his specifically literary aims, Barnstone wishes to restore the "Hebraicity" of these books, masked for too long by the overlay of Greek language, and by centuries of Christian interpretations which distanced Christianity from its originally Jewish matrix. On pages 23 to 27, Barnstone outlines the nine guiding principles of his work, which include the specifying of Biblical citations (instead of simply "As it is written..."), the use of gender-inclusive language wherever possible, retention of original metaphors and images, and a refusal to be bound by "traditional practices of pious speech that have become frozen by custom".[395] Unlike versions which are clearly meant for purposes of evangelism, Barnstone's aim is almost the diametric opposite: "[This version] ... does not proselytize by inflation, sectarian piety in the lexicon, or use any strategy to promote or demote one religious position or denomination over another, or to affirm or deny religious faith and rightness".[396]

Although criticisms can certainly be made of each of these translations, at the very least they testify to a growing interest among Christians in rediscovering the primordial relationship of Judaism and Christianity, and of Jesus to Judaism.

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[394] BARNSTONE, 9.
[395] *Ibid.*, 26.
[396] *Ibid.*

Representing a cross-section of beliefs, they seek to lead Christians to a new and more respectful interaction with Jews and Judaism today, and to a more informed and less stereotyped engagement with Judaism as it existed in the first century, and as it formed the vital framework within which the genesis of Christianity must be understood.

Conclusion

This historical overview is meant to demonstrate much of the historical, intellectual and cultural background against which André Chouraqui's own translation must be situated and understood. While he has not produced a Hebrew version of the New Testament, nevertheless he draws upon that heritage for his own work, and does consciously blend Hebrew phrasings into his French. While he is not a Christian, he has an evident interest in firmly establishing the historical and theological links between Judaism and Christianity. In one sense, therefore, his translation is part of a much longer stream of scholarship, upon which it builds. And yet it stands out from the work of others *precisely in that he is a Jew,* who did not himself convert to Christianity, and whose translation was never intended to promote such conversions. His goal is something very different—he wishes for the New Testament to become a place where contemporary Jews and Christians can come together in mutual respect and dialogue, to understand each other, not in some reductionistic or lowest-common-denominator manner, but precisely *as faithful Jews* and *as faithful Christians.* His hope, therefore, is that the Christian Scriptures—which have so painfully, and often violently, separated these two faiths—can become a source of healing, transformation and hope, whereby Jews and Christians may re-learn what can unite them, and where, inevitably, they must be content to remain divided.

Chapter 4 • Linguistic and Structural Considerations

Introduction

André Chouraqui's biblical translation, and his New Testament translation in particular, is a complex linguistic and theological tapestry, composed of a variety of strands which, together, produce a striking and evocative effect in many of those who have read and studied his work. However, to fully appreciate both his purpose and his unique methodology, it is necessary to carefully disentangle and critically analyze the various characteristics of his translation—characteristics which can be broadly broken down into two main categories: (1) linguistic and structural aspects, and (2) cultural, historical or religious aspects. Within these two categories, however, the discerning reader quickly discovers that Chouraqui is engaging simultaneously in a range of tasks and ambitions, each of which must be separated out and discussed separately. For the sake of clarity, I will examine linguistic, stylistic and structural aspects of his translation first, although the nature of his translation means that language and structure are often closely linked with broader historical and cultural issues, and are not always easy to disentangle.

The task of translating any part of the Bible into a modern vernacular is always a challenging and complicated one. However, because of Chouraqui's stated goals for his translation,[397] and because of his own personal sensitivities and competencies, this undertaking acquires several new layers of complexity and interest. His particularly keen focus on the Greek text—as well as his educated hypotheses about putative Semitic under-sources or background in places—demands a careful examination of the

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[397] "Retrouver, sous le mot grec, l'hébreu ou l'araméen et l'exacte pensée qu'il exprimait, restituer l'idée ainsi dégagée dans son contexte sémantique, le fait décrit dans des réalités historiques trop souvent oubliées, telle est notre méthode de lecture et donc de traduction du Nouveau Testament. Elle permet un décapage du texte qui se présente alors à nos esprits, dans sa rigueur originelle, comme un pacte encore neuf." Chouraqui, "Le substrat sémitique du Nouveau Testament," *L'Univers de la Bible*, tome 8, 11, ¶2.

semantic and syntactical aspects of his translation. The way in which he deliberately overturns conventional biblical terminology in favour of alternatives raises issues, not only of the *ancient* meanings of Greek terms, but also of how they may be heard and interpreted in a contemporary French context. Are his choices *legitimate*—and are they *helpful?*

In this chapter and the next, my comments and conclusions are based upon the following basic methodology:

1) to undertake a close, careful reading of Chouraqui's text, noting the places where his translation diverges noticeably from that of five other well-known French translations (the *Bible de Jérusalem* [BdeJ],[398] the *Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible* [TOB],[399] the Abbaye de Maredsous translation [Mar],[400] the *Bible en français courant* [BFC][401], and the recent Bayard translation [Bay][402]);
2) to determine, by a comparison with the standard Greek critical editions, whether Chouraqui is attempting to bring out some aspect of the Greek vocabulary or grammar, and to identify the subject at issue;
3) where Chouraqui seems to be attempting to highlight a putative Semitic understructure (usually in Hebrew), to compare his suggestion with the text of three major historical Hebrew New Testament translations (Hutter, Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg), to see whether their renderings would support his hypothesis;
4) in cases where Chouraqui's translation relies upon a socio-cultural, religious or historical presumption or point-of-fact, to determine to what degree mainstream commentators (past or present) would tend to agree with him.

On the basis of these analyses, I will then draw some preliminary conclusions about the merits and/or advisability of Chouraqui's translational choices, on a case-by-case basis. These conclusions will address the helpfulness of Chouraqui's ideas for other New Testament translators, and for those involved in contemporary Jewish-Christian education and dialogue.

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[398] Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1973; published electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0.

[399] Paris: Société Biblique Française/Éditions du Cerf, 1988; published electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0.

[400] Édition revue et corrigée de 1968 (Tournhout, Belgium: Brépols, 1992).

[401] Paris: Société Biblique Française, 1997; published electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0.

[402] *La Bible: Nouvelle traduction* (Paris: Éditions Bayard/Montréal: Médiaspaul, 2001; reprinted in 2005).

1. Syntax and Word Order

Within this first major category (of linguistic and structural aspects), Chouraqui clearly evinces a high degree of attentiveness to, and respect for, the underlying Greek syntax and word order, to a degree which is unusual in mainstream vernacular translations today. Although Chouraqui often strives, admittedly, for a glimpse of a presumed Semitic under-text, the fact is that, first and foremost, his translation attempts to adhere very closely to the *Greek*, to the point of reproducing in French aspects of *koinē* Greek which may sound somewhat awkward or abrupt to readers accustomed to literary and poetic French.

1.1. Placement of Subject Nouns

Whereas the subject tends to fall at the beginning of a French sentence, the Greek language (because of its use of declensions to distinguish grammatical roles) is much more flexible as regards word-order. Subjects frequently fall toward the end of a Greek sentence, a structure Chouraqui often seeks to reproduce, producing an effect of mild "suspension":

Matt 2:20	Grk	*τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου*
	Chour	ils sont morts, les persécuteurs de l'enfant
	BFC	ceux qui cherchaient à faire mourir l'enfant sont morts
	BdeJ	ils sont morts, ceux qui en voulaient à la vie de l'enfant
	TOB	ils sont morts, ceux qui en voulaient à la vie de l'enfant
	Mar	ceux qui en voulaient à la vie de l'enfant sont morts
	Bay	ils sont morts, ceux qui en voulaient à la vie de l'enfant
Matt 3:2	Grk	*ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*
	Chour	oui, il est proche, le royaume des ciels
	BFC	car le Royaume des cieux s'est approché
	BdeJ	car le Royaume des Cieux est tout proche
	TOB	le Règne des cieux s'est approché
	Mar	car le royaume des cieux est proche
	Bay	le règne des Cieux est proche

While this inversion of the expected word-order is not unknown in literary (and particularly poetic) French, it is, nonetheless, notable, especially because of the emphasis it often places on the subject.

A similar situation occurs in Matt 3:9, where Chouraqui adheres to the inverted Greek word-order in a way that other French versions do not:

Matt 3:9	Grk	πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ
	Chour	pour père, nous avons Abrahâm
	BFC	Abraham est notre ancêtre
	BdeJ	Nous avons pour père Abraham
	TOB	Nous avons pour père Abraham
	Mar	Nous avons Abraham pour père
	Bay	Abraham est notre père

It could be argued that the positioning of *pater* and *Abraam* at the beginning and end of this phrase is meant to be emphatic (and ironic) here. In this case, the BdeJ, TOB and Mar translations lose something of the intended impact. Chouraqui, on the other hand, highlights this by reproducing the Greek word-order, and the BFC and Bay highlight it by reversing that order, and yet retaining the two key terms at the beginning and ending of the phrase, in an order perhaps more natural for a declarative French sentence. Does the shift from a verb of *possession* ("we have") to a verb of *being* ("he is") lessen the rhetorical force? It does if the evangelist's intention here is to emphasize Abrahamic descent as something in which Jesus' opponents take particular personal pride, or see as their own exclusive prerogative (the point that Jesus seems to be debating here).

1.2. Adjectives or equivalents in Second Attributive Position

In French, attributive adjectives tend to immediately follow the noun or pronoun to which they refer,[403] e.g. "un ciel bleu," "une femme intelligente". It is

[403] "Adjectives normally follow the noun if they express a distinguishing feature of the person or thing referred to." Margaret Lang and Isabelle Perez, *Modern French Grammar: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 27; Lang and Perez provide (27-28) a helpful overview of categories to which this rule applies, as well as the main exceptions.

possible, however, to *emphasize* the quality of the adjective, by interjecting an article (definite or indefinite) between the noun or pronoun and the adjective. This usage, which often creates a relationship of apposition, tends to add an almost *demonstrative* flavour to the adjective: "mon oncle, le riche," "les livres, les miens". The adjective takes on an *emphatic, specific* nuance, highlighting the particularity of the noun or pronoun within a more generic group.

In Greek, this construction generally corresponds to what is called the *second attributive position:*

> The second attributive position is article-noun-article-adjective (e.g., *ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ ἀγαθός* = the good king). The difference in the placement of the adjective is not one of relation, but of position and emphasis. In the second attributive position, "both substantive and adjective receive emphasis and the adjective is added as a sort of climax in apposition with a separate article.' A literal, though awkward, gloss, bringing out the force of such a construction of *ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ ἀγαθός*, is 'the king, the good one."[404]

Although the adjective in second attributive position is certainly not foreign to classical Greek,[405] it is much less common than the *first* attributive position (article-adjective-noun, e.g. *ὁ ἀγαθός βασιλεὺς).* The use of the second attributive position may be an indication that the text is a translation, particularly from a Semitic language such as Hebrew or Aramaic, in which attributive adjectives follow the nouns they modify.[406] In the case of the New Testament, this often means reproducing the

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[404] DANIEL B. WALLACE, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 306.

[405] BASIL LANNEAU cites examples of this construction in the works of Isocrates, Andocides, Plato, Thucydides, Sophocles, Æschylus and Herodotus. He estimates (drawing upon the world of Dr. Alfred W. Milden) that, in classical Greek authors, the second position is employed roughly *half* as often as the first (*Syntax of Classical Greek from Homer to Demosthenes* [New York: American Book Company, 1900-1911]); electronic text online at the Perseus Project: www.perseus.tufts.edu

[406] "The frequency of adjectives in first attributive position ... serves as an index of Semitizing or translation Greek. While the normal position for the adjective in Hebrew as well as in both biblical and Middle Aramaic is following the substantive, Greek adjectives can appear in first or second attributive position, with the first being the more common. Translated books of the LXX tend to follow the Semitic order: Martin's study [RAYMOND MARTIN, *Syntactical Evidence of Semitic Sources in Greek Documents* (Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1974)] shows that the ratio of first- to second-position adjectives in translated books ranges from 0:1 to 0.33:1, whereas in books which were originally penned in Greek, the ratio always exceeds 1:1 (Martin, 30)." JOHN S. KLOPPENBORG, *The*

Semitizing style characteristic of the LXX. The construction can employ an adjective, or any of the several constructions which can function adjectivally, such as present or aorist participles, or prepositional clauses.

In the course of his translation of the Gospels, Chouraqui has made a concerted attempt—frequently but not exhaustively—to render the second attributive position in a more-or-less exact manner:

Matt 5:29	Grk	*εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε*
	Chour	Si ton oeil, le droit, te fait trébucher ...
	BFC	Si donc c'est à cause de ton oeil droit que tu tombes ...
	BdeJ	Que si ton oeil droit est pour toi ...
	TOB	Si ton oeil droit entraîne ta chute ...
	Mar	Si ton oeil est pour toi ...
	Bay	Si ton oeil droit te tend un piège ...
Matt 6:4, 6, 18	Grk	*ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ [κρυφαίῳ]*[407]
	Chour	ton Père, le voyant du secret ...
	BFC	ton Père, qui voit ce que tu fais en secret ...
	BdeJ	ton Père, qui voit dans le secret ...
	TOB	ton Père, qui voit dans le secret ...
	Mar	ton Père, qui voit dans le secret ...
	Bay	ton Père, qui voit dans le secret ...[408]
Mark 6 :2	Grk	*τίς ἡ σοφία ἡ δοθεῖσα τούτῳ*
	Chour	Quelle sagesse ! Elle lui est donnée ! À lui ![409]

Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 63.

[407] In the New Testament, the form *κρυφαῖος* is used only in Matt 6:18 (twice). The parallel phrasing of Jesus' threefold declaration in this pericope (addressing prayer—fasting—almsgiving) seems to suggest that it functions here as the equivalent of *κρυπτός*.

[408] All of the other versions translate the participle here by using relative clauses, which seems to lessen somewhat the grammatical equality of the two terms which this type of apposition implies (*ὁ πατήρ = ὁ βλέπων*). "Comme il y a une sorte d'identité, de consubstantialité,—puisqu'ils désignent la même réalité—entre le nom et son apposition ... des grammairiens parlent d'apposition chaque fois qu'il y a une identité." Maurice Grevisse and André Goosse, *Le bon usage : Grammaire française.* 13ème édition revue (Paris: Duculot, 1997), 516. "An appositional construction involves (1) two adjacent substantives (2) in the same case (3) which refer to the same person or thing, (4) and have the same syntactical relation to the rest of the clause." Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 48. This may be a relatively minor grammatical point, but I appreciate Chouraqui's mirroring of the Greek participial form here.

[409] Here Chouraqui has chosen a different method to highlight the emotive quality of this exclamation. Instead of translating the participial phrase as "la sagesse, celle qui a été donnée à lui...", he instead breaks up the clause into three exclamations, capturing some of the understandable shock of the crowd, confronted with the learning which seems to characterize the

	BFC	Qui donc lui a donné cette sagesse
	BdeJ	qu'est-ce que cette sagesse qui lui a été donnée
	TOB	quelle est cette sagesse qui lui a été donnée
	Mar	quelle est cette sagesse qui lui a été départie
	Bay	d'où sort-il cette sagesse
John 10:27	Grk	*τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐμὰ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούουσιν*
	Chour	Mes ovins, les miens, entendent ma voix...
	BFC	Mes brebis écoutent ma voix...
	BdeJ	Mes brebis écoutent ma voix...
	TOB	Mes brebis écoutent ma voix...
	Mar	Mes brebis écoutent ma voix...
	Bay	Mes brebis entendent ma voix...
John 14:27	Grk	*εἰρήνην ἀφίημι ὑμῖν εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν*
	Chour	Je vous laisse la paix et vous donne la paix, la mienne...
	BFC	C'est la paix que je vous laisse, c'est ma paix que je vous donne
	BdeJ	Je vous laisse la paix ; c'est ma paix que je vous donne
	TOB	Je vous laisse la paix, je vous donne ma paix
	Mar	Je vous laisse la paix; je vous donne ma paix à moi
	Bay	Je vous laisse la paix; ma paix, je vous la donne[410]

The rendering of chapter 15 of Luke (the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost [prodigal] son) is something of a mystery. In verse 9, Chouraqui *seems* to be following his standard practice, of translating second-position attributives as literally as possible: "J'ai retrouvé ma drachme, la perdue". The Greek here, however, does *not* employ a second-position attributive, but rather a relative clause:

συγχάρητέ μοι ὅτι εὗρον τὴν δραχμὴν ἣν ἀπώλεσα

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pronouncements of a Galilean craftsman, who would presumably have had limited opportunities for formal education.

[410] In this passage, several of the versions consulted have attempted to highlight the emphatic possessive adjective here (*tēn emēn*), but in different ways. Chouraqui reproduces in French the word-order of the Greek, where the adjectival phrase is in apposition to the noun it describes. The BFC and BdeJ emphasize it by the use of the demonstrative construction "*C'est* ma paix...". The Maredsous translation repeats the possessive idea, by adding, secondarily, *à* plus the personal pronoun: "ma paix *à moi*"; this use—grammatically redundant—strengthens and emphasizes the force of the possessive. The Bayard translation follows the word-order of the Greek, placing the direct object (*ma paix)* ahead of the verb and indirect object, emphasizing it by its lead position in the phrase.

Chouraqui seems to assume that the underlying Semitic structure would have been an attributive adjective, the equivalent of a Greek second-position attributive (an aorist participle, functioning adjectivally).

What is perhaps stranger is that, in verse 6, which *does* employ the second-position attributive, Chouraqui does not take advantage of this fact to highlight this construction in his translation:

συγχάρητέ μοι ὅτι εὗρον τὸ πρόβατόν μου τὸ ἀπολωλός
Chour: Chérissez-vous avec moi, parce que j'ai trouvé mon mouton perdu.
[instead of "mon mouton, le perdu"]

Does Chouraqui presume that both of these statements, in parables which are so obviously parallel and mutually interpretive, would—in the mouth of Jesus—have used the same Semitic form? This would, indeed, be a logical literary and theological inference, and yet it is difficult to explain his inconsistency in translation here, except to attribute it to oversight on his part.

In a number of other situations, Chouraqui seems to have chosen *not* to render the second attributive position as deliberately in his text:

Matt 4:16	Grk	*ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότει*
	Chour	Le peuple assis dans la ténèbre
Matt 6:9	Grk	*πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*
	Chour	Notre Père des ciels
Mark 3:22	Grk	*οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες*
	Chour	Les Sopherîms, descendant de Ieroushalaïms,
John 3 :16	Grk	*τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ*
	Chour	son fils unique
John 5:23	Grk	*τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν*
	Chour	le Père qui l'a envoyé

Chouraqui's choice *not* to emphasize the second attributive position consistently in his translation is particularly noticeable in a number of references to the Holy Spirit, where the Gospels often use the article with both the noun and the adjective:

Matt 12:32*b*	Grk	ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου
	Chour	Mais qui parle contre le souffle sacré...
Mark 3:29	Grk	δ'ἂν βλασφημήσῃ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον
	Chour	Mais le blasphémateur contre le souffle sacré...
Mark 12:36	Grk	αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ
	Chour	David a dit dans le souffle sacré
Luke 10:21	Grk	Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἠγαλλιάσατο [ἐν] τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ
	Chour	À cette heure même, il exulte au soufflé sacré...

and in Luke 3:22*b*, with reference to Jesus as the "beloved Son":

Grk	καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι, Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός
Chour	Une voix vient du ciel: « C'est toi mon fils... » [no adjective]

In other places, Chouraqui's rendering could lead readers to assume a second-position attributive where none exists in the Greek:

Mark 14:22,24	Grk	Λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου
		Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου
	Chour	Prenez! Ceci est le corps, le mien ...
		Ceci est le sang, le mien...

Chouraqui's translation does, therefore, help (at least in many places) to bring out a nuance of Greek syntax which may betray familiarity with Semitic syntax, and which can assist French readers in discerning some of the emphases already present in the Greek. His inconsistency in this matter, however, means that the translation can, at times, be misleading for readers, and his assumptions as to possible Hebrew under-structures must remain highly speculative. In this case, I believe that Chouraqui has provided an interesting, and frequently helpful, insight which is not adequately developed, and requires careful re-working if it is to be a reliable guide to the present Greek editions.

2. Rendering of Verbs

2.1 Translation of "imperatival future" by imperatives

In Hebrew, the second-person imperfect frequently has (as in the case of the Decalogue and other "covenantal" language) a modal sense of obligation, of request or of command. In §107.4.A.2 of his grammar, Gesenius notes that

> the imperfect with לֹא represents a more emphatic form of prohibition than the jussive with אַל־, and corresponds to our *thou shalt not do it!* with the strongest expectation of obedience, while אַל־ with the jussive is rather a simple warning, *do not that!* Thus לֹא with the imperfect is especially used in enforcing the divine commands ...[411]

While such occurrences are frequently translated using a future tense, they are more probably concerned with *mode* than with *time*. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is certainly more of an order than a prediction or statement.

That this Hebrew grammatical form should have an impact on the wording of the Greek gospels (as a "Septuagintism") is not, therefore, unexpected:

> The use of the imperatival future appears in the N.T. under three forms: (a) as a mild imperative, in simple prohibition, comp. Matth. ii. 5, *οὐκ ἔσεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί ·* (b) as a strong imperative, including prohibition and reproof, comp. Acts xiii. 10, *οὐ παύσῃ διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς Κυρίου;* (c) as a *legislative imperative*,—both negatively (Matth. v. 21, Rom. vii. 7, al.), and positively ... The two former usages (which in fact may be considered as one, varied only by the tone of the speaker) are common in classical Greek[412] ... the latter seems distinctly Hebraistic ... The uses of the future in the LXX appear to be very varied, and serve to express, negatively, *quod non convenit* (Gen. xx. 9), *quod non potest* (Gen. xxxii. 12; comp. Matth. iv. 4, al.); and, positively, *quod licet* (Numb. xxxii. 24), *quod solet* (Deut. ii. 11). These are almost purely Hebraistic ...[413]

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[411] *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, as edited and enlarged by the late E. Kautsch.* 2nd rev. English ed., (ed. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), as published electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0.

[412] Wallace, however, says that, apart from OT quotations, the future indicative was used in this manner "only sparingly" (*Greek Grammar*, 569). He argues that its use differs somewhat from that of the imperative: "Generally speaking, it has a universal, timeless and/or solemn force ... Even when the OT is not behind the command, the force of the imperatival future is emphatic." (*Ibid.*)

[413] Charles John Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, with a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 112.

In several places, Chouraqui presumes this mode of thought as underlying the use of the Greek *future indicative*, especially in some negative commands (and particularly in Matthew), and his translation takes this nuance into account:

Matt 1:21	Grk	καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν
	Chour	Crie son nom: Iéshoua'
Matt 4:7	Grk	οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον
	Chour	N'éprouve pas ADONAI IHVH
Matt 5:48	Grk	ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι
	Chour	vous, soyez intègres...
Matt 6:5	Grk	οὐκ ἔσεσθε
	Chour	Ne soyez pas...
Matt 19:18	Grk	οὐ φονεύσεις οὐ μοιχεύσεις οὐ κλέψεις οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις
	Chour	n'assasine pas, n'adultère pas, ne vole pas, ne réponds pas en témoin de mensonge
Luke 21:19	Grk	κτήσασθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν[414]
	Chour	Maîtrisez vos êtres...

Contrast these, however, with the following examples, where Chouraqui does *not* seem to render the "imperatival" force of the future indicative:

Matt 21 :3	Grk	ἐρεῖτε ὅτι ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν χρείαν ἔχει
	Chour	vous direz : 'L'Adôn en a besoin' [and not "dites"]
Mark 12:30	Grk	καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου
	Chour	Tu aimeras ADONAI IHVH ton Elohîms [and not "aime"]
Luke 1:13	Grk	καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννην
	Chour	Tu crieras son nom : Iohanân [and not "Crie," as above]

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[414] While the majority of manuscripts—including some very reliable Greek uncials—read the aorist imperative (κτήσασθε) here, others (A B Θ f^{13} 33 *pc* lat sa) read the future indicative (κτήσεσθε). "A decision is difficult because the evidence is so evenly balanced, but the aorist imperative is the harder reading and better explains the rise of the other" (NET Bible on this verse). METZGER's *Textual Commentary* (147) gives the aorist imperative only a "C" rating for certainty in this case.
Most translations render this by an English or French future tense: "you will gain/win/save your lives," seeing in it a promise; the meaning changes significantly if it is interpreted with imperative force, as Chouraqui, the 1595 Bishops' Bible ("Possesse ye your soule"), KJV ("Possess ye your souls"), and the Holman Christian Standard version ("gain your lives") translate it.

While it is certainly possible that Matt 21:3 (the "triumphal entry" of Palm Sunday) is meant to be heard *prophetically* (and thus to illustrate Jesus' ability to accurately predict the future), one is still left with the impression of inconsistency. While it is clear that Chouraqui is attempting to bring out a helpful grammatical nuance, it seems that (perhaps through oversight?) he has not applied his own principle across the board, creating a situation in which the reader is only given the benefit of this insight in some (but not all) occurrences. If this is accepted as an element worth highlighting, it would only require some attentive proofreading and editing to remedy this present inconsistency.

3. Greek cognate constructions

Sometimes referred to as the internal accusative, the *figura etymologica* or πολύπτοτον, *polyptoton*, this is a literary-rhetorical device in which "a noun that is directly governed by a verb ... has either the same root or approximately the same meaning as the verb".[415] Given the centrality of etymological interest on Chouraqui's part, we should not be surprised that he pays particular attention to the way in which this literary-linguistic feature is handled.

Cognate accusatives, generally used to heighten the force of the associated verb, are a common feature of biblical Hebrew[416] and, consequently, of the Septuagint. But they are also characteristic of literary Greek apart from the Bible, and it is sometimes difficult to determine with precision whether their use in the New Testament is, as some have suggested, a form of Semitism, or simply represents common usage among

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[415] J.A. Naudé, Jan H. Kroeze and C.H.J. van der Merwe, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar.* Biblical Languages 3 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 245. "The object is an abstract noun of action, and implies an action in most cases identical with that of the verb ... the object is a noun formed from the same root as the verb." Bill T. Arnold and John G. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.
"Polyptoton: A rhetorical figure involving the repetition of a word in different cases or inflections within the same sentence" (*OED*, s.v. "polyptoton"; online at: dictionary.oed.com)

[416] E.g. Gen 37:5 וַיַּחֲלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם, *wayyaḥălom yôsēp̄ ḥălôm*, "Joseph dreamed a dream"
Exod 32:32 אַתֶּם חֲטָאתֶם חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה, *ʾattem ḥăṭāʾtem ḥăṭāʾâ gᵉḏolâ*, "You have sinned a great sin"

speakers and writers of *koinē* Greek. It is likely that the New Testament represents a combination of both.

Many textbooks of biblical and non-biblical Greek suggest that, because the cognate accusative's effect is to reinforce the verb, it should normally be rendered by an adverb or an adverbial clause, since the effort to maintain its nominal function will usually result in an awkward or inelegant translation;[417] the repetition of more or less the same terms in close proximity will "clash," producing something of a literary dissonance. Thus, Mark 4:41 (the verse cited by many grammars as a classic example of the cognate accusative) includes the Greek phrase *ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν, ephobēthēsan phobon megan,* which is rendered adverbially by many English and French translations. Others simply incorporate the sense of the accusative in an emotionally-strengthened verb:

> "they were filled with great awe" (NRSV, NAB)
> "they were overcome with awe" (NJB)
> "they were terrified" (NIV)
> "they feared exceedingly" (KJV)
> "ils éprouvèrent une grande frayeur" (BFC)
> "ils furent saisis d'une grande crainte" (BdeJ, TOB, Mar)
> "leur crainte redoubla" (Bay)

Chouraqui's version differs noticeably: "ils frémissent d'un grand frémissement". It is clear that he has gone to great lengths, not to *subsume* the cognate accusative, but to *highlight* it, for the benefit of readers who may not be cognizant of the word-play at work here. Despite Chouraqui's background as an eminently-qualified literary

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[417] "The internal accusative construction is much more at home in Greek idiom than in English. Note that it is often convenient or necessary to translate a Greek verb with internal accusative other than literally. In some cases it is best to use the English catch-all verbs *make* or *do* and express the verbal action in a noun ... in others, a prepositional phrase (esp. with *in* or *in respect to)* may be appropriate" Donald J. Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 123. Gerald Hammond correctly points out that some of these cognate accusatives have (through the influence of the KJV) become so engrained in English that they are now part of the pool of "Bible English" upon which poets regularly draw. Hammond, "The Bible in English Translation," in Olive Classe, ed., *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000) Vol. 1, 150.

translator, the claim that such a construction will sound sloppy or *gauche* here does not seem to be a concern for him.

Throughout his translation of the Gospels, the reproduction of cognate forms seems to be a particular preoccupation for Chouraqui. In many places, it is clear that he is attempting to capture this linguistic characteristic in a way that few others have extensively tried:

Matt 2:10	Grk	*ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην*
	Chour	[ils] se réjouissent d'une très grande joie
Matt 9:16	Grk	*οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐπιβάλλει ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους*
	Chour	nul n'ajoute un ajout d'étoffe
Mark 10:38	Grk	*τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι*
	Chour	être immergés de l'immersion où moi, je vais être immergé
Luke 2:9	Grk	*ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν*
	Chour	ils frémissent d'un grand frémissement
Luke 7:29	Grk	*βαπτισθέντες τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου*
	Chour	en se faisant immerger de l'immersion de Iohanân
Luke 11:46	Grk	*φορτίζετε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους φορτία δυσβάστακτα*
	Chour	vous chargez des hommes de charges difficiles
John 7:24	Grk	*τὴν δικαίαν κρίσιν κρίνετε*
	Chour	jugez d'un juste jugement

There are also several examples of *cognate datives,* which function in much the same way, intensifying the force of the related verb ("truly I have *X*"):

Luke 22:15	Grk	*ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα*
	Chour	j'ai désiré de désir
John 3:29	Grk	*χαρᾷ χαίρει*
	Chour	se chérit de chérissement

and two cognate *nominatives*:

Mark 3:28	Grk	*αἱ βλασφημίαι ὅσα ἐὰν βλασφημήσωσιν*
	Chour	les blasphèmes autant qu'ils blasphèment
John 17:26	Grk	*ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με*
	Chour	l'amour dont tu m'aimes

What is therefore surprising (and somewhat disappointing) is that there are *other* verses in which similar cognate constructions occur, but where Chouraqui (for reasons he does not give) has *not* rendered the cognate noun-verb relationship:

Matt 14:1	Grk	*ἤκουσεν Ἡρῴδης ... τὴν ἀκοὴν Ἰησοῦ*
	Chour	Hèrôdès ... entend la renommée de Jésus [instead of "on a rapporté à Hèrôdès ... le rapport concernant Jésus"]
Mark 2:4	Grk	*ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην*
	Chour	ils défont le toit [instead of "ils détoitent le toit"; "they un-roofed the roof"][418]
Luke 2:8	Grk	*φυλάσσοντες φυλακὰς τῆς νυκτὸς*
	Chour	[ils] gardaient, aux veilles de la nuit, [leur troupeau] [instead of "veillant, aux veilles de la nuit..."; "keeping watch during the night-watches"]
Luke 6:48	Grk	*ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδομοῦντι οἰκίαν*
	Chour	**semblable à un homme qui bâtit une maison**
Luke 9:14	Grk	*κατακλίνατε αὐτοὺς κλισίας*
	Chour	Faites-les étendre par groupes [instead of "conviez-les en groupes de ... convives"]

A somewhat more ambiguous case is Matthew 6:19, where it clearly seems that Chouraqui has attempted to parallel the verb and noun. Despite the imperfect parallelism, the evident acoustic similarity between *thésaurisez ... trésor* (*t-é-s-r*) in French captures at least some of the sound and flavour of the relationship:

Matt 6:19-20	Grk	*θησαυρίζετε ... θησαυροὺς*
	Chour	thésaurisez des trésors

This approach, which plays on both the levels of semantics and sound, is a distinguishing mark of Chouraqui's approach, and highlights both his keen interest in linguistic associations, but also his attentiveness to the esthetics, literary artistry and oral quality of the text as he translates it. In this, he is a worthy successor to the Buber-

[418] These alternative renderings are meant simply as my attempt to reproduce some of the logic and style of Chouraqui's work in these particular cases.

Rosenzweig tradition in German, an ideological contender alongside Henri Meschonnic in French, and a precursor of Everett Fox's English edition of the Torah.

4. Substantive Participles

Participles occupy an interesting middle ground in many languages. Although, strictly speaking, they are verbs, they often share in the grammatical functions of nouns and pronouns.[419] This is particularly the case in the case of "substantive participles," in which a participle (often a present participle) is essentially employed as a noun. The ellipsis of the corresponding noun/pronoun (i.e., "the person or people who...") yields a situation in which the verbal form effectively becomes a noun; "[the] seeing" thus becomes a surrogate for "those who can see".

Examples of this phenomena are common in the Greek New Testament, and, in his efforts to concretize terms which could seem abstract or indeterminate, André Chouraqui has chosen to make the substantival function explicit, translating many such participles as if they *were* nouns. This is a procedure which has not generally been followed by other French translations:

Matt 2:20	Grk	*οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου*
	Chour	les persécuteurs de l'enfant
	BFC	ceux qui cherchaient à faire mourir l'enfant
	BdeJ, TOB, Mar, Bay	ceux qui en voulaient à la vie de l'enfant
Matt 3:3	Grk	*Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ*
	Chour	Voix d'un crieur[420] dans le désert
	BFC	Un homme crie dans le desert
	BdJ, Bay	Voix de celui qui crie dans le désert
	TOB, Mar	Une voix crie dans le desert
Matt 4:3	Grk	*ὁ πειράζων*
	Chour	l'éprouvant

[419] "The participle is so called because it *participates* in both nominal and verbal characteristics; it is a non-finite verb form used as a noun." Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 612.

[420] Chouraqui obviously sees the genitive *boōntos* as reflecting "the voice *of one who cries,*" which he then substantivizes into "un crieur"; cf. the versions of the BdJ and Bay.

	BFC, BdJ, TOB, Mar	le tentateur[421]
	Bay	le Séducteur
Matt 7:8	Grk	*ὁ αἰτῶν ... ὁ ζητῶν ... τῷ κρούοντι*
	Chour	tout demandeur ... tout chercheur ... au frappeur
	BFC, BdJ, TOB, Mar, Bay	quiconque demande ... qui cherche ... à qui frappe
Mark 4:3, 14	Grk	*ὁ σπείρων*
	Chour	le semeur
	BFC	un homme s'en alla ... pour semer
	BdJ, TOB, Mar, Bay	le semeur
Mark 6:14	Grk	*Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων*[422]
	Chour	Iohanân l'Immergeur
	BFC, BdJ,TOB, Mar:	Jean [le] Baptiste
	Bay	Jean le baptiseur[423]
Luke 1:66	Grk	*πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες*
	Chour	tous les entendeurs[424]
	BFC, Bay	[tous] ceux qui en entendaient parler
	BdJ, Mar	tous ceux qui en entendirent parler
	TOB	tous ceux qui les apprirent
Luke 2:23	Grk	*Πᾶν ἄρσεν διανοῖγον μήτραν*
	Chour	Tout mâle fendeur de matrice
	BFC, BdJ, TOB	tout garçon premier-né
	Mar	tout premier-né mâle
	Bay	tout mâle qui ouvre le sein[425]

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[421] Here the other French versions confirm, by rendering the participle with a substantive (instead of "celui qui tente," or a similar expression), the general legitimacy of what Chouraqui has tried to do.

[422] The use of the substantive participle *ho baptizōn* ("the Baptizing One, the Baptizer") as a title for John is unique to Mark (both Matthew and Luke instead refer to him using the title *ὁ βαπτιστὴς, ho baptistēs,* as does Mark in 6:25 and 8:28). Whether the original text of Mark 1:4 was *ho baptizōn,* or simply *baptizōn* without the article, continues to be the subject of scholarly debate, and textual critics and translators come to differing conclusions. The presence of the article is attested in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, as well as in Georgian and Coptic manuscripts, several Greek uncials and minuscules; it is lacking in Alexandrinus, and UBS[3] and NA[26] indicate the textual difficulty by placing the article in brackets. For more on this question, see: M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1-15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," in *Semeia* 52 (1990), 43-81.

[423] Both the RSV and NRSV translate *ho baptizōn* as "the Baptizer" here and in 6:24, as well as in 1:4, accepting the articular form as authentic.

[424] Chouraqui renders the almost identical phrase in Lk 2:47 (*πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες*) as "tous les *auditeurs,*" although why he has chosen to render the same verb, *ἀκούω, akouō* with two different French words is unclear.

[425] The very literal reading adopted by the Bayard translation is in keeping with that of the King James Version ("Every male that openeth the womb") and the Douay-Rheims ("Every male opening the womb").

Luke 6:25	Grk	*οἱ γελῶντες*
	Chour	les rieurs
	BFC, BdJ, TOB, Mar	vous qui riez
	Bay	rieurs
Luke 6:29-30	Grk	*ἀπὸ τοῦ αἴροντός ... παντὶ αἰτοῦντί σε ...*
		ἀπὸ τοῦ αἴροντος
	Chour	au preneur ... à tout demandeur ... au preneur[426]
	BFC	si quelqu'un te prend ... à quiconque te demande ...
		si quelqu'un te prend
	BdJ	à qui t'enlève ... à quiconque te demande ... à qui t'enlève
	TOB	à qui te prend ... à quiconque te demande ... à qui te prend
	Mar	à celui qui t'enlève ... à quiconque te demande ...
		si quelqu'un te ravit
	Bay	celui qui vole ... quiconque demande ... celui que te dérobe
John 2:14	Grk	*τοὺς πωλοῦντας*
	Chour	les vendeurs
	BFC	des gens qui vendaient
	BdJ	les vendeurs
	TOB, Mar, Bay	les marchands
John 4:36	Grk	*ὁ σπείρων ... ὁ θερίζων*
	Chour	le semeur ... le moissonneur
	BFC, TOB	celui qui sème ... celui qui moissonne
	BdJ, Mar	le semeur ... le moissonneur
	Bay	celui qui sème ... le moissonneur
John 5:29	Grk	*οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες*
	Chour	les faiseurs de bien
	BFC, Mar	ceux qui ont fait le bien
	BdJ, TOB	ceux qui auront fait le bien
	Bay	s'ils ont fait de bonnes choses
John 13:18	Grk	*Ὁ τρώγων μου τὸν ἄρτον*
	Chour	le mâcheur de mon pain
	BFC	celui avec qui je partageais mon pain
	BdJ, Bay	celui qui mange mon pain
	TOB	celui qui mangeait le pain avec moi
	Mar	celui qui mange le pain avec moi

[426] What is striking about Lk 6:29 is that, here, in a passage with a clear series of substantive participles, Chouraqui does not translate the first participle in this series (*τῷ τύπτοντί σε*) like the others, choosing instead: "À qui te frappe sur une joue..." (we would expect something like "au frappeur de ta joue").

It is not every participle (and not even every substantive participle) that Chouraqui translates in this way. And there are at least two notable instances in which he employs the "*X*-eur" form where there is no corresponding Greek participle at all. The first of these, of course, is Chouraqui's original use of the form "fauteur" for "sinner". Although the Greek form is clearly a noun (*ἁμαρτωλός, hamartōlos*), Chouraqui seems to suspect that the corresponding Hebrew would be חַטָּאִים, *ḥaṭṭā'îm*, which certainly *could* be translated as "those sinning"—a participial form, and thus justifying his translation.[427]

The second, and probably more tenuous, of Chouraqui's choices is to render the Greek *γραμματεύς, grammateus* "scribe" (often plural in the Gospels) by what *appears* to be a substantive-participial form: "répétiteurs de la tora". To those familiar with traditional New Testament translations, the translation is a jarring one, which provokes curiosity and some confusion. In his note at Luke 5:17 in *L'Univers de la Bible*, Chouraqui says: "*Des répétiteurs de la tora:* de ceux qui seront appelés plus tard *tanaîm*".

> The period of the *Tannaim* began with the disciples of Hillel and Shammai ... The word *tanna* means to repeat[428]: he is a repeater of the words learned from his masters. Repetition was, in fact, the method of study and of passing on tradition. It is said to be by modesty that the masters are given were given this name, for, in actual fact, the period of the *Tannaim* was more a time of creation than of repetition. However, the term *tanna* does not appear in the Mishnah ... It is in the *Gemara* that the word *tanna* appears for the first time. In fact, it is the first word of the *Gemara* of the first tractate of the Talmud (*Berakhot* 2a).[429]
>
> All sages committed to memory the traditions they received from the mouths of their masters. In addition, a professional class of memorizers known as *tannaim*, literally "repeaters," served as repositories for oral texts. These "living books" possessed excellent memories (though not necessarily excellent intellects) and were called upon to repeat traditions before a masters and his

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[427] See note on Matt 9:11, on p. 75 of *L'Univers de la Bible*.

[428] The root *tanna'* (תנא) is the equivalent, in Talmudic Aramaic, of the Hebrew root *šānah* (שנה).

[429] Marc-Alain Ouaknin, *The Burnt Book: Reading the Talmud* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 42.

> disciples ... When the sages performed by reciting, interpreting, and debating in formal sessions, they worked from memory.[430]

The usual translation, "scribes," is reductionistic, since it tends today to give the misleading impression that these men were nothing more than professional manuscript copyists, like monks in many mediæval monasteries. However, what is clear is that, beyond their skills as a literate class, the *tannaim* were also respected exegetes and scholars of Jewish law, conversant with the major governing interpretations given to the *Torah*, and able to advise others regarding halakhic questions:

> The scribes presented in the synoptic gospels are best understood as bureaucrats and also as experts on Jewish life ... They gospels testify most reliably to scribes connected to the government in Jerusalem, while their role seems to be as associates of the priests, both in judicial proceedings, enforcement of Jewish custom and law, and ongoing business in the Sanhedrin ... Scribes were found in the bureaucracy in great numbers, in villages and also among groups such as the Pharisees. Scribes had an effect on the preservation of prophecy, wisdom writing and the Pentateuch, and overlapped circles which had priestly, apocalyptic and wisdom orientations ... The references tell us little of what their function was, except that it seems to have involved politics and diplomacy, as well as moral leadership.[431]

David Orton speaks of "the high official rank and the authority of these γραμματεῖς. They are overseers, instructors and judges; they bear Mosaic authority and are connected with Levites and the implementation of the Law".[432]

Chouraqui's rendering of *répétiteurs*, while it illuminates one particular aspect of ancient Jewish biblical interpretation (the faithfulness of transmission from

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[430] Jeffrey L. Rubinstein, *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 62.

[431] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 267, 273.

[432] *The Understanding Scribe: Matthew and the Apocalyptic Ideal*. JSNT Suppl. 25 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 52-53. Orton highlights the role of the scribes by pointing out how the Aramaic targums often render the Hebrew סופר by terms such as שׂטר (prince, officer, high official), שׁפט (judge, governor), מחקק (commander, leader), etc.; a quasi-prophetic role is often ascribed to them. Orton's excellent overview of scribes in the Old Testament and Second Temple periods (39-61) is particularly helpful.

generation to generation), nonetheless risks a certain reductionism of its own. To suggest that Second Temple scribes were simply "repeaters" ignores their creative role in writing and their dedication to study, and can create the idea of them as merely "parrots" for received interpretations. Furthermore, in a modern world where repetition is often considered something negative and to be avoided, Chouraqui's rendering could do more to foster negative impressions of the Jewish *grammateis* than to alleviate them.

Similarly, a number of scholars believe that the Greek terms *νομικός, nomikos* (used 7x in the Gospels) and *νομοδιδάσκαλος, nomodidaskalos* (used once, in Lk 5:17) are both probably variants of *grammateus*, but describing the same persons.[433] Chouraqui, however, has translated *nomikos* either as "maître de la Tora"[434] (Matt 22:35; Lk 7:30) or "enseigneur de la Tora" (Lk 10:25; 11:45-46, 52; 14:3). He clearly sees *nomodidaskalos* as a synonym for *grammateus*, since he translates its one Gospel occurrence (in the plural) as "répétiteurs de la Tora".

The question can certainly be asked, whether it is prudent or accurate to render substantive participles by nouns, as Chouraqui has done. Although the two forms have much in common, they are not, however, strictly *identical*, and there are nuances to the verbal form which can be lost by the use of a nominal form:

> The participle, with the article before it, is frequently equivalent to a noun designating the doer of the action expressed by the verb ... There is, however, this difference; the participle expresses the doer in a *state of action*, the

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[433] See, e.g., G. Baumbach, "*γραμματεύς, grammateus,*" in Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990): "Thus *νομικός* can stand in place of *γραμματεύς* 9 times (of which 7 are in the Synoptic Gospels ...) and *νομοδιδάσκαλος* can appear 3 times (of which 2 are in the Lukan literature." (Vol. 1, 259). Baumbach summarizes the primary roles of Second-Temple scribes as *exegetes, teachers* and *jurists*.

[434] There is a beautiful ambiguity in Chouraqui's use of "maître" here, since it can capture in French both the sense of "teacher" and of "master" (both someone who has "mastered" their subject and knows it extremely well, but also someone who "lords it over" other people). There is more than a hint of this latter nuance in the presentation of the scribes in the Gospels. Their literacy and their knowledge of Judaism's sacred texts and traditions obviously gave them a certain power, and placed them in a respected class somewhat above the average person).

> substantive does not; thus, *ὁ δοῦλος* is *a man in the condition of a slave; ὁ δουλεύων* is *one,* at the time referred to, *performing the work of a slave.*[435]

There is, thus, an emphasis in the participial form on the action *as something present and ongoing,* as something taking place *in the moment referred to.* The French morpheme *–eur* (sometimes referred to as an "agentive suffix"[436]), however, often suggests a more enduring or stative quality, a vocation or occupation, or a defining aspect of the subject (e.g. *ambassadeur, serviteur, persécuteur, grondeur,* etc.).[437] Chouraqui might have been wiser to remain with the French suffix *–ant,* simply prefixing each term with the definite article. This might have required the creation of some subtle neologisms (whose meaning would, nevertheless, be evident to the reader); as we are seeing, this is certainly not an option Chouraqui would hesitate to employ.

5. Emphasis on Greek, Hebrew and French etymology

It is clear, both from Chouraqui's translation and from his biography, that he has a profound fascination with languages, their development, and their relationships to one another. As someone who was well-versed in at least six languages (Arabic, French, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Aramaic), he was in a position to appreciate the particular richness of each, to see similarities and parallels, and to note ways in which

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[435] Peter Bullions, *The Principles of Greek Grammar; Comprising the Substance of the Most Approved English Grammars Extant. For the Use of Schools* (New York: Pratt, Oakley & Co, 1859), 265.

[436] French *–eur* also serves as a suffix to (predominantly feminine) abstract nouns (*couleur, odeur, chaleur, pesanteur, longueur,* etc.) and to adjectives (*menteur, extérieur, protecteur, dévastateur,* etc.).

[437] "There are about 868 nouns ending in *eur,* of which about 70 only are of the feminine gender, the remaining 798 being masculine … [T]hose of the masculine gender, with very few exceptions, describe persons, or, rather, their occupations … They generally characterize men, either actively or contemplatively engaged in some way or other; that is, either by their occupation or trade, or by their disposition, whether it be good or bad; and are for the most part derived from the participle active of some verb: thus, from *parlant* comes *parleur,* a talker; from *riant* comes *rieur,* a laugher, &c.". J.H. Cooper, *The Genders of French Nouns, in Eighteen Lessons* (London: J. Souter, 1840), 9-10. With reference to the suffix *–eur,* the *Dictionnaire des racines et dérivés de la langue française* cites its functions as specifying "l'Acteur, l'Auteur, l'Agent, celui qui s'occupe, qui travaille, qui fonctionne … qui fait habituellement ou non la chose exprimée en la racine … ce qui provoque, ce qui attribue l'Activité, la Propriété, la Qualité, la Manière d'être de la chose exprimée en la racine." Frédéric Charrassin and Ferdinand François, eds. (Paris: Alexandre Héois, 1842), 50.

they differed in their portrayal of the world. Particularly in French, his etymological interests come through in renderings which, because they are so original and unexpected, stop readers dead in their tracks, and force them to ask themselves the reasons for Chouraqui's selection of this or that term. The resulting research can be enlightening and wonderfully surprising, because of the way in which Chouraqui draws upon different strands of French, some of which are seldom encountered today, even by native speakers.

5.1 Telōnēs

One of the prime examples of this "linguistic spelunking" is Chouraqui's rendering of the Greek noun τελώνης, *telōnēs*. The term, referring to tax-collectors ("publicans" in some older translations), is found 22 times in the Gospels, predominantly in Matthew (9x) and Luke (10x), and not at all in John. As almost every Gospel commentator has noted for centuries, this was a position regarded with resentment, disdain—and often hatred—by many Jews in Roman-occupied Palestine. Tax-collectors have probably never been popular in any culture, but they were particularly despised and marginalized in Jesus' world, both because they were viewed (by many religious and nationalistic Jews) as collaborators with the pagan Roman overlords, but also because they often made use of unjust, coercive and violent methods to extort the maximum amount from their fellow citizens.[438] Later Jewish

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[438] "The identity of the tax collectors has been debated. According to one view, they were primarily toll collectors at transport and commercial centers. According to another view, however, the term τελώνης (*telōnēs*, 'tax collector') probably referred to more than that. The tax collectors were well-to-do persons, including Jews, who paid for the privilege to collect tolls, market duties, and all kinds of local taxes (sales, income, property, and inheritance). They made their own income by overcharging people, as Zacchaeus admits (Lk 19:8), thereby preying upon them. Scorn for them is attested not only in the NT but also in rabbinic writings and secular literature of antiquity." Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 469.

"They [Romans] deliberately choose as tax collectors men who are absolutely ruthless and savage, and give them the means of satisfying their greed. These people who are mischief-makers by nature, gain added immunity because of their 'superior orders,' obsequious in everything where their masters are concerned, leave undone no cruelty of any kind and recognize no equity or

literature highlights the opprobrium with which tax-collectors were regarded, and the ritual impurity they were assumed to communicate:

> In the case of the tax collectors who have gone into the midst of the house, the house is wholly unclean. (b. *Ḥag.* 26a)[439]
>
> Come and hear: 'For shepherds, tax collectors and revenue farmers it is difficult to make repentance ... It may, however, [also here] be said that though they have to make restitution, it would not be accepted from them'. (b. *B. Qam.* 94b)[440]
>
> No money may be taken in change either from the box of the customs-collectors or from the purse of the tax-collectors, nor may charity be taken from them. (quotation from the Mishnah, in b. *B. Qam.* 113a)[441]

Chouraqui surprises the reader by avoiding the customary French translations ("collecteur d'impôts," "publicain"), and employing instead the rare and unusual term

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gentleness ... as they collect the taxes, they spread confusion and chaos everywhere. They exact money not only from people's property but also from their bodies, by means of personal injuries, assault and completely unheard-of forms of torture." PHILO, *The Special Laws* Book II:19; in MAUREEN B. CAVANAUGH, "Private Tax Collectors: A Roman, Christian and Jewish Perspective". Tax History Project; online at: www.taxhistory.org, citing P.G. MAXWELL-STUART, "Pollux and the Reputation of Tax-Gatherers," in *Rivisti di Studi Classici* 22 (1974), 157-63.

"The presence of a Roman contractor (*publicanus*) would mean that either public ownership was nullified or else the freedom of the allied people disappeared." LIVY, *History of Rome*, Book 45:19, in HENRY BETTENSON, transl. *Rome and the Mediterranean: Books XXXI-XLV of the History of Rome From Its Foundation* (Penguin Classics. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 613; the 1905 translation by CANON WILLIAM ROBERTS renders the text: "These [leases] could not be carried on without the tax-farmer, and wherever the tax-farmer flourished, either the law lost its authority or the subjects their liberty." *The History of Rome*, Vol. 6. Everyman's Library (London: J.M. Dent, 1905); online at: http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/txt/ah/Livy/Livy45.html

"Can you then imagine yourself empowered to perform every action ... however disgraceful and scandalous it may be deemed by the universal judgement of mankind? Such, I mean, as to execute the office of the tax-gatherer, of a procurer [i.e. a prostitute], and some similar employments. I must confess indeed these employments also to be inexpedient for free men, inasmuch as a penalty is annexed to engagements of this description, the hatred and indignation of our species." GILBERT WAKEFIELD, transl. *Select Essays of Dio Chrysostom* (London: R. Phillips, 1800), 177-78.

[439] ANNESLEY W. STREANE, *A Translation of the Treatise Chagigah from the Babylonian Talmud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 140 (the *gemara* here is citing a *baraita* to this effect). See also t. *Demai* 3:4: "At first they would say: A *ḥaber* who became a tax-collector [*gbyy*]—they expel him from his *ḥaburah*. They changed their minds to say: 'As long as he is a tax-collector, he is not reliable. If he withdrew from the office of tax-collector, behold, this one is [again] reliable." JACOB NEUSNER, trans. *The Tosefta 1: Zeraim* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1986), 88.

[440] ISIDORE EPSTEIN, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1961); as published online at: http://www.come-and-hear.com/babakamma/babakamma_94.html#PARTb

[441] EPSTEIN, *Talmud;* online at: http://www.come-and-hear.com/babakamma/babakamma_113.html . See also: MIREILLE HADAS-LEBEL, "La fiscalité romaine dans la littérature rabbinique jusqu'à la fin du IIIe siècle," in *Revue des études juives* 143 (1984), 5-29.

gabelou. The term, which is not included in most dictionaries of modern French, is, in fact, a much *older* French term, found beginning in the thirteenth century.[442] It is derived from a tax on foodstuffs and drinks, found in several Mediterranean countries in the late Middle Ages, and called, variously, *gabella* or *gabelle*:

> Wine, together with many other goods and services, was subject to a tax—often called the *gabella* or *cabellum*—when it was imported and sold. The Italian term *gabella* applied to a wide range of indirect taxes levied both in Italy and abroad by the thirteenth century.[443] In 1311, for example, the Venetian Zibaldone di Canal described the port of Bône as "a territory in which there is the *gabella*, and nobody may buy [goods] except from those who have the *gabella*, though they may sell imported merchandise, if they wish, after paying a tariff". The *gabella* was paid to state administrators or tax-farmers, and the right to collect the *gabella* on wine might be farmed to a western *fundicarius* or *gabellotto* by local Muslim administrations ... the word *gabella* probably derived from the Arabic *qabālah* ...[444]
>
> The recently-imposed *qabālah*-tax in the Játiva treaty is therefore likely to have been an excise tax. Moreover, this tax may have been ... the tax on the saltworks and olive presses ... Since the Romance cognates of *qabālah* (Castilian *alcabala;* Catalan *gabella;* French *gabelle;* Italian *gabella;* Occitan *gabela*) refer to revenue-farming, the *qabālah*-tax may have been collected by tax-farmers.[445]

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[442] "Ce mot, attesté en français dès 1267, dérive d'une racine *qabala* qui veut dire 'recevoir' en arabe comme en hébreu. Il s'agit des percepteurs d'impôts, regardés comme des pécheurs parce qu'ils étaient les agents de Rome." (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 59).
It goes perhaps without saying that this is also the root of the term *Kabbala(h)*, the esoteric branch of Jewish mysticism ("the received [wisdom]") which has become particularly popular among celebrities in Hollywood in recent years.

[443] "The term had a very broad range of application, taking different forms in different times and places. See, e.g., Florence Edler, *Glossary of Mediaeval Terms of Business. Italian Series. 1200-1600* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1934), 130-131, and examples throughout Pegolotti's *La pratica della mercatura;* also the chapter on the *gabelles* in Siena in William M. Bowsky, *The Finances of the Community of Siena, 1287-1355* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 114-165." (Footnote in Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger* [see citation below], 142).

[444] Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 142, citing Elisavet A. Zachariadou, *Emporio kai stauroforia: ē Benetokratoumenē Krētē kai ta Emirata tou Mentese kai tou Aïudiniou* [*Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menthese and Aydin*] (Venice: Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini, 1983), 134-135.

[445] Robert Ignatius Burns and Paul Edward Chevedden. *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain Under James the Conqueror.* The Medieval Mediterranean 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 182.

This tax was apparently widely hated, particularly so during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it was extended in France to the sale of salt as well; the first edition of the dictionary of the Académie Française (in 1694) includes the entry: "Gabelle: Impost sur le sel".[446] Emile Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872-77), which cites uses of the term in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, already considers *gabelle* as something of a relic from the past: "Gabelle: anciennement, tout impôt sur les denrées et les produits de l'industrie. *Gabelle de drap, de vin, etc.*".[447]

Those responsible for imposing and collecting the *gabelle* were called (not surprisingly) *gabeleurs,* which, in colloquial slang, became corrupted to *gabelous.* In a way somewhat akin to the *telōnēs* of the Roman period, the *gabeleurs/gabelous* were extremely unpopular with their peers; Littré defines *gabelou* as a "mot populaire et de dénigrement pour désigner autrefois les employés de la gabelle, aujourd'hui les employées de la douane et de l'octroi".[448]

Chouraqui's choice of *gabelou* is strikingly original. He has obviously sought out a term that not only conveys the functional meaning of *telōnēs* (i.e., a term referring to tax-collecting), but one which also captures something of the emotional weight of the word in the particular historical context with which he is working. He clearly is aware that the Gospels portray tax-collectors as those who were largely social outcasts in first-century Roman Palestine, and draws upon a very specialized term from French history to summon up both the necessary denotative *and* connotative aspects.

An important question, however, concerns the translator's task in reproducing, as far as possible, the *semantic register* of a term. No doubt, the word *telōnēs* (or its Hebrew/Aramaic equivalent[449]) was a very familiar term, both to Jesus' contemporaries

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[446] From the ARTFL Historic French Dictionaries Project; online at: www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos

[447] *Ibid.*

[448] *Ibid.*

[449] Both the Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginzberg versions employ מוֹכֵס, *môḵēś* (from the verb כסס, *k-ś-ś*, "to compute"), and Jastrow (741) defines *môḵēś* as "revenue farmer, publican, custom-collector (considered a robber in Jewish law)". Hutter, on the other hand, displays a curious inconsistency

and to the evangelists; it would have been used in everyday conversation. *Gabelou*, however, is an archaic form, familiar primarily to professional historians and linguists, and not to the average French reader. Although Chouraqui's choice clearly demonstrates his sensitivity to the emotional impact of a word, nevertheless the use of such a rarefied form seems to be taking a useful principle to an unnecessary extreme, and does not adequately capture the place of *telōnēs* in daily speech in ancient times. The fact that these terms derive from two very different semantic registers means that the impression of the translation on the modern reader is very different from that which the original term would presumably have had on an ancient listener/reader. Chouraqui might have been better to choose a more colloquial rendering, and to

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in translation. In his renderings of the occurrences of *telōnēs* in Mark and Luke, he employs the expression בַּעַל־מֶכֶס, *baʿal-meḵeś*, "tax-master" (occasionally *ha-meḵeś*, with the definite article; cf. Mk 2:15-16; Lk 15:1; 18:10-11). However, in the Gospel of Matthew (where the term occurs 8x), Hutter has instead בַּעַל־עֲבֵירָה, *baʿal-ʿăḇêrâ*, "master of iniquity/sin," which is difficult to understand as a translation, unless it is meant as an explanatory paraphrase on the term "tax-collector". Perhaps Hutter is relying here on the ancient tradition that the author of the first Gospel was Matthew the tax-collector, and Hutter has concluded that such a term of disdain would be in keeping with Matthew's revulsion for his former sinful occupation, as he recounted the events of which he had been a witness. Hutter's clear variation certainly raises the question of *why* he has not demonstrated greater consistency, since he obviously was aware of the *baʿal-meḵeś* possibility.

The Hebrew verb נגשׂ, *n-g-s*, which frequently has the meaning "to oppress, to apply pressure to, to impel, to drive hard," seems to be used in the sense of "to tax; to push for the payment of taxes" in at least some occurrences (e.g. II Kings 23:35); in Daniel 11:20, the noun נוֹגֵשׂ, *nôgēs* is explicitly understood as "tax-collector" by several modern translations (NAB, NIV); the NJB has "an extortioner," the RSV has "an exactor of tribute" and the NJPS has "an officer to exact tribute". The NRSV has the more generic "an official". It is thus possible that *nôgēs* could represent "tax-collector" in Hebrew, especially the more negative and harsh qualities associated with that role.

"An excise tax on articles consumed was called 'belo' in Hebrew, and a road toll or customs tax was termed 'halakh'. In Ezra 4:20, these indirect taxes are termed 'tribute' and 'duty' respectively in the modern English version. Other words used in various places in the Old Testament were 'mas' (forced labor) [I Kings 5:13; v. 27, Hebrew text], 'massa' (burden) [II Chronicles 17:11], 'mekhes' (measure) [Numbers 31:25-31], and 'middah' (tribute) [Ezra 4:20]. These numerous terms were perhaps necessary because the Hebrew language had no general word corresponding to the English word 'tax' [James Orr, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956), 2918]." Manuel L. Jose and Charles K. Moore, "The Development of Taxation in the Bible: Improvements in Counting, Measurement and Computation in the Ancient Middle East," in Simon James, ed. *Taxation: Critical Perspectives on the World Economy* (London: Routledge, 2002), 23.

incorporate the *telōnēs—gabelou* comparison (which is indeed fascinating) in a note, where it could more effectively stimulate—and not stump—his intended audience.

There are a number of other expressions in which Chouraqui's etymological fascination shines through in striking and unaccustomed translations:

5.2. Sperma

The noun *σπέρμα, sperma* (literally "seed") occurs 17x in the Gospels, and Chouraqui's chosen translation is *semence.* Chouraqui's consistency here is reflective of that of the KJV, which employed "seed" throughout, resulting in readings which are frequently quite memorable (e.g. "to raise up seed for his brother").[450] *Semence* has several benefits: it posits a fundamental unity between the fertility of the natural world (e.g. farmers, grain and mustard seeds, Matt 13:3-9, 18-43 and parallels) and that of human beings, whose "seed" blossoms forth in their children.[451] *Semence,* derived from the Latin *semen* (which is the translation of the Vulgate in these passages), also summons up the imagery of human sexuality, highlighting the *sperma=sperm=semen* association. It also provides for a more obvious linguistic connection in French between *sperma* and the verb *σπείρω, speirō,* with which it is associated in Matt 13:24, 27, 34 and Mark 4:31 (*semence* ⇔ *semer*). Given the semantic flexibility of *semence,* which is able to express both nuances simultaneously, I believe that Chouraqui's translation here is well-chosen, and will be of particular assistance to those wishing to trace the usage of this particular term in the Gospels.

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[450] The Douay-Rheims version, although generally very literal (and sometimes *overly* literal), is inconsistent in this case, translating *sperma* sometimes as "seed" and sometimes as "issue".

[451] Other French translations tend to employ different vocabulary for "seed," depending on whether it refers to plants or human beings. The BFC, BdeJ and TOB tend to use *grain(e)* for the former (except in Matt 13:24, 27 and 37-38, where BFC, like Chouraqui, employs *semence,* and 13:32, where the TOB has *semences;* presumably this difference is rooted in a desire for linguistic variety). For the latter (i.e., for human beings), these versions generally employ *descendants, descendance, postérité* or *lignée.* One does not need to be a linguist to recognize the very different semantic "flavour" conjured up by *posterité* or *lignée* (more technical terms associated with history, law, genealogy or genetics), versus the agricultural associations evoked by *semence.*

5.3. MISTHŌTOS

In Mark 1:20, Chouraqui translates the Greek phrase *μετὰ τῶν μισθωτῶν, meta tōn misthōtōn,* with "avec les mercenaires". Other translations use "ouvriers" (BFC, TOB, Mar) or "employés" (BdJ). The Greek *misthōtos* specifically designates a hired labourer, someone who works in exchange for payment (often day-labourers in ancient Palestine?).[452] The French "mercenaire" is derived from the Latin *mercenarius,* "[one] that does any thing for reward or pay; hired for money, wages, or pay; paid, hired"[453] (*mercenarius* is, in fact, the reading of the Vulgate in this passage, and it seems likely that this is Chouraqui's inspiration for this term). Unlike other possible terms, which tend to focus on the aspect of the person's status as an *employee,* Chouraqui's choice focusses on the aspect of *payment-for-labour,* which seems to capture the particular semantic "colouring" in this term (other *misthōt-* cognates are clearly associated with finance: *misthōphoreō,* "to receive wages or pay"; *misthōtēs,* "someone who pays rent; a tenant"; *misthōtikos,* "connected to rental of property; that what is paid by a tenant," etc.). It is in this same vein that the Bayard translation uses *salarié* here for *misthōtos,* similarly emphasizing the aspect of financial compensation for services, which seems particularly inherent in this term;

5.4. PHIMOŌ

Chouraqui's version offers a particularly vivid rendering of the Greek verb *φιμόω, phimoō* in its five occurrences (Matt 22:12, 34; Mk 1:25; 4:39; Lk 4:35). Other French versions (TOB, BdJ, BFC, Mar, Bay) have tended to translate the imperative form of this verb as "Tais-toi" (Be quiet, be silent, hush up) or "Silence!". Its primary meaning, however, is "to muzzle [an animal]," "to put something over or around the

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[452] The term is used only 3x in the Gospels, and its other occurrence is in John 10:12-13 (the Good Shepherd pericope), in which it is used negatively, to describe a "hired shepherd" who is primarily motivated by his salary, and flees in the face of danger, because he does not have the commitment to the flock desired in a "good" or "true" shepherd.

[453] From the Latin *merces,* "price, hire, pay wages, salary, fee, reward". CHARLTON T. LEWIS AND CHARLES SHORT, *A Latin Dictionary;* online at www.perseus.tufts.edu

mouths of animals so as to prevent them from eating" (Louw-Nida *Lexicon*). Chouraqui's renderings ("Muselle-toi!" or "Sois muselé!") capture this concrete connotation beautifully, suggesting the image of a wild animal being tamed, or forced into submission—appropriate in speaking of the violence of the sea (which was considered as a quasi-animate force in many ancient cultures) or of demonic spirits. The Gospels also use it for Jesus' "muzzling" or "enforced silencing" of his opponents, again suggesting the taming of a hostile force which is brought to heel by a superior power. Inasmuch as the meaning (with regard to human beings) is often "to cause someone to have nothing to say; to deprive of an argument," a consistent translation of "muzzling" may occasionally be too strong.[454]

5.5. THRĒNEŌ

In Matt 11:17 (and in its parallel in Lk 7:32), Jesus mockingly says of his critics that they are like children who complain, "we wailed, and you did not mourn". French versions traditionally render this expression as "Nous avons chanté des chants de deuil / entonné un chant funèbre". Chouraqui, however, says "Nous avons chanté *des thrènes,*" an arresting translation until one compares it with the Greek, *ἐθρηνήσαμεν, ethrēnēsamen,* from the verb *θρηνέω, thrēneō.* "Thrène" is, in fact, a very old French technical term for mourning songs or funeral dirges, derived from the same Greek root. Rather than creating a term *ex nihilo,* Chouraqui has delved into the rich vocabulary of the French language's own history, to retrieve a cognate that closely approximates the Greek. Unfortunately, Chouraqui is not consistent in this rendering: there are two further occurrences of this verb in the Gospels (Lk 23:27 and John 16:20), in which he inexplicably switches to the verb "lamenter".

5.6. SELĒNIAZOMAI

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[454] Today, the command "Muzzle it!" is sometimes used in informal English, with the sense of "Be quiet; I don't want to hear anything further about this".

Both Matt 4:24 and 17:15 employ the verb σεληνιάζομαι, *selēniazomai*, its only two occurrences in the New Testament (as a present passive participle in the first passage, and as a present passive indicative in the second).[455] Many modern translators (NIV, NJB, NRSV, BFC) and commentators understand this to be a reference to epilepsy or to some form of mental illness. Chouraqui, however, is sensitive to the meaning of the original Greek: "to be moonstruck" or "under the moon's sway" (derived from the Greek σελήνη, the moon, and Σελήνη, the goddess of the moon) and so his translation reprises the older rendering of "lunatic" (*lunatique)* which is also found in the King James, the Douay-Rheims and, surprisingly, the NAB. For someone as interested in etymology as Chouraqui is, this clearly has the advantage of highlighting for his readers the "moon" connection, preserved here via the Latin *luna* (and the French *lune)*—all of which is lost in references to epilepsy or mental illness. It also points us to the longstanding historical association of some forms of mental illness with the phases of the moon, and is a salutary reminder that our modern medical assumptions and diagnoses are not necessarily those of ancient Mediterranean cultures, which saw illness and healing in somewhat different categories than our modern ones. However, it is questionable whether today's word *lunatique*—as appealing a translation as that may be—accurately captures what was intended by the first-century author of Matthew[456]. It is an intelligent choice, but perhaps a somewhat misleading one, if epilepsy (and not mental illness) *is* what the Greek term refers to.

5.7. Leitourgia

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[455] The Liddell-Scott-Jones *Lexicon* also cites an occurrence of this verb, with this meaning, in the work of the second-century CE astrologer Vettius Valens (*Anthologies* 113.10). In several other works, it seems to have the meaning of "being subject to change and decay", i.e. waxing and waning, like the moon (*Ibid.).*

[456] *Le Robert Micro:* "Lunatique: qui a l'humeur changeante, déconcertante" (783). Older French dictionaries capture more of the original, moon-related sense: "Lunatique: Qui est sujet à quelque maladie qui augmente ou qui diminuë selon le cours de la lune" (*Dictionnaire de l'Académie française,* 1ère edition, 1694; online at: http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTfl/projects/dicos/)

Luke 1:23 contains a very specific reference to the cultic role which Zechariah—as a hereditary priest—is called upon to undertake at the Temple. Although many vernacular translations have "the period of his Temple service," "the time of his ministering," or something similar. The Greek here is somewhat more specific: *αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ, hai hēmerai tēs leitourgias autou.* Inasmuch as the French *liturgie* certainly corresponds to the idea of a public ministry in a ritual context, Chouraqui translates the expression as "quand ses jours de liturgie sont remplis...". By employing the appropriate (and familiar) French cognate, Chouraqui captures both the *form* and the *meaning* of the original Greek, in a way which helps his readers to understand Zechariah's role more clearly.

5.8. Makarios

One of the most stunning examples of how intent Chouraqui is on lexical derivations is found in his rendering of the Beatitudes in Matthew and Luke. It has long been acknowledged that, behind Jesus' use of the term "Blessed is/are..." (Grk *μακάριος / μακάριοι, makarios / makarioi*) stands the Hebrew exclamation אַשְׁרֵי, *'ašrê*, a plural construct form which is found 40x in the Hebrew Bible.[457] Translators have long grappled with the best way to appropriately express the meaning and form of this Hebrew expression: "O, the happinesses of...!", "How fortunate...", "How blessed...", "Blessed is/are..." (in French: "Bienheureux", "Heureux", "Quel privilège pour...", "Oh bonheur...", etc.). Chouraqui, however, focuses on the fact that the underlying verbal root, אשׁר, *'-š-r*, seems to mean (in the *Qal*) "go straight, go on, advance" (BDB[458]), speculating with many others that the idea of "blessedness" is a secondary, derivative meaning, in effect the reward/consequence for the one who "walks straight" in a moral and religious sense, who "keeps to the path" as defined by God's Law.

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[457] Predominantly in the Psalms, but also in 1 Ki 10:8; 2 Chr 9:7; Job 5:17; 31:7; Prov 3:13; 8:34; 20:7; 28:14; Isa 30:18; 56:2; Dan 12:12.

[458] BDB notes, however, that the *Qal* form is found only once in the Hebrew Bible, in Prov 9:6, which the BdJ translates well as "*marchez droit* dans la voie de l'intelligence".

On this basis, Chouraqui has used a radically *different* translation, which many readers admire and others detest: "En marche...!"[459] Perhaps this could be expressed in colloquial English as "Rise up!", "Forward!" or "Let's go!" Presumably this is not intended as a summons to a violent uprising[460], but as a call to arise from their social marginalization and to embark on the path toward a very different future, in which their fortunes will be reversed by God, and their sufferings will be transformed into happiness and reward.

5.9. GINŌSKŌ / YADA'

As even beginning students of the Bible quickly learn, the Hebrew verb translated as "to know" does not, in fact, refer solely to the intellectual faculties which English or French convey by that term. Indeed, the English euphemism "to know someone in the biblical sense" (in older English, "to know carnally") captures well the insight that the Biblical Hebrew verb ידע, *y-d-'*, is used (occasionally[461]) with reference

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[459] "Le premier mot du Sermon sur la montagne constitue, dans les traduction, le principal obstacle à la compréhension du message de Iéshoua'. *Makarioï*, dit le grec : « Bienheureux », et ce mot oriente d'emblée les commentateurs sur une fausse piste : les 'béatitudes' sont supposés acquises d'entrée de jeu, alors qu'elle ne le seront, en plénitude, que dans le royaume de IHVH. Or Iéshoua' n'a pas dit *makarioï*, mais *ashréi* (voir Ps 1,1), exclamation au pluriel construit, d'une racine *ashar*, qui implique non l'idée d'un vague bonheur d'essence hédoniste, mais celle d'une rectitude, *iashar*, celle de l'homme en marche sur une route sans obstacle, celle qui mène vers IHVH." (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 53)

[460] A colleague of mine, Father Eugene Curran, has suggested that the background Chouraqui may be drawing upon for this image (and which he can safely assume in a French reader) is that of the French national anthem, the *Marseillaise*, where the verb *marcher* is used in a revolutionary sense, as a call to arms, and a summons to rise up and join the throng journeying toward eventual victory. This is a particularly interesting hypothesis, given the way in which Chouraqui weaves together both deliberate and subconscious allusions in his translation. It is not the first time that someone has seen a more or less "revolutionary charter" in the words of the Beatitudes, which spell out a dramatically different vision of society, its values and priorities. "Empruntant aux sages d'Israël l'expression paradoxale de sa pensée, Jésus prend avec eux le contrepied du bon sens et porte son attention sur le monde tel qu'il apparaît à qui sait le voir ; Jésus indique la démarche qui mène à la découverte du cœur de l'homme et à celle de sa destinée, à la lumière de ses échecs, de ses contradictions et de ses attentes." (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 55)

[461] GERHARD BOTTERWECK ("ידע, *yāḏa'*," *TDOT*, 453) suggests that this meaning is found only in about 15 of its 948 OT occurrences—or about 1.6%.

to sexual intercourse[462]—a meaning that "to know" does not have in either French or English. It is not surprising that Chouraqui, intent as he is on trying to capture as much of the multivalence of Biblical terms as possible in his choice of French renderings, seeks to communicate the concepts (distinct to modern Europeans, but apparently unified in the minds of the Biblical authors) which Hebrew expresses by ידע (and which he considers to be behind occurrences of the Greek verbs *οἶδα, oida* [139x in the Gospels] and *γινώσκω, ginōskō* [109x])[463]. Chouraqui's rendering is a striking one: "*pénétrer*". In terms of its ability to combine both Hebrew nuances in a single French term, this initially appears to be a brilliant selection, conjuring up both the cognitive "penetration" of the unknown by the mind, but also the more physical "penetration" which takes place in sexual relations. How accurately, however, does it capture the *connotation* of ידע? It must be admitted that, especially in the sexual realm, "penetration" is not a common term, except in some medical and legal contexts; it carries at least a slight hint of force which, while not exactly "rape," certainly inclines in that direction. There is nothing of love or emotion to it—it is an extremely antiseptic and almost clinical term, concerned only with the external action of coitus. It seems, however, that the Hebrew was not so crudely or reductionistically physical, but saw sexual intimacy as expressing the deepest "coming-to-know" possible between two human beings, a physical and emotional form of "knowledge" that paralleled in some sense the more intellectual types of knowing:

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462 E.g., in Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 24:16; I Kgs 1:4, etc.

463 Although some have attempted to demonstrate differences in the semantic ranges or nuances of these two verbs, they have met with only limited success. "It is tempting to conclude that *oída* and *ginőskō* ought to be distinguished from one another in their force, especially when both occur in the same context, appearing to express a distinction, but this is difficult to demonstrate ... A limited distinction may be noted, in that *ginőskō* is sometimes used in the sense of 'learn' (Mt. 9:30; Lk. 19:15), whereas *oída* denotes settled knowledge, whether derived from revelation or instruction (Jn. 8:55). Some scholars contend that *oída* signifies intuitional knowledge ... The term *oída* is used interchangeably with *ginőskō* in the NT in sufficient instances to put one on guard against finding some distinctive meaning in *oída.*" C.F.H. Henry, "Know," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.* Rev. ed. (eds. Geoffrey W. Bromiley *et al*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988). Vol. 3, 48.

> ... in Hebrew thought to 'know' something was to experience it, rather than merely to intellectualize it. To 'know' someone was to share an intimate personal relationship with that one. Thus the Hebrew verb *yada*, 'to know,' means to encounter, experience, and share in an intimate way. So, a man may 'know' a woman through sexual intercourse (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25), and a woman may 'know' a man (Num. 31:17). In sum, in biblical Hebrew, the verb *yada* denotes 'an act involving concern, inner engagement, dedication, or attachment to a person. It also means to have sympathy, pity, or affection for someone'. The idea of knowledge thus embraced the whole human personality."[464]

By this criteria, I believe that *pénétrer* leads us in the wrong direction, reducing intercourse to its physical element[465].

The second question this translation raises is: *do oida* and *ginōskō* necessarily translate an underlying *Hebrew* concept? Certainly, on the level of the historical Jesus and his earliest circle of Semitic followers, this may be a reasonable assumption. But, as other studies have shown, in the ancient Mediterranean, the connection between "knowing" and sexual intercourse was not exclusive to Hebrew:[466] in his 1911 doctoral thesis at Princeton,[467] Donald Blythe Durham identified similar vocabulary in the work of the fourth-century BCE Greek dramatist Menander. Similarly, J.N. Adams' *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*[468] points to similar constructions in Latin in the century before Christ (Catullus, Julius Cæsar, Ovid). Furthermore, the fact that the sexual connotation seems

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[464] MARVIN R. WILSON, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 287-88, citing ABRAHAM J. HESCHEL, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 57.

[465] In addition, *pénétrer* (in an active sense) would seem to describe the specific physical role of the *man*, whereas the biblical *yāḏa'* can be predicated of both men *and* women; see, e.g., Num 31:17-18, 35; Jdg 11:39.

[466] Botterweck, in his entry for ידע in the *TDOT*, cites a similar verb, *rḥ*, in ancient Egyptian, and a Ugaritic cognate, *yd'*, with similar meaning (Vol. 5, 455, 460).

[467] *The Vocabulary of Menander Considered in Its Relation to the Koine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1913), 5. J.N. Adams (see note below) cites fragment 382.5 of Menander: "*ἔπειτα φοιτῶν καὶ κολακεύων <ἐμέ τε καὶ> / τὴν μητέρ' ἔγνω μ.*'

[468] "The familiar biblical euphemism 'know' (of carnal knowledge) was well domiciled in Latin before it made an appearance in Bible translations: e.g., Catull. 72:1 (*nosse*), 61:180 (*cognitæ*), Cæs. *Gall.* 6.21.5 (*notitiam habuisse);* Ovid *Her.* 6.133 (*cognouit);* cf. *CIL* VI.12853.5=*CE* 538 'dedita coniugi soli suo, *ignara* alienum'." (*Latin Sexual Vocabulary* [Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982], 190).

to apply in fewer than 2% of the occurrences in the Hebrew Bible should make us extremely wary about broad, sweeping generalizations as to its meaning.

6. Consistency in Translation

Part of Chouraqui's aim in translation is to assist those laypeople who wish, not merely to *read* the Bible, but to study it in depth. For those without training in *koinē* Greek (or without sophisticated tools like analytical concordances or interlinear translations), it is extremely difficult, using modern translations, to trace the usage of a single theologically-significant term throughout the Gospels. One of the canons of dynamic-equivalence (meaning-focussed) translation is that the translator's rendering should be guided by the meaning of a particular Greek word *in each specific context where it occurs*. The frequency with which such theologically-significant terms occur, and the wide variety of instances, normally mean that *several* English or French terms may be required to render a *single* Greek term. Particularly when the same term occurs repeatedly in close proximity, many translators feel that, for purposes of literary elegance and to avoid monotony, several different terms should be employed.

Chouraqui's view is exactly the opposite. In order to perceive some of the literary and theological effects which he believes are constructs intended by the New Testament authors, he believes that it is vital to use a bare minimum of such variation and, ideally, to consistently translate the same Greek term by the same English term, in a one-to-one correspondence that quickly reveals themes, emphases and clusters of related terms, used for effect.

6.1. Ballō

This attempt on Chouraqui's part is perhaps most evident in his effort in rendering the Greek verb *βάλλω, ballō*, its compounds and cognates (such as *ekballō, epiballō, periballō* and *symballō*), which are extremely common in the Gospels (more than 190 occurrences in total). Chouraqui is not perfectly consistent here, but what he is

attempting to do quickly becomes clear, by comparing his choice of terms with that of other French translations:

6.1.1. EKBALLŌ

One of the most common *ballō*-forms is the verb *ekballō*, "to cast out," used 72x, principally with reference to exorcisms of evil spirits performed by Jesus and his followers; Chouraqui translates these very literally as "jeter dehors". It is interesting to note, therefore, some places where Chouraqui *does* and *does not* employ this wording[469].

In Matt 9:38, Chouraqui retains the "jeter dehors" translation, in a phrase where other French translations use "envoyer" (the sending-out of labourers into God's harvest). In Matt 21:12, he employs "jeter dehors" for Jesus' expulsion of the money-changers and sellers from the Temple precincts (other French versions use "chasser" here). In this latter case in particular, the fact that this expression has been used regularly before this for the expulsion of demonic spirits may be a deliberate choice on Matthew's part, as part of his polemic against Jews who do not accept Jesus as Messiah. The verbal linkage may subtly portray them as Satanic pawns, thus suggesting a cosmic tug-of-war at work—and precisely in the setting of the Temple, the heart of Jewish religious life.

In Matt 7:4-5, and again in 15:17, four occurrences of *ekballō* are translated "chasser ... de". In 12:20, it is rendered by "...qu'il n'ait mené le jugement à la victoire". In 12:35, the same verb is rendered in two different ways in the same sentence: "tire du bon ... exprime ce qui est criminel". Chouraqui surprises his readers, therefore, both by uncommon places where he *holds to* "jeter dehors," and by situations in which he seems to abandon it in favour of other expressions.

6.1.2. BALLŌ FORMS IN MARK 12

In Mark 12:41-44, we have seven uses of forms of the verb *ballō* in quick succession, all connected to people giving donations for the Temple treasury. Chouraqui's translation of "jeter [les monnaies]" is striking, because of the seeming force/violence it implies, but also because it departs from the rendering of other French versions: "déposer ... donner ... mettre ... mettre ... [*τῶν βαλλόντων not translated*] ... donner ... offrir" (BFC); "mettre ... mettre ... mettre ... mettre ... mettre ... mettre ... mettre" (BdJ, TOB); "jeter ... déposer ... mettre ... donner ... verser ... verser ... mettre" (Mar). Although the BdJ demonstrates the desired consistency in vocabulary, nevertheless it is only the Bayard translation which attempts to similarly employ the French *jeter*, making the link with its use elsewhere in the gospels: "jeter ... jeter ...jeter ...jeter ... [*τῶν βαλλόντων not translated*] ... jeter ... jeter";

6.1.3. EPIBALLŌ

Of the thirteen uses of *epiballō* in the gospels, more than half involve the expression "to lay hands on [someone or something]," six of these (Matt 26:50; Mark 14:46; Lk 20:19; 21:12; John 7:30, 44) referring to those who seek to (or actually do) arrest Jesus (the other, in Lk

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[469] For the sake of space, I will only examine the twenty-eight occurrences in Matthew's gospel here.

9:62, speaks of "laying one's hand on/to the plough"). In each of these expressions, Chouraqui carefully makes use of "jeter la/les main(s) sur," continuing his extended use of the verb *jeter*. However, the other six occurrences are translated in a rather inconsistent way: in Matt 9:16 and its parallel in Lk 5:36 (regarding the imprudence of sewing a new patch on old cloth), Chouraqui translates *epiballō* with "ajouter". In Mark 4:37 (the storm on the lake), the waves are said to "se jeter sur la barque"; *jeter* is skillfully employed. The Palm Sunday text in Mark 11:7 speaks of the disciples placing their clothes on the donkey's back; Chouraqui has "jeter dessus". In both of these cases, *epiballō*'s rootedness in *ballō* is readily apparent to the reader.

In Mark 14:72, however, the aorist participle ἐπιβαλών, *epibalōn*, has provoked a certain degree of consternation for translators—what does it mean in the context of Peter's realization of his denial of Jesus? The BFC suggests "il se mit à pleurer"; the BdJ, Mar and Bay all have "il éclata en sanglots"; the TOB reads "il sortit précipitamment; il pleurait". Several English versions give "he broke down," and others guess "he wept abundantly". Chouraqui's reading is more adverbial: "hors de lui, il pleure"—which does not seem to take account of *any* of the wide range of possible translations put forth by scholars who have examined this apparently idiosyncratic usage.[470] Neither, unfortunately, does it give the slightest indication of the *ballō=jeter* equivalence that Chouraqui has so carefully cultivated elsewhere.

6.2 Anatol-

Another example can be found in Matt 2, where three occurrences of the lexical group ἀνατολ-, *anatol-* occur in close succession (ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν in 2:1, ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν in 2:2 and ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ in 2:9). Chouraqui wishes for two things to be clear to his readers: (1) the sense of the prefixed preposition ἀνά as indicating an upward motion, and (2) the rootedness of the *geographical* reference ("east") in the

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[470] W. Robertson Nicoll, in Vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897) calls this use of *epibalōn* "another puzzle in Mark's vocabulary; very variously interpreted". Nicoll cites three theories current at the end of the nineteenth century: that was an ellipsis of the phrase ἐπιβαλὼν τὸν νοῦν ("when he had thought thereon"); the conclusion of Theophylact (10th-11th centuries), that ἐπιβαλὼν here is essentially synonymous with ἐπικαλυψάμενος τὴν κεφαλην ("having covered his head" [so that he might weep without being seen]); and the possibility that ἐπιβαλὼν was actually a scribal misreading of ἐκβαλὼν, "having gone out; having flung himself out". He further mentions the evidence of D [Codex Bezae] and other ancent Latin, Coptic and Syriac versions which read instead ἠρξατο κλαιειν ["he began to weep"] (445). Raymond E. Brown provides a helpful summary of the possible renderings, on pp. 609-10 of Vol. 1 of his *Death of the Messiah*, and a very thorough discussion of the issue can be found in R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 623. As France notes, the BAGD *Lexicon* "cannot fit this case under any of the attested meanings of *epiballō* ... Mark's choice of idiom must remain obscure, but the essential sense is not in doubt...".

concept of the dawn/rising sun, which may not always be obvious. Chouraqui deliberately links the group in his translation as "[des mages] *du Levant* ... [son étoile] *au Levant* ... [l'étoile vue] *au Levant*". The other translations have, respectively:

BdJ: d'Orient ... à son lever ... à son lever
TOB: d'Orient ... à l'Orient ... à l'Orient
BFC: d'Orient ... en Orient ... en Orient
Mar: d'Orient ... en Orient ... en Orient
Bay: d'Orient ... à l'est ... en Orient[471]

Chouraqui's translation therefore offers a triple advantage: it employs the same term consistently in all three occurrences, signalling his readers to the use of the same Greek word; its use of *Levant* captures, in French, a sense of *the Middle East* more specifically (unlike *Orient*, which is "the East" more generically)[472]; and its form, as the present participle of the verb *lever*, captures both the general idea of "rising," and of the sun-rise (*lever du soleil; le soleil levant*) particularly. Although *Orient* is a very common term in French, even many francophones may not be aware that it is itself derived from the present participle (*oriens*) of the Latin verb *orior*, "to arise"—and thus "the rising [one]"—the exact equivalent of "Le Levant"!

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[471] Compare also (in English) the NJB: "from the east ... as it rose ... the star they had seen rising"; the NRSV and NAB: "from the east ... at its rising ... at its rising". According to BAGD and a number of commentators, the *plural* form refers to the East, whereas the *singular* refers to the rising of a star or of the sun. Undoubtedly, the translators' decision not to employ "in the east" in the second and third occurrences also reflects an awareness that, from the homeland of the Magi (Iran/Iraq?), the star would not *be* in the east, but—on the contrary—in the west.
There may, in fact, be much more to the discussion than a simple point of morphology. On this, see the interesting and enlightening discussion in: Mark R. Kidger, *The Star of Bethlehem: An Astronomer's View* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 25-27. Drawing upon an article by David Hughes in the journal *Nature*, Kidger proposes that the Greek singular actually refers to what astronomers called the "heliacal rising" of a star, the point at which a previously invisible star will first become visible again, at sunrise. "According to Hughes, when the Magi stated that they had seen the Star 'en té anatolé,' they were saying that they had seen the Star in the first light of dawn ... Thus, as dawn broke in the east, the Magi would in fact have seen a bright star, as most people like to believe ... It tells us that the Star was probably positioned low in the east, at dawn ..." (27).

[472] The *Robert Micro*'s definition of "levant" includes "*Le Levant*, les régions de la Méditerranée orientale (on dit aujourd'hui Proche-Orient, Moyen-Orient)" Alain Rey, ed. *Le Robert Micro*. Paris: Éditions Robert, 2006, 762. The entry characterizes this usage, however, as "vieilli"—somewhat outmoded.

7. Reproduction of Morphological Characteristics

It is perhaps a corollary of Chouraqui's decision to employ a wide range of Hebrew proper names and significant theological terms, that he must then seek to unpack some of the morphology of these terms, inasmuch as it differs from French morphology, may be of theological or linguistic interest, and will not be immediately obvious to someone who has not studied biblical languages.

7.1 Hebrew Duals and Plurals

One of the ways in which Chouraqui achieves this is quite novel: in the case of both the Hebrew plural and dual suffixes (*-im, -ayim*), Chouraqui adds an additional *s* to the form, to signal the French reader that the foreign word in front of him or her is, in fact, indicative of "more than one". To someone familiar with Hebrew, this can come across as a linguistic oddity, adding a (French) plural suffix where one already exists. However, the average reader of Chouraqui's work is unlikely to intuit that *Peroushîm* [Pharisees] is, in fact, the plural form of *Peroush,* that *Sopherîm* [scribes] is the plural of *sopher,* or that *Shomronîm* [Samaritans] pluralizes *Shomronî;* these therefore become *Peroushîms, Sopherîms* and *Shomronîms,* respectively. Once one grasps the logic of Chouraqui's project, this morphological signal is understandable, if perhaps unexpected. Chouraqui is attempting to guide his readers into some of the particularities of Hebrew, without a formal course in grammar.

What is more striking—and more interesting—both linguistically and theologically, is Chouraqui's decision[473] to indicate the plural of certain more unusual terms, which both Jewish and Christian scholars have traditionally characterized as "plurals of majesty/excellence/intensity" (and translated as singulars). Chouraqui seems to see this procedure as something of a sneaky scholarly evasion, a refusal to

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[473] This was obviously a decision made between the publication of *L'Univers de la Bible* in the 1980s and the latest edition of *La Bible Chouraqui;* there is no "s" on the plural and dual forms in the earlier edition, but there is in the 2003 version.

allow the reader to grapple for him/herself with the implications of these grammatical forms, which have intrigued and troubled interpreters for centuries.

7.1.1. YᵉRÛŠĀLAYIM

Why is it, for example, that the name of Jerusalem takes a specifically *dual* form in Hebrew, as יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, *Yᵉrûšālayim* (Chour: *Ieroushalaïms)*? Jewish and Christian commentaries have traditionally explained this is a reference to the "earthly/present" city of Jerusalem (*Yerushalayim shel mattah*), and the "heavenly/future" city of Jerusalem (*Yerushalayim shel ma'alah*)—the Holy City in its eschatological perfection, in the presence of God:

> R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: What is the meaning of the scriptural verse, *The Holy One in the midst of thee and I will not come in to the city?* [Hosea 11:9] [Surely it cannot be that] because the Holy One is in the midst of thee I shall not come into the city! He replied: Thus said R. Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter the earthly Jerusalem'. Is there then a heavenly Jerusalem? Yes; for it is written, *Jerusalem thou art builded as a city that is compact together.* [Ps. 122:3][474]
>
> You find that Jerusalem on high is situated directly opposite the earthly Jerusalem. It was because the earthly Jerusalem was exceedingly precious to Him that He fashioned another one on high, as it is said: *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before me* (Isa. 49:16) ... [The city that the Lord built was] on high, directly opposite the one on earth, and concerning which He vowed that His Shekhinah would not enter the city above until the earthly Jerusalem was erected. How beloved was Israel in the sight of the Holy One, blessed be He![475]
>
> We have learned: The blessed Holy One formed Jerusalem below corresponding to the pattern above, this one arrayed facing the other, as it is written: מכון *(makhon), dais, of Your throne, that You made, O YHVH* (Exodus

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[474] "Stressing the word שחוברה, R. Johanan adduces from the verse that Jerusalem has a חברה, a companion (or prototype) in heaven. Both are said to be situated exactly opposite each other. [The verse in Hosea is thus taken to mean: There is a holy (city) in thy midst (referring to the earthly Jerusalem) and I (i.e., God) will not enter the city (the heavenly Jerusalem)]." (Soncino Talmud, b. *Ta'anit* 5a and accompanying notes)

[475] SAMUEL A. BERMAN, *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu: An English Translation of Genesis and Exodus from the Printed Version of Tanhuma-Yelammedenu with an Introduction, Notes and Indexes* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1995), 648.

> 15:17) ... for the blessed Holy One will one day cause Jerusalem to descend from above fittingly.[476]

This dichotomous portrayal is already picked up in the New Testament, and will become a significant theme in patristic commentaries and preaching:

> But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. (Galatians 4:26 NRSV)
>
> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect. (Hebrews 12:22-23 NRSV)

Justin Martyr, Origen and Augustine are among the many Fathers of the Church who will develop this strand of allegorical interpretation, which will provide rich inspiration for Christian spirituality, liturgy and architecture.

It is precisely this tradition (which Chouraqui wishes to evoke and open up to his non-specialist readers) that lies behind his emphasis on translating this "duality" of Jerusalem. His goal is simply to point out this fascinating linguistic anomaly, without meaning to impose a particular linguistic or theological interpretation upon it. Is the answer as mundane as some have suggested: a dual form to reflect the Upper and Lower parts of the ancient city (just as the dual form for Egypt, *Miṣraîm*, probably corresponds to the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt)? Or is there is a further richness—historical, theological, mystical—concealed in this dual form? Chouraqui's version at least invites his readers to begin to grapple with some possible reasons and their implications, in a way not possible with other translations. In a world in which many Christians today are quite theologically sophisticated, Chouraqui's choice is respectful of adult learners, allowing them to explore the possibilities and, in the end, to draw their own (newly informed) conclusions.

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[476] Daniel Chanan Matt, *The Zohar* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 120.

7.1.2. PROSŌPON / PĀNÎM

Chouraqui is similarly convinced that, behind many of the occurrences of the Greek πρόσωπον, *prosōpon*, is concealed the Hebrew פָּנִים, *pānîm*, with the masculine plural suffix *-îm*. For this reason, Chouraqui translates *prosōpon* with the plural *faces*[477]. Again, the question arises: how are we to understand the plural form of *pānîm*? Traditionally, Jewish interpreters have pointed out that every human being has a *multiplicity* of "faces"—different ways in which we encounter others, either deliberately or unconsciously. Our faces reveal and communicate the many facets of our personality and our emotions, so that it is impossible to speak only of one "face". In a note on Matt 6:17, Chouraqui confirms this: "L'hébreu *panîm* est toujours employé au pluriel, afin de signifier les expressions multiples que peut revêtir le visage de l'homme" (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 63). The simple addition of the letter "s," rooted in Hebrew morphology and physiology, provides an opportunity to reflect on a psychological and spiritual insight that is surprisingly modern.

8. REINVIGORATING TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS TERMS

Chouraqui repeatedly stated that a primary impetus pushing him to prepare a radically new translation was his sense that certain key biblical terms had, through familiarity or overuse, become "fossilized" in popular usage. Over the course of centuries of French translation, some terms (in both Testaments) had gradually become divorced from their original meanings, while others had become "spiritualized" or "Christianized" in ways that Chouraqui felt would summon up incorrect or misleading images, no longer rooted in the concreteness of Jesus' original Semitic

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[477] See, e.g., Matt 6:16-17; 11:10, 26; 12:4; 16:3; Mark 1:2; 2:26; 12:14; Lk 1:17; 5:12; 6:4; 9:29. He has also rendered several prepositions and prepositional phrases using *faces*, such as "en faces de" (Matt 3:7, translating Grk *apo;* 4:10, capturing some of the sense of *proskuneō*, "to bow down *before*"; Luke 12:6, translating *enōpion;* John 12:37, translating *emprosthen).* In all of these, it seems that Chouraqui seems Greek translations of the Hebrew preposition לִפְנֵי, .

expressions. Many of these terms have been "canonized" by long-time theological use, and have acquired meanings which Chouraqui wishes to set aside (at least temporarily), to enable *other* possible meanings to surface.

It comes as quite a shock, therefore, for a reader—and particularly a Christian reader—to discover that many of the most common theological and biblical terms that one *expects* to find in the Gospels are not, in fact, found in Chouraqui's work ... or at least not in their traditional and customary forms. His changes, which can initially seem disconcerting and somewhat arbitrary, are clarified considerably by the explanatory notes in *L'Univers de la Bible.* As the reader progresses, these new renderings can both provoke new insights and offer a sense of liberation and freshness to a text whose overfamiliarity may be at the expense of its actual *meaning.* This was certainly Chouraqui's stated purpose.

8.1. ANGELOS

The noun ἄγγελος, *angelos* occurs fifty-four times in the Gospels, and is particularly concentrated in Matthew and Luke. Chouraqui, however, was concerned that many modern readers would be overly influenced by centuries of Christian iconography, which has tended to portray angels either as magnificent (and clearly otherworldly) winged figures, as heavenly minstrels (cf. the frescoes of Melozzo da Forli) or as the pudgy *putti* of Raphael. Lost in these artistic renderings was the inherent link between *angelos* and such related Greek terms as *angellia* (announcement, proclamation, message), *evangelion* (a declaration of happy or beneficial news), and the verb *angellō* (to announce, to declare, to proclaim) and its cognates (*epangellō, diangellō,* etc.).[478] Many Bible readers today, conditioned by these ubiquitous artistic representations, no longer automatically associate the concept of "announcing" or

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[478] As Chouraqui correctly points out, the Greek *angelos* is the LXX's equivalent of the Heb מַלְאָךְ, *mal'āḵ,* "a messenger" and, secondarily, "an angel". The Hebrew root לאך, *l-'-ḵ* seems to connote the sending of someone to bear a message to another; "l'hébreu *malakh* ... n'a pas la signification purement spirituelle que le mot 'ange' a prise par la suite" (*L'Univers de la Bible,* 38).

"delivering a message" with the word "angel". For many readers, the term is exclusively associated with heavenly figures, which does not take into account the passages in which *angelos* clearly means an earthly, human figure (such as the application of Mal 3:1 to John the Baptist in Matt 11:10, Mark 1:2 and Lk 7:27, and Lk 9:52, in which Jesus sends "messengers" [*ἀγγέλους, angelous*] ahead of him). Chouraqui's compromise is to strip away a certain layer of theological precomprehension, and to settle on the more prosaic *messager*, which, he feels, captures more accurately the sense of the Greek term and its Hebrew antecedents, and is open to both an earthly and a heavenly interpretation, according to the context.

8.2 PRESBYTEROS

Although the concept of priesthood does not play as central a role in the Gospels as in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is present nevertheless—frequently because of the mentions of "the [chief] priests" among those who seem opposed to Jesus.[479] Luke specifies that John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, is a priest of the course of Abijah (Lk 1:5-8), and it is to "the priests" that Jesus sends cleansed lepers for formal acknowledgment of their healing (Lk 5:15; 17:14). Having lived much of his life among Catholics, however, Chouraqui realizes that, for many European Christians, the primary association they have with priesthood is not the ancient *Jewish* institution, but the later *Catholic* variety. Furthermore, he argues that some of the terms most frequently used to translate "priest" in Greek and Latin (*πρεσβύτερος, presbyteros; pontifex)* are equally ill-suited to conveying an idea of the Temple priesthood as it would have been understood by a Second Temple Jew. The first, *presbyteros*, "implique une idée d'ancienneté" (as the comparative form of the Greek adjective *presbys*, "old; advanced in years"); traditionally rendered as "elder," it is, in fact, the linguistic source

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[479] Forms of the Greek *ἀρχιερευς, archiereus* occur eighty-three times in the Gospels. The simple form, *ἱερευς, hiereus* occurs eleven times.

of both the French *prêtre* and the English *priest*.[480] The second term, *pontifex*, is a term associated with the priests who served the Roman pantheon of gods, and is associated with their role as *mediators*, or "bridge-builders," between the common people and the divinity. Both because of its pagan origins and its implication of a mediatory role, Chouraqui rejects *pontifex*, as incompatible with the ancient Jewish concept. In its place, he inserts a word drawn from older French documents, but uncommon in modern French usage: *desservant*. This is the term by which he translates occurrences of the Greek *hiereus;* plural uses of *hoi archiereis* are rendered "les chefs des desservants," and references to the High Priest as "le grand desservant". In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century references, *desservant* was a term used for the cleric who was the incumbent of a particular (usually rural) parish, who "served" or "ministered to" (French *desservir*) the surrounding area.[481] The presumed Hebrew verb כָּהַן, *kāhan* (of which the noun כֹּהֵן, *kohēn* is a denominative form) seems to mean "to officiate in a religious capacity; to serve as a priest"; it is a term specifically used of cultic service, and the French *desservant* is similarly limited in its scope: "*desservant* ne se dit que dans cette dernière acception [i.e., faire le service, les fonctions d'une chapelle, d'une cure]".[482] The unfamiliarity of *desservant* (as a noun) to many readers will, presumably, avoid some of the anachronistic associations of the more common *prêtre*.

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[480] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "priest"; refer to etymological notes. However, the association of *presbyteros* with a formal class of Christian leader (elder/presbyter/priest) is a development in the decades after Christ, as witnessed by the so-called "Catholic Epistles" of I-II Timothy and Titus. In the Gospels, the term is used only with reference to the elders of the Jewish community. Indeed, in the Gospels, Chouraqui himself translates *hoi presbyteroi* by "les Anciens".

[481] "À present, on donne le nom de curé au chef ecclésiastique d'un chef-lieu de canton, tandis que, dans toute commune autre que les chefs-lieux de canton, le chef du service ecclésiastique est appelé desservant" (Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris : Hachette, 1872-77) ; available online at the ARTFL Project: www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos
French *desservir* is itself derived from the Latin *deservio/deservire*, "to serve zealously, be devoted to".

[482] Jean-François Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* (Marseille: Mossy, 1787-88), A750a; available online at the ARTFL Project: www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos

8.3. Disciples, Apostles and Prophets

Two of the more significant words in the four Gospels are "disciple" (*μαθητής, mathētēs;* 233 occurrences) and the less common, but equally important, technical term "apostle" (*ἀπόστολος, apostolos;* 10 occurrences). They are terms regularly used in Christian discourse and theological discussion, particularly in the field of ecclesiology. Neither, however, occurs in the French form that would normally be expected (*disciple, apôtre*). Precisely because these terms have acquired a specifically "churchy" nuance, Chouraqui feels it advisable to avoid the more usual translations, which may suggest to readers a network of ideas extraneous to the original biblical usage.

8.3.1. Mathētēs

Once again, Chouraqui's choice of terms flows from his interest in etymology. The Latin *discipulis* (whence the English and French "disciple") refers to a learner, pupil or apprentice; it is a derivative of the verb *disco*, "to learn; to acquire knowledge; to become acquainted with; to be taught".[483] It is a term closely bound up with the process of education and learning. Similarly, the Greek term *mathētēs* derives from the verb *manthanō*, "to acquire information as the result of instruction, or experience, whether in an informal or formal context; to learn, to be instructed, to be taught; to come to realize; to understand".[484] For many Christian readers, this connotation is largely lost, and "disciple" in the New Testament comes to mean simply "a follower of Jesus". Chouraqui's alternative is a striking one; instead of "disciple," he uses the term "adepte". It is an evocative term on several levels. First of all, linguistically, it derives—via the participle *adeptus*—from the Latin verb *adipiscor*, "to arrive at; to reach; to attain to something by effort or striving". It suggests those who have successfully reached the goal of their searching, and implies a certain *struggle* or *process*

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[483] Drawing upon Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).

[484] J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), s.v. "*μανθάνω*".

of learning. But it is also a term with a very particular history: in the Middle Ages, "adept" was used in the world of alchemy, to describe those who, after years of labour and intensive study, claimed to have attained to the Great Secret; it thus had the somewhat attenuated meaning of "someone who is completely skilled in all the secrets of his art" (cf. *OED*). Historians of religion often use the term "adept" with reference to the ancient mystery religions which were so prevalent in the Mediterranean in the centuries around the time of Jesus. An "adept" was someone who, through a process of initiatory stages, had penetrated into the inner mysteries of the cult, who understands its rituals, symbols and their meaning. To be an adept implied a lengthy and intensive master-disciple relationship, gradually being led further and further into the secrets of the god or goddess (Isis-Osiris, Mithras, Serapis, Hermes, etc.)—secrets which could never be revealed to an outsider.

Is "adept" a suitable category in which to consider discipleship as we see it described in the Gospels? On some levels, the link is an attractive one, drawing both upon the social-religious framework of the ancient Mediterranean, and upon certain aspects of intimacy and obscurity/secrecy that we see in the relationship of Jesus and those who followed him. The idea that disciples are "learners" and that Jesus is portrayed as (and addressed as) their Master/Teacher is certainly accurate. But the comparison is unsatisfactory on several other levels. firstly, the Gospels portray Jesus' ministry as a largely *public* matter—there is very little of the secrecy and exclusiveness that is normally associated with both the mystery cults and medieval alchemy. Jesus' primary message is not destined for a small, élite circle of "initiates" (although certainly the Twelve *are* privy to explanations, experiences and teachings that are not provided to "the crowds"). Etymologically, *adeptus* suggests someone who "has arrived," who has attained to a superior level of understanding reserved for very few. However, what we see in the Gospels, over and over again, is a general *lack* of comprehension of many of Jesus' key teachings by many of those who hear him. Many

of his more cryptic sayings would have been virtually incomprehensible in their original context, and will only make sense in retrospect, in the wake of the events of Jesus' Passion, death and resurrection. The intense master-student relationship is also lacking: the Gospels largely portray "the disciples" as a loose (and probably changing) body of individuals, with minimal structure or cohesion. Finally, there seems to be little scholarly consensus about the degree to which the mystery cults had made inroads in Roman-ruled Palestine during the decades of Jesus' life.[485]

> Among the earlier competitors of belief in Jesus were such new religions as the worship of Mithra from Iran and the worship of Isis from Egypt, along with others such as Cybele from Phrygia in Asia Minor ... The cults of Dionysos and Demeter (and Kore) were ancient mystery religions with long histories and deep attractiveness. They have been less effectively examined and applied to the Bible, partly because their initiation rites were so important, and there were such several penalties for revealing their secrets that almost no information has come down about their activities. All three sub-fields—mystery religions, new religions and Imperial religion—had footholds in Palestine: Samaria/Sebaste, Sepphoris, Beth Shean, Cæsarea Maritima, and Panias.[486]
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> That so many can raise the question of the influence of the mystery-cults on early Christianity and come to such very different answers is in itself eloquent testimony to the problems that beset any who would venture into this field.

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[485] "Although Christianity had points of contact with Stoicism, the mysteries, the Qumran community, and so on, the total worldview was often quite different ... So far as we can tell, Christianity certainly represented a new combination for its time ... At the beginning of the Christian era a number of local mysteries, some of great antiquity, flourished in Greece and Asia Minor. In the first century A.D. the only mysteries whose extension may be called universal were the mysteries of Dionysus and those of the eastern gods, especially Isis." Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity.* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 3, 252.
"Examples of such mystery religions could be found in Greece (the Eleusinian Mysteries at Eleusis, not far from Athens; the religion of Dionsys or Bacchus, god of wine and the vintage harvest); Asia Minor (Cybele, the Great Mother, and her consort Attis, whose priests were castrated in imitation of Attis, diven mad by the jealous Cybele); Syria-Palestine (the Adonis fertility cult); Persia (the religion of Mithras, god of light and patron of the soldier); and Egypt (the religion of Isis and Osiris). Though the mysteries had sacred shrines in these regions, many of them spread to other parts of the empire, including Rome. There is no clearly direct influence of the mysteries on early Christianity, but they shared a common environment and many non-Christians would have perceived Christians as members of an oriental Jewish mystery cult." Norman Perrin and Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament, An Introduction: Proclamation and Parenesis, Myth and History* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 12.

[486] Peter Richardson, "Study of the Græco-Roman World," in J.W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 114.

> These problems were already raised acutely by Albert Schweitzer when he argued that it was only from the early second century C.E. onwards that the mysteries enjoyed wide currency in the Roman Empire ... Schweitzer draws attention to two problems confronting the investigation of a possible background to early Christianity in the mysteries, that Christianity was born when the mysteries' hey-day still lay in the future, and that the mysteries were then yet to undergo a considerable transformation and reinterpretation ... Most of our main sources for the theological thinking of the mysteries comes from this later period when the mysteries were at the height of their influence, and when they were being transformed and reinterpreted ... much of the material used to construct a 'theology of the mystery-religions' is drawn from such sources."[487]

Given the sparse archæological and literary evidence from this period regarding mystery cults in Roman Palestine, and the apparent resistance of many Palestinian Jews to religious syncretism, Chouraqui's use of the noun "adepte" seems likely to presuppose comparisons between the historical Jesus and the mystery cults that are doubtful, on both the levels of chronology and religious culture. I believe that this term, in particular, is likely to suggest a vision of Jesus which, instead of rooting Jesus more deeply in his historical-cultural milieu, in fact *distances* him from the world of religious ancient Judaism, creating a distorted view of what spiritually inspired him.

8.3.2. Apostolos

The second key term, *apostolos*, is changed by Chouraqui to "envoyé". This is perhaps a more defensible and obvious shift, with more to recommend it. Simply put, the Greek *apostolos* is a derivative of the compound verb ἀποστέλλω, *apostellō*, which can be defined "to send out, often with a mandate or a mission; to cause someone to depart for a particular purpose; to send with authority or a commission".[488] The apostle is, both linguistically and in terms of his role, the "sent-out one" (the KJV and the RSV

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[487] A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection Studies in Pauline Theology Against Its Græco-Roman Background*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 44 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 90.

[488] On this second translation, see Louw-Nida *Lexicon*, s.v. "ἀποστέλλω"; on the third, see Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), s.v. "ἀποστέλλω".

both render *apostolos* in John 13:16 as "he that/who is sent")[489]. Unfortunately, the term "apostle" has generally lost its connectedness to the idea of "sending" in both French and English today. "Apostolic" tends to be used, either of the foundations of Christianity (cf. the Nicene Creed: "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church"), of the historical succession of bishops ("apostolic succession") or of those who engage in missionary outreach or community service (an "apostolic" religious community, vs. a cloistered or enclosed community). Chouraqui's use of "envoyé" recaptures the original sense of sending; its form as a past participle suggests that the "envoyé" has been sent *by someone else,* and not simply on his/her own initiative. To be "apostolic," Chouraqui seems to say, is necessarily to be outward-looking, and conscious of bearing a message from another.

8.3.3. PROPHĒTĒS

Because of the clear prediction-fulfillment motif which undergirds so much of the Gospels and early Christianity, it is not surprising that the Greek noun προφήτης, *prophētēs* occurs eighty-six times in these four books. However, instead of the expected French "prophète," Chouraqui has again opted for a variant translation. Perhaps he senses that, for many moderns, "prophet" and "prophecy" are generally equated with clairvoyance and predicting the future, rather than with their more strictly biblical meanings of being a "spokesperson" or "intermediary" of a word received from God, an "authorized interpreter" of the times, in the light of God's message[490]. Chouraqui's choice, "inspiré" is a very interesting one, in light of both Old and New Testament contexts. Past generations of scholars often linked the Hebrew נָבִיא, *nāḇîʾ* (via cognate expressions in other Semitic languages) primarily with the idea of "prophetic ecstasy":

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[489] It is noteworthy that, in this same verse, the main French translations (TOB, BFC, BdeJ, Bay) all render *apostolos* as "envoyé"; Mar has "messager". Most other English versions have "messenger".

[490] From the Greek preposition *pro* + *phēmi,* "to declare; make known" (or perhaps *phainō,* to bring to light; make to appear; reveal; disclose").

an altered state of consciousness (often a type of frenzied motion) in which mystical utterances were made. Such people seemed to experience a type of involuntary "possession," during which their bodies and minds were temporarily "taken over" in an ecstatic state.[491] Chouraqui, however, seems to have a less violent image in mind, "someone into whom [God] has breathed" (Latin *in* + *spiro*, akin to the Greek *θεόπνευστος, theopneustos*, "God-breathed"). These people, in whom God's creative spirit was active, spoke not on their own, but with a God-given spiritual insight (the past participle, *inspiré*, suggests that they have been *acted upon*—perhaps a type of "theological passive"). The ascription of unique spiritual insight to a "spirit" issuing from God is pre-Christian, attested already in Sirach and Wisdom,[492] and found also in later rabbinic texts.[493] The idea of an "inspiré" as someone who speaks with God's

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[491] "The primary meaning [of this related root-cluster] may be the reflexive *to call (to o.s.)*, reinforced in the tD-stem to mean, *to enter into o.s.*, referring to the trance of the ecstatic prophet" A. MURTONEN, *Hebrew in Its West Semitic Setting: A Comparative Survey of Non-Masoretic Hebrew Dialects and Traditions*. Part 1, Vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 270. More recent scholarship, however, has tended to largely discount this derivation, and to see *nāḇî'* as related to a root meaning "to be called, summoned, appointed": "The origin of the term ... is almost certainly to be sought in Akkadian, as W. F. Albright argued many years ago. He derived it from *nabiūm* and *nabū(m)*, 'the one who is called', 'the one who has received a commission ... root *nb'*, already apparently attested at Ebla during the last centuries of the third millennium BCE" J. ALBERTO SOGGIN, *Introduction to the Old Testament: From Its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandrian Canon*. 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1976), 239; "...the Hebrew word employed most frequently for a prophet *(nabî')* means a person 'called' by YHWH ... Israel's prophets were thus primarily mediators and preachers of a personal experience of divine revelation." THEODOR CHRISTIAAN VRIEZEN AND A.S. VAN DER WOUDE, *Ancient Israelite and Early Christian Literature*. 10th rev. ed. of *De Literatuur Van Oud-Israël* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 308.

[492] Sir 48:24 "In the power of the spirit [Isaiah] saw the last things" (NJB)
Wis 7:7 "I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me" (NRSV)
Wis 9:17 "Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?" (NRSV)

[493] *Leviticus Rabbah* 21:8 "R. Hanina b. Hakinai ... went to study Torah at R. Akiba's college at Bene Berak, and stayed there thirteen years ... R. Hanina did not send and did not know what was happening at his house. His wife sent him word and told him: 'Your daughter is marriageable, come and get her married.' [He said nothing to his master.] Nevertheless R. Akiba saw it by means of the Holy Spirit and said to him: 'If any one has a marriageable daughter he may go and get her married.'"
b. *Berakot* 10a "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, son of Amoz, came to him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live, etc. ... [Hezekiah] said to [Isaiah]: Why so bad? [Isaiah] replied: Because you did not try

commission and by virtue of God's power seems to accord well with the idea of prophecy, in both the Old and New Testaments, and I believe that Chouraqui's choice of it is particularly opportune.[494]

8.4. TO PNEUMA HAGION

The Greek expression *πνεῦμα ἅγιον, pneuma hagion* is one that is found twenty-five times in the Gospels, and that is traditionally translated in French as "l'Esprit Saint" or "le Saint-Esprit" (Holy Spirit). However, in the wake of the Trinitarian controversies and councils of the first 500 years of Christianity, Chouraqui realizes that for many Christian readers, the automatic association will be with one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, as defined by more than 1500 years of Christian dogma. To sidestep this particular "lens" (and the theological presumptions it includes), Chouraqui has chosen a less familiar—but equally valid—translation: "le souffle sacré". He is certainly correct in that both the Hebrew רוּחַ, *rûaḥ* and the Greek *πνεῦμα, pneuma* can mean "breath" (as well as "wind" and "spirit").

While diverging from the more traditional Christian rendering, Chouraqui's phrase has much to recommend it. Firstly, it is a reminder that this expression is not entirely foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures; in its form of רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ, *rûaḥ qōdeš*, it is found (with personal pronoun suffixes) in Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10-11,[495] both of which seem to express an impersonal *aspect* of God, or an extension of God's *active*

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to have children. [Hezekiah] said: The reason was because I saw by the holy spirit that the children issuing from me would not be virtuous."

b. *Yoma* 73b: "No priest was inquired of who does not speak by means of the Holy Spirit and upon whom the Divine Presence does not rest"

[494] Likewise, Chouraqui generally translates the verb *προφητεύω, prophēteuō* with "être inspiré" (Matt 7:22; 11:13; 15:7; Mark 7:6; Lk 1:67; John 11:51). In Matt 26:68 and Mark 14:65 (in the context of the soldiers' mockery of Jesus during the Passion), he renders it with "faire l'inspiré," although he returns to "être l'inspiré" in Luke's parallel version (22:64).

[495] The LXX renderings of these verses are "*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν σου*," "*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ*," and "*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*" respectively. Chouraqui is, therefore, justified in building upon the *rûaḥ–pneuma* equivalence which the LXX already supposes. *Rûaḥ* is not, however, the only concept associated with "life-breath": there is also the noun נְשָׁמָה, *nišāmāh*, which the Septuagint translates as *πνοή, pnoē* (e.g. Gen 2:7; 7:22; II Sam 22:16; I Kgs 15:29; Neh 6:1, etc.).

power. Although the expression does not have the definite article (and the more specifically personal quality) that it will acquire in the New Testament (and perhaps in the Kabbalah, in the form of the *Shekhina*), *qōdeš* seems to have an adjectival quality here (i.e. "holy" rather than "holiness"). Chouraqui's rendering therefore provides a subtle linguistic bridge between Testaments, allowing for (but neither presupposing nor endorsing) the connections seen by New Testament and patristic authors, and emphasizing continuity between Jewish and Christian Scriptures.[496] Secondly, whereas "spirit" is an invisible and intangible concept, "breath" is a more organic image, something familiar to Chouraqui's readers from their own experience. It suggests an image of God which, while admittedly more anthropomorphic, also captures a certain intimacy and immanence, avoiding some theological descriptions (often rooted in Greek philosophical categories) which have made the Godhead seem austere, distant, impenetrable and almost aloof. The shift to using breath-imagery also allows for an entirely different register of biblical associations, which are not as evident with the translation of "spirit":

- that of the breath of life which God breathes into the first human beings in Genesis 2:7 (and the use of "breath of life" elsewhere in Genesis);
- of life-breath being invoked upon the dry, dead bones in Ezekiel 37;
- of the fragility of life as Job describes it (Job 7:7, 16; 12:10);
- of God's breath as the source of all of creation (Psalms 18:15; 33:6);
- and of the ephemeral character of human existence (Psalms 39:5,11; 62:9; 78:33; 94:11).

Given Chouraqui's clear preference for the concrete over the abstract, "le souffle sacré" seems to capture a valuable, and often overlooked, possible interpretation of this expression, and allows for a richer constellation of biblical backgrounds to this fundamental term in the Christian theological repertoire.

8.5. PISTEUŌ / PISTIS

[496] In two of these Old Testament occurrences (Ps 51:11 and Isa 63:10), Chouraqui uses "souffle sacré"; in the third, he inexplicably uses "le souffle de sa sacralité," reading *qōdeš* here in a nominal (rather than adjectival) sense.

The whole concept of *faith*, as understood in Greek, is one that Chouraqui seems unsatisfied with. Too often, he argues, "faith" and "belief" become purely mental categories, an assent of the mind and will, something purely "heady" and intellectual. To counteract this "Hellenistic misinterpretation," Chouraqui renders the Greek verb πιστεύω, *pisteuō* and the noun πίστις, *pistis* by "adhérer" and "adhérence," respectively. It is not, he seems to suggest, merely a question of making a *decision* about a certain set of facts or assertions, but of *adhering*, of "clinging to" a message—and a person. Whereas the Greek has a psychological cast to it, implying the idea of conviction and belief, the notion of "adhering" implies a close physical association, a certain intimacy and commitment—indeed, the cognate "adhesive" connotes "being attached or glued to something"[497]. It is that level of deliberateness and personal engagement, of *demonstrated actions* more than of *thoughts or words*, that Chouraqui sees as characterizing authentic biblical faith, אֱמוּנָה, *ʾĕmûnāh*. He is returning here to an older vocabulary, which spoke of believers as "adherents," and of people's spiritual convictions as a "religious adherence". The Hebrew *ĕmûnāh*, Chouraqui argues, has the sense of "committed trust" or "embodied confidence," of a personal conviction that is—and must be—put into action in one's daily life, in concrete choices and options. Just as the cognate interjection *Amen* has the sense of "Yes: I wholly stand behind this," so faith demands a similar "investment," an "attachment" which is lived out. I believe that Chouraqui's choice of *adhérer* and *adhérence* can stimulate readers of the New Testament to think seriously about the implications of their "faith" or "beliefs".

9. A Preference for Concrete, Tangible Terms

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[497] From the Latin *ad* + *hæreō* (="to hang or hold fast, to hang, stick, cleave, cling, adhere, be fixed, sit fast, remain close to any thing or in any manner" [Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. "adhæreō"; online at: www.perseus.tufts.edu]); and therefore, "to be close to a person or thing, to be near, to hang on, keep close to".

Part of Chouraqui's insistence on a return to what he sees as the *Hebraica veritas* is his belief that, in the translation from Hebrew to Greek thought-forms, the meaning of certain key biblical expressions shifted from the concreteness of ancient Hebrew vocabulary (rooted in sense experience and everyday life) to a Greek world, whose terms often had a more theoretical, psychological and philosophical bent. This has resulted, Chouraqui argues, in a "spiritualization" of ideas which were, in their original conceptual world, very down-to-earth and literal. With the leap into Hellenistic modes of expression, some of these terms eventually acquired a more "transcendent," allegorical or psychological meaning that was several steps removed from the meaning they would have had in the mind—and on the lips—of first-century Jews like Jesus in the Holy Land. In many of these cases, Chouraqui attempts his own hypothetical retroversions, proposing what he believes might have been the underlying Hebrew or Aramaic expression.

9.1. Metanoeō - Metanoia

The call to *repentance* is intimately linked with the proclamation of John the Baptist and Jesus in the Gospels. The concept is expressed both by the noun μετάνοια, *metanoia* (found 8x in the Gospels) and by the verb μετανοέω, *metanoeō* (found 16x in the Gospels). Both terms are already found in the Septuagint, where the verbal form occurs 24x, and the nominal form 7x, primarily in the prophetic and wisdom books.[498] A comparison of the Greek and Hebrew in these verses reveals that, in almost every case, *metanoeō* is translating the *Niphal* of the verb נָחַם, *nāḥam*, which has here the sense of "to be sorry for an earlier decision; to rue or regret; to change one's mind about a previously-decided course of action".

What is interesting is that, in his translation of the Gospels, Chouraqui clearly understands a different, but related, concept at work. Wherever *metanoeō* occurs, he

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[498] *Metanoeō:* 1 Sam 15:29; Odes 12:7, 13; Prov 20:25; 24:32; 30:1; Wis 5:3; Sir 17:24; 48:15; Amos 7:3, 6; Joel 2:13f; Jon 3:9f; 4:2; Zech 8:14; Isa 46:8; Jer 4:28; 8:6; 18:8, 10; 38:19
Metanoia: Odes 12:8; Prov 14:15; Wis 11:23; 12:10, 19; Sir 44:16

renders it with the expression "faire retour," and he translates *metanoia* as "[le] retour".[499] In its first occurrence (in Matt 3:2), the notes in *L'Univers de la Bible* say:

> *Faites retour:* la *teshouba*, acte de retour à IHVH et à sa tora, conditionne la libération d'Israël et la venue du royaume des ciels, qui verra la fin de toutes les injustices et de toutes les tyrannies de ce monde.

Chouraqui clearly sees the Hebrew noun תְּשׁוּבָה, *tešûbâh*, as underlying *metanoia*, and the verb שׁוּב, *šûb* as the undertext of *metanoeō*. What is even more interesting is that Chouraqui is not alone in this interpretation: a study of the three major historic Hebrew translations of the New Testament shows that, in almost every case, their translations are the same as Chouraqui's.[500]

9.2. Misthos

In three places (Matt 5:12; Lk 6:23, 35), Jesus speaks of a future recompense for any of his followers who endure suffering on account of him. The Greek here (μισθὸς, *misthos)* has often been translated as "your reward [will be great in heaven" (French: "votre récompense sera grande," or something similar). *Misthos*, however, primarily refers to the ordinary salary of a worker. Chouraqui, perhaps concerned that this ordinary term had become overly theologized (or seen in a more eschatological light than necessary), translates is quite plainly, as "votre salaire". It is not, therefore, an extraordinary prize waiting "beyond the clouds" (which "reward" could suggest) but, in some sense, merely the wages owed to the worker for a job well done. Proper theological interpretation depends on proper translation, and it is important for readers to see this term in all its quotidian simplicity.

9.3. Terms for Awakening, Rising or Resurrection

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[499] The one exception to this is in Lk 11:32, where, for some reason, Chouraqui departs from his standard translation, rendering the Greek μετενόησαν, *metenoēsan* by "ils ont fait pénitence". Perhaps it was Chouraqui's intention to emphasize here the concrete *actions* taken by the Ninevites to demonstrate their conversion, rather than the actual moral change.

[500] With the notable exceptions of Delitzsch's translations of Lk 15:7 and 17:3-4, which instead employ the *Niphal* of *nāḥam*, for reasons which are not clear.

At the theological centre of Christian faith—and, to a certain degree, at the heart of the Gospels—is the concept of *resurrection*, of rising from the dead. In a number of places in the Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as bringing the dead back to life (the daughter of Jairus [Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Lk 8:40-42, 49-56]; the son of the widow of Nain [Lk 7:12-17]; Lazarus [John 11]).[501] Two main Greek verbs are used in these accounts: ἐγείρω, *egeirō* (86x in the Gospels) and ἀνίστημι, *anistēmi* (56x in the Gospels). *Egeirō* has a range of possible meanings, including "to awaken/rouse; to lift up; to raise up (physically, and, by extension, to raise from the dead)"; *anistēmi* has (in transitive forms) the foundational sense of "to raise (up); to erect" and (in middle forms) "to rise; to stand [up]"; both forms can, according to context, have the meaning "to raise from the dead".

9.3.1. EGEIRŌ

In his quest for a unifying translation that would encompass both the literal and the metaphorical meanings of *egeirō*, Chouraqui has sought to avoid the traditional language of "resurrection" and "being raised," with their inherent theological baggage, and has opted instead for the more prosaic and physical "[se] réveiller".[502]

In a number of cases—particularly as regards the "awakening" of dead people—Chouraqui's translation is a good one, and avoids some of the presumptions of a 2000-year theological tradition. However, his effort to impose this understanding uniformly on every occurrence sometimes produces translations which are not only perplexing, but sometimes misleading. Looking only at the 36 occurrences of *egeirō* in Matthew, "[se] reveiller" certainly suits a number of texts, such as the angelic messages

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[501] As a number of exegetes and theologians point out, these are, technically speaking, more a case of *revivification* or *resuscitation*, rather than *resurrection*, strictly speaking. Christian faith considers resurrection as a qualitatively different phenomenon, as a transformation, absolute renewal and "immortalizing" of the body by God, marking the inbreaking of the Messianic Age, Christian faith distinguishes clearly between these miracles—of which Jesus was the agent—and the Easter miracle, of whom he was the subject.

[502] Literally, to awake or be awakened out of a state of sleep (here, the metaphorical "sleep" of death).

to the sleeping Joseph (1:24; 2:13-14, 20-21), the disciples' frantic awakening of the sleeping Jesus (8:25-26), the waking of the virgins in 25:7, and texts speaking of the "raising-up" of the dead (14:2, referring to impressions of the Baptist *redivivus;* 10:8; 11:5; 16:21, the raising of the dead as a sign of the Kingdom's advent). It is perhaps less helpful in contexts where the person concerned is sick (Peter's mother-in-law, in 8:15) or paralyzed (9:5-7); French does not normally employ this verb in this way. However, even here, it is possible that Chouraqui (perennially fascinated by etymology) recognizes *réveiller* as a compound of *re* + *éveiller,* with the "re-" prefix serving to mean "... once again". If so, then it may be a justifiable translation, since *éveiller* certainly *can* bear the meaning of "donner de la gaieté, rendre plus agissant et plus vif,"[503] and *réveiller* would thus mean "to *restore* joy, liveliness, energy, health, *joie de vivre* and a sense of purpose". Such an acception (if it is indeed his intention) would certainly be appropriate, although it is by no means certain that the average French reader would automatically draw the requisite etymological connection. *Se réveiller* seems *least* satisfactory in situations where *egeirō* seems to have the clear sense of a physical lifting or raising, or of standing up from a sitting or lying position: 9:19 (Jesus and the disciples stand up), 11:11 (no prophet greater than John the Baptist has arisen), 12:11 (lifting out an animal that fell into a pit on the Sabbath), and 17:7 ("Stand up—do not fear"). In these situations, *se réveiller* seems almost certain to confuse and mislead the reader, since these verses are not in any way linked to sleeping and waking, and even the broader sense of *"réveiller = re + éveiller"* seems unable to stretch far enough to encompass them. While the evangelists very clearly do at times employ the language of "waking" and "rising" to draw subtle connections with Jesus' own rising, Chouraqui's desire to lump all the uses of such multivalent terms under a single rubric becomes at times a Procrustean bed which ends up distorting the meaning of both the

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[503] See the entries for "éveiller" in the 4th, 5th and 6th editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1762, 1798, 1832-35); online at the ARTFL Project: www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/

Greek and French terms involved. It is a fact that even Chouraqui himself admits when, in 9:19 and 12:11, he departs from his standard "se réveiller" translation, choosing "s'éveiller" and "se relever," respectively, to express the same French verb.

10. Neologisms

In a number of places throughout his translation of the Gospels, Chouraqui creatively invents new verbs and nouns in an attempt to capture nuances that, in his mind, would be lost or attenuated by the use of existing French terms. As might be expected, this innovation has earned him both praise and criticism; some argued that he was being unnecessarily exotic, and was indirectly impugning the literary richness of the French language as insufficient. Others discovered in his renderings a salutary provocation, to reconsider whether one's accepted understanding was necessarily in keeping with that of the New Testament thought-world.

10.1. Fauter

The most common of these Chouraquisms is the verb *fauter,* its derivative verbal-nouns (participles) *fauteur* and *fauteuse,* and the corresponding adjective *fautif.* Of these, it is *fauteur* that the reader encounters most often; it occurs roughly twenty times,[504] and (not surprisingly) is particularly prevalent in the Gospel of Luke, which emphasizes Jesus' outreach to sinners and social outcasts. In verbal form, it is found four times, all of which fall in Luke: in 15:18, 21 (the parable of the Prodigal Son: "Père, *j'ai fauté*...") and in 17:3-4 ("Si ton frère *a fauté* ... si sept fois par jour *il faute* ..."). As an adjective, it is found exclusively in chapter 9 of John, in vv. 2, 3, 16, 24, 25, 31 (the healing of a man born blind), where questions about sin and sinners are a literary and theological *leitmotif.*

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[504] Matt 7:23; 9:10, 11, 13; 13:41; Mark 2:15, 16, 17; 8:38; Lk 5:30, 32; 6:32; 7:37 [feminine : une *fauteuse* de la ville], 34; 15:1, 2, 7, 10; 18:13; John 5:29.

Why has Chouraqui chosen to create a new verb from the existing and familiar noun *faute?* It clearly seems to be because he believes that what underlies the Greek in these verses is some form of the Hebrew verb חָטָא, *ḥāṭāʾ*, which, many authors suggest, was originally an archery term, used to describe a failure to hit the intended target ("a miss").[505] *Fauter* would, then, have a *double* meaning: both as a moral error, mistake or sin, but *also* a subtle evocation of the world of sport, in which "to commit a fault" is often a technical mistake, a failure to attain an expected goal, but is not a crime. Chouraqui sees his neologism as an attempt to recapture some of the original concreteness of a presumed original Hebrew term, while suggesting that the verb is perhaps not as morally judgemental as has sometimes been presumed in Christian circles. If it suggests a *deviation* from an intended path (a mistake despite good intentions), this is clearly less severe (and less morally culpable) than a deliberate and intentional act of wrongdoing. Such *fauteurs* are deserving, not of condemnation and judgement, but of correction and reorientation.

When we examine the underlying Greek, however, we discover that not all of these passages are employing the same Greek term. The vast majority employ the noun *ἁμαρτωλός, hamartōlos,* or (in (15:18, 21; 17:3) connected to the verb *ἁμαρτάνω, hamartanō.* However, in at least three verses, the underlying Greek terms are different. In Matt 7:23, for example, the expression is actually *οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν, hoi ergazomenoi tēn anomian.* Here, Chouraqui has *"fauteurs de non-Tora"* (presumably those who sin through disobeying or rejecting the Torah; the alpha-privative would suggest,

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[505] "The basic meaning of the root is to miss a mark or a way … In Jud 20:16 the left-handed slingers of Benjamin are said to have the skill to throw stones at targets and 'not miss.' In a different context, Prov 19:2 speaks of a man in a hurry who 'misses his way' … In so acting, man is missing the goal or standard God has for him, is failing to observe the requirements of holy living, or falls short of spiritual wholeness … ḥāṭāʾ means 'to miss, to fall short of the standard.'" G. Herbert Livingston, "חָטָא, ḥāṭāʾ" in *TWOT* (ed. R. Laird Harris; Chicago: Moody Press, 1981); provided electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0. "*Het* literally means something that goes astray. It is a term used in archery to indicate that the arrow has missed its target. This concept of sin suggests a straying from the correct ways, from what is good and straight." Reuven Hammer, *Entering the High Holy Days: A Guide to the Origins, Themes and Prayers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998), 30.

literally, "the law-less, those apart from the Law"). Similarly, Matt 13:41 has *τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν, tous poiountas tēn anomian* (presumably this is more or less the functional equivalent of the expression in 7:23). In both of these cases, Chouraqui's *fauteurs* would appear to be misleading, since the reader unfamiliar with Greek would assume that the term being translated is the same (*ἁμαρτωλός*) as that rendered thus in other locations, which is not the case. Similarly, in John 5:29, the Greek expression rendered *les fauteurs de mal* is, in fact, something different again: *τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες, ta phaula praxantes*. In each of these three cases, Chouraqui's rendering could mislead readers who rely on his promised translational consistency; the single verb *fauter* is being used to render at least *four different* Greek verbs: *ergazomai, poieō* and *prassō*, in addition to *hamartanō–hamartōlos*.

10.2. Messier

A second Chouraquian invention is the verb *messier*. As can easily be discerned, this is his proposed verbal form of the familiar noun *messie/Messie*, one of the titles applied to Jesus throughout the New Testament. This epithet, rendered by the Greek *Χριστός (Christ)*, is an approximate French transliteration of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ, *māšîaḥ*. Both the Hebrew and the Greek terms are derived from the respective verbs for "anointing" (Heb מָשַׁח; Grk *χρίω*), and thus mean "one who has been anointed". There are certainly ways of expressing this anointing in standard French: *consacrer par onction* [sometimes merely *consacrer*], or the older French technical verb *oindre*. However, neither of these expressions captured, in Chouraqui's view, the essential link between *anointing* and the New Testament ascription to Jesus of the title of *messiah/Christ*. He therefore coined the verb *messier*, "to anoint / to make one a 'messiah'," to make this connection explicit.

This verb is used only three times in Chouraqui's Gospels, and all of its uses fall in the Gospel of Luke: in 4:18, and twice in 7:46. In 4:18, it is a question of a citation of a portion of Isaiah 61:1-2a; the verb in the Hebrew is, indeed, מָשַׁח, which the LXX

renders with χρίω (Chouraqui: "il *m'a messié...*"). Given Chouraqui's intention here, his new French verb seems to make his point admirably. However, in 7:46, the answer is not quite so simple. Here, the verb is *not* χρίω; it is, in fact, ἀλείφω ... ἐλαίῳ, "to anoint with [olive] oil"; Chouraqui has *"Tu n'as pas messié ma tête d'huile ... elle, de parfum, a messié mes pieds"*. Has Chouraqui perhaps overstepped his role as a translator here, reading a theological or symbolic message into the gesture of hospitality which was denied Jesus by Simon but conferred by the unnamed woman? Are χρίω and ἀλείφω ... ἐλαίῳ functional equivalents, both conveying the sense of a solemn anointing with religious overtones? Is Chouraqui attempting to raise the woman's gesture to the level of the usage of oil in the Hebrew Scriptures to designate "the Lord's anointed"? Or is he perhaps deliberately intending to do just the opposite: to *broaden* the understanding of this term among Christian readers, and thereby suggest that its is not always to be understood in such a quasi-mystical way? In making such a decision, it is interesting to note that the Vulgate translates both verbs in the same way: *unxit* in 4:18, and *unxisti ... unxit* in 7:46. The three main Hebrew NT translations are not unanimous on this point: Hutter and Salkinson-Ginsburg both employ מָשַׁח here (therefore supporting Chouraqui's rendering), while Delitzsch has סוּךְ, "to pour a liquid, to anoint"—but which seems often to be used in terms of personal hygiene or cosmetic adornment (perfumes, unguents, etc.). Other French translations render the verse as "Tu n'as pas répandu d'huile ... elle a répandu du parfum" (TOB, BdeJ, BFC) or "Tu ne m'as point versé d'huile ... elle m'a versé son parfum" (Mar); the Bayard translation is somewhat less specific: "Tu n'as pas parfumé mes cheveux ... elle a couvert mes pieds de parfum".

What is particularly unusual is that Chouraqui sees "messianic" imagery at work here, but does not employ the verb *messier* in Mark 14:3, which seems to be the earlier version of this story. In Mark's version, the precious ointment (which is spikenard, rather than oil) is poured *on Jesus' head,* which certainly seems to capture

more specifically a hint of "messianic anointing". Perhaps because the scene of Jesus being "anointed" by a woman seemed culturally or religiously scandalous (or because it would seem to confirm Jesus' acceptance of a "messianic" role in the immediate lead-up to the Passion), Luke appears to have "softened" the story somewhat.[506]

Chouraqui's creation and use of *messier* is both innovative and thought-provoking; who in English would ever think to speak of anointing as "christ-ing" or "messiah-ing" someone?[507] While the specific way he has employed it in the Gospels may demand some re-thinking or slight corrections, it represents nevertheless a brilliant attempt to recapture for New Testament readers the "Christ=anointed one" equation that many Christians rarely consider. Perhaps the use of *christos*/messiah as a verb will enable future generations to realize that Christ is *not* "Jesus' surname,"[508] but is, in fact, a title that makes a profound theological claim about him—the claim which is at the heart of Christianity itself.

10.3. Matrices - Matriciel - Matricier

The four Gospels are filled with references to mercy and compassion, both on the part of Jesus himself, and as a key component in his teachings. Obviously, mercy and compassion are not New Testament innovations; on the contrary, they rely and

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[506] See Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Luke 7:36-50—Woman Who Anoints Jesus," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (eds. Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S. Kraemer; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 441.

[507] The very similar term "christen" (still used in some churches with reference to baptism) might seem very promising in this regard. However, it actually has more the sense of "to make one like Christ, to unite one to Christ" than "to 'christ' [i.e., anoint] someone". The derivation of "christening" from "anointing," although implicit from a linguistic point-of-view, has largely been lost in Christian usage.

[508] "So current was the name Jesus that some descriptive phrase like 'of Nazareth' or 'the Christ (Messiah' had to be added to distinguish him from the many other bearers of that name ... So important was it to use 'Christ' as a distinguishing name for Jesus that, by the time of Paul in the mid-fifties of the 1st century A.D., 'Christ' was well on its way to becoming Jesus' second name." John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991) Vol. 1, 206; "It is very easy for a Western reader to assume that 'Christ' was Jesus' surname, and to fail to appreciate that it is actually a title." Alister E. McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 53.

draw upon the messages of love, compassion and mercy which are such an important connecting thread in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Prophets but also in the Pentateuch, and often exemplified by particular biblical figures: Abraham, David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, etc.

One of the most striking discoveries made by many introductory students of Hebrew is the fact that one of the nouns most commonly associated with mercy and compassion, רַחֲמִים, *raḥămîm*, is a plural form—of the Hebrew term for the womb, רֶחֶם, *reḥem*, and, thus, "wombs". Hundreds of books and articles have been written—and perhaps thousands of sermons preached—exploring the connection between these qualities and the apparently "maternal" character which biblical Hebrew associates with them. In the singular, *reḥem* is used more than 80 times in the Hebrew Scriptures; *raḥămîm* is used almost 40 times in the plural.[509]

Scholars debate how much value should be attributed to this derivation; perhaps, over the course of time, this motherly connection was attenuated in popular usage, and it was merely a faint echo in terms of people's perceptions. Furthermore, *reḥem* is not the only term for womb in Hebrew, which also employs (about 75x) the somewhat broader noun בֶּטֶן, *beṭen*, which can also encompass the meanings of "stomach, abdomen, torso, innards," and, by extension, the most secret inner parts of a person, where their appetites and deepest desires are lodged.[510]

Chouraqui clearly believes that, if not the actual *word raḥămîm*, then at least the *concept*, lies behind many of the New Testament's references to mercy, pity and compassion. And it is here that he employs one of his more interesting neologisms. Like Hebrew, French has several words for a mother's womb: *les entrailles* is very common (used, for example, in the French version of the Hail Mary), as is *le ventre*.

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[509] Primarily in the Psalms (Pss 25:6; 40:12; 51:3; 69:17; 77:10; 79:8; 103:4; 106:46; 119:77, 156; 145:9) and Prophets (Isa 47:6; 54:7; 63:7, 15; Jer 16:5; 42:12; Lam 3:22; Dan 1:9; 9:9, 18; Hos 2:21; Amos 1:11; Zech 1:16; 7:9).

[510] Job 15:35; 20:20; Prov 18:8, 20 (sometimes rendered colloquially as "heart").

They, too, can refer to more of the body than strictly the uterus: *ventre* can include much of the torso, including the stomach, whereas *entrailles* can mean the inner organs generally (like the English *entrails).* Chouraqui, however, has skipped over both of these possibilities, and has chosen a less common (and more linguistically suggestive) term: *le matrice / les matrices.*

Although *matrices* is not encountered as commonly as other possible renderings, it is certainly part of "mainstream" French vocabulary. It is found in French dictionaries from at least the 1600s, and is defined by the eighth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* thus: "Organe de la femme, dans lequel le fœtus se nourrit et s'accroît jusqu'au terme de la gestation"; that dictionary's first edition (1694) simply said, "La partie de la femme dans laquelle se fait la génération".[511] In that sense, *matrice(s)* is not a wholly unexpected translation, and it appears with this usual meaning in two passages in Chouraqui's Gospels: Lk 1:31 (tu concevras dans ta matrice [=*γαστήρ, gastēr*]) and 2:23 (Tout mâle fendeur de matrice [=*μήτρα, mētra*] sera appelé « Consacré à IHVH »).[512] He also employs *matrice* in Luke 1:78, as part of his translation of the Greek phrase *διὰ σπλάγχνα ἐλέους θεοῦ ἡμῶν, dia splanchna eleous theou hēmōn,* which Chouraqui renders "Par les matrices du secours de notre Elohîms". Evidently, he sees *splanchna* as equally rendering a presumed Hebrew *reḥem.*

What is unexpected is Chouraqui's extension and conversion of the noun *matrice(s)* into corresponding verbal and adjectival forms—into the transitive verb *matricier* and the adjective *matriciel. Matricier* is Chouraqui's rendering of the verb *ἐλεέω, eleeō,* "to be merciful, compassionate," and he uses it consistently in each of the fifteen Gospel occurrences of this verb,[513] often as part of the plea "Matricie-moi/nous" (=*Ἐλέησον με/ἡμᾶς, eleēson me/hēmas*). He uses it three further times (and only in Luke):

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[511] ARTFL Historic French Dictionaries Project: online at: http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/

[512] *Mētra* occurs only here within the Gospels. *Gastēr,* however, occurs six times (Matt 1:18, 23; 24:19; Mk 13:17; Lk 1:31; 21:23) ; in all but one of these occurrences (Lk 1 :31, above), Chouraqui has translated *gastēr* by the French *ventre.* He provides no explanation for this inconsistency.

[513] Matt 5:7; 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 18:33; 20:30-31; Mk 5:19; 10:47-48; Lk 16:24; 17:13; 18:38-39.

in Lk 1:54 (for the expression *μνησθῆναι ἐλέους, mnēsthēnai eleous)*, 1:72 and 10:37 (for the expression *ποιῆσαι ἔλεος, poiēsai eleos*), all of which he sees as expressing the action of showing *raḥămîm* in some way. He employs the derivative adjective *matriciel* five times: in Matt 5:7 (for *ἐλεήμων, eleēmōn)*, in Lk 1:50 (for *ἔλεος, eleos*), in 1:58 (for the expression *μεγαλύνω τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ, megalunō to eleos autou)*, and in 6:36 (for the adjective *οἰκτίρμων, oiktirmōn*, presumably since Matthew's parallel in 5:7 has *ἐλεήμων, eleēmōn*).

If Chouraqui is correct about *raḥămîm* as underlying *eleeō* and its New Testament cognates, then *matrice(s)* has certain advantages. In contemporary French, it is often used in the sense of the English "matrix"—the foundational building-blocks out of which something is created or shaped. One of the definitions of "matrix" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is particularly apposite: "A place or medium in which something is originated, produced, or developed; the environment in which a particular activity or process begins; a point of origin and growth".[514] *Matrice* would, therefore, suggest the foundational setting within which life begins and is nurtured; it is, of course, derived from the Latin word for mother (*mater*), and thus succeeds admirably in reproducing the feminine associations of *raḥămîm*, which Chouraqui obviously aims to capture.

10.4. Oligopistos

Another somewhat unanticipated expression is Chouraqui's translation of the Greek adjective *ὀλιγόπιστος, oligopistos.* Used five times in the Gospels (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Lk 12:28[515]), *oligopistos* is a compound word (*oligos* + *pistos*), employed by

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[514] *OED* online: http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca. Émile Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872-77) includes several particularly interesting uses: *"Église matrice,* la plus ancienne église d'un pays ou d'un ordre religieux, celle à l'imitation de laquelle il s'en est fait plusieurs autres; *Langue matrice,* celle dont quelques autres sont dérivées; *Couleurs matrices,* les cinq couleurs simples dont toutes les autres peuvent être composées, c'est-à-dire, noir, blanc, bleu, jaune, rouge" (ARTFL Historic French Dictionaries Project; online).

[515] The fact that this term is used only in Matthew and Luke suggests that it is rooted in the putative *Q* source. It certainly seems to be particularly dear to Matthew.

Jesus[516] to gently chide the limited faith of his followers, and, among Greek texts, seems to be unique to the New Testament.[517] *Oligos* has the sense of "few; small in number; a very limited quantity". Chouraqui sees the unusualness of this term in Greek as an indication that Matthew and Luke (or their sources) are trying to forge a Greek expression that would correspond to a similar expression in Hebrew, which for him is קְטַנֵּי־אֱמוּנָה, *qᵉṭannê-ʾĕmûnāh*, "little ones of faith / as regards faith".[518] How does Chouraqui express this? By the somewhat humourous "nains de l'adhérence" – "faith-midgets" or "dwarves on the level of faith"! Certainly, he *could* have chosen something more traditional, such as "little ones in the faith," but I suspect that, with this expression, he wished both to shock his readers into reconsidering the meaning of this phrase, and to capture some of the playfulness that certainly could have been intended by Jesus in using it.

A problem with Chouraqui's translation of "nain" is that it immediately conjures up in the reader's mind the idea of *height*, since "nain" normally has reference to a person of small stature. The Hebrew *kātān* is ambiguous; it can refer both to "a little of something" (in terms of quantity), to something small (in terms of size), or to

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[516] Serious questions have been raised by exegetes as to whether this expression does, in fact, go back to the historical Jesus. Joseph Fitzmyer, in the second volume of his Anchor Bible commentary on Luke (*The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985]), says that *oligopistos* "lacks any real equivalent in the Semitic languages, and hence is scarcely traceable to Jesus himself" (979). "*Oligopistia*, 'poverty of faith' (only in Mt.) and *oligopistos*, 'of little faith' (Mt., Lk.) meet all the requirements for Christian coinage". Jacob Martin Myers, Otto Reimherr and Howard N. Bream, eds., *Search the Scriptures: New Testament Studies in Honor of Raymond T. Stamm.* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 175.

[517] The entry in *Thayer's Lexicon* specifies that the adjective is not found in profane authors, and the corresponding adjective, *oligopistia*, is found only in Matt 17:20, and in later ecclesiastical and Byzantine texts. G. Barth (in Balz and Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2) specifically mentions the sixth of the *Sentences of Sextus* ("A man of little faith in faith is an unbeliever"; Henry Chadwick, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 139) and the seventh-century writings of Leontius of Neapolis.

[518] This is, in fact, the reading of all three of the historical Hebrew NT reference translations (Hutter, Delitzsch, and Salkinson-Ginsburg). The expression (מ)קטני אמנה is also found several times in midrashic sources (*Pesikta Rabbati* 118b and *Genesis Rabbah* 32:6 [מחוסר אמנה]; see Rashi on Gen. 7:7, "Noah, too, was of those who had little faith..."), and in the Babylonian Talmud (b. Sotah 46b and 48b; b. Arakhin 15a; b. Pesachim 118b; b. Berakhot 24b). On this, see Strack-Billerbeck, Vol. 1, 438, in their comments there on ὀλιγόπιστοι.

"someone who is little" (in terms of their height). In the Hebrew Scriptures, it often frequently means "young," and *can* mean "unimportant, insignificant". The very range of possible meanings of *kātān* makes it a challenge to translate under the best of circumstances. My concern with "nains de l'adhérence" is that it *severely reduces* this range of possibilities, and privileges the notion of *height* over that of *quantity* (which seems to be more the sense of the Greek *oligos)*:

> "Smallness of faith" ... takes on the specific form in which the disciple who knows and has accepted the message of salvation and has responded to the call to discipleship stumbles as a believer ... Accordingly, in 14:31 ὀλιγόπιστος is parallel to διαστάζω ("doubt"). Not a fundamental refusal of faith, but lack of trust, of perseverance in faith ...[519]

It is an evocative, original and thought-provoking image, opening up an entirely new avenue of understanding this expression.[520] Nevertheless, I fear that it may "leapfrog" unnecessarily over the meaning of the Greek text (which is certain) in favour of a Semitic text (which must necessarily remain hypothetical, even when probable).

11. Text-Critical Issues

Many of those who have worked with Chouraqui's text acknowledge that it represents a work of considerable erudition and labour, even if they do not always

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[519] G. Barth, "ὀλιγόπιστος ... ὀλιγοπιστία" in Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 506.

[520] It is particularly interesting in this connection to read the following anecdote about Sœur Jeanne d'Arc, a French Dominican nun who was a prominent exegete and translator, and one of Chouraqui's editorial consultants: "De nature bien différente, mais remarquable dans la finition elle aussi, est le monument élevé par un auteur unique, septuagénaire et femme de surcroit, dans un milieu d'exégètes où elles sont (encore ?) rares : Sœur Jeanne d'Arc a entrepris d'offrir une édition bilingue des Évangiles, avec le texte grec sur la page de gauche et la traduction française à droite ... pour permettre le passage facile du français à l'original grec et vice versa ... il faut dire que le pari est remarquablement tenu. Il y a même du 'moderne,' d'abord surprenant pour l'œil et l'oreille. Ainsi, ceux qui étaient habitués à s'entendre interpeller 'hommes de peu de foi' se voient traités ici de 'minicroyants'." Jean-Louis Schlegel, "Une nouvelle 'rage biblique'," in *Le Monde* (Dec. 25, 1987); access in digital format by subscription at lemonde.fr. Pierre Chaunu suggests that her inspiration for the term "minicroyant" was actually the 1970s fad of the "miniskirt". Chaunu, *Reflets et miroir de l'histoire* (Paris: Economica, 1990), 356.

agree with his choices or interpretations. Chouraqui himself was very conversant with exegetical issues, and frequently sought out the input of more specialized scholars, in his attempts to hone and improve his translation.

One of the issues that modern biblical study raises for a translation like his, however, is the degree to which it acknowledges and incorporates (or at least grapples with) some of the thorny questions that have been raised by the last three centuries of textual criticism. The discovery and study of hundreds of ancient manuscripts and versions continues to challenge exegetes and translators to take into consideration the history of the New Testament's transmission (at least insofar as this can be reconstructed on the basis of the existing evidence). Some translators are loath to present such text-critical questions to their readers, fearing perhaps that the ambiguity it admits may shake the faith of those for whom the Bible is primarily the (inerrant) Word of God. For others, the thought of "adjusting" (or even *excising*) cherished expressions or verses is enough to make them skim over textual criticism's questions in a fairly superficial way. Especially in the case of some evangelical Protestant groups, for whom the *Textus Receptus* and the King James Bible represent the lodestars of Greek and English Bibles, such questions are often set aside entirely. Sometimes *exegesis* yields to *apologetics*, or to the practical realities of pastoral leadership.

Chouraqui, as a Jewish scholar and as someone with considerable training in the rabbinic tradition of exegesis (which grappled with the implications of textual variants), was not ignorant of the inevitable issues raised by the translation of the New Testament from the Greek. On page 15 of Volume 8 of *L'Univers de la Bible*, he openly addresses the question of the state of the text of the New Testament:

> Nous ne possédons pas les textes autographes du Nouveau Testament, pas plus que ceux de la Bible hébraïque ou des grands écrivains de l'Antiquité. Les plus anciens manuscrits complets du Nouveau Testament en grec datent du IVe siècle, et 72 papyri fragmentaires des IIe et IIIe siècles.
> Cependant, 242 manuscrits écrits en lettres onciales et quelques 2 575 manuscrits écrits en minuscules et ne remontant pas plus haut que le IXe siècle ont permis d'établir, grâce à un constant effort d'érudition, de savantes

> éditions critiques du Nouveau Testament dont la plus autorisée, celle qui a servi de base à notre traduction, est celle d'Aland, Black et Martini (*The Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, New York).

To what degree, therefore, does Chouraqui's translation take into consideration—and present to the reader—some of the major text-critical issues raised by the Gospels?

As a yardstick by which to judge Chouraqui's approach to passages where textual criticism is particularly important, I have chosen to begin with Bart D. Ehrman's recent (and controversial bestseller, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). In an appendix that has received considerable media attention, Ehrman offers the "Top Ten Verses That Were Not Originally in the New Testament". His list includes Mk 16:17, 18; Lk 22:20, 44; 24:12, 51; Jn 5:4, 7; 8:7, 11 (whether this is truly a "top ten" is arguable, since several of these verses occur in the same questionable passages as their neighbours). His listing is at least a convenient starting-point to examine Chouraqui's treatment of these textual issues and others.

11.1. The Woman Caught in Adultery

Perhaps the best-known (and most significant) of these passages are the *pericope adulteræ* (Jn 7:53-8:12), and the question of the ending of Mark. With regard to the first of these passages, the relevant passage has a footnote in *La Bible Chouraqui* (2079) which reads: "8.1-11 Ces versets manquent dans de nombreux manuscrits ; ils pourraient être de la main de Luc". A more thorough explanation is found in *L'Univers de la Bible* (Vol. 8, 423):

> Le passage allant de 7,53 à 8,11 manque dans de nombreux et importants manuscrits. Quoique représentant une tradition authentique, il est généralement considéré comme une insertion postérieure, d'ailleurs étrangère au style de Jean. Certains croient qu'il est de Luc, où on le trouve, de fait (après Lc 21,38) dans un bon nombre de manuscrits.

These comments, concise though they are, provide a very accurate summary of the *status quæstionis*, and reproduce the main lines of the argument as presented in Metzger's *Textual Commentary* (187-89)—without, of course, going into detail as regards Syriac, Coptic, Georgian and Gothic manuscripts.

11.2. The Ending of Mark

Surprisingly, the question of the various available ending(s) of Mark, one of the *loci classici* of New Testament textual criticism, receives no footnoted commentary in *La Bible Chouraqui*. The version in *L'Univers de la Bible* provides several significant notes which helps to frame the debate for readers:

> 9-20. On considère assez généralement que cette finale de Marc n'appartenait pas à la rédaction primitive du deuxième évangile. Elle manque en effet dans plusieurs manuscrits, dont certains importants, comme le Vaticanus et le Sinaïticus, et dans un bon nombre de versions. Elle est néanmoins considéré comme inspirée et canonique par les Églises chrétiennes. (246)
>
> 9-20. Certains manuscrits très anciens s'achèvent en 16,8. La plupart ont toutefois une seconde finale. Les uns ont le texte suivant : « Elles racontèrent brièvement aux compagnons de Pierre tout ce qui leur avait été annoncé. Après cela, Jésus lui-même fit porter par eux, de l'Orient à l'Occident, la proclamation sacrée et incorruptible du salut éternel. » ... Une autre finale, bien plus longue et traduite dans à peu près toutes les bibles modernes, date dans doute du débat du IIe siècle (16, 9-20). Elle rassemble les traditions sur la résurrections contenues dans Matthieu, Luc et Jean, et donne au drame qu'était Marc une conclusion narrative, comparable surtout au récit historique de Luc.
> Le récit s'achève par une représentation du Ressuscité en gloire, tandis que la Parole qui témoigne de lui est elle-même portée par lui (versets 19-20). (248)

Page 248 also offers a more than quarter-page discussion by Chouraqui on the "shorter ending" (16:1-8), and its textual and theological implications. Metzger devotes roughly four pages in his *Textual Commentary* to a weighing of these variants, and concludes "on the basis of good external evidence and strong internal considerations it appears that the earliest ascertainable form of the Gospel of Mark ended with 16.8" (105). His footnote, however, acknowledges that the shorter version could have resulted from three possible causes—his own preferred option being that the Gospel

was never finished. He and his committee decided, given the antiquity of vv. 9-20, and their importance in the New Testament textual tradition, to print these verses, enclosed in double square brackets, to show that, in their judgement, they represent the work of someone other than the second evangelist. The treatment of this issue in *L'Univers de la Bible* is well done; the fact, however, that no comparable annotations or textual signals occur in the *Bible Chouraqui* (which reproduces the longer ending without comment) is disappointing and, to a certain degree, misleading to readers, who will likely be unaware of the major questions surrounding the conclusion of Mark, and will presume the authenticity of the text as translated by Chouraqui. Although this issue remains hotly contested by scholars on textual, grammatical, literary and theological grounds, to omit any hint of this (in an edition destined for the widest readership) is, I believe, a disservice to the very readers Chouraqui seeks to enlighten.

11.3. The "Second Cup" in Luke 22

The existence of two main variant forms—and two seemingly intermediate variants—of the institution of the "second cup" by Jesus in Lk 22:17-20 raises a number of questions, which Metzger addresses on pages 148-50 of his *Textual Commentary.* Although the majority of the UBS committee (*pace* Ehrman) actually favoured the *longer* version of this pericope, the presence of shorter versions in Old Latin and Syriac versions signals ancient difficulties regarding this text. Neither of the printed versions of Chouraqui's translation mention the questions about the wording here.

11.4. Jesus "Bloody Sweat" in Gethsemane

In verse 44 of the same chapter, the famous description of Jesus' sweat "becoming like drops of blood" is part of a text (vv. 43-44) which is lacking in many ancient and reliable manuscripts; it is signalled by editorial markings as questionable in several others (*Textual Commentary,* 151). The double square brackets enclosing this text in the UBS version point to the conclusion that it was almost certainly not part of

Luke's original version. *La Bible Chouraqui* makes no mention of the issue, whereas *L'Univers de la Bible* notes: "L'authenticité de ces deux versets est controversée, car ils sont absents de plusieurs manuscrits importants. Mais leur style est conforme à celui de Luc et ils ne déparent pas son récit" (363). The New English Translation (NET Bible), a recent version which has attracted particular praise because of its extensive (almost 61,000) notes explaining its translators' decisions and alternatives, summarizes the issue thus:

> Arguments can be given on both sides about whether scribes would tend to include or omit such comments about Jesus' humanity and an angel's help. But even if the verses are not *literarily* authentic, they are probably *historically* authentic. This is due to the fact that this text was well known in several different locales from a very early period. Since there are no synoptic parallels to this account and since there is no obvious reason for adding these words here, it is very likely that such verses recount a part of the actual suffering of our Lord. Nevertheless, because of the serious doubts as to these verses' authenticity, they have been put in brackets.[521]

Chouraqui's comments in *L'Univers de la Bible* may be seen as minimizing the issue somewhat, although prominent scholars continue to debate opposing solutions. In any case, the readers of *La Bible Chouraqui* will remain blissfully unaware that this text is uncertain.

11.5. Peter at the Empty Tomb

Ehrman flags Lk 24:12 (Peter's running to the empty tomb, and his perplexity at his findings) as another "non-original" verse. Some have argued that this represents a borrowing of details from chapter 20 of John; the majority of Metzger's committee colleagues were inclined to accept it as original, although they gave it a {B} rating, indicating some uncertainty. Luke Timothy Johnson provides a concise overview of

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[521] For an important discussion of this problem, see B.D. Ehrman and M.A. Plunkett, "The Angel and the Agony: The Textual Problem of Luke 22:43–44," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 401-16 (from the NET Bible notes).

factors in its favour in his *Sacra Pagina* volume on Luke.[522] Neither of Chouraqui's editions speaks of these questions.

11.6. The "Angel at the Pool"

Ehrman's list of textually dubious passages includes verses 3b-4 of John 5, both of which refer to the angel who was believed to stir up the water of the pool of Bethesda/Bethzatha, giving it its curative powers. The notes to the *New American Bible* explain the difficulty—and why these verses (almost certainly a later explanatory gloss) are omitted in a number of printed modern Bibles:

> Toward the end of the second century in the West and among the fourth-century Greek Fathers, an additional verse was known: "For [from time to time] an angel of the Lord used to come down into the pool; and the water was stirred up, so the first one to get in [after the stirring of the water] was healed of whatever disease afflicted him." The angel was a popular explanation of the turbulence and the healing powers attributed to it. This verse is missing from all early Greek manuscripts and the earliest versions, including the original Vulgate. Its vocabulary is markedly non-Johannine.[523]

Metzger's committee likewise expressed certainty (an {A} judgement) that this verse was a later interpolation, and should be omitted. *La Bible Chouraqui* includes this rejected text, as does *L'Univers de la Bible* (406) which, however, includes the following *caveat* at v. 4: "Ce verset manque dans de nombreux et anciens manuscrits. Il est considéré comme une glose tardive".

11.7. Gadarenes / Gazarenes / Gergasenes / Gerasenes?

In addition, I decided to look at Matt 8:28, a passage that (together with its parallels in Mk 5:1 and Lk 8:26) is infamous for the textual confusion about the exact location of the town whose inhabitants' pigs were said to have became infested with demons after an exorcism by Jesus, and rushed headlong into the sea. The textual variants include: Gadarenes (Vaticanus, *Ephræmi rescriptus*, Koridethi, etc.), Gazarenes

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[522] *The Gospel of Luke*. Sacra Pagina series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 388-89.
[523] As included in electronic form in BibleWorks 7.0.

(original reading of Sinaiticus); Gergasenes (second hand of Vaticanus), and Gerasenes (Old Latin, Vulgate, Sahidic Coptic and several Syriac versions). Sinaiticus is particularly challenging here, since it reads "Gadarenes" in the Matthean text, "Gerasenes" in Mark, and "Gergasenes" in the Lukan parallel. Although the UBS committee chose "Gadarenes" as their textual option, they assigned it a {C} rating, indicating considerable uncertainty.

In this context, *La Bible Chouraqui* provides only a brief note of geographical explanation (p. 1891: "*des Gadarènoï* : habitants de Gadara, ville située au sud-est du lac de Galilée?"), whereas *L'Univers de la Bible* flags the difficulty,[524] and points the reader to a note on the Markan parallel, where Chouraqui characterizes the situation quite frankly:

> Les démons et les cochons du *pays des Gadarîm* ont décidément mis en déroute des légions d'exégètes ... Le lieu même où s'est censé s'être passé l'incident demeure introuvable, et les variantes que présentent les évangélistes et les manuscrits quant au nom qui lui est donné montrent bien que, même à l'époque où ils furent rédigés, ce lieu n'était pas identifié. (189)

This investigation, which is indicative rather than exhaustive, suggests three conclusions: (1) that Chouraqui was certainly aware of notable text-critical issues in the Gospels which he translated; (2) that, in a number of these cases, he presents and explains the difficulties in his *Univers de la Bible;* and (3) that, for some reason, almost no indication of these problems is included in the latest mass-market paperback edition of *La Bible Chouraqui.* On more minor questions of spelling or word-order, such omissions are certainly understandable, destined more for professional scholars than for the reading public. However, the fact that Chouraqui includes a number of almost certainly inauthentic passages—without typographical indications or notations to caution the non-professional reader—means that his audience is not being given the

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[524] "Ce nouveau miracle est situé par Matthieu dans la région de Gadara, à une dizaine de kilomètres au sud-est du lac de Galilée. Pour Marc 5,1 et Lkc 8,26, l'incident serait survenu dans le voisinage de Gérasa, beaucoup plus bas au sud-est." (72)

best-informed conclusions of modern critical scholarship, and may, in fact, be misleading them. In any case, it is clear that the earlier edition (in *L'Univers de la Bible)* is preferable, since it identifies many of these issues and helps the reader to properly situate the controversy. For a translation that has evidently gone to such lengths to draw upon, and to share, the insights of the best contemporary exegesis, this is a particular, and significant, *lacuna* which should be remedied in any future editions of the Chouraqui Bible.

Conclusions

A close study of the Gospels in the Chouraqui translation is an enlightening and challenging exercise. It reveals certain trends and preoccupations, assumptions and hypotheses, which are unique to Chouraqui, and which are the distinguishing marks of his translation, and his career generally.

First among these is his fascination with language and languages, which is evident on every page. There is a sensitivity to the way in which ancient languages were structured, to their semantics and style, which are often quite different from modern European languages. But there is also an appreciation for the richness and history of French, a desire to exploit its possibilities and incorporate even the more remote branches of its family tree. While this may seem pedantic to some readers, it more likely reflects André Chouraqui's life-long love affair with linguistics, and his desire to share some of his more interesting discoveries with a larger audience. Chouraqui had a burning desire (which at times seems to border on obsession) to attain "le mot juste"—the precise, exact word capable of conveying in French the cognitive and emotional weight of the Greek and Hebrew words he grappled with for much of his adult life. His own life experiences provided him with a deep sensitivity to the rhythm and meaning of language, a respect for literary conventions, and the tools and knowledge which enabled him to break thoughtfully with those conventions when

he felt they were constraining him unnecessarily. He combined an awareness of tradition with a sense of freedom and creativity, a blend of the old and new whose end-result is never dull.

Chouraqui's attentiveness to Greek syntax and Hebrew morphology, and his desire to reproduce what he saw as key literary features of the Gospels, yield what are often brilliant renderings. If sometimes his goals and enthusiasm seem to push him too far in the application of his principles, at other times, the reader is disappointed that he does not go as far as he might have, or that he has not pressed his valuable insights consistently. One does not need to share all of Chouraqui's intuitions, or agree with his hypotheses or reconstructions. But no one can fail to be impressed by the depth and breadth of his learning, and the subtlety with which he makes ancient texts spring to life in sparkling new ways.

If Chouraqui was passionate about language and the structures of communication, he was no less passionate about religion, history and culture. Indeed, it was in the service of a religious and cultural vision that he initially undertook the task of translation: to bring together Abraham's children in peaceful dialogue around their sacred texts, to rediscover a lost familial connectedness that would blossom into respect, collaboration, and peace. As we shall see in the next chapter, Chouraqui hoped that, by drawing on the best available knowledge about the religions and cultures of the *past*, Christians and Jews could lay the foundations of a different and better future.[525]

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[525] Chouraqui's vision always included Muslims as equal partners in this text-based Abrahamic "trialogue". However, the specifically *Islamic* component is beyond the scope of the present study, which focuses only on how the Gospels might impact on *Jewish-Christian* interactions,

Chapter 5 • Socio-Cultural and Religious Aspects

Introduction

From his childhood onward, language—and languages—were a particular fascination for André Chouraqui, and his translations abundantly witness to that preoccupation. As he matured, however, he began to understand the subtle interplay and necessary correlation between language and culture. A language expresses, and is shaped by, its underlying culture in a complex symbiosis. To properly grasp the structures and shadings of a language, one always needs to anchor its use in a particular place, a particular time, a particular way of life. The English of Australia, of India, of Ireland and of the southern United States, while recognizable as the same tongue, nevertheless vary considerably in their idioms, vocabulary and even pronunciations, because of the very different settings in which they have evolved over the past 300 years.

Especially in his New Testament translations, André Chouraqui sought to insert his linguistic insights into their larger geographic and religious contexts: the land of Israel in the first century C.E., and Palestinian Judaism generally (inasmuch as its pre-70 form can be plausibly reconstructed). His goals—rooting the Gospels and Jesus in their original landscape, and re-discovering the Jewish character of those Christian writings—clearly demand such cultural "encoding". Chouraqui, raised in a traditional rural Mediterranean setting, encouraged by his own extensive studies in biblical culture, and later living as a citizen of the State of Israel, sought to emphasize those elements of culture and religion which would bring home to Christians the quintessentially Jewish quality of their Scriptures, and might enable sympathetic or curious Jewish readers to discover there a more Jewish Jesus than they had heretofore suspected. While Chouraqui's various methods and assumptions are certainly open to

question, nevertheless they *do* help to make the ancient Semitic milieu of the gospels more visible and tangible than most other modern versions. In the service of that goal, Chouraqui makes use of a variety of devices, conventions and procedures:

1. First-Century Forms of Proper Names

Part of Chouraqui's purpose lies in attempting to *heighten* the historical and cultural gulf separating modern readers from this ancient text, to remind us that the New Testament was written at a time, and in cultures, substantially different from our own. Too often, modern readers presume an essential congruity between their modern thought-world and the world of the Bible, leading to a subconscious reading into the text of modern concepts and assumptions, which are often quite different from the thought-world of New Testament figures and authors.[526] This is a constant danger for students of the Bible, and Chouraqui quite deliberately sets out to amplify the "strangeness" of the text, to "jar" the reader into an awareness that he or she is, in some sense, journeying through "foreign territory," where the rules and assumptions may be somewhat different, and may require a reorientation on the reader's part.

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[526] "The modern readers of the Bible and the original readers of the texts are separated by an enormous cultural gap. The culture presupposed by the Bible is that of the ancient Mediterranean world in general and Palestine in particular. One has only to note a few general characteristics of biblical culture to sense its difference from much modern culture. The social structures presupposed by the writers of biblical materials were patriarchal and authoritarian. The dominant economic system was agricultural and village based. Diets were seasonal. Medical arts were primitive. Machines were little developed. Slavery was widespread. General mortality, and especially infant mortality, rates were high. Travel was slow and difficult. Life was rather simple and characterized by stability and similarity rather than change. Human life was oriented to the cycles of nature and climate. Entertainment was limited. Good artificial lighting did not exist. Animals were slaughtered. dressed, and burned on altars as an integral part of worship. Divine beings, both good and bad, were assumed to be participants in the ongoing course of life and history." John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook.* Rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 15. "Before even embarking on the exegetical step, however, an interpreter must acknowledge entering a strange world where little is predictable in terms of his own world. The ancient writer may or may not take it for granted that the earth is round or that the government should outlaw slavery immediately. This sort of hermeneutical preorientation will pave the way for the interpreter to listen to the ancient text with sympathy and humility. It forms part of the exegetical frame of mind." Richard J. Erickson, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear Out of Critical Method* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 28.

1.1. Jesus - Iéshoua‘

One of the subtle but intentional ways in which Chouraqui attempts this is by his employing of proper names which are much closer to those which would have been familiar to a first-century audience. Perhaps surprisingly, one will never find "Jesus" (or "Jésus") in Chouraqui's translation; one will, however, regularly encounter *Iéshoua‘*, a French approximation of the Hebrew *Yeshua‘*. This is a salutary reminder that the names by which many Europeans today call the Nazarene (Jésus, Gesù, Jesús, etc.) are themselves based on a Latinization (*Iesus*) of a Grecization (*Ἰησοῦς, Iēsous*) of an originally Semitic name (יֵשׁוּעַ, *Yēšû‘*)—that the form *Jésus* is at least three steps removed from the name by which the historical Jesus was presumably familiar to his contemporaries.[527] Furthermore, via its triliteral root, *y-š-‘*, the name *Yēšû‘* can help readers to grasp the Hebrew play on words in Matthew 1:21 ("you are to name him *Jesus* [*Yēšû‘*], for *he will save* [*yôšî‘*] his people from their sins"), without which the angelic command to Joseph remains enigmatic and a seeming *non sequitur*.[528] It may

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[527] See Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew.* Vol. 1: The Christbook: Matthew 1-12. Rev. and exp. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 29, and the sources cited there. The Semitic form may also make more transparent the connection between *Yēšû‘* and *Yᵉhôšûa‘*, the Hebrew name of Joshua (of which it is a shortened form). Such a connection both roots Jesus in the history and Scriptures of his people, and strengthens the sense of continuity between the two Testaments (especially for Christians).

[528] See, e.g., Schalom Ben-Chorin, *Brother Jesus: The Nazarene Through Jewish Eyes.* Transl. and ed. from the original German by Jared S. Klein and Max Reinhart (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Ben-Chorin notes: "The wordplay *Yeshua‘/yoshia‘* in the Jewish-Christian Gospel of Matthew is lacking in Luke (1:31). Luke, a non-Jewish physician, is writing to a certain Theophilus, who, presumably, was a patrician in Antioch and would not have understood the Hebrew wordplay (it was in fact foreign to Luke himself)." (24).
The connection between this proper name and the biblical Hebrew noun for "health, healing, salvation, wellness" (*yᵉšû‘āh*) may also be helpful in understanding the statement in Lk 19:9 (in the story of Zacchaeus): "Today *salvation* has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham". Indeed, it is precisely *in the person of Jesus* [*Yēšû‘*] that this "salvation/health/healing" [*yᵉšû‘āh*] "has come to the house" of Zacchaeus; Luke sees the two as essentially interchangeable, or at least seems to be making the type of word-play typical of biblical literature (perhaps also captured in the deliberate irony of Zacchaeus' Hebrew name *Zakkai*, meaning "pure, innocent"!).
[Commenting on 1QIsaᵃ 51:4f.:] " 'Salvation' (ישע, ישועה) appears as a messianic title in other portions of Jewish literature as well. Jubilees, in speaking of the expectations associated with the tribe of Judah, says: 'In thee shall be the Help of Jacob, and in thee be found the Salvation of Israel.' The Hymns of the Qumran community tell of waiting 'for Salvation to bloom and for a

also help readers to understand Chouraqui's later rendering of the acclamation *Hosanna*, long incorporated in Christian liturgy and music, by the transliteration *Hosha'na* (Matt 21:9,15; Mk 11:9,10; Jn 12:13), literally, "Save [us], please!"—a cry derived from the same basic root, to which the precative particle נא (*-na'*) is added, suggesting a command, entreaty or prayer[529]—addressed, presumably, to one viewed as a 'saviour'.[530] For readers unfamiliar with Hebrew, Chouraqui's rendering can be a bridge to a better understanding of some of the less immediately obvious linguistic and theological connections which the evangelists make regarding Jesus.[531]

Shoot to grow up to give shelter with might'. The Damascus Document assures the faithful that a 'book of remembrance' is being written for them 'until Salvation and Righteousness be revealed', and that they 'shall see his Salvation'. In the comment on II Sam. 7.14 in 4Q Florilegium where the Davidic Messiah is identified as the 'son' in question, Amos 9.11 is quoted in substantiation and applied to 'him who will arise to bring salvation to Israel'—thus equating 'sonship', the 'Scion of David', and the One 'who will arise to bring salvation to Israel' ... What the evidence cited above does mean ... is that the early Jewish believers in Jesus appreciated the fact that as the Messiah he was the one who both embodied and effected the salvation promised of old, and that they expressed this consciousness by means of the title 'God's Salvation' in speaking of him". RICHARD N. LONGENECKER, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1970), 100, 103. See also ANDREW Y. LAW, *Manifest in Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 86 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), Chapter 4 (The Use of Christological Traditions in the Pastoral Epistles), especially 117-124.

[529] See, e.g., the Vulgate's rendering of the Hifil imperative הוֹשַׁע in its occurrences in Psalm 86:2 ("salvum fac [servum tuum]") and Jeremiah 31:7 ("Salva, [Domine, populum tuum]"), and of הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא in Psalm 118-25-26 ("Salvum [me] fac").

[530] For many Christians, the "pleading" aspect of *Hosanna* has been lost, and it has become seen strictly as an acclamation of praise and victory; this may already have been largely the case by the time of the Gospels' redaction: "De cri d'appel, poussé en particulier le septième jour de la fête des Tentes en agitant des rameaux, le terme est devenue, peut-être dès le judaïsme, en tout cas dans le christianisme primitif, une acclamation." (*TOB*, note on Matt 21:9). On this, see particularly: ANDREW C. BRUNSON, "The Hosanna," in BRUNSON, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 203-14; R.T. FRANCE, *The Gospel of Matthew*. NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 779-781 (and esp. the notes on 780); HERBERT W. BASSER, "Planting Jewish Trees in Christian Soil," in ALAN J. AVERY-PECK, ed., *Review of Rabbinic Judaism: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 97-98.

[531] Perhaps also in this vein should we understand the specific challenge to the crucified Jesus to "save" himself (Matt 27:40 "*σῶσον σεαυτόν εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ*"; Lk 23:35 "*ἄλλους ἔσωσεν σωσάτω ἑαυτόν εἰ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐκλεκτός*")—to *do* that which both his reputation and his very name seemed to point to, to *show* that "God will save".

1.2. John the Baptist

Just as there is no "Jesus" (in that form), so neither is there "John the Baptist" (or *Jean-Baptiste*) for Chouraqui. Instead we find *Iohanân l'Immergeur,* immediately drawing attention to the fact that the Greek verb *βαπτίζω, baptizō,* is expressive of a "plunging" or "immersion" into a liquid.[532] This original meaning—clear to first-century Greek-speaking Christians—has, to a certain degree, been lost or obscured in modern times, both by the emergence of an entire branch of Protestant Christians called "Baptists," but also by longstanding sacramental practices in many churches that relied on sprinkling or pouring for baptism, instead of the older form of plunging/immersion, which is inherent in the two Gospel epithets used for John (*ὁ βαπτιστής, ho baptistēs; ὁ βαπτίζων, ho baptizōn).* In addition, the Semitic form of John's name may allow for an easier connection to be made with the Hebrew noun חֵן, *ḥēn* (unmerited grace, favour) and the corresponding verb, חָנַן, *ḥānan* (to show mercy, unmerited grace, favour) to which John's name is etymologically related.[533] For the author of Luke's gospel, and for the other evangelists, John is the one whose very conception is a demonstration of God's graciousness, and who is to be the messenger

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[532] See, e.g., the definitions in the standard lexica of Liddell-Scott-Jones, Thayer, Gingrich, and the Louw-Nida *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains.* 2nd ed. (all as provided electronically as part of BibleWorks 7.0), and the ISBE article on "Baptism," by G.W. Bromiley. See also the study by Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist Within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), esp. 49-50. Some translators (most recently John Henson, in his *As Good As New* translation [Washington: O Books, 2004], endorsed by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams) have suggested that "John the Dipper" might also capture more colloquially the sense of *βαπτίζω* here. Indeed, this is one possible rendering of Luther's German *Johannes der Taufer,* derived from a High German root, *toufan,* or *tief machen* ("to make deep") and, therefore, to immerse or plunge deeply into a liquid. See Thomas J. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein: Philologically and Historically Investigated for the American Bible Union* (New York: American Bible Union, 1861), 145-46.

[533] See, e.g., Lk 1:58: "[Elizabeth's] neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her [*ἐμεγάλυνεν κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτῆς*], and they rejoiced with her" (in the LXX, the Greek verb *ἐλεέω, eleeō* and its cognates frequently render the Hebrew verb חָנַן, *ḥānan* and its cognates).

of the grace and favour that God is preparing to reveal imminently to the world in the person of Jesus.

1.3. Other Hebrew and Aramaic Personal Names

Other Semitic names are similarly transliterated, in place of their more traditional and familiar "biblical" versions: the apostle James, son of Zebedee, is now *Iaʿacoḇ bèn Zaḇdi,*[534] and Simon Peter is once again *Shimʿôn Pétros* (which may help to clarify for French readers the pun in Matt 16:18).[535] The prophet Elijah is called by his Hebrew name, *Éliyahou,* and David's successor as king is no longer Solomon but *Shelomo;* Jesus' mother, Mary, is once again *Miriâm,* and her husband is *Iosseph.*

1.4. Place-Names

Names of villages, towns and regions are treated in much the same way as personal name: Bethlehem is now the construct-chain *Béit-Lèḥèm,*[536] Nazareth is

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[534] "Zebedee (*Zebedaios*) means 'gift of Yahweh.' The Aramaic or Hebrew name is closely related to Zebediah, which means 'God has given'. A column of the synagogue in Capernaum (fourth century A.D.) provides evidence of the continued popularity of the name in Galilee. It bears an Aramaic inscription naming a certain 'Zebida bar Yochanan' as the maker of the column." R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend.* Studies on Personalities of the New Testament (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 7-8. Culpepper also cites an occurrence of the name in Josephus (*Ant.* 5.33: "... a certain Achar, son of Zebedee, of the tribe of Judah ..."; Vol. 5, Henry St. John Thackeray and Ralph Marcus, transls., 17). The family name "bar Zavdi" [from the Hebrew root זבד] is also found in the Jerusalem Talmud; see order *Zeraʿim,* tractate *Kil'ayim* in the edition by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer (Berlin: W. DeGruyter, 2000), 9; order *Našim,* tractate *Kiddušin,* in the Guggenheimer edition (Berlin: W. DeGruyter, 2008), 372.

[535] Chouraqui makes the wordplay explicit: "Tu es *Pétros*—Pierre—et sur cette pierre—*petra*—je bâtirai ma communauté" (103).

[536] As Richard R. Losch points out, long before it acquired its more familiar Hebrew name, "Bethlehem" was originally named for a Canaanite fertility god, Lachma/Lachama, and was a Philistine garrison town. "Grain grew plentifully in the fertile valleys and was an important factor in Bethlehem's economy. The Hebrews, being faithful Jews, would naturally not honor the pagan fertility god Lachama. They called the town *Beth-Lechem,* meaning 'House of Bread' or 'Granary'. Today it is still known as Bethlehem to the religious, but its official name is *Bayt Lachm* (Arabic for 'House of Food')." In the accompanying footnote, Losch acknowledges that the older Canaanite name is, even today, not far below the surface: "The Hebrew and Aramaic word *lechem,* 'bread,' and the Chaldean *lachmo,* 'fertility,' which was also the name of the god of fertility, derive from the same Semitic root." "Bethlehem," in Losch, *The Uttermost Part of the Earth: A Guide to Places in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 51. See also the historical notes on the Internet site of the municipality of Bethlehem itself; online at: http://www.bethlehem-city.org/English/TempVewMenuSub.php?Mid=7

Naṣèrèt,[537] Samaria is *Shomrôn,*[538] Galilee is *Galil,*[539] Magdala is *Migdal,*[540] Egypt is *Miṣraïms*[541] and Beersheba is *Beér-Sheḇa'*.[542]

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[537] In his notes in *L'Univers de la Bible,* Chouraqui admits and explains some of the exegetical and etymological difficulties related to the description of Jesus as a "Nazarene": *"Nazôraios :* La signification de ce titre est sujette à controverse, d'autant que chez Marc, on trouve la graphie *Nazarènos,* et chez Luc les deux formes conjointement. On peut penser qu'il s'agit de simples synonymes, signifiant 'de Naṣèrèt,' mais des rapprochements ont aussi été proposés avec les termes *nazir,* 'voué à יהוה,' *nèṣèr,* 'drageon,' 'rejeton' (voir Is 11,1)." (42)

[538] According to 1 Kings 16:23-24, the name *Shomron* derived from *Shemer,* the family from whom King Omri bought the land for his capital city.

[539] From the Hebrew root *g-l-l,* perhaps "circular" or "encircled area" (and thus, "district").

[540] Perhaps the *Migdal Nūnayā,* "tower of salted fish," mentioned in the Talmud (b. *Pesaḥ.* 46b). See: Jane Schaberg, "Meditations at Migdal," in Schaberg, *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian Testament* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 47-48. Also the biblical Dalmanutha?

[541] Note the terminal *s,* by means of which Chouraqui wishes to signal an unusual *dual* form. Some older linguists suggested that the use of the dual here probably originally referred to the two "kingdoms" (Upper and Lower Egypt) into which the country was divided: "The country was divided from time immemorial into two large sections, Upper and Lower Egypt. The Hebrew name of Egypt, מִצְרַיִם [Mizrayim], being a dual form, forcibly reminds us of this division. These two sections were are various times of Egyptian history independent principalities, and governed by different Pharaohs. Whenever the two sections had one and the same ruler, he was always called ... *'the king of Upper and Lower Egypt'...*" Charles E. Moldenke, *The New York Obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle: With a Preliminary Sketch of the History, Erection, Uses, and Signification of Obelisks* (New York: A.D.F. Randolph & Co., 1891), 84. More devotional and liturgical commentaries have interpreted it literally, in terms of "constraints, tightnesses, narrownesses": "The name *Mitzrayim* [מצרים] has been interpreted homiletically as standing for oppression in the plural, for it foreshadowed all later suffering." Samson Raphael Hirsch and Joseph Elias, *The Nineteen Letters* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1995), 120; "In Hebrew the Exodus from Egypt is called יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. מִצְרַיִם is the Hebrew word for Egypt. It is built around the three-letter root [מצר]. A מֵצַר is a 'pit.' מִצְרַיִם is plural. That makes Egypt 'the pits.' The word is built out of the two letters צַר, which means 'narrowness.' A rabbi—named the Sefat Emet—taught, 'We each have our own Egypt, our own 'narrowness,' that we have to escape.' Another rabbi, Isaac of Gur, taught the same lesson in a different way. He said, 'In every generation there is a new understanding of leaving Egypt. Egypt is inside of us. We all have our own Pharaohs. Not only in every generation, but in every person there is a point of freedom. To touch that point is to exit the inner Egypt. That point can only be found individually by each person.'" Joel Lurie Grishaver, Jane Ellen Golub and Lane Yerkes, שִׂפְתֵי תִפְתָּח: *Siddur Mastery and Meaning.* 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 2003), 106; "... [T]he name *Egypt—mitzrayim*—is grammatically dual. It is the plural of *meitsar,* which means 'narrowness' or 'anguish.' Egypt symbolizes narrow-mindedness. Ancient Egypt and its paganism form the model for the individual who fabricates an entire system to refute true knowledge ... Egypt is the prototype of a world that proclaims itself to be autonomous and announce that it owes nothing to others because it is self-sufficient." Josy Eisenberg and Adin Steinsaltz, *The Seven Lights: On the Major Jewish Festivals* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000), 126. More recent scholarship suggests that *Mitzrayim* is actually an adaptation of a Semitic cognate root, attested in Ugaritic [*mṣrm*] and Akkadian [*muṣur*]. "The word first occurs in nonbiblical texts in the 14th century B.C., and seems to have been used only by outsiders, since the

These examples, while certainly demonstrating Chouraqui's particular love of etymology, may also enable readers of the Bible (with some assistance) to grasp more clearly the meanings behind these place-names. While the original derivations are often not as obvious in Greek and French, the folk-etymologies associated with place-names are frequently a key component of biblical story-telling.[543]

For Chouraqui, a return to first-century Semitic names is one step in a larger project, which is to stress—both for Jews and for Christians—the inherent Jewishness of Jesus, his message, and the primitive Christian tradition. These are names which will necessarily shock and surprise Christians into a re-thinking of the origins of their faith, which will bring home to many (perhaps for the first time) Jesus' deep

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name has not been found in Egyptian sources." W.S. LaSor, "Egypt," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *ISBE*. Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982). Vol. 2, 29.

[542] On the historical and archæological background to these sites, see, among others, Losch, *Uttermost Part;* Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*. Oxford Archæological Guides (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and the relevant articles in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. Eric M. Meyers, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) and the *Encyclopædia Judaica*. 2nd ed. (ed. Fred Skolnik; Detroit: McMillan Reference USA in association with the Keter Pub. House, 2007).

[543] "Not only are large blocks of the Old Testament written in verse, but the prose, with its frequent verse interludes, shows a strong affinity with the associative and figured speech of verse. Puns and popular etymologies appear everywhere in the Hebrew text: they are naturally untranslatable, but translations have to take account of them, at least in the marginalia. Foreign words are assimilated to the Hebrew, sometimes violently. Babel, which means gate of God, is associated with a Hebrew word meaning confusion; the story of the finding of Moses derives his name, which looks Egyptian, from a Hebrew word meaning 'drawn out'; and so on. The New Testament continues with the same patterns. In Matthew 16: 18 we find the celebrated 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church,' a Greek pun which by a curious accident, if that is what it is, works also in the Aramaic that Jesus was more likely to have been speaking. Another Aramaic pun is probably involved when John the Baptist says (Matthew 3:9) that God is able of these 'stones; (*'ebhanim)* to raise up 'children' *(banim)* to Abraham." Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1983), 53-54. "A less obvious example of this, requiring a knowledge of Hebrew as well as Greek, occurs in Acts 28:1: 'After we had escaped, we heard that the island was called Malta (Greek *Melita;* cf. Hebrew *melitah,* 'escape')." John F.A. Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (London: Routledge, 1999), 115. See also "Pun," in Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 12-14.

Some of the most extensive—and often controversial—studies of such supposed word-plays have been done by scholars (such as Maurice Casey, Claude Tresmontant, Éric Edelman, Joachim Jeremias) who were attempting to reconstruct the Semitic "back-text" of the Gospels, and their conclusions necessarily build upon their own views about the language of Jesus, and the potential use of Semitic sources or ideas in the Gospels' redaction.

rootedness in the land, culture and language of ancient Israel. They are also names which are eminently familiar to many Jews, and which may enable them to see (and hear) Christianity in a somewhat different light, to perceive in it elements common to their own religious heritage. The question, however, is whether this "restoration" of Semitic names can *itself* constitute a form of anachronism, imposing upon authors writing in Greek forms of names that they themselves would have been unfamiliar with, or would never have used themselves. Inasmuch as the cultural background of each evangelist—not to mention issues of layers of redaction, and of possible Semitic sources or influences—remain hotly debated among scholars, it is almost impossible to answer this question adequately or definitively. In such cases, it is necessary to choose between a certain *historical* accuracy (i.e., the form in which a name was likely used in its own original setting) and *literary* accuracy (i.e., the form which the evangelist or redactor would have had in mind). In his translation, Chouraqui consistently seems to privilege the *first* of these.[544]

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[544] At times, Chouraqui seems to perhaps *over-translate*, reading more into the Greek than perhaps it can reasonably bear. For example, is εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν (Matt 4:5) really the equivalent of "vers la ville du Sanctuaire"? In this example, Chouraqui seems to see the Greek as translating a Hebrew construct chain: בְּעִיר/אֶל־עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ (perhaps "in the city of the Holy [Place]"? Cf. this usage in Ps 20:3, where *ha-qôdeš*=The Temple/sanctuary); this is indeed the Hebrew reading of Hutter, Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg (although their choice of preposition differs).
And does εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου (Lk 1:9) mean "au Sanctuaire des sanctuaires" (i.e., "to the Holy of Holies")? Translators are not of one accord as to the best translation of the Greek ναός; at times it refers (both in the LXX and in the NT) to *the whole precincts of the Temple*, while at others it seem to indicate more specifically *the inner sanctum of the Jerusalem Temple* (just as the term referred to the inner chamber of pagan temples, where sacred statues of the god/goddess were venerated, and cultic rites performed). Zechariah's role would have required him to enter the "Holy Place" inside the Temple, but *not* the "Holy of Holies," which only the High Priest could enter, once a year, on the Day of Atonement. For this reason, Chouraqui's translation of Lk 1:9 would seem to be mistaken, or at least misleading. Hutter, Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg are unanimous here, in rendering εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου by אֶל־הֵיכַל יהוה.

1.5. Greek and Latin Personal Names

It is not only *Semitic* names, however, that Chouraqui attempts to restore to their earlier Mediterranean forms; Greek and Latin names are transliterated as well.[545] The apostle Philip is *Philippos*, Peter's brother Andrew is *Andreas*, and the evangelists Mark and Luke are *Marcos* and *Loucas*.[546] The Emperor is *Cæsar* and his procurator Pilate is *Pilatos*—although it is perhaps strange that, in a translation which aims diligently at such historical and cultural accuracy, Chouraqui has rendered Pilate's name in *Greek*, rather than the form it presumably took in Latin, *Pilatus* (as we see preserved in the dedicatory inscription from Cæsarea Maritima).[547]

1.6. Debatable or Unusual Translations

1.6.1. Bethany

Although most of these retroversions have been assumed and accepted for centuries, Chouraqui occasionally adopts a transliteration which is less widely agreed upon. Such is the case of the proper derivation of the town of Bethany near Jerusalem, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and the starting-point for Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem days before his crucifixion. Some scholars, both ancient and

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[545] It is therefore a surprise when, in some places, Chouraqui chooses to *translate*, rather than *transliterate*, a proper name. Such is the case with "les Dix-Villes" in Matt 4:25, a rendering of Δεκάπολις, *Dekapolis* which stands out as doubly strange as part of a list of place-names which Chouraqui has *not* translated (*le Galil, Ieroushalaïms, Iehouda, le Iardên*), although plausible translations of these names certainly could be proposed.

[546] Insofar as many church-going Christians are not at all aware of the considerable Hellenization of ancient Palestine, it is instructive to note that at least two of Jesus' closest followers (both presumably Galilean Jews) bore *Greek* names, which may say something about them and their families, but also may hint at Jesus' contact with Hellenistic culture. Similarly, the use of Greek names for two of the evangelists is a reminder that the collection and composition of the Gospels was a complex task, involving different cultures and languages, which should not be oversimplified (as it sometimes is by those espousing a view of the Gospels as "verbatim transcriptions" of Jesus).

[547] In fact, in Chouraqui's earlier edition (in *L'Univers de la Bible*), Pilate's name *is* given in its Latin form, as *Pilatus*. No reason for the subsequent change is given. On the Pilate inscription, see: Craig A. Evans, "Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 334-36, and the scholarly sources cited there.

modern, see the name Bethany as a corruption of an earlier *Bêt-ʿĀnî* (perhaps "Place of the Poor/Miserable/Suffering Ones"),[548] while others suggest a derivation from an original personal name: *Bêt-Ḥānanyah* (perhaps originally "Place of Hananiah/Ananias"?)[549], or even "Place of Dates" *(Bêt-Tᵉʿênîm).*[550] Chouraqui has opted for the second of these possible translations, although it seems to be a minority opinion today.

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[548] This derivation seems to have been first proposed by Jerome, in his Latin translation of Eusebius' *Onomasticon,* in which he translated Bethany as *"domus adflictionis"* or *"domus obœdentiæ"* (see Scott Nash, "Bethany," in David Noel Freedman *et al.*, eds., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible,* 168). "The name Bethany itself confirms the village's function as a poor-house of Jerusalem ... Jerome understood the name to be derived from the Hebrew *bet 'anî* or the identical phrase in Aramaic, *bet 'anyâ,* 'house of the poor' or 'house of affliction/poverty'. The Christian Palestinian and Syriac versions of the New Testament both give the Aramaic version of this name and confirm Jerome's understanding. Unfortunately, modern commentators have rejected Jerome's explanation, preferring most often to suggest a derivation from the personal name Anaiah (Neh 8:4 and 10:22) ... The explanation of the expert Semitic philologist Jerome, who spend the last thirty-four years of his life as abbot of the monastery at Bethlehem, only about six miles to the southeast, was correct. The modern semantic equivalent of *bet 'anyâ,* 'Bethany/bethany,' is 'Poorhouse/poorhouse'." Brian J. Capper, "The New Covenant in Southern Palestine at the Arrest of Jesus," in James R. Davila, ed. *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity.* Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrew's in 2001. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 46 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 110; Capper, "Essene Community Houses and Jesus' Early Community," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 472-502.

More recently, some scholars have attempted to associate Bethany (as "house of the *'anî"*) with references in the Dead Sea Scrolls to a colony of lepers and other impure or suffering people located to the immediate east of Jerusalem (11QT 46:16-18). The Essenes certainly *do* seem to have referred to themselves as the *'anî,* the "Poor Ones of God," and some contend that this supports the presence of an ancient Essene commune in the area around modern-day Bethany (See: Bargil Pixner OSB, "Bethanien bei Jerusalem—eine Essener-Siedlung?" in *Wege des Messias und Stätten der Urkirche.* SBAZ 2. R. Riesner, ed. (Basel: Giessen, 1994), 208-18; Timothy J.M. Ling, *The Judæan Poor and the Fourth Gospel.* SNTSMS 136 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 177.

[549] See Losch, *Uttermost Part,* 45; "Ananiah," in Geoffrey Wigoder, ed., *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible* (New York, Sterling, 2005), 59.

[550] See, e.g., John Lightfoot's notes on Bethany in his classic *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ.* Robert Gandell, ed. Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859; originally published 1658-1674), 90-91. See the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of various proposed etymologies in Capper, "Essene Community Houses," 497-98. The "place of dates" etymology might be strengthened if, as most scholars surmise, the adjoining village of Bethphage means "place of unripe/green figs"; see, e.g., John J. Rousseau and Rami Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 18; Thomas V. Brisco, "Bethphage," in Freedman *et al.*, eds., *Eerdmans Dictionary,* 174; Rivka Gonen, *Biblical Holy Places: An Illustrated Guide* (Herzlia: Palphot, 1999), 69. See also "בֵּית פ', פַּגֵי, פָּאגֵי," in Jastrow's *Dictionary of Targumim, Talmud and Midrashic Literature* (1926), 1130; online at: http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/TABS/Jastrow/

1.6.2. The "Queen of the South"

Another transliteration which strikes the reader because of its unusualness is Chouraqui's rendering of the title *βασίλισσα νότου, basilissa notou* in Matt 12:42 and Lk 11:31. In these parallel passages, the reference is to the mysterious Queen of Sheba,[551] who, according to I Kgs 10:1-13 (‖ II Chr 9:1-12[552]), came to marvel at the wisdom and grandeur of Solomon. Chouraqui has rendered the phrase—interestingly—as "la reine du Téimân". Why has Chouraqui made the rather unexpected association "queen of the South—Sheba/Saba—Teman"? Presumably the link is at least partly based on the text of Job 6:19, "The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope"; on the basis of the synonymous parallelism characteristic of ancient Semitic poetry, it could be argued that "the caravans of Tema" and "the travelers of Sheba" are, in fact, equivalent expressions, and that Tema and Sheba are different names for the same place. Similarly, the very name Teman (Hebrew תֵּימָן, *têmān*) seems derived from יָמִין, "the right hand [side]" (when one is facing east), and frequently refers to the south in Hebrew (Job 9:9; 39:26; Ps 78:26, etc.). The interplay of these various possibilities means that Chouraqui's "Téimân" can be interpreted in several different ways: was the Queen of Sheba a specifically Yemenite (Temanite) sovereign? Or did she come from one of the unspecified kingdoms in the area of modern Arabia (perhaps adjoining the territory of the Edomites?) and certainly "south" to someone in Israel?[553] Chouraqui's

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[551] Variously located in the Arabian peninsula; perhaps modern Yemen.

[552] In both instances, the Hebrew is מַלְכַּת־שְׁבָא.

[553] "Sheba is variously located. Northern Arabia, NE of Medina, where a wādi'eš-šeba may echo the name, was the home of a number of queens mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions as early as the eighth century B.C. ... If the queen ruled this northern area, the spices, gold, and gems carried to Jerusalem must have been acquired in trade, not procured in her homeland. More likely, Sheba is Saba on the southwest coast of the Arabian coast (modern Yemen), S of Ma'in and W of Qataban and Hadramaut, South Arabian states. Although the several expeditions that excavated Sabean cities have not reached levels assignable to the 10th century BC when Solomon's empire flourished, the developed cultures that appear in the 8th cent. may well have roots as early as the 12th century. This southwestern location better suits the references to Solomon's fleet based at Ezion-geber and also the queen's precious cargo. So far, however, Sabean inscriptions have revealed no record of female rulers. The third possible site is in the Horn of east Africa, across the Red Sea from Saba, near modern day Djibouti ... This evidence leaves much room to affirm the

choice of term here succeeds in being both evocative and evasive at the same time, challenging his reader to re-think, and perhaps to research for themselves, who the Queen of the South was, and where she may have come from. Should "Queen of the South" be understood in terms of a geographical direction, or, as it seems to be in the Old Testament, as a specific nation or kingdom, i.e. "the Southern Kingdom"? The interplay here, between the New Testament allusion and its Old Testament referent, allows for more than one possible answer.

A comparison of our three Hebrew translations here yields results that may be instructive. In both of these instances, Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg agree in reading מַלְכַּת תֵּימָן, while Hutter reads the place-name as שְׁבָא in the Matthean parallel and נֶגֶב in the Lukan one. Clearly, Chouraqui has not followed Hutter here, but it seems likely that he may be following either Delitzsch or Salkinson-Ginsburg, or both.

Unfortunately, Chouraqui is not consistent in employing this translation. In the two other occurrences of *νότος* in the Gospels (Lk 12:55; 13:29, referring, respectively, to "the south wind" and to those "coming from the south" to dine in the Kingdom of God), Chouraqui chooses the more usual French geographical designation, *le Midi* (as also the TOB and the BdeJ).[554] As a result, the link between the four uses is broken for his readers, who will not realize that the two different French expressions are translating the same Greek term.

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basis reliability and antiquity of the story while acknowledging that some of the argument is inferential, since no specific external record from Solomon's time has yet been found to confirm the identity and homeland of the queen." D.A. HUBBARD, "Queen of Sheba," in *ISBE*. (ed. GEOFFREY W. BROMILEY; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), Vol. 4, 9.

[554] In Lk 12:55, Hutter has דָּרוֹם; Delitzsch has רוּחַ הַנֶּגֶב; Salkinson-Ginsburg has רוּחַ נֶגֶב. In Lk 13:29, Hutter has מִנֶּגֶב; Delitzsch has מִדָּרוֹם; Salkinson-Ginsburg has מִיָּם. The obvious variations suggest that even these three sets of translators were not certain of the most appropriate way to render the Greek in these four pericopæ, and translated as best they could, according to the context, without being concerned for consistency.

1.7. Similar Attempts by Other Translators

Chouraqui is not the only person to attempt to return to more ancient forms of personal and place names in a New Testament translation.[555] In English, David H. Stern did more or less the same in his *Jewish New Testament*,[556] and James S. Trimm has attempted something similar in his *Hebraic Roots Version New Testament*.[557] Both of these translations, however, have been prepared by Messianic Jews, which immediately makes them controversial—and suspect in the eyes of many Jews—whereas Chouraqui remained a faithful Jew until his death.

2. Treatment of Divine Names[558]

One of the subjects for which Chouraqui reserved his most strident criticisms was the way in which divine names were dealt with in the Bible, both in Greek and in French. For centuries, it has been a given of critical scholarship that various strands, sources or traditions in the Hebrew Bible (particularly in the Pentateuch, but not exclusively) could be identified, at least in part, by their use of different names for the deity. Today, many university students and educated laypeople are familiar with the terms *Elohist* and *Yahwist*, and with the putative "sources," E and J, which are roughly characterized by their use of the divine names *Elohim* and *YHWH* [perhaps *Yahweh*[559]].

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[555] The Brill Josephus series (in process) has adopted a somewhat similar approach: "In the case of Josephus' personal names, we have used the familiar English equivalent where it is close to his Greek form. Where his version differs significantly from the one familiar to Western readers, or where he varies his form within the same narrative, we have represented his Greek spelling in Roman characters. That is because his unusual forms may be of interest to some readers. In such cases we have supplied the familiar English equivalent in square brackets within the text or in a footnote. Similarly, we keep Josephus' units of measurement and titles, giving modern equivalents in the notes." Louis H. Feldman, ed., *Flavius Josephus*. Vol. 3: Jewish Antiquities (ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2000), x.

[556] Jerusalem/Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1989.

[557] 2nd ed. (Hurst, TX: Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, 2001).

[558] On this, see p. 2415 in *La Bible Chouraqui*, "Les noms divins dans la Bible".

[559] This pronunciation is not, however, entirely certain. See, for example, G.H. Parke-Taylor, "The Tetragrammaton Within Judaism," in Parke-Taylor, יהוה *YHWH: The Divine Name in the Bible*. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1975, 79-80; G.J. Thierry, "The

There are a wide range of other divine names as well, often invoked in relationship to particular sites or regions, and often seemingly derived from earlier Middle Eastern divinities.[560]

2.1. The Tetragrammaton

André Chouraqui's early education in Hebrew, and his later rabbinic studies in Paris, highlighted for him this rich panoply of names and titles in the *Tanakh*. However, he became increasingly upset and scandalized to realize that the distinguishing name of Israel's God—יהוה, YHWH, a name which many have argued is actually a "non-name," a deliberate *avoidance* of being named and thereby ideologically hemmed in[561]—had been transformed by the Septuagint translators, in

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Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton," in Pieter Arie Hendrik de Boer, ed., *Oudtestamentische studiën*, Part 7. Leiden: Brill, 1950, 30-42.

[560] El-Elyon, El-Shaddai, El Olam, etc.

[561] "... scholars do not agree on what [the name YHWH] means. One likely explanation is that it is a kind of refusal to answer the question. You want to know who I am — but 'I will be who I will be'. This is like the line in some fairytales or pantomimes: 'We shall see what we shall see!' It gives absolutely nothing away. Like Ezekiel's vision, this scene is a way of stressing the mystery of God, the fact that we can know little or nothing about him." John Barton and Julia Bowden, *The Original Story: God, Israel, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 48; Roland de Vaux, "The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH," in John I. Durham and J.R. Porter, eds. *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 48-75, esp. the extensive etymological discussions on 63-66, where de Vaux notes that both Aquila and Theodotion rendered the Hebrew with the Greek future tense: ἔσομαι ὃς ἔσομαι, *esomai hos esomai*. "In whatever way one interprets the meaning of the phrase 'I will be who I will be,' it entails among other things the freedom of God to decide on the manner of God's presence. Human-made images could not and should not represent the untrammeled free presence of the Holy One of Israel, because such would too easily be understood as containing the Holy God. The prohibition against seeking and locating the presence of God in anything human-made is thus directly connected to the expression of divine self-disclosure in Exodus 3. Taken to its logical consequence, the ban includes permanently locating God in concepts or metaphors as well as physical representations. The God of the Torah, the God of the Bible is not to be located forever in any one image, be it physical or verbal, for then the Holy Name may he applied to what is in reality an 'illusion' (Exod. 20:7) ..." Johanna W. H. Van Wijk-Bos, *Making Wise the Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 245; "Dieu révèle son nom à Moïse: *Yahvé*, et il explique ce nom ... Cette explication demeure évasive. Dieu garde son mystère. Mais, en même temps, elle dévoile quelque chose. Le «je suis» en hébreu a une portée dynamique, comme Dieu l'avait exprimé juste avant en promettant à Moïse son soutien: «Je serai avec toi» (3, 12). On peut comprendre de la manière suivante l'explication du nom divin: «Je suis celui qui demeure activement présent dans votre vie; c'est par mon accompagnement dans votre histoire que je manifesterai qui je suis, et donc que

ways which Chouraqui argued were linguistically and theologically skewed and unfaithful:

> [God's] misfortune began when men took it into their heads to name the Unnamable ... The Hebrews took, in order to speak of him, the name for the gods of their pagan neighbors, the Elohim. They used this plural word as singular, and combined with it the unpronounceable Tetragram, to form the term YHWH Elohim. But, in so doing, they confounded, in the popular mind, the unique and transcendent God of Sinai with the crowd of idols that encumbered the pagan pantheons. On account of this, [God] became, linguistically at least, a part of that very family which he wished to destroy, in snatching the nations away from the myths and mythologies that were killing them ...
>
> The most subtle misreading, the most profound, and the most difficult to deal with, occurred when the rabbis of Alexandria, probably encouraged by the Ptolemies, undertook to translate the Bible into Greek, around the third and second centuries before the Christian era. To make themselves understood by the Greeks, they had to use their language. The translation of the Septuagint was resolutely syncretist, and, since it addressed itself also to Hellenized Jews, was frankly written in the spirit of apologetics ... The first rash step was to call the God of Sinai, YHWH Elohim, by a name that designated the idols of Olympus, *Theos*, the *Deus* of the Latins, the *Dieu* of the French. God, under the name of *Theos* or any name formed from that term, was thus born in Alexandria, of the cross-breeding of the pagan divinities, undoubtedly astonished to discover in their company the austere and redoubtable Elohim of Sinai ... The name could be expressed, but it ceased to be the eternal Name, essentially unutterable. As the crowning disgrace, the Unutterable, the Unnamable YHWH received as his Greek name the designation common to the idols of Olympus, grouped around his most unyielding enemy, *Zeus (Theos, Deus, Dieu)*. Unnamed, he was the master of heaven and earth, source of the ascetic fruitfulness of silence. Named, he became the very nadir of his infinite and unnamable essence ... Debaptized in the West, YHWH, who had become *Theos-Deus-Dieu*, survived only under the hardly disguised mask—splendid, it must be said—of Zeus[562] ... Only a handful of men, brought up, as

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vous découvrirez qui je suis.»" MARCEL DUMAIS, *À la rencontre d'un Dieu-amour: Dieu le Père dans la Bible* (Montréal: Médiaspaul, 1999), 15-16. Probably the single most thorough analysis of the names and epithets associated with YHWH is found in LORENZO VIGANÒ, *Nomi e titoli di YHWH alla luce del semitico del Nord-Ovest* (Rome : Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1976).

[562] In a 2003 article on this subject, GUY STROUMSA suggests that the silence surrounding the name of God was precisely to preserve the "otherness" of God, vis-à-vis the (often tempting) deities of surrounding nations: "While the reason for this dramatic departure from common usage in Antiquity can only be guessed, it stands to reason to see in it a will to insist on the radical difference between the God of the Israelites and those of the other peoples, idols not to be put on a par with Him. ELIAS BICKERMAN [*The Jews in the Greek World*. Cambridge, MA, 1998] claims that

> it were, in the seraglio, comprehend what deep meanings, and what realities, are contained in the name YHWH, and in the surnames Elohim and Dieu. For the vast majority of men, including the great dechristianized masses of the West, God, like the gods of the empires that adopted him in order the better to reduce him to impotence, is from now on naked, dead—so say the crowds, deprived of his light and of his love—dead of having been named, dead of having been imprisoned in a conceptual cage in which his fire is smothered and his strength worn down. And since God, as *Dieu*, is dead, the world is at last free to discover his true countenance and his mystery, that of the Unnamed.[563]

Foundational to Chouraqui's concern is the traditional reticence of Jewish piety to pronounce the ineffable Name of God, YHWH, which is revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:1-15—and which is used more than 6800 times in the Hebrew Bible. Today it is uncertain at exactly what point pronunciation of that Name became a taboo, but the generous use of euphemisms, circumlocutions and divine titles, both in the Gospels and in rabbinic literature, would seem to suggest that it was a pre-Christian innovation. How ancient is avoidance of speaking the Name, and the practice reflected in the *ketîv—qeré*, of reading *Adonai* when the Tetragrammaton is written?[564]

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the Elephantine papyri clearly reflect this attitude. According to Bickerman, referring to God's name would have meant letting Him appear together with the idols." STROUMSA, "A Nameless God: Judæo-Christian and Gnostic 'Theologies of the Name," in PETER J. TOMSON AND DORIS LAMBERS-PETRY, eds. *The Image of the Judæo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature.* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 231.

563 ANDRÉ CHOURAQUI, *A Man in Three Worlds*. Transl. by KENTON KILMER of *Ce que je crois*. Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1979 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 149-52.

564 In this connection, it is particularly interesting that, in the summer of 2008, the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship issued a document, "On the Name of God," which forbid the use of any form of the Tetragram (YHWH, Yahweh, Jehovah, etc.) in Catholic liturgy:

"1) In liturgical celebrations, in songs and prayers, the name of God in the form of the *tetragrammaton* YHWH is neither to be used or pronounced;

2) For the translation of the Biblical text in modern languages, destined for the liturgical usage of the Church, what is already prescribed by n. 41 of the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* is to be followed; that is, the divine *tetragrammaton* is to be rendered by the equivalent of *Adonai/Kyrios:* 'Lord,' 'Signore,' 'Seigneur,' 'Herr,' 'Señor,' etc.;

3) In translating, in the liturgical context, texts in which are present, one after the other, either the Hebrew term *Adonai* or the *tetragrammaton,* YHWH, *Adonai* is to be translated 'Lord' and the form 'God' is to be used for the *tetragrammaton,* YHWH, similar to what happens in the Greek translation of the Septuagint and in the Latin translation of the Vulgate."

The full text of this document is available on the Web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop (USCCB): http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/NameOfGod.pdf

Sean McDonough provides an excellent and comprehensive overview of the relevant witnesses in his 1999 study, *YHWH at Patmos: Revelation 1:4 in Its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting.* After reviewing the variants found in the extant LXX manuscripts and the treatment of the Name in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Philo, Josephus and the intertestamental literature, McDonough concludes:

> ...we have no direct evidence to tell us precisely when and why the practice of not using YHWH was introduced. While portions of the Hebrew bible seem reticent to use the tetragrammaton ... these are difficult to date and offer no explicit information as to why they are avoiding the divine name.

Based on the available evidence, McDonough suggests that the substitution was certainly post-exilic, and was already in place by the mid-third century BCE.[565] What is clear, however, is that the name YHWH frequently received special treatment from Hebrew and Greek scribes, being written in paleo-Hebrew letters (cf. the papyri Fouad 266 [first century BCE] and Oxyrhynchus 3522 [first century CE]), and occasionally marked out with raised dots. Origen claims (*On the Psalms* 2:2) that paleo-Hebrew was still being used to render YHWH at the time of Aquila's Greek translation.[566]

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[565] Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Revelation 1:4 in Its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting.* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 111.

[566] "In some Qumran texts written in the square script, the tetragrammaton and some other divine names were written in paleo-Hebrew: 2QExod^{b} [a rewritten Torah text?], 4QExod^{j}, 4QLev^{g}, 11QLev^{b}, 1QPs^{b}, 4QIsa^{c}, 3QLam) and fifteen nonbiblical compositions. Likewise, the scribes of several Jewish-Greek translations wrote the tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew characters (fragments of Aquila, 8ḤevXIIgr, Pap. Oxy. 1007, Pap. Oxy. 3522) or in the square script, usually in stylized characters. This habit was mentioned by Origen in his commentary on Psalm 2 (Migne XII, 1104) and Jerome, *Prologus galeatus.*" Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible.* 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 220. Tov argues elsewhere that "the paleo-Hebrew texts found at Qumran came from the circles of the Sadducees who ascribed much importance to the authenticity of the ancient characters." E. Tov, "The Socio-Religious Background of the Paleo-Hebrew Biblical Texts Found at Qumran," in H. Cancik *et al.*, eds., *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70 Geburtstag* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 353-74. See also: Philip Wesley Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography and Textual Criticism* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 208-209; Larry W. Hurtado, "The *Nomina Sacra*" (Chapter 3) in *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 95-134, and especially 101-108, on the treatment of the Tetragrammaton; Donald W. Parry, "4QSam^{a} and the Tetragrammaton," in Donald W. Parry and Stephen David Ricks, eds. *Current Research and*

2.1.1. Chouraqui's Ketiv-Qeré

Chouraqui's antidote to the syncretism—so objectionable to him—which has made YHWH into "God," is a return to the ancient practice of the *ketîv—qeré*. The later printed versions of his Bible incorporate a unique logogram (IHVH[ADONAI]), which attempts to reproduce in Roman letters the venerable scribal convention of writing the consonantal *nomen sacrum*, but with an indication as to how it should properly be *pronounced* in oral reading [יְהוָה]. Whenever the Greek κύριος, *kyrios* occurs in the text as a divine epithet (roughly 90x, beginning in Matt 1:20 and ending in Jn 21:12), Chouraqui inserts this logogram, to indicate his belief that, behind the Greek *kyrios* originally lurks the unutterable Hebrew Name of God, YHWH.[567] Once again, we are faced with the unresolved scholarly debate about the identities, backgrounds and locations of the writers and redactors of the Four Gospels: how many of them were originally Jewish, and would thus have been conscious of the Hebraic background to their use of *kyrios*? The New Testament understanding of God (and Jesus) as "Lord" is certainly rooted in Scriptures where *kyrios* was thought a suitable equivalent to YHWH, and Chouraqui's presumption that the Tetragrammaton underlies this Greek term is certainly justified on a *historical—linguistic—theological* level, highlighting once again the continuity of the two biblical Testaments. On the *psychological and literary* levels, however, it can probably never move beyond an interesting hypothesis, since it presumes a link that not all of the evangelists may themselves have been able to make.

Technological Developments in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Studies in the Texts of the Desert of Judah 20 (New York: Brill, 1996), 106-25.

[567] In places where the Greek *kyrios* is clearly being applied to an ordinary human being, and *not* to God (or to Jesus understood as divine), Chouraqui instead renders it by the Hebrew *Adôn* (e.g. Matt 18:27 *L'Adôn* de ce serviteur...). Unfortunately, in some circumstances, this obscures or removes entirely a parallel necessary for effect or contrast (e.g. Matt 22:44 ‖ Lk 20:42 "Harangue de IHVH[ADONAI] à mon Adôn..." instead of the more usual "Le *Seigneur* a déclaré à mon *Seigneur*..."). In some cases, the interpretation is disputed: is the vocative *kyrie* in Lk 19:8 a form of polite address ("Sir" NJB; "Maître" BFC), or an ascription to Jesus of quasi-divine status and authority ("Lord" NAB, NIV, NRSV; "Seigneur" BdeJ, TOB, Mar)? The Bayard translation has "seigneur," but without a capital letter, perhaps precisely to allow for this ambiguity; Chouraqui has *Adôn* here.

2.2. Elohim

The second most common name for God in the Hebrew Bible is אֱלֹהִים, *ʾĕlōhîm*, a term that is used roughly 2600x in the Tanakh and which, for Chouraqui, is the Hebrew behind occurrences of the Greek *θεός, theos*[568]. Both Jewish and Christian interpreters have long recognized—and grappled with—the fact that *ʾĕlōhîm* is, at least formally, a Hebrew *masculine plural*. The apparent incongruity of strict Israelite monotheism side-by-side with a form which *could* be construed (and often must be) as *gods* (or "angels/heavenly beings") has prompted many attempts to explain away this uncomfortable linguistic phenomenon; some of the oldest may be those contained in the *Mekhilta* attributed to the late first- and early second-century C.E. rabbi Ishmael ben-Elisha, in its comments on the Decalogue.[569] Similarly, at least some of the

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[568] In Matt 1:23, Chouraqui instead translates *theos* with the Hebrew theonym *Él*, to make more explicit the derivation of the Hebrew name *Immanuel*: "Ils crieront son nom: 'Imanou Él,' qui s'interprète: 'Él avec nous'." The verbal connection, made in the Hebrew of Isa 7:14, is lost in the Greek: *καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.*

[569] See the parallel Mekhilta texts presented by Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism*. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), Chapter 2, "Conflicting Appearances of God," 33-34; Barry Blackburn, *Theios anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretative Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 40 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 163-64; "GOD SPOKE (Ex. 20: 1). Whenever the term 'God' is used it always refers to God as judge. He is a judge who will faithfully exact punishment and dispense reward. Since there are sections of the Torah the observance of which brings reward but whose neglect does not exact punishment, I might have thought that this was so in regard to the Ten Pronouncements. Therefore the verse states GOD SPOKE and 'God' always refers to God as judge. He is a judge who will exact punishment and dispense reward … [FN:] The rabbis established the principle that the two names of God had different connotations. *Elohim* (God) indicated justice since the same word is used for human judges, while *adonai* (Lord [i.e., YHWH]) referred to mercy, since this is the name used in the verse delineating His qualities: The Lord! the Lord! a God compassionate and gracious (Ex. 34:6)." Reuven Hammer, transl. *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 143, citing *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 4. See also Reinhard Neudecker, *The Voice of God on Mount Sinai: Rabbinic Commentaries on Exodus 20:1 in the Light of Sufi and Zen-Buddhist Texts* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 2002), 43-46 ("The Divine Attribute of Justice: Rabbinic Interpretations"), and especially the Jewish sources cited in the notes there; William Horbury, "Jewish and Christian Monotheism in the Herodian Age," in Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*. Early Christianity in Context (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 16-44.

midrashic sages were sensitive to how such references could be interpreted as fodder for Christian polemics.[570]

> The response of some medieval commentators to these troubling questions is that the plural form of the Hebrew term for deity was employed by the biblical text to emphasize God's "all-encompassing power".[571] Or, that its purpose is to remind one that "there is nothing that exists that does not derive from His being,"[572] or that *Elohim* denotes "one who has power to produce all things".[573] That is, according to these commentators, the use of the plural form *Elohim* is intended to signify the multidimensional character of the one God, and not that the supreme deity may be conceived of as consisting of a multiplicity or aggregation of diverse divine beings or powers.
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> By contrast, Judah Halevi explained that the reason why the term *Elohim* is in the plural is because it was adopted by the early Israelites from the civilization they were to supplant. "The word has a plural form, because it was so used by gentile idolators, who believed that every deity was invested with astral and other powers. Each of these was called *Eloha;* their united forces were, therefore, called *Elohim".*[574] Abraham ibn Izra, on the other hand, eschewed attributing any particular theological significance to the plural form of *Elohim.* In his opinion, it merely reflected the linguistic traditions of the region to use the plural form of appellations to signify respect and honor. In other words, Ibn Ezra may be understood as suggesting that, notwithstanding its plural form, *Elohim* should not be considered as the plural of *Eloha.* Instead, it should be considered as a singular root with a special form to reflect conventional linguistic usage.[575]
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> In modern times, David Z. Hoffmann suggested that the designation *Elohim* derived from a variant meaning of *el,* "to be strong". "This name therefore refers to the powerful, the omnipotent".[576] Similarly, Samuel D. Luzzatto suggested that the ancient Hebrews adopted the plural name for God to emphasize that, unlike the surrounding peoples who identified their gods with

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[570] "R. Samuel b. Nahman said in R. Jonathan's name: When Moses was engaged in writing the Torah, he had to write the work of each day. When he came to the verse, *And God said: Let us make man,* etc., he said: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why dost Thou furnish an excuse to heretics?' [i.e. favourable to Christian Trinitarian beliefs, by suggesting a multiplicity of divinities]. 'Write,' replied He; 'Whoever wishes to err may err'." (*Genesis Rabbah* 8:8).

[571] Bahya ben [Asher] Hlava (Rabbenu Bahya), *Biur al haTorah* on Gen. 1:11.

[572] Sforno, *Biur al haTorah* on Gen. 1:1. [Edited by Zeev Gottlieb. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1980].

[573] Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha'Ikkarim,* Vol. 1, 103.

[574] Judah Halevi, *Book of Kuzari,* 4:1, 175.

[575] Abraham ibn Ezra, *Perushei haTorah* on Gen. 1:1, 12.

[576] David Z. Hoffmann, *Sefer Bereshit.* Asher Wasserteil, transl. and ed. (Bnei Brak: Nezach, 1969-71), 16: "The word *el* is used in this sense in Gen. 31:29: *It is in the power [el] of my hand,* and also in Deut. 28:32: *and there shall be naught in the power [el] of thy hand."*

> individual aspects or forces of nature, their God encompassed all those aspects[577] ... [578]

Approaching the question from categories more linguistic than philosophical, the Hebrew specialist Bruce Waltke provides arguments based on grammar, and on the particularities of Hebrew morphology:

> The plural form *ʾĕlōhîm* does not designate a countable plural, as it would in English (i.e., "G/gods"). In Hebrew grammar, unlike English grammar, the plural commonly has other uses than to indicate a countable plural number. For example, the Hebrew plural is used for abstractions (such as "wisdom," or "youth," or "virginity"). The plural is also used for appellatives whose reference is inherently large or complex (e.g., "face" or "back"). Grammarians designate its use with *ʾĕlōhîm* as an "intensive plural," a plural that designates a single animate as thoroughly characterized by the qualities of the noun. Thus Leviathan, the sea monster, is in plural form (Ps 74:13-14), and so is the land monster, Behemoth (Job 40:15). When applied to deities, this *intensive plural* is sometimes referred to as the *honorific plural*. In other words, the divine being is so thoroughly characterized by "God-ness" that only a plural is appropriate for his designation. This intensive plural of *ʾĕlōhîm* can be distinguished from its countable plural by its modifiers (such as verbs and adjectives). The former use singular modifiers, while the latter uses plural modifiers.[579]

Waltke's explanation is certainly neat, and has the weight of scholarly support behind it; it has been the accepted explanation of this phenomenon for centuries, and is found widely in commentaries and textbooks of Hebrew grammar. However, the fact that even some of Judaism's most brilliant and knowledgeable commentators have felt compelled to grapple, linguistically and theologically, with this issue, indicates that it is perhaps an issue not so easily dismissed.

Chouraqui's practice, here as in the case of other forms which he believes to be underlain by Hebrew plural forms (see comments on this in the previous section), is simply to indicate the presence of a plural form, by the addition of an "s": *Elohîms*.

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[577] SAMUEL D. LUZZATTO, *Perush Shadal al Hamisha Humsehi Torah*. Phil Schlesinger, ed. (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1965) on Gen. 1:1.

[578] MARTIN SICKER, *Between God and Man: Issues in Judaic Thought*. Contributions to the Study of Religions 66 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 46.
See also: ARI MARK CARTUN, "When God's References Are Plural: A Look at Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7 in an Overarching Context," in *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* (Fall 1996), 51-70.

[579] BRUCE K. WALTKE, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 430.

Some may argue that, by doing so, he has, in fact, presumed the *plural* interpretation, in a question about which there is not absolute scholarly unanimity. However, my own sense is that, had he wished to do so, he could easily have chosen a plural *French* form, such as *dieux* (or, perhaps, *dieus?).* By his retention of the Hebrew term, with added "s," I believe he is simply indicating to his readers that there is something of a mystery here to be explored—a mystery which has a long history of exploration in his own Jewish culture, which Chouraqui invites his (largely Christian) readership to discover and weigh for themselves.

Once again, the question arises: could the evangelists have had the Hebrew *ʾĕlōhîm* in mind when they used *theos* in the Gospels? While it is entirely possible, it is a thesis that remains unproven, and will likely remain hypothetical—a conclusion based more on Chouraqui's personal intuition than on anything we can determine with certainty from these texts about their authors, and the communities for which they were initially written.

3. Use of Jewish or Hebrew expressions

It is today a commonplace of New Testament historical and theological scholarship that Jesus was born a Jew, was raised in a devout Jewish family, and remained a Jew until his death.[580] Although scholars today question specifically what *type* of Jew Jesus was, within the constellation of Second Temple Jewish sects and

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[580] For example, Robert Aron, *The Jewish Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1971); Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); John Shelby Spong, *This Hebrew Lord: A Bishop's Search for the Authentic Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Bruce Chilton, *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006). "Jesus was and always remained a Jew, and his ministry was deliberately limited 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt. 15:24). Jesus is fully a man of his time, and of his environment—the Jewish Palestinian one of the first century, the anxieties and hopes of which he shared." Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" (June 24, 1985), 12; online at: http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/Vatican_Notes.htm

movements, it is generally agreed that Jesus' lifestyle and outlook were, broadly speaking, consistent with what we know of Jewish life, especially in Galilee. Consequently, Chouraqui and many others today are at pains to highlight some of the ways in which Jesus' Jewishness is presented (or at least hinted at) in the Gospels. Very often, Christian translators of the New Testament, less familiar with Jewish life, theology and interpretive traditions, have not been particularly sensitive to these issues in their work; these are religious and cultural lacunæ that Chouraqui hopes to at least partly remedy in *his* translation. Attempting to "read between the lines" of the existing Greek text, Chouraqui asks himself: is there a specifically Jewish or Semitic concept which might reasonably lie beneath the present Hellenistic garb?

3.1. Kraspedon / Kraspeda

For example, the question has often been raised of the best way to translate the Greek noun κράσπεδον, *kraspedon*, which is found five times in the Gospels (Matt 9:20; 14:36; 23:5; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44), each time with reference to the garments of Jesus. In the past, many vernacular translations have rendered *kraspedon/kraspeda* with "the edge" or "the hem" of his cloak (BFC: "le bord de son vêtement"; Bay: "le bord de son manteau"). Chouraqui, however, sees this as an allusion to Jesus' wearing (as a devout Jewish man) of צִיצִת, *ṣîṣit*, the ritual fringes or tassels that Jewish men were commanded (in Num 15:38 and Deut 22:12) to attach to the corners of their clothes, as a constant reminder of the Covenant. In each of the five verses listed above, Chouraqui's rendering is *ṣiṣit*.

Is he, in fact, correct in his assumption, or is this an example of a forced interpretation for apologetic purposes? The TOB and the BdeJ both render this phrase as "la frange de son manteau," and the Maredsous translation has "la houppe [tuft; cluster; knotted part] de son manteau"—all of them at least hinting at a reading in keeping with Chouraqui's.

Such a reading is not, however, either new or novel. Already in the mid-eighteenth century, the English Baptist commentator John Gill (whose work is distinguished by his extensive study of, and reference to, Hebrew and rabbinica) confirmed this interpretation. In his *Exposition of the New Testament* (3 vols., 1746-48), he writes, in his comments on Matt 9:20:

> *touched the hem of his garment;* which was the ציצת, or *fringes,* the Jews were obliged to wear on the borders of their garments, and on it a ribband of blue; see Numb. xv, 38, Deut. xxii, 12, in both which places Onkelos uses the word ברוספדין[581], the same with κρασπεδα used here, and in Mark vi, 56, and rendered *hem.* The Jews placed much sanctity in the wear and use of these fringes; and the Pharisees, who pretended to more holiness than others, enlarged them beyond their common size; but it was not on account of any particular holiness in this part of Christ's garment that induced this poor woman to touch it; but this being behind him, and more easy to be come at, she therefore laid hold of it; for it was his garment, any part of it she concluded, if she could but touch, she should have a cure. However, we learn from hence, that Christ complied with the rites of the ceremonial law in apparel, as well as in other things.[582]

More recent scholarship, both Jewish and Christian, endorses the *ṣîṣit* translation:

> ... running like an undercurrent in Mark's narrative, obscured by the immediacy of his polemical concerns, is Jesus the traditionally religious Jew. He frequents synagogues on the Sabbath, certainly a normatively pious practice. The ill grab ahold of "the fringe of his garment" (6:56); the term, *kraspedon* in Greek, translates the Hebrew *tzitzit* ... Pious Jews would (and do) wear these; if Jesus did, too, it would be small surprise ... In brief, and Mark's conscious efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, Jesus appears even in this Gospel as a recognizably observant Jew.[583]

> ... ancient Jewish sources describe two distinctively Jewish items of clothing: tzitzit and tefillin. Jesus, the Pharisees, and presumably other pietists in the land of Israel wore tzitzit in public, tasseled fringes affixed to the four corners

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[581] See JASTROW (1926), 665, s.v. בְּרוֹסְפְּדָא, which cites this transliteration of the Greek in the Onkelos version of Numbers 15:38.

[582] Text online at: http://www.freegrace.net/gill/

[583] PAULA FREDRIKSEN, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 109.

> of one's garment in accordance with the injunctions of Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12.[584]
>
> Jesus's connection to Judaism can be seen not only in his general comments about Torah but also in his practice of its commandments. For example, Jesus dresses like a Jew. Specifically, he wears *tzitzit*, "fringes," which the book of Numbers enjoins upon all Israelite men (and a number of Orthodox Jewish men still wear) and which can be seen today most readily in the *tallit*, or "prayer shawl," worn in the synagogue during worship ... The Gospels do not shy away from the fcat that Jesus wore these fringes: it is these fringes that the woman with the twelve-year hemorrhage touches in hopes of a healing (Matt. 9:20).[585]

Perhaps the impact of such a change on the reader is little (beyond some initial perplexity). However, by drawing attention to this small but significant detail, already contained in the Gospels, Chouraqui both helps us to re-image the historical Jesus in light of his religious culture, and enables Christians and Jews to see a concrete connection between the historical Jesus and a custom that is familiar to—and still practiced by—many modern Jews. He further reinforces this connection with a diagram and note on p. 76 of *L'Univers de la Bible*, in which he illustrates the tying of the *ṣiṣit*, showing them as part of a modern *tallit*, and explaining some of the numerical and mystical associations of the threads and knots.

3.2. Goyim

One of the more striking (and understandably controversial) of Chouraqui's renderings is the use of the Hebrew plural noun גּוֹיִם, *goyim* [transliterated as *goïm* in *La Bible Chouraqui*, and as *goîm* in *L'Univers de la Bible*], which occurs twenty-five times in his Gospels.[586] Chouraqui generally assumes *goyim* as the Hebrew term underlying

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[584] Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. Hellenistic Culture and Society 31 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 33.

[585] Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 23-24.

[586] In Matt 4:15; 5:47; 6:7, 32; 10:5, 18; 12:18, 21; 20:19, 25; 24:9,14; 25:32; 28:19; Mk 10:33, 42; 11:17; 13:10; Lk 2:32; 12:30; 18:32; 21:24-25 (3x); 22:25. "Il y a une nette opposition entre les Hébreux auxquels Iéshoua' s'adresse et les autres nations, vouées au culte d'idoles multiples. Mieux vaut donc maintenir la transcription du mot hébreu qui seul rend compte de cette distinction. Ce qui

uses of the Greek ἔθνος, *ethnos* and its derivative ἐθνικός, *ethnikos* (found in Matt 5:47 and 6:7).[587] In two of these instances, in Matt 12:21 and in Mk 11:17, it is possible to check Chouraqui's choice against the MT, since the term is part of a quotation from the Hebrew Bible (Isa 42:4 and Isa 56:7, respectively).

What is intriguing is that in *neither* of these verses does the MT itself employ *goyim*. Isaiah 42:4 employs the plural noun אִיִּים, *ʾiyyîm*, "coastlands"; Isa 56:7 employs the expression לְכָל־הָעַמִּים, *lᵉḵol-hāʿammîm*, "to/for all peoples". What these two verses share in common, however, is that the LXX renders both *ʾiyyîm* and *hāʿammîm* with forms of the Greek *ethnos* (*ethnē* in the first case, and *pasin tois ethnesin* in the second). It almost seems as if, in these two cases, Chouraqui has worked backward from the Septuagint version, assuming Hebrew *goyim* where none actually existed. Or perhaps he has assumed that, for a Jew of Jesus' time, the term *goyim* would best have expressed a cultural understanding in which "the nations" now meant specifically "non-Jewish, or Gentile, nations" (a narrower meaning than its biblical usage in earlier centuries). It is difficult to know for sure.

Two other points are somewhat surprising in connection with Chouraqui's use of this term. firstly, although Chouraqui employs it 25 times, *ethnos* actually occurs 39 times in the Gospels, in 34 verses. It is employed five times in the Gospel of John (four times in 11:48-52, in conjunction with the deliberation about Jesus before Caiaphas, and once in 18:35, in Pilate's questioning of Jesus). John's use of *ethnos* is somewhat particular, however, since in each of these cases, *ethnos* clearly refers to the Jewish nation or people, and not to "the Gentiles" or "foreign nations". In each of these Johannine occurrences, Chouraqui has chosen *"la nation (ta nation)"* as his translation. Although this variation is certainly accurate, and may help to highlight the

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définit ici Israël aux yeux de Iéshoua' se résume dans une exigence d'abandon total et filial à la volonté du Père." (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 65, note on Matt 6:32)

[587] *Ethnikos* is also found in Matt 18:17, where Chouraqui renders it with the Hebrew singular *goï* (*goy*).

significantly different usage in John, it is, nevertheless, subtly misleading, especially for a reader who, not finding the term *goïm* in Chouraqui's translation of John, will not be aware that the term *ethnos* does, in fact, occur in that book. Similarly, it is worth noting that, in several other locations where *ethnos* occurs in the Synoptic Gospels,[588] Chouraqui has chosen a translation other than *goïm: nation* or *ethnie* (as in Matt 24:7). Perhaps he felt that to use the singular *goy* in these contexts would be misconstrued, since among those familiar with Yiddish, the term refers to a single Gentile individual, rather than to an entire nation or people.

The second question is less linguistic and more oriented toward Chouraqui's goal of promoting Jewish-Christian understanding. As many non-Jews are aware, the terms *goy* and *goyim* are today ambivalent at best, often condescending, and insulting at worst. Although these terms originally meant simply "a people" and "peoples" (including Israel itself[589]), by the post-biblical period, they had acquired a negative veneer, a psychological "distancing," by which they referred to "the Other"—that is, to non-Jews generally. With the passage of time, they became employed as less-than-complimentary epiphets for Gentiles—and for the worst of what Gentiles represented in Jewish eyes:

> The ... Hebrew word [*goyim*] of course literally means "nations". Used as an antonym to "Jews" or "Israel," it means "[members of] nations [other than Israel." However, the near exclusive use of *goy* as the binary opposite of "Jew" begins only with Rabbinic Hebrew. In Biblical Hebrew, the singular *goy* can be and is used of Israel/the Jews as well ... The many Biblical precedents guaranteed that application of the term *goy* to Israel was familiar to postbiblical authors, including the rabbis. For example, a phrase from II Samuel 7:23, which is repeated in I Chronicles 17:23, "who is like our people Israel, a nation (*goy*) unique on the earth," was incorporated into the Sabbath afternoon *amidah* prayer. if the Jews themselves constituted a *goy,* then calling

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[588] Matt 21:43; 24:7 (twice); Mk 13:8 (twice); Lk 7:5; 21:10 (twice); 23:2; 24:47.

[589] See, for example, Gen 12:2, where Abraham's descendants are referred to as a *"gōy gāḏôl,"* and Exod 19:6, where the Israelites are to be a *"gōy qāḏôš"*; Josh 4:1, etc.

> non-Jews *goyim* could not have the same force as Greeks calling others *barbaroi*.[590]
>
> In classical Rabbinic writings ... "goy" refers to an idolater. In these writings, all of humanity is divided between Israel, defined as those who know God and accept the Torah, and gentiles, who worship idols. Idolaters die and do not rise from the dead ... In contemporary parlance, [goy is] a derogatory term of reference for a gentile; the adjectival form, *goyish*, similarly distinguishes its referent in a negative way as unJewish.[591]
>
> In this setting [of Ashkenazi Jewry], where Jews were usually segregated and governed by special, often harsh laws, and in which periodic, violent pogroms against Jews took place, the word *goy* took on a negative meaning. It referred to a person who was to be treated with caution because he could quite unexpectedly, and without provocation, turn upon Jews. While the term *goy* continued to have the neutral meaning of non-Jew in some contexts, in other settings it means an ignorant, hostile, and dangerous person. Many folk sayings bear out the fear and distrust with which the Gentile was viewed ... Sometimes the word *goy* was also used to refer to a Jew. Calling a Jew a *goy* labeled the person as ignorant, uncouth, even sacrilegious, as in the following: *A melamed—a yid vos handlt mit goyim* (A teacher is a Jew who deals in Gentiles [that is, the ignorant].[592]

Although *goyim/goïm* may capture a distinctively Semitic way of describing the non-Jewish world (then and now), it is also a word loaded with so much negative baggage that it is questionable if it can be heard by contemporary readers *without* a subtly disparaging tone. It is a term with an ambivalent history, whose usefulness is debatable in a translation designed to promote Jewish-Christian amity and understanding. In addition, the fact that much of its modern meaning developed only in post-biblical times means that, even subconsciously, we risk anachronism by using it, reading connotations into this term which are much later evolutions or accretions. It is precisely the *avoidance* of such cultural anachronisms that Chouraqui intended to foster with his work. *Goïm*, which initially seems like such a brilliant and striking

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[590] David M. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15-16.

[591] Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, eds., *Routledge Dictionary of Judaism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 47, s.v. "Goy".

[592] Shirley Kumove, *More Words, More Arrows: A Further Collection of Yiddish Folk Sayings* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 23.

rendering, ends up being a less-than-desirable translation, both for reasons for language and on account of modern interfaith sensitivity.

3.3. Rabbi

One of Chouraqui's translational choices is his expanded use of the Hebrew term *Rabbi*. The term itself occurs, in Greek transliteration (*ῥαββί*), fifteen times in the Gospels;[593] the related diminutive form *ῥαββουνί (rabbouni)* occurs twice.[594] However, by my count, Chouraqui employs *Rabbi* fifty-three times in his Gospels (the expected fifteen times, but also including the evangelists' use of the Greek noun *διδάσκαλος, didaskalos*, most often in its vocative form *Διδάσκαλε, Didaskale).* Needless to say, using this title with reference to Jesus certainly speaks to modern Jewish readers, for whom Rabbi is a familiar term, and role, in their congregations.; it establishes an immediate "bridge," and inserts Jesus into a well-known category. Numerous recent scholarly works, both Jewish and Christian, have portrayed and discussed Jesus under this rubric.[595] Chouraqui's extensive use of this term raises several related questions, however:

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[593] Matt 23:7-8; 26:25, 49; Mk. 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; Jn. 1:38, 49; 3:2, 26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8.

[594] Mk 10:51; Jn 20:16. "'Rabbouni' literally means '*my* teacher' or '*my* master,' but it is used elsewhere simply as an equivalent to the common word 'Rabbi'." Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 637. In a note to that sentence, Ridderbos says: "Some interpreters have, admittedly, seen in it a diminutive term of endearment with a strong charitable sound ('my dear Rabbi'). It has been proven, however, that in the usage of those days 'Rabbouni' need not have had any other meaning than the customary 'Rabbi' (see E. Lohse, *TDNT* VI, pp. 964f.; Schnackenburg, *Comm.* III, p. 317 with n. 50 on p. 470). Accordingly, the Evangelist translates it with the same Greek word with which in 1:38 he translates 'Rabbi,' not including 'my' in the translation." "The precise distinction between 'Rabbouni' and the more common 'Rabbi' is difficult to see, although some have suggested that 'Rabbouni' shows greater respect and is therefore more suitable for use by a woman. This may be the case, but these subtle distinctions would be as lost on John's original readers as they are on us today. More likely is that John is concerned to preserve the actual word used by Mary ..." Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause, *John*. College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1998), 394.

[595] Bruce D. Chilton, *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); William E. Phipps, *The Wisdom and Wit of Rabbi Jesus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993); Matthew Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Frauke Büchner, *Rabbi Jesus und die Anfänge einer christlichen Lernkultur.* Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie, Jg 53, 2 (Frankfurt am Main:

> 1) is "Rabbi," in fact, an accurate rendering of *didaskalos* throughout all four of the Gospels?
> 2) was this Hebrew term actually employed during the lifetime of the historical Jesus and, if so, in what sense?
> 3) is "Rabbi" a term apt to mislead modern readers, because of its contemporary associations?[596]

The first two questions are closely intertwined, and need to be treated together. The question of the meaning (and historicity) of the evangelists' use of *Rabbi* is an old and vexed one. The traditional Jewish view, attested most famously in the 987 C.E. letter of Sherira Gaon of Pumbeditha (ca. 900-1000) to Jacob ben-Nissim, is that *Rabbi* was a distinctly Palestinian title (as opposed to *Rab* among the Babylonian Jews), but one which did not come into use until the gathering of scholars at Yavneh, in the years after 70 C.E.[597] It was during this period, when the surviving *Pharisaic* leadership was slowly morphing into a more specifically *rabbinic* type of Judaism, that a formal "laying-on of hands" (*smikha*, or "ordination") was apparently instituted by Yochanan ben-Zakkai (ca. 1-80 C.E.),[598] by which someone was formally recognized as a learned scholar who was known by the term "rabbi". On this basis (and based on the lack of *Rabbi* as an appellative in the earliest strata of Mishnaic and Talmudic literature), the traditional view has been that use of the term *rabbi* in the Gospels is an anachronism, reading back into the first third of the first century C.E. practices and vocabulary that developed only decades after the time of Jesus.[599]

Diesterweg, 2001); Susannah Heschel, *From Rabbi to Aryan: The Political Use of Jesus in Jewish-Christian Dialogue* [Video lecture] Christopher F. Mooney SJ Lecture in Theology, Religion and Society, Fairfield University (Nov. 7, 2002); Bernard Chouraqui, *Jésus, le rabbi de Nazareth* (Paris : La Différence, 1990); Jacques Baldet, *Histoire de Rabbi Jésus* (Paris : Imago, 2003), etc.

[596] Chouraqui studiously avoids the use of several other religiously-laden terms, such as priest/*prêtre*, in his translation, precisely because he believes that a modern reader is likely to misimagine what the term means, based on their familiarity with *contemporary* figures bearing the same title.

[597] See Louis Jacobs, "Sherira Gaon," in *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 463.

[598] The dates presumed by Jacob Neusner, in his *Life of Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai, ca. 1-80 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1962).

[599] See, e.g., the discussion of Catherine Hezser, "The Lack of Rabbinic Evidence for a Pre-70 Usage of the Title 'Rabbi'," in Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman*

In a series of *JQR* articles in the 1960s, Solomon Zeitlin and Hershel Shanks debated this question quite fiercely, with Zeitlin maintaining the traditional view, and Shanks arguing against it. Shanks acknowledged that, because of the extremely limited corpus of Hebrew and Aramaic literature from the period in question, it is nearly impossible to be definitive about such a question. However, he pointed out that the use of *Rabbi* as a title in the last third of the first century certainly was not an invention *ex nihilo*, but a development of a term already in use and familiar—although probably as more of a title of respect and courtesy for a distinguished person than as a formal title implying study and an authorized teaching mandate. This less formal usage (i.e., "Rabbi" approximating modern "Sir," "Master," "Your Excellency/Honour") is more or less what we see in the Gospels. Furthermore, Shanks argues, the presence of the term in transliteration in later Gospels (when the shift was already well underway from a predominantly *Jewish* community to a *Gentile* one) is extremely hard to explain on the initiative of the evangelists, who were then forced to explain the meaning of this foreign term to their readers (as John does in 1:38, and in 20:16, for *ῥαββουνι*). The apparent interchangeability of *ῥαββί* and *διδάσκαλος* in pre-destruction Judaism is confirmed for Shanks by Eleazar Sukenik's 1929 discovery of an ossuary on the Mount of Olives bearing on one side the name Theodotion in Hebrew lettering, with the Greek title *ΔΙΔΑΣΚΟΛΟΥ* on the other side, presumably the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *rabbi*.

Shanks' position of forty years ago has been borne out in a very interesting way by Shaye Cohen, in his 1981 archæological and inscriptional study, "Epigraphical Rabbis".[600] Cohen examines all of the occurrences of "rabbi" and its cognates (Rab,

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Palestine. Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 63-64, and particularly the notes on p. 58 of David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23*. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 52 (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

[600] Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Epigraphical Rabbis," in *JQR*, new series. 72:1 (July 1981), 1-17. See a further discussion of this evidence and the conclusions to be drawn from it, in Jonathan J. Price and Haggai Misgav, "Jewish Inscriptions and Their Use," in Shmuel Safrai *et al.*, eds., *The*

Ribbi, etc.) found in extant inscriptions or monuments up to the seventh century (including three pre-70 ossuaries from Jerusalem). His conclusion:

> [T]he term "rabbi" is ambiguous. It may be either a popular designation for anyone of high position, notably—but not exclusively—a teacher, or it may be a technical term for someone who has been 'ordained' and has achieved status and power within that society which produced the Mishnah, the Talmudim, and related works ... [P]ractically all Semites used the word *rab* and its forms to designate individuals of rank[601], and we have no reason to assume that every Jew so designated helped to write the literature and shape the Judaism we call rabbinic ... For centuries, "rabbi" remained a popular title which could describe individuals who were not part of that Hebrew and Aramaic-speaking society which produced the Talmud ... If we allow the term "rabbi" to include more than just the Rabbis of the Talmud, we admit that even in Israel, where Rabbinic influence was strong, many Jews were led by men who might not have found favor in the eyes of those who were establishing what was to become, but still was not, "normative" Judaism.[602]

It is not, therefore, necessary to posit the existence of a formal class of duly authorized Jewish teachers called "rabbis" in order to contend that the term is used for Jesus as a

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Literature of the Sages. Compendia rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 3, Second part (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1987), 481-82.

[601] This agrees substantially with the views expressed by standard dictionaries of biblical theology: "An etymological survey of Semitic reveals that *rab* was used as a title at a very early date: Old Akk. *rubûm* and *rubātum* already mean 'prince' and 'princess' when referring to deities and human beings ... This title, with the meaning 'commander,' came to be used quite extensively in Aramaic, Syriac, Phoenician and Punic, Nabatean and Palmyrene. The association system ... used the title *rab* for the chief functionary of the various associations, with authority appropriate to his office ... The use of *rab* in OT titles is very common. The term always implies the hierarchical superiority of the person bearing the title ... The title *rabbi* was thus originally an honorific style of address implying a certain relationship." Heinz-Josef Fabry, "The Title 'Rabbi'," in G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 294. "The term *rab* denotes one who holds a respected position, e.g. an official. It is used by an inferior to a superior ... The use for teachers goes back to the second century B.C. Students follow their teachers with respectful obedience. When qualified to teach, they themselves are given the title, while the people as a whole also uses. It occurs on many inscriptions from Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, and Italy ... The use of *rhábbi* shows that Jesus is viewed as a teacher by his disciples and the people ... As the Palestinian tradition becomes less prominent, *rhábbi* does not occur in other Christian writings." E. Lohse, "*Rhábbi* [rabbi], *rhabbouni* [master]," in Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey William Bromiley, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Single volume edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 982.

[602] Cohen, 9, 16, 17. Price and Misgav characterize the inscriptional use of the term 'rabbi' as "fluid and varied ... The appearance of 'rabbi' on inscriptions does reinforce the general impression that the title had a wide semantic range and could be used merely as a title of honour, not any official position or authority, until quite late in antiquity" (481).

title of deference and respect, both by his followers and those who seek his counsel. In this sense, Shanks' argument seems convincing.[603]

Following Shanks, I believe that the evidence would generally support Chouraqui's translation of the vocative *Didaskale* as *Rabbi*—in direct address, it clearly conveys a title of honour, and a certain sense of submission to the guidance of a devout Jewish man who is considered a worthy spiritual teacher, biblical interpreter or guide (this applies to its use both for Jesus and for John the Baptist). In several passages where it is used indirectly, but seemingly as a title of respect by others, Chouraqui's rendering can also probably be justified.[604] If we presume that, at the time of the historical Jesus, it is primarily a respectful title of direct address (rather than the name for a body of recognized Jewish scholars *per se)*, then I am less comfortable with

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[603] "The reluctance to use the category of 'rabbi' in order to assess Jesus is to some extent understandable. That term can and has been used anachronistically, to impute the organized Rabbinate of the Talmud to the first century. In principle, however, that anachronism should be dealt with just as we cope with such terms as 'messiah' (or 'christ') and 'son of God.' It is a commonplace of scholarship to alert readers to the fact that 'messiah' during the first century did not bear the apologetic associations that developed quickly in early Christianity, and that 'son of God' did not convey the ontological claims of the Council of Nicea. Both of those corrections involve more global adjustments than calling attention to the well-documented, historical structures which attended the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism. Could it be that scholarly aversion to the term 'rabbi' shows that it has become a metonym for Jesus' Judaism, not only as a happenstance of birth and nurture, but as his own commitment? The relative neglect of the actual usage of the term in the Gospels might suggest that is the case. John the Baptist is explicitly called 'rabbi' in John 3:26, and Jesus is addressed that way more than by any other designation (Matt 26:25, 49; Mk 9:5; 10:51; 11:21; 14:45; Jn 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). Despite those facts, it is routinely objected by scholars that Jesus 'was not a "rabbi,"' but 'a prophet (eschatological or otherwise).' The Gospels suggest that, as he became known for his signs (Matt 16:14: Mk 6:15; Lk 7:16; 9:8, 19: Jn 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9: 17) and approached Jerusalem for the last time in his life (Matt 21:11, 46; Lk 24:19), Jesus was indeed called a prophet, but not as persistently or routinely as he was called rabbi. In any case, the one address by no means excludes the other. That the term 'rabbi' was current in Jesus' time is suggested by Dan 2:48; 4:6; 5:11 and *m. 'Abot* 1:6, 16, as well as from inscriptions. Bernas is definitely right to raise the issue, but only because being called 'rabbi' did not involve an institutional qualification until a much later period, well after the destruction of the Temple. When Crossan and others compare Jesus to the popular philosophers of the Mediterranean world, especially the Cynics, their comparison may be helpful in general terms, although it seems clear that a Jewish teacher whose wisdom was valued would be called 'rabbi'." Bruce Chilton, "Mapping a Place for Jesus," in Bruce Chilton, Craig A. Evans, and Jacob Neusner, eds., *The Missing Jesus: Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 42-43.

[604] For example, in Matt 9:11; 17:24; Mk 5:35; Lk 8:49; Jn 11:28, references to "votre Rabbi" or "le Rabbi".

Chouraqui's use of it as a self-reference by Jesus[605], to characterize the *role* of "teachers" generally[606], or to describe the "teachers" among whom Jesus sits in the Jerusalem Temple in Lk 2:46 (Chour: *"au milieu des rabbis"*). It is particularly instructive to note that there is no strict consistency in how our three Hebrew New Testament translations render *didaskalos* and *Didaskale.* Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg both show a definite proclivity for *Rabbi* or *Rabbēnu,* whereas Hutter generally prefers *mᵉlammēd* (מְלַמֵּד)[607], using *Rabbi* for *didaskalos* only in a few situations of direct address (Matt 8:19; 12:38; Lk 7:40; 9:38; 12:13; רַבִּינוּ in Lk 20:28, 39; 21:7); in others, he uses *mᵉlammēd,* often with the definite article *ha-mᵉlammēd* (Mk 9:38; 12:14, 19; Lk 3:12; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21; Jn 8:4; 20:16b), to express the vocative nuance. Especially in light of the later discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is particularly interesting to note Delitzsch's occasional choice of the Hebrew present participle-*cum*-noun מוֹרֶה, *môreh* to render "teacher," in Mk 5:35, Lk 2:46; 8:49; 10:25; 20:28; Jn 11:28; 13:13-14 and 20:16.[608] What is clear, however, is that a strict *didaskalos–rabbi* equivalence is not at all obvious, even to skilled and knowledgeable Hebrew translators, who did not feel comfortable employing *rabbi* quite as widely as Chouraqui has.

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[605] Mk 14:14 ("Le Rabbi dit: Où est ma salle…") ; Lk 22:11 ("Le Rabbi te dit…") ; Jn 13 :13-14 ("Vous m'appelez Rabbi et Adôn…"). These three cases are not as clear-cut, however, since Jesus is, in fact, referring to himself by a title by which *others* seem to speak of him.

[606] Matt 10:24-25 ("Nul adepte ne surpasse son Rabbi … il suffit à l'adepte d'être comme son Rabbi"), apparently seeing it is a *title,* rather than a generic *occupation.*

[607] *Mᵉlammēd* seems to have taken on the more specific later meaning of "a teacher of the young; a tutor or instructor of children" (see JASTROW, citing *b.* Sanh. 17b (מלמד תינוקות, *mlmd tynwqwt,* "an instructor of young children") and *b.* B. Bat. 21a (מלמדי תינוקות, *mlmdy tynwqwt,* "instructors of young children"). It is difficult to know if this shift in meaning had already taken place in the early first century C.E.

[608] The references to the Qumran sect's "Teacher of Righteousness" (מוֹרֶה הַ־צֶּדֶק) in the Scrolls lend particular credibility to Delitzsch's choice, since it was clearly a term already in use by a devout Jewish group close to the time of Jesus, referring to a specially revered and God-sent religious teacher (it is also suggestive because of its etymological affinity with *Tôrah,* the "teaching" delivered by God). However, since the term occurs only in third-person references in the Scrolls, it is impossible for us to know how the Teacher's immediate contemporaries might have spoken *directly* to him: as *môreh?* as *rabbi?*

3.4. The Exclamation "Oy" / "Hoy"

Chouraqui grew up in an predominantly Arab area of North Africa, and was deeply steeped in its culture and traditions, many of which had blended with his own Jewish heritage over the course of five centuries of coexistence. Perhaps one of the aspects of Middle Eastern culture with which many Westerners have become familiar (at least in recent years) has been the powerfully expressive emotions associated with lamentation over a great sorrow or loss, and particularly with mourning rituals for the dead. The ululations and shrill crying associated with Middle Eastern mourning are in stark contrast with the more formalized and subdued Western expressions of sorrow and regret.

One of the most common expressions of sadness, shock or upset in the Middle East is the exclamation "Oy!" Although it has today largely become a stereotypical expression associated with Yiddish and, to a certain degree, with modern humour based on Jewish life, the term is actually a very ancient one, found in the Hebrew Bible (as אוֹי, *'ôy)* more than twenty times, and (as הוֹי, *hôy*) almost fifty times.[609] It is an expression with both a long pedigree and an unusually broad semantic range:

> Perhaps the most popular Yiddish expression, *oy* conveys dozens of emotions, from surprise, joy and relief to pain, fear and grief. Sometimes used as *oy, oy, oy*. Also common are *oy vay* (short for *oy vay iz mir),* meaning "Oh, woe is me," and *oy gevalt,* a cry of desperate protest.[610]

In its Greek form, *οὐαί, ouai,* this interjection is found 67 times in the Septuagint, primarily in the prophetic literature.[611] It is, therefore, of interest that

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[609] Num 21:29; 24:23; 1 Sam 4:7-8; Prov 23:29; Isa 3:9, 11; 6:5; 24:16; Jer 4:13, 31; 6:4; 10:19; 13:27; 15:10; 45:3; 48:46; Lam 5:16; Ezek 16:23; 24:6, 9; Hos 7:13; 9:12.

[610] Joyce Eisenberg and Ellen Scolnic, eds. *The JPS Dictionary of Jewish Words.* Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 121.

[611] Several authors note that this word is not native to the Greek language, and is rarely found in classical Greek authors. "This word, which is not found in class. Greek, but is common in the LXX and NT, occurs in a farce of date rather earlier than the Roman period, P Oxy III. 413[184 f.] οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκληρε, ἀ[λγ]εινέ, ἀναφρόδιτε· οὐαί σοι· οὐαί μοι, 'Woe to thee wretched, hapless, miserable, loveless one! Woe to you, woe to me!' (Edd.). Cf. also Epict. iii. 19. 1, 22. 32

Chouraqui has decided to employ this term (transliterated into French as *Oïe)* throughout his translation of the Synoptic Gospels (the term does not occur in John), in the thirty passages where *οὐαί* occurs.

To what degree is Chouraqui's choice here advisable?

On one level, it makes a concrete linguistic link with a fairly common term in the Hebrew Scriptures, and thus emphasizes once again the rootedness of the New Testament (and Jesus) in the language and culture of the Hebrew Scriptures. For readers familiar with modern Jewish life, it is immediately recognizable as a distinctively Jewish term, and may thus be helpful in reminding contemporary readers of Jesus' Jewish identity.

Good arguments can also be raised against it. Several authors note that the exact etymology of the Greek *ouai* remains unclear: it certainly *could* be derived from ancient Hebrew interjections, but it may also have been influenced by the similar Latin exclamation *vae,* a usage which predates Christianity.[612] The *OED* describes it as a "common Indo-European interjection, used as a natural exclamation of lament" (s.v. "woe"), and it seems likely that its roots are more broadly Mediterranean than simply Hebrew-derived. Horst Balz's entry on "*οὐαί*" in the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 2, 540) speaks of it as both a Semitism *and* a Latinism. As a short, single-syllable term, with a long and largely unknown history, it is perhaps dangerous to

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οὐαί μοι." "*οὐαί,*" in James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), as made available in electronic form as part of BibleWorks 7.0. For a good discussion of the biblical meaning of *οὐαί,* and the possible distinctions between the nuances of the underlying Hebrew expressions, see: Norman C. Habel and Vicky Balabanski, "Woe or Lament?" in Habel and Balabanski, *The Earth Story in the New Testament.* The Earth Bible 5 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 181-84.

[612] See, e.g., the famous quotation in Livy (ca. 59 BCE-19 CE) of the phrase *"Vae victis"* [Woe to the vanquished] by the Gallic chieftain Brennus, in Livy's recounting of the fourth-century BCE sack of Rome (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita,* Book 5, chapter 48, section 9). Other examples are adduced from Plautus (third-second centuries BCE), from Vergil's *Eclogues* (1st century BCE) and Horace's *Odes*(1st century BCE). On these, see the results cited by the Perseus Project: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/vor?lookup=vae&lang=la&group=bilevel

attribute too much specifically cultural weight to it, as if it were Jewish—and Jewish only.

From the perspective of contemporary readership, however, it can be asked whether "Oy" has, in fact, acquired such a farcical, flippant and almost camp tone that it is hard to take it seriously today—and *very* hard to hear it as the solemn declaration of sorrow, disappointment and impending woe that it is in the biblical context.[613] Its usage has shifted considerably from its earlier semantic register and, despite Chouraqui's best intentions, it is unlikely that this shift can be reversed enough to recover for contemporary readers the more serious flavour that its biblical meaning requires.[614]

3.5. Shalom

Even those individuals who have little or no knowledge of Hebrew are generally aware that, both in Israeli society and in Jewish religious contexts, the standard greeting of friendship and welcome is שָׁלוֹם, *šālôm* (more commonly *Shalom*),

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[613] "... the Hebrew words, *oy, oyah, hoy,* and the Greek, *ouai,* translated as 'woe' in the Bible, are more in the nature of an exclamation, a cry, a wail, a lament of the most excruciating kind. It is a sob of sorrow, a cry of the utmost desolation, an agonizing moan ..." Lucille Turfrey, *John's Amazing Mystery* ([N.p.]: Xulon Press, 2003), 120.

[614] A similar attempt to capture the distinctive high-pitched mourning cries of the Middle East is found in Chouraqui's translation of Mk 5:38: "Il perçoit le tumulte: ils pleurent et crient force alalas" (Grk *καὶ θεωρεῖ θόρυβον καὶ κλαίοντας καὶ ἀλαλάζοντας πολλά).* Here, Chouraqui's French *alalas* (a rare term not found in standard French dictionaries) mimics the sound of the Greek verb *ἀλαλάζω* (to raise a war cry; to cry aloud in pain, anguish or triumph; to wail [from the noun *ἀλαλά / ἀλαλή*]; in the NT, used only here and in I Cor 13:1, where it describes the sound of a cymbal; in James 5:1, the verb *ὀλολύζω* [wail; cry loudly] is almost certainly a synonym, and very probably a variant). That verb is, in turn, judged by many to be onomatopoeic, reproducing the high-pitched sound of ululation. Whether it is necessarily rooted in the specifically Middle Eastern context is highly debatable, since it is also found in classical Greek writers like Xenophon and Sophocles (see LSJ *Lexicon*, s.v. *ἀλαλάζω*). See also the entry for *"Ἀλαλά, ᾶς"* in Joseph Planche *et al.*, eds., *Dictionnaire grec-français* (Paris: Le Normant, 1843), which identifies *alala* as a Doric form of *alalē*, "cri de guerre, cri, son, retentissement," and defines *alalazō* as "crier alala ; pousser des cris de guerre ou de joie ; faire entendre un grand cri ou des cris retentissans". It further cites the occurrence of *Ἀλαλάξιος* as the "surname" of the god Mars, "qui aime les cris de guerre" (45); the LSJ *Lexicon* confirms this, citing *Ἀλαλάξιος* as an epithet of both Ares [Mars] and Zeus (s.v. *"ἀλᾱλαι").*

and that one of the word's usual meanings is "peace".[615] This is not, of course, an innovation of modern Hebrew; the term is found almost 270 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning in Gen 15:15 and continuing through chapter 2 of the prophet Malachi. Scholars have found *š-l-m* cognates in ancient Ugaritic, Akkadian and Phoenician; this particular Semitic root is common over a large geographic and cultural area.[616]

It is not surprising, therefore, that many New Testament scholars concur in seeing the Hebrew *šālôm* underlying many occurrences of the Greek εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*, especially in the Gospels:

> In classical Greek, "peace" refers to the cessation of hostilities, but in Israelite writings it means much more because it translates as "shalom," which means plentitude of blessings or completeness of benefaction ... The context of these sayings, then, influences how we should read them ... the disciples are given fullness; that is, shalom, or peace.[617]

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[615] As many commentators point out, however, the word connotes much more than merely the absence of conflict or war, and actually encompasses the ideas of wholeness, well-being, soundness—the person, family and community in proper balance and in a network of appropriate, life-giving relationships. "In secular Greek the basic meaning of the term εἰρήνη differs from the common Jewish and Christian use. Here it usually 'designates a political and social phenomenon, first of all the state of a nation that is not at war' [FN: C. Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* 1, 424; W. Foerster, G. Von Rad, 'εἰρήνη, εἰρηνεύω κτλ.', *TDNT* 2, 401; R. Bloch, 'Eirene' *Der neue Pauly* 3, 921. This is not to say that we do not find quite a few occurrences of a political use of εἰρήνη in the LXX where it is used as an antonym of war. See, e.g., 1 Kings 2:5; 5:26; Deut 20:10; 1 Sam 7:14. However this is not the common use of the term in the LXX]. Thus it designates a state or period of peace and is used as an antonym for πόλεμος [FN: See e.g. Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.172; *I. Gonn.* 2:1; 7:5; 9:6; 10:4; 11:9; Diod. Sicil. 3.64.7; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38:15]. It is, however, not restricted to the absence of war. The fact that εἰρήνη and φιλία are almost always linked in treaties of alliance and of peace indicates that εἰρήνη implies an arrangement for the future that provides an 'opportunity for all sorts of happiness and prosperity' [FN: C. Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* 1, 425]. Thus εἰρήνη is the state of peace which is a precondition for other blessings for both land and people." Odd Magne Bakke, *"Concord and Peace": A Rhetorical Analysis of the first Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Language of Unity and Sedition*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 143. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 77-78.

[616] F.J. Stendebach, "שָׁלוֹם, *šālōm*," in Gerhard J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *TDOT*, Vol. XIV, 16. See also Willard M. Swartley's excellent investigation, "*Shalom* and *Eirēnē* in Hebrew Scripture, the Greco-Roman World, and the New Testament," in Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 27-43.

[617] Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 252.

> [on Matt 10:12:] *Shalom aleikhem* ... *"Shalom aleikhem"* means "Peace be upon you" and is a common greeting, as is simply *"Shalom!"* Thus there is a deeper meaning to Yeshua's instruction in v. 13 on when to give or withhold *shalom*, for he refers not only to the greeting but to the whole complex of peace/wholeness/well-being that the Messiah offers through his *talmidim* – and similarly at many places in the New Testament.[618]
>
> The rising light guides our feet into "the path of peace". This shalom (peace) is the hope of Israel and a primary effect of the coming of Christ as it is expressed in Luke's writings ... It is the first greeting of the risen Lord to his disciples[619].
>
> [on Mk 5:34] *Depart in peace:* This is a standard biblical dismissal (e.g. Exod 4:18; Judg 18:6; 1 Sam 1:17; 20:42; 25:35; 2 Kgs 5:19), combining both blessing and prayer that wholeness and peace (that is, peace *[shalom])* may accompany a person. Similar in tone to Mark 5:34 is Eli's dismissal of Hannah: "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him" (1 Sam 1:17).[620]
>
> [on Mk 5:34] *"Go in peace" (ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην)* ... *Peace* may have more the idea of the Hebrew *shalom*, health of body and soul.[621]
>
> ... he saith unto them, peace be unto you: שלום לכם, "peace be unto you," is an usual form of salutation among the Jews; see Ge 43:23; expressive of all prosperity in soul and body, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and here may have a special regard to that peace he said he gave unto them, and left with them, upon his departure from them; and which he had obtained by the blood of his cross, and now preached unto them.[622]

There is wide agreement that, especially in passages which may reasonably be attributed to the historical Jesus, Jesus' declarations of "peace" are likely to have employed the Hebrew *šālôm* (or, arguably, the Aramaic *šalmā'*).

It is an instinct that Chouraqui obviously recognizes and shares ... at least partially. Within the Gospels, the Greek εἰρήνη occurs 25 times (predominantly in Luke); in five of these (Lk 10:5; 24:36; Jn 20:19, 21, 26), it serves as a salutation in direct

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[618] David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), 39. See also Stern's comments on Jn 14:27 (200-201) and 20:19 (212).

[619] Stephen J. Binz, *Advent of the Savior: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives of Jesus* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 51.

[620] John R. Donahue and Daniel Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*. Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 176.

[621] A.T. Robertson and Wesley J. Perschbacher, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol. 1: The Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004), 306.

[622] John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*. Online at: http://www.freegrace.net/gill/ (on Jn 20:19).

discourse: "Peace...!". In each of these contexts, Chouraqui (as we might by now expect) has replaced εἰρήνη with the transliteration *"Shalôm"*. Given the weight of scholarly opinion on this question, this would seem a justified and reasonable choice, especially given the particular mandate he has established for himself.

What is more confusing, and less helpful, is that, for the *other* twenty occurrences, Chouraqui allows himself to return to the more usual French translation of "paix". It is not that "paix" is an incorrect translation. But Chouraqui, who has placed such importance of consistency of translation for the benefit of non-specialist readers, has now created a situation in which he translates 20% of the occurrences of this term in *one* manner, and 80% in *another*. It will not be at all obvious to many readers that *Shalôm* and *paix* are, in fact, translating one and the same Greek word. It also raises an important question: according to what criterion has he decided to distinguish in his translation between the use of εἰρήνη as a social or religious greeting, and its use as a common noun? Is there a significant difference—or should there be? It is somewhat disappointing that, in this particular instance—when many readers would be able to understand and appreciate his use of *shalôm* for the evangelists' "peace"—he has, for unknown reasons, retreated somewhat from his own translational ideal, missing a key opportunity to make a bridge between Jews and Christians, and between ancient and modern Judaism.

3.6. Shofar

One of the items of Jewish ritual life most familiar to non-Jews is the *shofar*, the ram's-horn trumpet which today is primarily associated with the High Holy Days—with Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, when its powerful, shrill sound summons the community to mindfulness of human behaviour and divine judgement.[623] Found 72

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[623] See, e.g., Jeffrey M. Cohen, "The Sounding of the Shofar," in Cohen, *Understanding the High Holyday Services* (London: Routledge, 1983), 36-40; Will Berkovitz, "The Shofar: A Cry Into Eternity," in Paul Steinberg and Janet Greenstein Potter, *Celebrating the Jewish Year: The Fall Holidays, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2007),

times in the Hebrew Scriptures, the specifically *musical* meaning of *shofar* is believed to derive from a more generic term used for rams or wild sheep (from whose horns the instrument was fashioned).[624]

In Luke 1:69, Chouraqui's translation begins: "il a réveillé le shophar du salut," rendering the Greek *ἤγειρεν κέρας σωτηρίας ἡμῖν*. His phrasing here is an interesting interpretation; the image of "awakening" [*réveiller*] a musical instrument is not foreign to the Bible, being found in Pss 57:9[8][625] and 108:2.[626] "Awakening the trumpet [*shophar*] of salvation" would therefore seem to capture the idea of a watchman trumpeting to alert the people to the arrival of a savior-figure, or to the imminence of victory, both of which would seem to fit in this context. It also has possible resonances of Temple-worship, especially given the discovery of a Hebrew inscription from the south-east corner of the Second Temple site: לבית התקיעה ("To the trumpeting place...")—the place where (if Josephus' word is to be accepted) a priest stood and trumpeted to signal the beginning and ending of the Sabbath.[627]

As intriguing as these speculations may be, it seems that it is probably unnecessary to have recourse to such messianic or liturgical imagery. Much more likely is that the Greek *keras sotērias* here is reproducing, not so much the image of the *shophar*, but the "horn [of salvation]" ([יְשׁוּעָה] קֶרֶן) which is said to be "exalted" or "raised up" by God (I Sam 2:1; II Sam 22:3; Ps 18:2). The use of *qeren* focuses, not on the

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57-59; Abraham P. Bloch, "Customs of Rosh HaShanah and the Days of Penitence," in Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies* (New York: Ktav, 1980), 141-48.

[624] See, e.g., the *TWOT* entry, "שׁוֹפָר, *shôpār*" which cites Akkadian and Arabic cognates referring either to the animals themselves, or to their horns (electronic version as included in BibleWorks 7.0).

[625] עִוֹרָה כְבוֹדִי עִוֹרָה הַנֵּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר אָעִירָה שָׁחַר

[626] עִוֹרָה הַנֵּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר אָעִירָה שָׁחַר

[627] "The last [tower] was erected above the roof of the priests' chambers, at the point where it was the custom for one of the priests to stand and give notice, by sound of trumpet [*σάλπιγγι δείλης*], in the afternoon of the approach, and on the following day of the close, of every seventh day, announcing to the people the respective hours for ceasing work and for resuming their labours." Josephus, *J.W.* 4.582 (Thackeray, LCL 487, pp. 327, 329).

musical or annunciatory quality of the horn-turned-instrument, but on the metonymic association of "horn-as-symbol-of-power".[628] *Qeren*, then, would be emblematic of strength and victory, of human capabilities which are confirmed, enhanced and fortified by God himself, and *qeren yēša'* would suggest that power actively at work to save and redeem God's people. In the 1995 revision of his thesis, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*,[629] Mark Strauss highlights the remarkable similarity between this wording and that found in the text of the *Shemone Esre* (prayer 15 of the Babylonian recension), which praises God for "causing the horn of salvation to shoot forth" (49-50). Strauss argues that both texts go back to a common ancestry in an early form of the *Shemone Esre*, and that "a horn of salvation raised up by God" was a first-century messianic epithet, a suggestion that has obvious applicability in terms of Jewish and Christian traditions of interpretation. Although Chouraqui's *shophar* translation is novel and thought-provoking, it seems to be rooted in a mis-reading of the Lukan imagery (and its OT antecedents), and thus fails to convince. The three earlier Hebrew versions are unanimous in translating this phrase by קֶרֶן יְשׁוּעָה; none of them seems to perceive the *shophar* imagery as Chouraqui does.

3.7. Qodesh / Qadosh

Central to both Judaism and Christianity is the whole area of the "holy"—of holiness generally, and of holy people and things. Generally, French translations have captured this concept using words like *"saint"* and *"sacré"*. Chouraqui, however, is

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[628] See, e.g., "Horn," in Leland Ryken *et al.*, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 400; Benjamin Keach, "Metaphors from the Parts and Members of Living Creatures," in Keach, *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1972), 141-42 (this appears to be a modern re-issuing of Keach's earlier *Τροπολογια* [*Tropologia*]*: A Guide to Open Scripture Metaphors, in Four Books*, originally published in London by J.W. Pasham in 1779).

[629] Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament 110 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

convinced that these words, diluted by centuries of theological and liturgical use, have become hackneyed, and fail today to convey important aspects of their original biblical connotation.

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, "holiness" is primarily expressed by the semantic cluster of קֹדֶשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, קְדוּשָׁה and their associated terms, from the root *q-d-š*. Unlike the English and French "saint" (which often conjures up images of extraordinarily devout or religious behaviour, or of those formally canonized by church authorities), the primary sense of the Hebrew *q-d-š* seems to be "apartness; separateness; distinct from the secular or the quotidian". To "sanctify" something or someone is, in the Hebrew Bible, to "set them apart" for God, to place them in a category of "specialness" somehow reserved from ordinary life.[630] While we should not stretch this definition too far, or too literally, nevertheless it seems that the semantic ranges of the Hebrew and contemporary French do not exactly coincide in this area, a fact that Chouraqui almost certainly recognized.

His solution is to replace Gospel references to "holiness" and "holy" people with forms of the French "*consacrer*". In French, *"le sacré"* often expresses the realm of "the holy" (the opposite of the profane), just as the Hebrew קֹדֶשׁ is the opposite of חֹל. Similarly, in an active sense, *"consacrer"* implies, in many religious contexts, a "setting-apart," a "devoting" of someone or something to God and God's purposes

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[630] "Unapproachableness; the state of separation from, and elevation above, things common, profane, or sensual, first in a physical and external, and later in a spiritual, sense." KAUFMANN KOHLER, "Holiness," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901-06); as available online at: http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=847&letter=H&search=holiness ; see also DAVID PATTERSON, "The Holy," in PATTERSON, *Hebrew Language and Jewish Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 195-215. On page 198, Patterson notes that, in the interpretation of Nachmanides, "holiness signifies separateness". Drawing upon the interpretation of the *Mekhilta*, RASHI further specifies that this "separateness" is concretely realized in the commitment to upholding *kashrut;* see his interpretation of Exodus 22:30a ("You shall be a holy people to me..."); see the Judaica Press edition of Rashi, available online at:
http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/9883/showrashi/true/jewish/Chapter-22.htm
See also JACOB MILGROM's valuable insights, from anthropology and comparative religion, in MILGROM, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 108-11 ("On being holy").

(such as the "consecration" of a church or altar); *"un consacré"* is someone (or something) that has been dedicated to God.

In a number of situations, this substitution results in a refreshingly new vision of a text's meaning. In Lk 1:75, "servir Dieu *dans la consécration"* has an entirely different flavour than "servir Dieu *en sainteté"* (BdeJ, Mar; TOB has "dans la piété" and Bay has "pieux"). The idea of "in holiness"(which seems to imply either moral perfection or a superhuman effort) emphasizes much more the human contribution, or the struggle to attain a certain goal. "Dans la consécration," however, is a reminder, first and foremost, of one's identity as part of a chosen and holy people, which becomes the source, the rationale and the measure of one's distinctive way of life. "In consecration" suggests almost a sphere into which God invites people—for indeed, holiness is, first and foremost, an existential quality of God, who is both its well-spring and its fullness.[631]

4. Precision in Translation of Greek and/or Hebrew

Many of André Chouraqui's renderings strike the reader because of their freshness, novelty or creative re-working of texts which have often become trite because of over-familiarity. His work provides copious examples of well-chosen phrases, relevant cultural insights, sensitivity to linguistic aspects of the text, and an attempt to capture structure and semantic nuance in a way rarely attempted by other modern translators and translations.

However, there are other passages where Chouraqui's work stands out, not necessarily for being innovative or helpful, but on account of its sometimes

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[631] "... in the Bible ... we find no animism. Holiness is not innate. The source of holiness is assigned to God alone. Holiness is the extension of his nature; it is the agency of his will. If certain things are termed holy—such as the land (Canaan), person (priest), place (sanctuary), or time (holy day)—they are so by virtue of divine dispensation. Moreover, this designation is always subject to recall. Thus the Bible exorcises the demoniac from nature; it makes all supernatural force coextensive with God ... for Israel the holy is the extension of God's will; it means more than that which is 'unapproachable' and 'withdrawn.' It becomes a positive concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man." Milgrom, 109.

idiosyncratic readings, which draw the audience's notice precisely because they are unexpected or unexplained. These instances seem to attract attention unnecessarily—not because they are particular literary or theological *foci* within the text, but simply because Chouraqui has selected a translation that stands out as radically unusual, questionable or awkward. In an analysis of a translation like this one, these renderings also deserve closer investigation and discussion.

4.1. Ovins / Bovins

One of the expressions which the reader quickly notes (because of the frequent use of pastoral imagery in the Gospels) is Chouraqui's use of the terms "ovins" and "bovins". As might be guessed, these are originally *adjectival* forms which Chouraqui has substantivized for the purposes of his translation. They are most commonly used in French (as in English) as descriptors, as part of a larger category of agricultural adjectives (ovin, bovin, porcin, équin, caprin, etc.) referring, respectively, to sheep, cattle/oxen, pigs, horses and goats. Very seldom would they be used as free-standing nouns.

Chouraqui's usage[632] stands out, both because these are such specialized terms, but also because there is such a long tradition of translating the Greek *πρόβατον / πρόβατα* with fairly common French terms, including "mouton(s)," "brebis" and "troupeau"; most dictionaries of New Testament Greek simply render *πρόβατον / πρόβατα* as "sheep" (whether singular or plural).

Why, then, has Chouraqui deliberately avoided using this common term in favour of a more rarefied one? His translation itself provides no easy answer, leaving us to speculate. Does he intend to make a linguistic or cultural point here? The usual Hebrew singular term for a sheep would be either כֶּבֶשׂ, *kebes* or שֶׂה, *seh*; the most

[632] See *ovin* in, among others, Mt 9:36; 15:24; 26:31; Mk 6:34; 14:27; Jn 10:1-27; *bovin* in Jn 2:14, 15.

common collective form would be צֹאן, *ṣō'n.*[633] The second and third Hebrew terms (שֶׂה, צֹאן) are not as species-specific as are many modern European languages; often they do not strictly distinguish between *sheep* and *goats* (כֶּבֶשׂ seems to be used only of the young lambs for sacrifices).[634] I suspect that what Chouraqui is attempting to do here is to signal to his European/Western readers that the ancient biblical notions of sheep and flocks do not entirely coincide with our modern categories, and thus, instead of "sheep," Chouraqui is trying to broaden the term somewhat, to mean "sheep-like animals" or "animals broadly resembling sheep". If this is indeed the case, then perhaps "ovin(s)" is a valid and helpful translation here, reminding us that the Bible constitutes something of a foreign cultural landscape, where our usual assumptions are not always a reliable guide.

4.2. Lilies or Amaryllis?

In some cases, Chouraqui seems to be deliberately tampering with a fixed expression which has become proverbial. In Mt 6:28, Jesus employs the expression *τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ, ta krina tou agrou* (traditionally, "the lilies of the field"), and the floral term is partially reprised in Lk 12:27: *κατανοήσατε τὰ κρίνα πῶς αὐξάνει, katanoēsate*

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[633] "Flock," referring to *small* livestock, as opposed to בָּקָר, "cow; herd," which normally refers to *larger* domesticated livestock such as bulls and cows.

[634] "... *τὰ πρόβατα* in the LXX can translate *ṣ'n* and thus mean 'the flock,' perhaps consisting of both sheep and goats (e.g., Gn 27:9) and the singular *πρόβατον* can be used in a manner that does not discriminate between a sheep and a goat (e.g., Ex 12:5)." John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 1025, fn 215. "The dominant impression created by a survey of OT uses of 'sheep' and 'goat' is the degree to which they are interchangeable (both are milked: both, and especially the young of both, are eaten: the hair and the skins of both are used: they are mostly interchangeable as sacrifices; they are often referred to together). However important the difference between them might have been for certain purposes (some sacrifices did require a distinction; the cloth produced from spinning goats' hair had it coarse texture, more suitable for curtains and coverings than for garments), and this may imply a certain priority for sheep, the animals are first and foremost thought of together. In their normal dirty state, it might even have been considered wise to leave it to the skilled shepherd to distinguish with confidence the sheep from the goats." Nolland, 1026. There are some exceptions to this rule, however, such as I Sam 25:2, which clearly distinguishes the two species: "There was a man in Maon, whose property was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel." (My emphasis)

ta krina pōs auxanei ("Consider the lilies, how they grow..."). Chouraqui, however, renders the Greek *κρίνα* in the Matthean occurrence with "les amaryllis des champs". A reader even slightly familiar with the phrase as it has been adopted into colloquial French or English is left puzzling as to the unexpected choice of the amaryllis over the lily.[635] Has Chouraqui made this choice simply to be provocative, mischievous ... or pedantic?

Late twentieth-century commentators and translators have tended to take a more agnostic approach to the question of specifying the exact strain of flowers referred to in biblical texts. While the RSV/NRSV and Maredsous versions continue to use the familiar "lilies of the field"/"les lis des champs," many other versions clearly prefer a more generic rendering:

> Bayard: "les fleurs sauvages"
> Jerusalem (and New Jerusalem) Bible: "the flowers growing in the fields"
> Good News and New American Bible: "wild flowers"
> Christian Community Bible: "the flowers in the fields"

Trying to establish with precision the botanical equivalents of ancient flora, especially on the basis of vague or incidental comments like this, is a path strewn with potential pitfalls. More often than not, the descriptions are insufficient for certainty, or are part of metaphors whose goal is other than scientific taxonomy:

> The most frequently mentioned specific flowers are traditionally translated "lily" and "rose" (Heb *šušan* and *ḥ*ª*baṣeleṯ* respectively). Students of Palestinian botany tell us that neither of these is probably the correct translation, however. The lily familiar to most readers, the white or "Easter" lily (*Lilium candidum*), grows in remote regions of Israel, but does not fit the description attributed to it in the biblical text ... Many commentators now assume, for example, that the phrase "lilies of the field" means any of the showy, attractive flowers that burst forth in glorious profusion in the springtime on the plains, pastures and hills of the Carmel and Sharon regions ... These flowers include ranunculus, anemone, cyclamen, tulip, hyacinth, narcissus, crocus, iris and orchid. Any reference to lilies or roses in the follow discussion could therefore just as easily

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[635] Still more puzzling is that Chouraqui, for unspecified reasons, translates the Lucan occurrence as "Observez les lis et leur croissance..."! Although *krinon* occurs only twice in the entire New Testament, it is treated differently in each passage, although the literary-theological parallels between them seem clear.

> be substituted with any of those species, or could be understood to be making a generic reference to flowers.[636]
>
> *Ta krina tou agrou,* solitamente tradotto « i gigli del campa », non si riferisce specificamente ai *šušannîm* (cfr. Can 2:1; 5:13), ma più in generale ai « fiori selvatici », forse all'*anemone coronaria,* che a motivo dei suoi colori brillanti e svariati, serve bene da termine di paragone alla gloria della porpora regale di Salomone.[637]

As several commentators point out, part of the difficulty lies in matching a specific plant with the characteristics given in the Bible (e.g. Is it, in fact, a wildflower [vs. a cultivated garden variety], and a species actually native to Israel? Does its habitat as described cohere with what we know from botany? i.e. the biblical *šušan* is said to bloom in the valleys, among brambles, and in the meadowlands where shepherds might pasture their sheep [Song of Solomon 2:1, 16]). These descriptions—and the question of what scientific weight is to be attributed to them—have led to generations of debate among exegetes and scholars of the floral world.

As regards the flower described as the *krinon,* there appear to be three schools of thought today: (1) that a white, conical flower with petals is envisaged, either identical to or similar to the familiar Easter lily;[638] (2) that the reference in Mt 6:28, comparing this flower and the glory of Solomon's vesture is to be taken in terms of its *colour,* which would suggest a crimson or purple flower, similar to the ancient purple favoured by royalty; (3) that no specific flower is intended, and *ta krina tou agrou* is simply a vivid figure of speech, referring to the beauty, rich colour and variety of spring wildflowers; it would therefore be merely a generic or collective term, and no

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[636] "Flowers," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 294.

[637] Léopold Sabourin, *Il Vangelo di Matteo: Teologia e exegesi.* Nuova edizione aumentata. Vol. 1 ([Rome?]: Edizioni Paolini, 1976), 462.

[638] This explanation seems to be undercut somewhat by the fact that the Greeks seem to have a different, and more specific term (*λείριον*) for this particular flower. "The Latin name *Lilium* is from the Greek *leirion,* the name applied to the Eastern Mediterranean-native Madonna lily (now *L. candidum),* one of the oldest known lilies." B.J. Ward, *A Contemplation Upon Flowers: Garden Plants in Myth and Literature.* Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2000, 243.

particular species should be sought (cf. the biblical versions cited above).[639] Traditionally, what has been pointed out to generations of pilgrims and students as Jesus' "lily of the field" is the *anemone coronaria* (windflower), a brilliant crimson flower that could seem to suggest the reddish-purple of imperial robes; others have argued in favour of the Chalcedon lily (*Lilium chalcedonicum*), a particularly striking variety of scarlet flower. Both of these seem to presume that the point of reference for Jesus' allusion is the rich, regal *colour* of the blossom in question.

Under Mt 6:28 in *L'Univers de la Bible* (64), Chouraqui gives us a hint as to his own conclusions, with this note: "amaryllis, ou pancrais, le *ḥabaṣèlèt* de Is 35, 1 et de Ct 2, 1".

> Pour résoudre cette difficulté de détermination, il est important de remarquer que chez les anciens ... les noms de plantes n'ont pas toujours une acception précise. Ainsi chez les grecs, si le mot a un sens assez déterminé et désigne le lis blanc (quelquefois cependant il s'applique au narcisse), le mot plus fréquemment employé, , a un sens plus général et embrasse avec le lis orangé plusieurs autres espèces de plantes ... Chez les Sémites non plus le mot *šušan* n'a pas d'acception bien précise ... Quoi qu'il en soit, le terme arabe *susan* comprend non seulement le lis, mais, d'après Delille[640] et Schweinfurth[641], le *Pancratium Maritimum* ou lis Mathiole ... Ce mot [=the Arabic term] a donc une assez grand élasticité. Il en était ainsi probablement pour le *šušan* hébreu, il devait embrasser plusieurs espèces de plantes de la famille des liliacées, des

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[639] "What flower (or flowers) κρίνα denotes (κρίνον occurs over twenty times in the LXX, most often for *šôšannâ*; for the rabbinic *qĕrînôn*, a loanword, see Jastrow, s.v.) is uncertain ... If it is the purple anemone, the image of Solomon's purple robes could be in mind ... Other possibilities include the gladiolus, the crocus, some variety of poppy, the white Madonna lily, or Galilean flowers in general. This last option is now widely favoured; Jesus was speaking not of one particular flower, but of the several beautiful flowers which bloom in abundance between January and May." W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC. Vol. 1, 654.

[640] Presumably A.R. Delile, "*Floræ Ægypticæ illustratio,*" part of the monumental *Description de l'Égypte* composed by the scholars accompanying Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809-26). Part III: *Histoire naturelle,* Tome second. The entire second edition (1821-1830) is available online in digital format at:
http://gallica.bnf.fr/Catalogue/noticesInd/FRBNF33341149.htm

[641] Presumably Paul Ascherson and Georg Schweinfurth, *Illustration de la flore d'Égypte* (Cairo: [n.p.], 1887-89).

> iridées, des amaryllidées, des fritillaires, etc., comme, dans le langage vulgaire, nous donnons le nom de lis à diverses fleurs ...[642]

While Chouraqui is apparently conversant with the typical flora of modern Israel, it is also possible that the deciding factor for him in his choice of "amaryillis ou pancrais" was, in fact, his familiarity with the related Arabic term, as outlined in Vigouroux's *Dictionnaire de la Bible,* above. In any case, the considerable scholarly debate about the particular floral species referred to by Jesus—or whether it is *a particular species* at all—seems to suggest that Chouraqui's rendering, as unusual as it is, falls well within the spectrum of acceptable hypotheses, based on his own particular linguistic and/or botanical deductions.[643]

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[642] EUGÈNE LEVESQUE, "Lis," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (ed. F. VIGOUROUX ; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912), Vol. 4, col. 283.

[643] Chouraqui's somewhat unorthodox rendering here is reminiscent of a similar episode 1500 years earlier, in which the (mis-)identification of a biblical plant provoked liturgical chaos. St. Jerome, in the process of translating the Vulgate, had rendered the Hebrew קִיקָיוֹן, *qîqāyôn* (the plant which God caused to grow up to shelter Jonah in Jon 4:6, and found only in Jon 4) by the Latin *hedera* (ivy). This innovative translation—based on Jerome's own inquiries and deductions—broke with older translations (including the LXX) which understood the plant as a gourd or castor-oil plant [Grk *κολοκύνθα, kolokuntha*]. St. Augustine, in his *Letter 72,* writes to Jerome, criticizing him for this shocking innovation, which had apparently spurred a near-riot in the diocese of Oea when initially read aloud in the liturgy: "There was a certain brother bishop of ours who decided to read your translation in the church over which he presided, and he caused a sensation by some passage from the Prophet Jonas, which was very different from the version enshrined in the memory and hearing of all, and sung for so many generations. There was such a disturbance made among the people by the Greeks arguing and stirring up passions with the charge of falsity, that the bishop ... was forced to call on the testimony of the Jews. Was it through ignorance or malice that they answered that what the Greeks and Latins said and maintained was found in the Hebrew texts? To make a long story short, the man was forced to correct an apparently wrong statement, not wishing to run the great risk of remaining without a flock. After this, it seems to us that you, also, among others, can be wrong, and you see the sort of thing that can happen ..." [*Nam quidam frater noster episcopus, cum lectitari instituisset in ecclesia cui præest, interpretationem tuam, movit quiddam longe aliter abs te positum apud Jonam prophetam (Jonæ iv, 6), quam erat omnium sensibus memoriæque inveteratum, et tot ætatum successionibus dectantatum. Factus est tantus tumultus in plebe maxime græcis arguentibus et inclamantibus calumniam falsitatis, ut cogeretur episcopus (Oēa quippe civitas erat) Judæorum testimonium flagitare. Utrum autem illi imperitia an malitia, hoc esse in hebræis codicibus responderunt, quod et græci et latini habebant atque dicebant. Quid plura? Coactus est homo velut mendositatem corrigere, volens, post magnum periculum, non remanere sine plebe. Unde etiam nobis videtur, aliquando te quoque in nonnullis falli potuisse.*] (English translation by SISTER WILFRID PARSONS, *St. Augustine: Letters,* Vol. 1. [1-82]. [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1951], 327; Latin version in MIGNE, *PL* XXXIII, cols. 242-43).

Conclusion

As can be seen, Chouraqui's translation is not merely a translation in the usual sense. His text incorporates a wealth of linguistic, social and religious background in ways that can be puzzling, curiosity-provoking, and sometimes disconcerting. His text attempts to digest down decades of study and volumes of scholarship and, to a certain degree, to have *the text itself* bear the weight of issues that would normally be relegated to commentaries or editorial notes. It is, in that sense, an "ultra-informative" or "ultra-semantic" translation.

The end result is a version that attempts to force its readers to grapple, and sometimes grapple hard, with the historical, linguistic and cultural gulf which separates modern readers from ancient writers. While Chouraqui's word-choices are often enlightening, and point in the direction of previously-unconsidered meanings, nevertheless they can also seem cryptic and obstructive, leaving readers perplexed. Chouraqui's conscious emphasis on the Jewish/Hebrew matrix of Jesus and the Gospels certainly succeeds in bringing to the attention (of Christian readers, at least) aspects of Jesus' daily life as a first-century Palestinian Jew that they may never have explored. It is a translation in which Jesus of Nazareth once again begins to take on the traits of his people and culture, whose language he spoke, whose land he knew well, whose customs and *mores* he took for granted, and whose religion he devoutly practised. Restored to their Semitic roots, the names of places and people may once again become elements in the biblical narrator's craft, and the words of Jesus—transmitted to us only in Greek—can take on new layers of meaning, and occasionally new meanings entirely.

In many of these cases, Chouraqui's choices are either guided by earlier scholarship, or have been confirmed by subsequent studies. While his style is certainly unique to him, many of his options—as novel as they may seem—can be shown to have the support of respected exegetes and translators; he is certainly not writing in

isolation from the larger scholarly world and major currents within it. While some of his renderings are perhaps less than "mainstream," they frequently reflect at least a respectable minority view-point, for which good arguments can be made. He is certainly not afraid to be something of a renegade or a maverick—but I do not believe that he is guided by a simple desire for non-conformity. There are deeper literary, linguistic and theological agendas at work in Chouraqui's Bible.

The novelty of Chouraqui's style has been, in the eyes of its readers, both its pride and its weakness. Where some see brilliance, freshness and purpose, others see only arbitrariness, eccentricity and a *faux* French that bears little resemblance, either to the language of Voltaire or to the biblical tongues that it claims to be rendering. Chouraqui certainly has his champions, but his critics are not lacking. In the next chapter, we will examine the substance of their judgements, both positive and negative, on *La Bible Chouraqui.*

Chapter 6 • Critiques and Questions

Introduction

As a veteran politician, diplomat and literary figure, André Chouraqui was no stranger to criticism, not only of his political and social views, but also of his published work. While he had numerous defenders, and many who were fascinated by, and deeply appreciative of, his biblical translations, nevertheless, the somewhat "confrontational" nature of his enterprise guaranteed that it would arouse controversy. Some dismissed Chouraqui as a dilettante, without the proper professional credentials to work in the field of exegesis and biblical studies, while others scoffed at his unorthodox, rugged and seemingly unpolished style. It was criticism that he both expected and welcomed, precisely because it showed that he had succeeded in his undertaking, of "shaking the foundations" of institutional readings of the Bible (both scholarly and religious), and had jarred people into looking anew at these ancient—and for many, canonical—texts. No one, however, could deny Chouraqui's stunning accomplishment in almost singlehandedly translating the entirety of the Jewish and Christian Bibles, and with a speed that was mind-boggling. Nor could they refute the fact that his translations were demonstrably popular with the French reading public, who found in his work a new and "untamed" look at writings that were deeply rooted in French history, literature and culture.

The appearance of the first individual volumes of the *Bible Chouraqui* in the early 1970s caught the attention and curiosity of religious and academic scholars. Because of the significant post-war developments in Jewish-Christian relations, Chouraqui's work had an immediate resonance for those who were already active in interfaith dialogue, and was of particular interest to those with at least some familiarity with biblical languages, who were best able to appreciate and judge Chouraqui's attempt at a new kind of religiously and culturally sensitized literalism.

1. F-P. Dreyfus

In 1975, Father François-Paul Dreyfus, a French Dominican scholar at Jerusalem's École Biblique,[644] was one of the first to review the initial published volumes of Chouraqui's translation.[645] Dreyfus (who had been a consultant to Chouraqui in his translation work) clearly understood the author's specific intention; he reminded the *Revue's* readers that there is no such thing as a single "ideal" translation, but that different translations can admirably serve different needs and constituencies. Unlike many other translations, which aim not to *feel* like translations, Dreyfus acknowledges that Chouraqui seeks just the opposite: to slow people down, to surprise and challenge them, and to enable them to read the Biblical text with new eyes:

> Le passage de l'univers culturel des auteurs à celui du lecteur est réduit au strict minimum requis pour que le texte soit intelligible; tout l'effort du traducteur va en sens inverse, et vise à transporter le lecteur dans le monde de pensée et d'expression des auteurs bibliques. Tout les hébraïsmes sont maintenus ... Dans les différentes nuances, les différentes acceptions possibles d'une expression ou d'un mot, Chouraqui privilégie le sens original concret même si, au moment où le texte hébreu est composé, il n'est plus qu'une harmonique de son fondamental.[646]

Nevertheless, Dreyfus points out some potential pitfalls in Chouraqui's approach: he is not always consistent in the application of his principles; he occasionally mistakes medieval Masoretic (or even later Yiddish) pronunciations for the ancient *Hebraica veritas*, and he sometimes presumes that a term's meaning remained stable and unchanged throughout the long centuries of the Bible's oral and written composition. Indeed, he asks if Chouraqui has not sometimes *overtranslated* colloquial expressions, far more literally than their ancient use demanded, in a way that would have been foreign even to their original speakers (here, he draws upon

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[644] Father Dreyfus was born into a non-practicing Jewish family, converted to Catholicism as a young man, and went on to become a well-known French biblical scholar. See: http://ebaf.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=65&Itemid=36&lang=en

[645] *Revue Biblique* LXXXII (Jan. 1975), 114-18.

[646] *Ibid.*, 115.

analogous expressions in modern Hebrew, where scrupulous word-for-word translation does not always yield the proper colloquial sense). Dreyfus' article is perhaps most insightful when he defends Chouraqui against the charge of clinging too rigidly to the original syntax and vocabulary; as he demonstrates, this was, in fact, the very approach taken by both the Septuagint and the Vulgate, which allowed the literal meaning to be preserved (even awkwardly at times), in settings where Hebrew was no longer understood.

> Si André Chouraqui est servi par un talent poétique indiscutable, ce qui est un avantage inappréciable pour traduire la Bible ... il est aussi un exégète compétent qui connaît les problèmes posés par le texte et les travaux des spécialistes. Ses options peuvent être parfois discutables, elles sont toujours le fruit d'un travail en profondeur et ne sont jamais arbitraires. Et, en fréquentant davantage cette traduction, on est séduit, attiré, captivé, même si on n'est pas toujours entièrement convaincu. *En tout cas, l'option qui est à la base de sa traduction est parfaitement légitime et, dans l'éventail des traductions bibliques existantes, elle comble un vide* ... ce qui fait le prix de la traduction d'André Chouraqui, [c'est que] elle veut garder au texte toutes ses virtualités, elle veut conserver toutes les harmoniques du son fondamental.[647]

The danger, Dreyfus reminds us, is that fidelity to the *letter* of a text can sometimes result in infidelity to its *meaning*—although he admits that this is a difficult threshold to fix in a hard and fast way. At the outset of this major translation enterprise, Dreyfus clearly feels that Chouraqui is on to something significant, even if such a translation can be criticized on other technical or literary counts, and will not be appropriate for every person or every situation.

2. C. Wiéner

In the summer of 1976, Claude Wiéner (a professor of biblical studies at the Institut Catholique de Paris) reviewed the newly-published Chouraqui version of the Gospels for *Les cahiers universitaires catholiques*.[648] Like Dreyfus, Wiéner clearly sees the value of Chouraqui's overall purpose, and characterizes his earlier Old Testament

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[647] *Ibid.*, 116-17 ; my italics.

[648] No. 6 (juillet-août 1976), 40-41.

translation as an "œuvre savoureuse et déroutante".[649] Wiéner identifies three particular strands in Chouraqui's work which distinguish it: (1) his emphasis on the essentially Semitic quality, not just of the Old Testament, but of the Gospels as well; (2) his attempt to "dust off" biblical language ("le 'dépoussiérage' du vocabulaire," p. 41) and present it in striking new ways which provoke the reader into re-considering its possible meanings; (3) his strenuous attempt—unusual among modern translators—to render each Greek word consistently by the same word in French.

While Wiéner acknowledges that it is certainly legitimate to speculate as to Semitic under-texts in the Gospels (particularly as regards the words attributed to Jesus), Chouraqui's emphasis on reading the Gospels in the light of presumed Aramaic or Hebrew sources sometimes produces highly questionable results. For example, Chouraqui presumes that the "original" layer(s) of the Gospels would reflect the *parataxis* typical of Semitic languages; sentences would be fairly short, without the layers of subordinate clauses and other complex phrasings more typical of Greco-Roman literary style. He therefore de-constructs existing complex sentences into their supposed smaller components, and translates them accordingly. The Greek of John 13:1-4, for example, is made up of two long and complex sentences:

> *πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα ἵνα μεταβῇ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους τοὺς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς. καὶ δείπνου γινομένου τοῦ διαβόλου ἤδη βεβληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἵνα παραδοῖ αὐτὸν Ἰούδας Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου εἰδὼς ὅτι πάντα ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ εἰς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπάγει ἐγείρεται ἐκ τοῦ δείπνου καὶ τίθησιν τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λαβὼν λέντιον διέζωσεν ἑαυτόν*

[649] *Ibid.*, 40. Several reviewers describe Chouraqui's translation as "déroutant," a rich adjective which can mean "disconcerting, confusing, unnerving"—literally, it takes you "off your usual route" and forces a change of itinerary, into strange and unfamiliar territory.

This becomes, in Chouraqui's version, *five* shorter sentences, without the temporal and causal subordinations implicit in the Greek[650]:

> Avant la fête de Pèssah, Iéshoua' sait que l'heure est venue pour lui de passer de cet univers vers le Père. Il a aimé les siens en cet univers, et il les aime jusqu'à la fin. Et c'est au cour d'un dîner : le diable jette alors au cœur de Iehouda bèn Shim'ôn, l'homme de Qériot, de le livrer. Iéshoua' pénètre que le Père lui a tout donné entre les mains ; il sort d'Elohîms et va vers Elohîms. Il se lève du dîner, dépose ses vêtements, prend un linge et s'en ceint.

In a similar vein, Chouraqui chooses to translate almost everything using the narrative present, ignoring the more complex and subtle tenses and moods of Greek in favour of the perfect/imperfect system of Hebrew, with its modal nuances of complete or incomplete action. Chouraqui argues elsewhere[651] that the Hebrew verbal system is essentially "a-temporal" (at least in the sense that many Western readers usually think of tense), a conclusion which for him justifies the general use of the French present tense, with its considerable malleability; similarly, he favours the *indicative* mood. Needless to say, this combination has significant implications, not only on the literary and linguistic levels, but also on the level of theology (it largely favours immanence over transcendence, and the present versus the future, which demands a significant re-orientation of some key eschatological passages).[652]

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[650] The NRSV translates the same passage with four sentences; the French *Bible de Jérusalem* follows the Greek closely, using only two sentences.

[651] "La liberté la plus constante que j'ai prise avec le texte grec concerne les temps du verbe. Déjà Joüon l'avait noté : «L'attention donnée au substrat araméen est particulièrement utile pour éviter la traduction trop mécanique des temps grecs.» [*L'Évangile de Notre Seigneur.* Paris, 1930, XVI] Le verbe grec conçoit le temps surtout en fonction d'un passé, d'un présent et d'un futur ; l'hébraïque, ou l'araméen, au contraire, au lieu de préciser le temps d'une action, décrit son état sous deux modes : l'accompli et l'inaccompli. Comme Pedersen l'a bien vu, le verbe hébraïque est, par essence, *intemporel*, c'est-à-dire *omnitemporel*. J'ai tenté, entre deux notions du temps irréductibles l'une à l'autre, de recourir le plus souvent au présent qui dans l'usage du français contemporain est un temps très souple, très ample, très évocateur, soit dans son emploi normal, soit sous forme de présent historique, ou de présent prophétique." A. CHOURAQUI, "Une nouvelle traduction du Nouveau Testament," in *Évangiles: Les 4 Annonces* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976), XIII.

[652] For example, in the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer, Chouraqui replaces several Greek aorist imperatives with the French present indicative tense, so that *ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐλθετω ἡ βασιλεια σου γενηθητω τὸ θέλημά σου* (Mt 9:9-10) becomes "ton Nom se consacre; ton royaume vient, ton vouloir se fait...". The Greek clearly implies a wish or a prayer (perhaps

In terms of Chouraqui's attempt to re-root New Testament language in its more concrete Semitic origins, Wiéner can appreciate the freshness and newness of some of Chouraqui's choices, while still questioning whether this instinct can be overdone, to the detriment of the text, and to the distortion of the historical development of language within both Judaism and early Jewish Christianity:

> L'avantage de sortir des formules toutes faites est certain et les phrases de l'évangile trouvent une allure de nouveauté dont on sent bien intérêt. Mais peut-on exprimer la foi chrétienne sans un minimum de vocabulaire technique et précis ? Certains mots n'avaient-ils déjà dans le judaïsme un sens bien déterminé ? Et d'autres n'en avaient-ils pas déjà acquis un, dans les communautés chrétiennes, au moment de la rédaction des évangiles ?[653]

Wiéner also notes (p. 41) some of the places in which Chouraqui's claimed consistency of one-French-term-for-each-Greek-term breaks down. Certainly, he says, a good concordance could assist in avoiding these inconsistencies—but they also raise the larger question of whether the correspondence between any two languages is rigid enough to permit such a strict one-for-one equivalency, without ending up with renderings that are either laughably inaccurate in context, or largely incomprehensible.

3. P.M. Beernaert

In 1987, Pierre Mourlon Beernaert,[654] in two consecutive reviews in *Lumen Vitæ*,[655] addressed both Chouraqui's recent publication (1984) of the New Testament under a single cover, and the 1985 publication of the *L'Univers de la Bible* volume on the Gospels. He clearly sympathizes with Chouraqui's attempt to bring about a more positive Jewish-Christian encounter by means of his biblical translation, and he welcomes Chouraqui's text as a study aid, while conceding that its ruggedness does not easily lend itself to public proclamation. Beernaert praises the erudition, beauty

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for situations which do not yet exist, at least not fully), whereas Chouraqui's French takes the form of statements of fact, suggesting that these actions are *already* taking place.

[653] Wiéner, 41.

[654] Beernaert, a Jesuit and scholar of classical philology, teaches Scripture at the Lumen Vitæ International Institute in Brussels.

[655] *Lumen Vitæ*, 42:3 (1987), 356-57.

and interreligious flavour of the *L'Univers* series overall, and his criticisms of Chouraqui are gentle and fairly subdued:

> What must be especially emphasized is the deliberately provoked feeling of new surroundings experienced by the reader of these all too well-known texts, who can thus look at them from a fresh and often suggestive viewpoint. Chouraqui has great enthusiasm, both warm and poetic, but he does not always manage to avoid a few approximations and generous anticipations in his attempt to incorporate 20 centuries of universal gospel reading. All things considered, this is an admirable though inevitably expensive volume, which enables us to look at the Gospels with new eyes, through the author's great love, and to discover as much as possible of the true face of the sacred text—in its Jewish roots far more than in its Greek roots![656]

4. Henri Tincq

The first pocket edition of *La Bible Chouraqui* was published in the autumn of 1989, and in December of that year, the French journalist Henri Tincq interviewed Chouraqui for the French daily *Le Monde*, in an article entitled "Chouraqui, le saute-frontières" (literally, "the one who leaps across borders" or "the boundary-jumper").[657] Tincq notes how rapidly Chouraqui's translation travelled around the globe ("de Vancouver à Tokyo"), finding its way into the hands of the French *homme de lettres* André Malraux, who kept it by his bedside in his final days. To Tincq's suggestion that Chouraqui's version was perhaps more "difficult" than other French translations, its author replied, somewhat indignantly:

> "Mais la Bible est difficile ! Ce n'est pas du Stendhal ni du Victor Hugo," tempête Chouraqui, qui, comme à la prunelle de ses yeux, tient à l'authenticité du nom des lieux et des personnages, à la fidélité au rythme de la phrase hébraïque. Sa langue, crue, ardue, rugueuse, mais savoureuse, est proche de l'originale. C'est un retour aux sources ... Son projet est ambitieux : il n'est pas, dit-il, d'"arracher" la Bible à l'univers occidental qui est le sien depuis deux mille ans, mais de restituer, à destination de l'Occident, l'univers hébraïque et sémitique.[658]

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[656] *Ibid.*, 357.

[657] Tincq, "Chouraqui, le saute-frontières," *Le Monde* (December 22, 1989); available in digital form on a pay-per-use basis from the archives of *Le Monde*, at: http://www.lemonde.fr/

[658] *Ibid.*

Tincq's article also highlights one of Chouraqui's longtime personal campaigns: the effort to eschew the various names conferred on God in Greek, Latin and most European languages, and to restore to God the numinous, self-revealed Name which distinguishes Him in the Hebrew Bible: YHWH"

> "Pourquoi avoir remplacé ce nom sacré par celui des idoles que les prophètes juifs ou les apôtres chrétiens n'ont cessé de condamner ? ... Le nom, dans les langues sémitiques, a une importance capitale : changer de nom, n'est-ce pas changer d'être ?"[659]

Tincq's article blended Chouraqui's life story with a very appreciative evaluation of his Bible. It stressed Chouraqui's interreligious efforts in the face of the ever-present historical and political realities faced by anyone committed to dialogue with the Arab world that encircled Israel: " 'Mon pays a quarante-deux ans. Il n'a pas connu un seul jour de paix,' dit Chouraqui, dans un soupir las et amer." Tincq would follow Chouraqui's career with keen interest, and would (in July 2007) write *Le Monde*'s obituary for him.

5. M.R. Hayoun

In 1993, Chouraqui was again the subject of an article in *Le Monde*, this time a book review by Maurice Ruben Hayoun, who examined the most recent revision of *La Bible Chouraqui*.[660] While Hayoun correctly characterizes the translation as "une entreprise parfois déroutante," he also compliments the author for "sa sensibilité, si empreinte d'universalisme et d'amour du prochain, si éloignée de tout dogmatisme religieux". Chouraqui's deep immersion in midrashic and Talmudic learning came through, Hayoun noted, as well as his familiarity with Jewish commentators both ancient and modern, and with the necessary scriptural languages:

> ... l'impression d'ensemble est positive—malgré des choix verbaux parfois étonnants. Chouraqui est, en effet, un excellent connaisseur de l'hébreu biblique, comme du grec et de l'arabe, puisque même le Coran est appelé

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[659] *Ibid.*

[660] Hayoun, "La Bible selon Chouraqui," *Le Monde* (August 6, 1993); available in digital form on a pay-per-use basis from the archives of *Le Monde*, at: http://www.lemonde.fr/

> parfois à la rescousse. Par ailleurs, il est pratiquement le seul juif à avoir tenu compte des résultats de la critique biblique sans toutefois se ranger complètement sous sa bannière. Il insiste sur "l'unité profonde" du textus biblique ... Chouraqui a choisi de briser la coque des traductions précédentes et de revenir à une version très proche du texte originel, afin d'en faire jaillir la richesse et la plénitude de sens ... Chouraqui ne faillit pas à sa méthode dans sa traduction des Évangiles qu'il nomme le Pacte neuf ... Cette traduction de Chouraqui n'en demeure pas moins une performance, en raison justement de ses hébraïsmes et de ses commentaires très éclairants, ouverts et faciles à comprendre. Le seul reproche qu'on pourrait lui adresser est la recherche d'un littéralisme (qui n'est jamais étroit) et la volonté de dérouter le lecteur ... dans le bon sens.

While clearly appreciating the overall style and impact, Hayoun points out that Chouraqui's near obsession with etymology can sometimes yield phrases which, instead of enlightening, merely leave the audience confused and puzzling: "El matriciel, graciant, long de narines, abondant en chérissement et vérité" (Exod 34:6[661]). His method, intended to "open up" the biblical text, can instead have the effect of making the Bible a closed or intimidating book, one which makes sense only to scholars, and not to the average reader.

6. F. Kaufmann

Francine Kaufmann, a professor of translation and interpreting studies at Bar-Ilan University (Ramat Gan, Israel), and a native-born francophone, is one of the scholars who has delved most thoroughly into Chouraqui's personal background and translational work. In a 1998 article for the translation-theory journal *Meta*[662], Kaufmann situates Chouraqui's work within the framework of his unusual "life in three worlds," and demonstrates how his biblical work flows naturally from his earlier translations of medieval Arabic poetry. Chouraqui's earlier work clearly shows that he is "un traducteur sagement classique, aux phrases élégantes et soigneusement coulées dans la moule de la langue française" (p. 2). In his more recent biblical work, however,

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[661] Instead of the more usual "Dieu de tendresse et de pitié, lent à la colère, riche en grâce et en fidélité" (*Bible de Jérusalem*).

[662] *Meta*, 43:1 (1998), 2-15.

he clearly sacrifices a certain "literary" quality in the pursuit of a more linguistically-oriented approach. The impression it leaves with readers is often that of "un texte rocailleux, abrupt, aux beautés sauvages et ardues, parcouru ... par un souffle vivifiant qui rend à la Bible sa fraîcheur et l'actualise...".[663]

Kaufmann's remarkably comprehensive article provides a very helpful biographical overview, explaining the genesis of the original translation initiative, and highlighting Chouraqui's broad collaboration with noted exegetes and other specialists in Biblical culture, to correct and improve his renderings (each edition of Chouraqui's translation incorporates slight modifications and corrections, on the basis of feedback received). Her article is particularly strong on what she terms *"la méthode Chouraqui,"* which she characterizes as centred on the importance of etymology and historical linguistics, on concreteness, and on his attempt to recapture the vigour of the original languages, sometimes dulled by centuries of overly familiar translations which have numbed the minds of religious readers to the multivalence—and even the original meaning—of many Biblical expressions.

> ... Les traductions d'André Chouraqui sont loin de représenter un simple «calque» d'un original sémitique mal digéré en français ou plaqué de force sur une langue récalcitrante. Si elles ne laissent personne indifférent, c'est qu'il est difficile de ne pas réagir devant le souffle poétique, la verdeur, l'actualité du texte qu'il restitue dans une vitalité bondissante. Chouraqui invite à redécouvrir l'original hébreu, à revisiter les paysages de l'Israël biblique, à retrouver l'Orient originel oublié sous les siècles d'académisme linguistique occidental.[664]

> Dans sa traduction, Chouraqui s'attache à mettre en évidence l'influence de la Bible hébraïque, de son vocabulaire et de ses images sur les textes des religions issues d'Israël. Moins pour les «judaïser» que pour en souligner l'homogénéité et dévoiler, à travers la proximité des langues et des expressions, l'unité primordiale de la parole divine, la véritable dimension œcuménique des textes.[665]

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[663] *Ibid.*, 2.
[664] *Ibid.*, 13.
[665] *Ibid.*, 11.

It is, as she aptly notes, not just a translation aimed at "reorientating" the reader but is, even more profoundly, a "re-Orient-ation," attempting to re-situate the text in its original temporal and cultural milieu in the Middle East. The "ruggedness" and occasional unfamiliarity of terms in Chouraqui's translation is a salutary reminder to readers that they are in something of a foreign land here, where their usual moral, cultural and literary assumptions may not apply, and which may at times demand a strenuous effort to penetrate (or re-learn) the text's possible meanings. In this sense, "Chouraqui amène le lecteur au texte et non le texte au lecteur" (p. 10). For Chouraqui, emphasizing the alterity of the biblical text is one of the imperatives of the translator.

Kaufmann's studies highlight both the particular esthetic qualities and the interfaith possibilities inherent in such a translation. Unfortunately, like most other Jewish and Israeli reviewers, her focus centres almost exclusively on the Hebrew Bible, and does not engage in a detailed discussion of Chouraqui's New Testament.

7. H. Meschonnic

Undoubtedly the harshest criticisms of Chouraqui have come from his colleague (and, some would say, competitor) Henri Meschonnic, of the Université de Paris VIII (Vincennes, France), himself a specialist in "the poetics of translation," whose work has focussed on rhythm and the form/function dichotomy. In a series of articles and reviews in the 1970s and early 1980s[666], Meschonnic has accused Chouraqui's early versions of "barbarizing" the French language, of yielding a version that is unnecessarily exotic, which, in its blend of Hebrew and French syntax and vocabulary, is a strange amalgam of languages, identifiable as neither French nor Hebrew (what Meschonnic dismissively calls "franbreu"). He often refers to Chouraqui's translation as a "*calque,*" which suggests in French a reproduction of a

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[666] Henri Meschonnic, « Traduire la Bible aujourd'hui, » *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, n° 20, printemps 1970, 43-46 ; Meschonnic, « Le calque dans la traduction, » *Les Cahiers internationaux du symbolisme*, 31-32 (1974), CIEPHUM, 66-75 ; Meschonnic, « Le calque dans la traduction ou la Bible en décalcomanie, », *Poésie sans réponse (Pour la poétique V)*, Paris, Gallimard (1978).

drawing traced through onionskin—copying something so exactly that the appearance of the original is clearly seen to dictate the appearance of the copy (as one dictionary suggests, "a servile imitation"[667]). Linguistically, it often refers to an author's "importing" of foreign terms into his/her work, even if subtly disguised—and in the case of Chouraqui, I suspect Meschonnic intends *both* of these meanings. Meschonnic finds Chouraqui's style forced and unnatural, without literary beauty or elegance.

To Meschonnic, Chouraqui's work,

> littérairement présentée comme la plus moderne et la plus poétique, linguistiquement garantie par un hébréophone, lancée comme un événement dans les milieux catholiques et protestants de l'œcuménisme, est une régression linguistique, un faux poétique, et une trahison du Juif, qu'elle primitivise, ethnologise, pour le livrer à l'œcuménisme chrétien et dont elle se sert pour sa réclame propre.[668]

Meschonnic's criticisms seem to centre on three issues: (1) that the unaccustomed *mélange* of French and Hebrew in Chouraqui's translation yields a bastard-language which is an artificial construct, and which lacks literary integrity; (2) that Chouraqui, by attempting to create a "Jewished" New Testament, is privileging the interests of interreligious sensitivity and relevance over a strict fidelity to the Greek text; (3) that the entire exercise has more to do with Chouraqui's self-glorification than about either the Bible or translation. He is particularly concerned about the claims being made for Chouraqui's version—that his credentials as a Hebrew-speaking Israeli translator automatically confer a veneer of accuracy on his translation that makes it somehow "superior" to other translations—especially when Meschonnic himself believes just the opposite[669]:

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[667] "calque," in ÉMILE LITTRÉ, ed., *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872-1877); available online as part of the University of Chicago's ARTFL project: http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/

[668] Text as cited in the online biblical journal *Interface*, in "Portrait d'une Bible : la Bible de Chouraqui," by JACQUES DESSAUCY, 4th quarter, 2000 ; http://www.cibmaredsous.be/cib3004A.htm

[669] It should be noted that Meschonnic is equally harsh in his criticisms elsewhere of Eugene Nida, one of the most respected experts in modern Biblical linguistics and translation theory

> Quand André Chouraqui retraduit la Bible (de 1974 à 1985, la dernière édition), ce n'est, contrairement à l'apparence, pas la Bible qu'il traduit, mais l'étymologie isolément de chaque mot dans la Bible, ce qui donne un résultat cacophonique et dénué non seulement de sens poétique, mais souvent de sens tout court. Exemple—mais c'est presque à chaque ligne—là où, par exemple le Rabbinat [=la traduction du Rabbinat Français] a « ne me refuse pas ta clémence » (*Psaume* 40, v. 12), Chouraqui dit : « ne boucle pas tes matrices ». J'ajoute que, contrairement à sa réclame initiale, Chouraqui n'est pas plus proche que les autres du texte hébreu, et il ne peut pas l'être, étant donné son parti-pris linguistique. De plus, il ignore, au sen anglais, autant que tous les autres, la rythmique du texte, qu'il travestit de plus en *poétisant* typographiquement.[670]

Meschonnic, much of whose published work deals with the æsthetics of translation, faults Chouraqui (among other things) for seeming to suggest that meaning resides primarily in individual lexemes and their etymology, and thereby completely overlooking the vital contribution of syntax, rhythm and accentuation:

> Meschonnic argues that the Hellenistic distinction between poetry and prose reflects a more inclusive one between form and content, and the priority of reason over rhythm ... The Bible, however, is constituted by rhythm, as codified in the Masoretic system of *ṭᵉ'amîm*; every element of speech contributes to this rhythm, which is essentially empirical and comes to life when articulated ... In reading the Bible, we must avoid our habitual question, What is it trying to say? The signification of the words is therefore only part of the meaning. Meschonnic aphoristically schematizes the opposition as "Meaning (*sens*) is Greek, rhythm is Jewish.[671]

At times, Meschonnic seems to be as upset by Chouraqui's interfaith activity and public profile as he is by the quality of the translation *per se*. Meschonnic's voice stands out, precisely because it is so clearly opposed to the vision inspiring Chouraqui's work, at the same time that Chouraqui was receiving rave reviews from many other translators and Biblical scholars.

The particular irony of Meschonnic's criticism is that he is, in fact, involved in largely the same enterprise as Chouraqui—a *ressourcement* into the

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[670] Henri Meschonnic, "Le rythme, prophétie du langage" in Paul Bensimon and Didier Coupaye, eds., *Pourquoi donc retraduire?* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 2004), 21.

[671] Francis Landy, "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*," in *Beauty and the Enigma* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 104.

richness of the original Hebrew, even if he does not pursue the goal quite as far as Chouraqui does, or in exactly the same manner. On the basis of a similar interest in etymology, Meschonnic replaces the verb *pécher* (to sin) with *égarer* (to go astray), which is closer to the intent of the corresponding Hebrew verb; "Amen" becomes "C'est ma foi" and the *Torah* is not *Loi* but *Enseignement* (again, reflecting a greater sensitivity to the rootedness of תּוֹרָה in the Hebrew root ירה, "to teach" and, more primitively, "to throw something; to aim/direct at").[672] Although Meschonnic would probably vehemently reject the comparison, the flavour of his biblical translation has much in common with Chouraqui's; in some ways, theirs is a difference, not of *kind*, but of *degree*. As Cyril Aslanov characterizes their relationship,

> À la vérité le résultat [de Meschonnic] diffère assez peu de la méthode Chouraqui ; même respect de l'ordre des mots de la phrase hébraïque, mêmes jeux étymologiques et même volonté de faire table rase des médiations qui risquerait d'entraver le passage de l'hébreu au français ... la critique acerbe de Meschonnic fit naguère de la traduction de Chouraqui relève bien davantage d'un antagonisme de concurrent que d'une véritable opposition de principe. Les deux hommes visaient en fait au même but qui était de fournir au public français un équivalent de la traduction Buber-Rosenzweig.[673]

I think that Aslanov captures the professional rivalry of the two men perfectly in his phrase "cette gémelléité antagoniste"—the image of two twin brothers locked in a seemingly interminable contest for superiority.

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[672] "Anyone who has suffered through hearing Judaism denigrated as an arid legalism will shudder at the implications of translating *Torah* as 'law.' (Paul may have gotten his distorted view of Torah—as other Christians certainly did—from using the Greek translation of the Bible which renders *Torah* as *nomos*, 'law.') The Hebrew root of the word Torah is *y-r-h*, whose most concrete usage is for casting something in a certain direction, as in shooting an arrow. More abstractly it comes to mean 'to teach,' as in the first words students beginning Hebrew learn when they are told to call their teacher *moreh* or *morah*. We should probably translate Torah as 'The Teaching.'" Eugene B. Borowitz, *Reform Judaism Today* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 1983), 107.

[673] *Pour comprendre la Bible: la leçon d'André Chouraqui* (Paris : Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 97, 99.

8. C. Aslanov

It is Aslanov who has authored the single most thorough study of Chouraqui's biblical work to date: *Pour comprendre la Bible: La leçon d'André Chouraqui* (Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 1999). Aslanov, a Sorbonne-trained linguist, is a professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, where he specializes in French and Romance-language linguistics. Aslanov makes no secret of his admiration, both for Chouraqui and for his literary accomplishments:

> Le dessein de la présente étude n'est pas polémique mais plutôt apologétique. C'est en quelque sorte un plaidoyer pour une approche du texte biblique qui débarrasse celui-ci de sa gangue sacrée, afin d'en apprécier les beautés esthétiques et le souffle poétique.[674]

Aslanov clearly sees Chouraqui's translation as something quite revolutionary in the history of French biblical work, and he analyzes it, not only in terms of Chouraqui's own distinctive approach, but also of how Chouraqui actually turns out to be the heir of a long and distinguished tradition among Jewish translators, dating back to the Septuagint and Aquila.[675] Paradoxically, Chouraqui's desire to distance himself from the more recent trends in biblical translation actually places him in a line of translators which, Aslanov argues, includes St. Jerome, the Eastern European translators Ulfilas,[676] Sts. Cyril and Methodius[677], Martin Luther, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig—and Henri Meschonnic.

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[674] *Ibid.*, 14.

[675] See especially the first part of chapter 2, "Rupture et continuité : André Chouraqui face aux traductions grecques et latines de la Bible," 46-62.

[676] Ulfilas (ca. 311-ca. 381) became bishop of the Visigoths in 341. He was the first to translate the Greek Bible into a Germanic language, i.e. Gothic (fragments of which are still extant). The Gothic language, with its combination of Roman and Greek characters, is traditionally attributed to him. See "Ulfilas," in Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English*, rev. ed. (Oxford University Press, 2005); online at: www.oxfordreference.com.

[677] Cyril and Methodius were two ninth-century Greek-born brothers who together are known as "the apostles to the Slavs". Active as Christian missionaries among the Serbs, Bulgars and Croats, they were the first to translate the Bible into the local language, and are believed to have developed the Glagolithic alphabet (from which today's Cyrillic alphabet is largely derived) to enable their translation and catechetical work. See "Cyril and Methodius," in David Hugh

Aslanov's work, which highlights the specific contribution of Chouraqui's personal background to his translational work[678], is almost entirely centred on his translation of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament, and thus largely ignores his New Testament work, which Chouraqui understood to be an essential part of his larger interreligious ambitions.[679] Unlike those who had critiqued Chouraqui's rough and sometimes inelegant French style, Aslanov discerns a deeper appreciation of literary æsthetics, and does not hesitate to speak of "l'éminente dignité littéraire de cette traduction".[680] Indeed, he argues that, generations hence, while other versions will likely be more commonly used and studied, the version of André Chouraqui will continue to be read for the sheer pleasure it takes in choosing and weaving words in unaccustomed and provocative ways. Aslanov sees it as filling a void in French for those who, lacking knowledge of the biblical languages, seek a version that reflects, as faithfully and artfully as possible, the "flavour" of the original, with its sometimes foreign assumptions and turns of phrase.

> [La traduction de Chouraqui] mérite d'être examinée en profondeur, car elle constitue un précédent instructif à l'usage de tous les traducteurs littéraires. En ce sens la Bible de Chouraqui constitue un modèle qui gagnerait à être imité pour d'autres textes provenant des horizons culturels les plus divers.[681]

While Aslanov occasionally critiques Chouraqui, he is particularly impressed by his concern to bring out wordplays and etymological nuances, and—even in French—to select words which attempt to reproduce some of the sound-effects (alliteration, assonance, rhymes) of the Hebrew. He is pleased to see how Chouraqui

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FARMER, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press 2003); online at: www.oxfordreference.com.

[678] "Cette traduction est véritablement la figure emblématique de la destinée de son auteur." (207)

[679] Out of nearly 210 pages, Aslanov dedicates slightly less than two (pp. 40-42) to the issues raised by the New Testament. He occasionally mentions the way in which Chouraqui has translated a Greek term, but usually this is as a function of how he has translated a Hebrew term. It is clear that, for Aslanov (perhaps because of his location at an Israeli university?), it is the Hebrew Scriptures which are of primary importance as a subject of study.

[680] p. 13.

[681] p. 14.

has "de-baptized" the Bible, returning it to its original Middle Eastern matrix, and attempting to strip away centuries of Western interpretations which have distanced the Bible from the very concrete language of its original writers and hearers, in favour of a more "abstract" and philosophical text. Ironically, Aslanov writes, it is *French* which, under the pen of André Chouraqui, becomes the medium by which the Greek and Latin biblical traditions (and the Arabic tradition represented by the Qur'an) are "re-rooted" in a more deliberately Hebraic soil:

> Il est intéressant de noter que, paradoxalement, cette réduction de la diversité des trois livres saints à leur dénominateur commun hébraïque passe par la médiation du français. La langue de Voltaire sert en quelque sorte de révélateur neutre et universel permettant de déceler le lien profond qui unit trois corpus de textes saints en trois ou quatre langues différentes : hébreu, araméen, grec et arabe. Par une sorte d'ironie du sort, l'idiome qui servit à assimiler des générations de colonisés de l'Empire français est mis au service d'une entreprise qui vise précisément à émanciper les trois grands patrimoines spirituels de l'humanité de toute tentative de récupération émanant de l'Occident.[682]

Aslanov's study is insightful, careful and appreciative of so much that is worthwhile and helpful about the work of Chouraqui, whom he rightly describes (in the best sense of the term) as "un archéologue du texte".[683] Aslanov's almost exclusive focus on the Hebrew Bible, however, means that large parts of it—especially some of the more detailed, technical discussions about linguistic matters—have little relevance for a study of Chouraqui's engagement with the New Testament, or are of interest only indirectly.

Conclusions

In the thirty-five years since his translations first began to appear in print, André Chouraqui has gained a dedicated following, both among scholars and among the Bible-reading public, who see in his work a valuable departure from more familiar

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[682] p. 209.
[683] p. 209.

and treasured versions. But he has not been without detractors and critics, who have tried to portray his work as that of a dilettante or of a scholarly eccentric, espousing less-than-mainstream theories and rocking the boat of translational convention unnecessarily. Throughout his life—and throughout the several revisions of his translation which he published—Chouraqui sincerely attempted to correct and revise his work, taking into account what he saw as valid, constructive criticisms. He was not opposed to scholarly input or correction; indeed, as his lengthy acknowledgements confirm, he frequently sought out the insights of highly-regarded biblical scholars and archæologists, in Israel and throughout Europe.[684] In the end, of course, the responsibility for the finished product lay with him alone (and, of course, with his second wife, Annette, who was his close collaborator in this work).

André Chouraqui is dead now, and it is unlikely that there will be further revisions of the Chouraqui Bible. It must therefore stand on its own, in its latest version, with its strengths and weaknesses, for scholars to assess. As other scholars have pointed out—and as I have highlighted in my own analysis of the Gospels—there are issues where one can certainly find fault with Chouraqui, can dispute his translations, question his theory about the Semitic underpinnings of the Gospels, or point to occasional inconsistencies or cases of "over-translation". Æsthetics is very much in the eye of the beholder, and questions about what constitutes an appropriate "French style" are almost unresolvable. But even Chouraqui's most ardent critics concede that he has done what very few in history have set out to accomplish—and what fewer still have managed to complete: a truly monumental translation of the Abrahamic scriptures which attempts to highlight their linguistic and theological roots and commonalities in a way that non-experts can begin to see and appreciate. One could appropriately call it a work of *ouverture*—of "openness" to the contributions of a new cultural and religious dialectic, and of "opening-up" the Bible, and its language

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[684] See, for example, the three-page list of collaborators and advisors in Vol. 8 of *L'Univers de la Bible* (8-10).

and culture, to new readers, or in a new way.[685] As the work of one man, it is truly a *magnum opus* (the complete *L'Univers de la Bible* weighs more than 30 kilograms!), and, as a monument to that one man's vision of interfaith respect, esteem and dialogue, it will remain a lasting inspiration for those who seek to build bridges between the scattered children of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar.

The Question of Hebrew or Aramaic

One of the distinctive characteristics of Chouraqui's New Testament translation is his attempt throughout the text to hypothesize regarding the Semitic "underbelly" of the Gospels—the Hebrew or Aramaic "original" which he believes lies behind large parts of the present Greek text. In addition to the methodological challenges inherent in such efforts at retroversion, there is the allied question of whether *Hebrew* or *Aramaic* is the more appropriate language to turn to as a point of reference. Chouraqui tends to privilege Hebrew (no doubt because, as an Israeli citizen, it was a language with which he was more immediately familiar as a vernacular). If the majority scholarly (Aramaic) hypothesis be correct, then Chouraqui's regular recourse to Hebrew for understanding the words of Jesus marks a wrong direction from the outset, and would represent a significant flaw in a method that had already raised many eyebrows. A review of the *status quæstionis* is thus a necessary part of evaluating Chouraqui's New Testament work, and some of its presuppositions.

While few today would question that Jesus spoke Hebrew or Aramaic as his daily vernacular (and would certainly have *known* the other language well), nevertheless the question of which one was his *primary* language is a vexed and increasingly complex one. The most common answer—at least since the Enlightenment—has been that Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of most Palestinian Jews

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[685] It is also an *ouverture* in the sense of a musical *overture:* it marks merely the beginning of a larger undertaking (for Chouraqui, Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue), whose motifs and contours it introduces in a preliminary way, announcing something richer and deeper that is yet to come.

around the first century, Hebrew having been relegated centuries earlier to the position of a purely liturgical or cultic tongue (much as Latin was in Catholicism until the 1960s). Hebrew had ceased to be a spoken language long before Jesus, and so Aramaic would have been his native tongue for most matters. He would likely have been able to read portions of the Scriptures in Hebrew (if we are to take Luke 4:16-30, Jesus' address in the Nazareth synagogue, as historical), and it is quite possible that he had at least enough elementary Greek to carry on business in a bi-cultural region like Galilee.[686] He would, however, have spoken to the crowds, and to his disciples, in Aramaic; references to "Hebrew" in the New Testament (Jn. 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Rev. 9:11; 16:16) would actually *mean* Aramaic. This has been a commonplace of historical Jesus and New Testament studies generally for roughly three centuries; the following quotations are representative of a much more widespread understanding in scholarly circles (the emphasis in each passage is my own):

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[686] "Probably the demands of business and trade, as well as the general need to communicate with the larger world, made some use of Greek necessary at times, even for conservative Galilean peasants. But exactly how much Greek would have been employed by the average peasant remains difficult to estimate. In his woodworking establishment Jesus may have had occasion to pick up enough Greek to strike bargains and write receipts. Regular pilgrimage by his family to the holy yet Hellenized city of Jerusalem would have exposed the youthful Jesus to steady doses of Greek culture and Greek spoken on street corners. Naturally, such catch-as-catch-can exposure might help one gain enough Greek to get through some everyday business transactions ('tradesman's literacy') ... It might even be that Jesus was able to speak enough Greek to communicate directly with Pilate at his trial. But, without formal education in Greek, it is highly unlikely that Jesus ever attained 'scribal literacy'—or even enough command of and fluency in Greek to teach at length in it with his striking verbal artistry." JOHN P. MEIER, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991). Vol. 1, 261-22. "The question whether [Jesus] also knew ... Greek can only be answered on theoretical grounds ... [I]t is recorded on several occasions that Jesus held conversations with people who could not be expected to know either Semitic language: on one occasion with a Roman commander and on another with Pontius Pilate. The texts do not mention translators, but one cannot for this reason conclude with certainty that none were present. The Gospel writers were not generally interested in reporting such apparently irrelevant details of Jesus' life. Theoretically, Jesus may well have known at least some Greek, for Nazareth was in Lower Galilee, an area in which there were many Greek-speaking Gentiles and in which numerous inscriptions in Greek have been discovered—although, unfortunately, not dated to the first century." MICHAEL O. WISE, "Languages of Palestine," in JOEL B. GREEN, SCOT MCKNIGHT AND I. HOWARD MARSHALL, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 442.

After the invasion of Palestine by the Assyrian and Chaldean rulers of Babylon, things were completely changed. *The Jews of Palestine, along with their political independence, lost also the peculiar character of their language. The Babylonian-Aramaic dialect expelled the Hebrew, and gradually became the predominant language of Palestine, which it continued to be to the period of the Christian era, if not later ... At the time of Jesus Christ, the ancient Hebrew was completely extinct, even in its character of language of literature, and all the Jews of that period, residing in Palestine, spoke and wrote the Aramaic. Jesus, too, spoke this language* ... Josephus has also many Aramaic expressions in his "Antiquities," and Wars ...[687]

[In II Kings 18:26,] we find Rab-shakeh addressing the Jews on the walls of Jerusalem in Hebrew, while the elders desire him to speak in the Syrian language, as they understood it. But the common Jews did not understand it, so that there must have been an essential difference between the Syriac (Chaldee) and the Hebrew before the Babylonish captivity. *After that event the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language,* and parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra are written in Chaldee, which the Jews are inferred to have acquired on the other side of the Euphrates, and *at the period of the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, the Syriac of the Peshitto, or old version, is supposed to have been the common language of Palestine.*[688]

The subject of Hebrew names is interesting. The same feelings which obtain in all human hearts led to the names chosen, but the form of the names themselves, at different periods, marks the successive changes of the national history. *After the Return, when Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, and Aramaic had taken its place,* names from the new dialect were naturally introduced—such as Martha, Tabitha, or Caiaphas.[689]

[Discussing claimed 'Hebraisms' in the Lukan infancy narrative:] Is it likely that such a narrative should have been composed in Hebrew in the first century after Christ? *At that time Hebrew seems to have long ceased to be the ordinary language of Palestine.*[690]

After the return from the Exile, *Aramaic, a North-Arabian Semitic dialect, closely akin to Hebrew, replaced Hebrew as the language of everyday life.*[691]

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[687] William Carpenter, *The Biblical Companion, or, An Introduction to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures: Comprising a Comprehensive Digest of the Principles and Details of Biblical Criticism, Interpretation, Theology, History, Natural Science, Etc.* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1836), 7 and footnote. Here and in the following quotations, the italics are mine.

[688] Henry Welsford, *Mithridates Minor, or, An Essay on Language* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848), 81.

[689] Cunningham Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ* (New York: Appleton, 1913), 540.

[690] J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (New York: Harper, 1930), 135.

[691] H.D.A. Major, Thomas Walter Manson, and C. J. Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus: An Exposition of the Gospels in the Light of Modern Research* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1938), 221.

> Devenu langue morte à partir du IVe siècle, quand l'araméen avait définitivement triomphé, l'hébreu restait une langue liturgique, comme le latin a survécu ...[692]

The idea that Aramaic had essentially replaced Hebrew in the Holy Land continued to be the consensus opinion until the 1950s. Beginning with the first discoveries of manuscripts from the Dead Sea region in the late 1940s, however, scholars began, first to nuance, and then to completely re-evaluate, this opinion, which had been taken for granted for so long:

> Before the Christian era Aramaic had *in good part* replaced Hebrew in Palestine as the vernacular of the Jews. It continued as their vernacular for centuries later ...[693]

> *On se rappellera à ce propos qu'à l'époque romaine tous les Judéens étaient au moins bilingues. Ils continuaient à parler l'hébreu mishnique, leur langue maternelle, mais connaissaient aussi parfaitement l'araméen,* langue officielle du Proche Orient sémitique au même degré que la *koiné* grecque. L'usage concurrent de l'hébreu et de l'araméen écrits faisait aboutir en fait à une orthographe unifiée, valable pour un texte hébreu aussi bien qu'araméen. On aperçoit des essais dans ce sens dans le rouleau de cuivre, dans les graffites des ossuaires, dans les documents de Murabba'ât ...[694]

> The language of Jesus is still much debated. Although scholars like S. Porter seek to revive the view that Jesus taught in Greek, the evidence both within and outside the Gospels favouring the Aramaic view still has the preponderance. *To make the matter more complicated and against the common belief that Hebrew was a dead language in the first century, there is evidence that Hebrew was also a spoken language in some sectors of the Jewish society in the time of Jesus ... In Galilee Jesus probably taught in Aramaic. When he was engaged in scholarly discussions in Jerusalem, he probably used Hebrew ...* Sayings like ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε might have originally been pronounced in Aramaic. In the minds of those who spoke Hebrew these sayings were easily turned into Hebrew.[695]

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[692] Henri Daniel-Rops, *Jésus en Son temps*. Les grandes études historiques (Paris: A. Fayard, 1951), 313.

[693] Philip S. Alexander, *The Aramaic Bible*. Vol. 17a: Canticles (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), ix.

[694] M. Baillet, J.T. Milik and R. de Vaux, eds., *Les "petites grottes" de Qumrân: Exploration de la falaise, les grottes 2Q, 3Q, 5Q, 7Q à 10Q, le rouleau de cuivre* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 224.

[695] Maureen W. Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul: A Comparison with Special Reference to 'Faith That Can Remove Mountains' and 'Your Faith Has Healed/Saved You'*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 147 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 222.

Fundamental to this radical re-thinking has been the discovery of significant numbers of manuscripts dating from the centuries around the turn of the eras (especially the first century BCE and the first century CE), and written in a form of Hebrew that is neither strictly biblical nor entirely of the later Mishnaic variety. The largest single corpus, the Qumran manuscripts, represents almost 900 documents and document fragments, more than 85% of which are written in Hebrew. Although these are primarily biblical and parabiblical manuscripts, there are also a variety of other texts seemingly written at Qumran or for the Qumran sect. Some of these, although authoritative for the Qumranites, likely had their origins in Second Temple Judaism more broadly. The vast majority of these non-biblical texts were written in a form of Hebrew midway between the biblical and Mishnaic varieties (sometimes called "Qumran Hebrew"), and they thus provide at least *some* testimony to the literary use of Hebrew close to the turn of the eras.[696] Significant questions persist as to the rationale for their use of Hebrew: Was it "patriotic"? Was it deliberate archaism for literary or theological reasons? Was it counter-cultural, meant as a "transcendent" rejection of the range of languages being used in "profane" Roman Palestine?[697], the degree to which the *written* Hebrew corresponded to a colloquial *spoken* Hebrew, and the extent to which we may reliably extrapolate from Qumranic practices to broader conclusions about Hebrew usage in Judæa or Galilee.

Similarly, discoveries of fragmentary Hebrew texts at other places in the area of the Dead Sea (including Masada and Naḥal Ḥever) have demonstrated that *some* first-century and early second-century Jews continued to be able to write letters, legal and other documents in Hebrew. Nevertheless, the limitations imposed by the nature of

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[696] However: "[T]here is certainly not enough evidence to warrant the conclusion that [Qumran Hebrew] represented a peculiar dialect. The purpose of the peculiar orthography seems rather to be to mark off the sectarian texts from other Jewish literature in their library." WILLIAM M. SCHNIEDEWIND, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," in *JBL* 118:2 (1999), 248.

[697] On this question, see: STEVE WEITZMAN, "Why did the Qumran community write in Hebrew?" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119:1 (1999), 35, and SETH SCHWARTZ, "Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine," in *Past and Present* 148 (1995), 3-47.

these texts (particularly potsherds with single words or names, where Hebrew and Aramaic are frequently impossible to distinguish) combine with the nationalistic character of their writers, to raise methodological questions about their applicability more generally. This difficulty—of distinguishing the precise language in short written or engraved texts using the square script—means that scholars are frequently hesitant to be specific about the language used, and refer simply to "Jewish script". Of the 701 Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions found at Masada, 85 bore identifiably Aramaic elements, and 71 were identifiable as Hebrew. Three of the Masada texts categorized as letters are written in Aramaic; the four most extensive jar inscriptions are in Hebrew. Interestingly, fourteen of the fifteen literary texts from Masada are written in Hebrew.[698]

This issue is particularly pertinent to one of the broad categories of relevant epigraphic evidence from this period: ossuary inscriptions. According to one of the standard catalogues of publicly-owned ossuaries[699], 157 of these include at least some "Jewish script"; sometimes a tentative distinction can be made on the basis of the Hebrew or Aramaic terms for "son," "daughter" or "wife" (but even these can sometimes be misleading[700]). In this collection, the word for wife occurs six times in

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[698] The statistics in this paragraph are those cited by DAVID GOODBLATT, "Constructing Jewish Nationalism: The Hebrew Language," in *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54.

[699] I.Y. RAHMANI, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority/Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994).

[700] "The use of *ben* instead of *bar* in the patronymics is no sure indication of a Hebrew proper name, even thought it is often used to distinguish Hebrew from Aramaic inscriptions on the ossuaries. This is a recognized convenience and no more. The proper name with *ben* or *bar* could have been used properly in its own language milieu, or could easily have been borrowed into the other because of the close relationship of the two; it is even conceivable that the stereotyped character of the *ben* or *bar* might have been the unique borrowed element. Texts from Murabba'at illustrate this. *Bar* is found in Semitic names in a text written in Hebrew, and *ben* in a text written in Aramaic. The only noteworthy thing in the Murabba'at texts is that *bar* is more frequent in Hebrew texts than *ben* is in Aramaic texts. The evidence, however, is so slight that one could scarcely conclude that this argues for Aramaic as the more common language." JOSEPH FITZMYER, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D." in *A Wandering Aramæan: Collected Aramaic Essays*. Republished as part of *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 44-45.

Aramaic and three times in Hebrew, and the Aramaic terms for sons and daughter occur two to three times more often than their Hebrew equivalents.[701]

Already at the start of the twentieth century, the Hebrew scholar Moses Segal had begun to call the "death of colloquial Hebrew" theory into serious question, on the basis of his own in-depth study of Mishnaic Hebrew.[702] The language of the Mishnah was not, he said, an artificial or rarefied language used only in scholarly debate, but showed all the signs of being a natural evolution of a spoken vernacular—later than, and linguistically distinguishable from, late Biblical Hebrew. Segal's arguments made a significant impression in the field, but it would take the discovery of the Dead Sea texts before his linguistic intuition would be at least partially confirmed.

As a result, the once near-unanimous view of Aramaic's replacement of Hebrew has now yielded to a much more nuanced range of opinions. According to some scholars, *Hebrew* may very well have been the daily vernacular for some devout Palestinian Jews around the time of Jesus (although they clearly would have been fluent in Aramaic as well), whereas others continue to maintain the predominance of Aramaic (while acknowledging the presence of at least some pockets of spoken Hebrew in Palestine). Of course, there is a wide range of possible permutations between these two extremes, and a truly vast scholarly literature has developed around these competing assertions.

This significant shift is reflected in more recent scholarship, in which at least some prominent scholars now argue for the centrality of Hebrew—and even their more skeptical colleagues acknowledge that this is at least a possibility that can be entertained without apologies (again, the italics in each passage are my own):

> [The 1954 view proposed by H. Birkeland[703]] has found little if any support among competent authorities: the evidence of the Aramaic *ipsissima verba* of

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[701] Goodblatt, 54.

[702] Moses H. Segal, "Mishnaic Hebrew and its Relation to Biblical Hebrew and to Aramaic," in *JQR* 20 (1908): 670-700, 734-37; Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 5-19.

[703] *The Language of Jesus* (Oslo: Dybwad, 1954).

> Jesus in the Gospels is impossible to explain if Aramaic was not his normal spoken language ... While this extreme position must be rejected, there is nevertheless a case, certainly for a wider *literary* use of Hebrew in New Testament times. This much is certain from the Qumrân discoveries. It is also possible, however (as Professor Segal argues) that Hebrew did continue as a spoken tongue: it seems unlikely, however, that this was outside the circles of the learned or the educated, i.e., in learned Pharisaic, priestly, or Essene circles. *We must nevertheless allow possibly more than has been done before for the use of Hebrew in addition to (or instead of) Aramaic by Jesus Himself, especially on solemn festive occasions; there is a high degree of probability that Jesus began his career as a Galilæan rabbi who would be well versed in the Scriptures, and able to compose (or converse) as freely in Hebrew as in Aramaic.*[704]
>
> Although some arguments that Hebrew was spoken as a vernacular are inconclusive, the manifold use of it in ordinary conversations in rabbinical literature, and statements about its use that were made by Rabbis Meir, Judah, and Jonathan, *make it probable that Hebrew was still used as a vernacular by some Jews in the first century A.D., and that it continued to be used well into the second century,* and perhaps even into the third to a more limited extent. *I was not prepared in 1961 to go beyond the very cautious statement that it is 'quite possible that' Hebrew continued to be used [in everyday speech in Judæa] by some Jews as late as the second century A.D.', but I should now wish to say that such a use is highly probable.* If it is as probable on the ground of statements in rabbinical literature that Hebrew was used as a vernacular, then it is possible to look again at ambiguous evidence, such as the Hebrew letters of Ben Kosiba, and to interpret it in the light of a conclusion reached on other grounds.
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> *It is thus likely that Hebrew was used as a vernacular in Palestine in the time of Jesus* ... [I]t is agreed by such scholars as Ben Yehuda, Segal, and Kutscher (but not Birkeland) that Aramaic was the vernacular of most ordinary people in Galilee ... and so it is probable that Hebrew was not as deeply rooted there as in Judæa, and that Aramaic was in general use ... Thus, although it is not easy to find conclusive evidence, it is likely that Aramaic had a dominant position in Galilee ... *What is uncertain, and is probably impossible to determine, is the precise proportions in which Hebrew and Aramaic—and, indeed, Greek—were used.*
>
> *Jesus was brought up in Galilee, and it is inherently likely that he normally spoke Aramaic, and that he used it when teaching crowds in Galilee or talking to his disciples, who were also Galileans. Aramaic would also have served his needs when he visited Jerusalem, for it was understood there even by people whose vernacular was Hebrew.* There is not much to be said for Delitzsch's argument (pp. 30-1) that 'Our Lord and his apostles thought and spoke for the most part in Hebrew', on the ground that 'the Aramaic dialect of Palestine ... was the language of daily life, the vulgar language,' whereas Hebrew 'was the holy language' and

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[704] MATTHEW BLACK, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts.* 3rd ed. (Originally published by Oxford University Press, 1967; reprinted by Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 1998), 48-49.

'Knowledge of Hebrew was then as now universal among the educated of the nation.' It is scarcely likely that Jesus chose a language understood by the educated in preference to a language used by ordinary people, and it is doubtful whether the disciples belong to 'the educated of the nation'. *However, if Hebrew was normally spoken by many people of Judæa, then Jesus perhaps used it more frequently than has been supposed by many New Testament scholars. It is also possible that Hebrew was Jesus's primary language, notwithstanding his Galilean upbringing, and the probability that he taught in Aramaic in Galilee.*

There is thus some evidence for the use of Aramaic by Jesus, and some evidence that can be explained as either Hebrew or Aramaic ... *The testimony to Jesus' use of Aramaic may support the inherent probability that he, as a Galilean, would normally have spoken Aramaic, and there is no difficulty in admitting the possibility, or even probability, that he sometimes spoke Hebrew.*

The New Testament ... offers support for the view that Jesus normally spoke Aramaic, and its evidence is compatible with—and, if Rabinowitz's explanation of ἐφφαθά is right, favours—the view that he sometimes spoke Hebrew ... Hebrew was probably used as a vernacular in Judæa in the time of Jesus, but Aramaic was also used there and was in more general use in Galilee.[705]

... The role of Aramaic in everyday life should not be exaggerated. Many scholars who admit the widespread use of Hebrew in the last few generations of the Second Temple period claim that Temple services were conducted in Aramaic. While there were a number of Aramaic words and phrases associated with the administration of the Temple and Temple area, the vast majority of references relating to Temple life reflect the use of Hebrew there. The Mishnah preserves many descriptions of various aspects of everyday life in the Temple, including statements of Temple officials which almost always are in Hebrew. Moreover, to date all of the inscriptions found in the Temple area are written in Hebrew, except for two Greek inscriptions, originally part of a balustrade surrounding the inner Temple, which warned Gentiles not to go beyond that point ...

...The custom of translating the readings of the Torah and Prophets into Aramaic is not mentioned in any source before approximately 140 C.E. Sources from the second Temple period and the era immediately following the destruction of the Temple do not reflect this custom. The phenomenon of sages understanding Biblical Hebrew while the rest of the population required a translation is the reality of a later period and was not the situation during the first century C.E. ...

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the documents from the period of the Bar-Kochba revolt (132-135 C.E.) conclusively settled the question of whether Mishnaic Hebrew had been an artificial or a living language. Hymns, prayers and biblical works written in Hebrew were discovered, as well as

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[705] J.A. EMERTON, "The Problem of Vernacular Hebrew in the First Century A.D. and the Language of Jesus," in *JTS* 24 (1973): 16-19, 21.

documents composed in the Mishnaic Hebrew dialect. Among them were letters containing Hebrew slang and abbreviated Hebrew forms characteristic of everyday speech. These discoveries prompted the biblical scholar J.T. Milik to conclude:

"The thesis of such scholars as Segal, Ben-Yehuda and Klausner that Mishnaic Hebrew was a language spoken by the population of Judea in the Persian and Græco-Roman periods can no longer be considered an assumption, but rather an established fact." (*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* [Oxford University Press, 1961], 2:70)....

In his *The Jewish War*, Josephus states that in order to deliver Titus' message and persuade the inhabitants of Jerusalem to surrender, he approached the walls of Jerusalem. Since Josephus wanted not only John of Gischala to understand, but also the entire population, he delivered the message in Hebrew (*War* 6:96). It would seem, therefore, that Hebrew was commonly spoken and understood in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

... Jesus probably spoke Hebrew within the circle of his disciples, and since the thousands of parables which have survived in rabbinic literature are all in Hebrew, no doubt he likewise told his parables in Hebrew ...

Hebrew was certainly the language of instruction in schools, as well as the language of prayer and Torah reading. The language of instruction in the house of study also most certainly was Hebrew, and this was likely the case regarding instruction in the synagogue. It would seem that Hebrew was spoken in the marketplaces of Jerusalem (Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesahim* 37[d]), but there is not enough information to determine whether this also was the case in other cities. It is not impossible that there were religiously uneducated people who did not understand Hebrew and were conversant only in Aramaic. There is some evidence for this linguistic phenomenon beginning in the second century C.E., but it is unlikely that such was the case in the first century.

Although the Jewish inhabitants of the land of Israel in the time of Jesus knew Aramaic and used it in their contacts with the ordinary, non-Jewish residents, Hebrew was their first or native language. It is especially clear that in enlightened circles such as those of Jesus and his disciples, Hebrew was the dominant spoken language.[706]

The Dead Sea Scrolls have shown that there was a great deal more literary activity in Hebrew during this period that had been thought before their discovery ... At one time scholars thought Mishnaic Hebrew was an artificial language, an attempt to resurrect Hebrew for teaching purposes by Hebraizing Aramaic. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found that hypothesis had been disproved [citing Segal's *Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* and Kutscher's article in the EJ and his *History of the Hebrew Language*, ch. 6]. Now, the Scrolls, and the documents deposited during the Second, Bar Kochba, Revolt, demonstrate that Hebrew was a living language, in use for literary and everyday documents, and in

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[706] SHMUEL SAFRAI, "Spoken Languages in the Time of Jesus," in *Jerusalem Perspective Online*. www.jerusalemperspective.com

more than one dialect, with *MMT* and the list of hidden treasure engraved on the Copper Scroll sharing many features with Mishnaic Hebrew.

The haphazardly preserved inscriptions and manuscripts of Herodian Palestine *leave no room for doubt that all three languages were current, with Hebrew more widely used than many have allowed,* and the documents from the second century add their support ... On this evidence we can assume that Jesus spoke Aramaic as a matter of course ... As a well-taught, observant Jewish boy, Jesus would also have learnt to read the Scriptures in Hebrew ... Was that the language he spoke? The few scholars who have tried to make that case have not convinced many others. The presence of the Aramaic words just discussed is very difficult to explain if the normal language was Hebrew ... The texts from the Dead Sea area and from Masada reveal that Hebrew was written and spoken in Herodian Palestine in both religious and secular situations. How widespread that was is impossible to define. At present it seems the people who wrote the documents in Hebrew—letters and legal deeds, notes and marks of ownership—may have come from a relatively small area around Jerusalem and from a small number of families connected with the Temple ... It is unlikely Jesus taught regularly in the language a localized minority favoured, for his message is presented as one all could understand; there is no evidence for much Hebrew being spoken in Galilee at the time.[707]

While scholars generally agree that during the Second Temple period Palestinian Jews generally adopted Aramaic as their common language, they disagree over the continuing relevance and usage of Hebrew in Hellenistic and Roman times. *Most scholars believe that Hebrew remained a spoken language until the second or third century C.E. or even longer. According to Schmitt, for example, Hebrew was still used as a vernacular in certain circles until around 200 C.E.*[708] *Others suggest that spoken Hebrew was limited to certain geographical areas such as Judaea until 135 C.E. and the Galilee until the third century C.E. ... Fraade reckons with a continuous knowledge of Hebrew amongst the Jewish population of Palestine until late antiquity*[709] ...[710]

It is therefore important to realize that this older view of Middle Hebrew is no longer held by experts in the field. *It was the work of M. H. Segal in particular that altered the prevailing view and gave good evidence from grammar and lexicon, from style of expression and literary character, that Middle Hebrew rests upon a basis of colloquial spoken Hebrew. That this is so is no longer questioned by major workers in*

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[707] Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 119, 138, 144, 146-47.

[708] Citing Rüdiger Schmitt, "Die Sprachverhältnisse in den östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches," *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983), 554-86.

[709] Citing Chaim Rabin, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century," in Shmuel Safrai and M. Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century*. CRINT (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976) Vol. 2, 1007-39; Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 225-40.

[710] Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 2001), 228.

> *the field.* It is true that the recognition of a colloquial basis for Middle Hebrew, and the abandonment of the idea that it is an artificial jargon, do not in themselves prove that Hebrew was still generally spoken in the Tannaitic period. *Nevertheless, when we consider the language situation of (say) the first century C.E., it can no longer be assumed that the emphasis must lie on Aramaic to the exclusion of Hebrew. On the question, in what language the teaching of Jesus was given, an increasing number of scholars in recent years has considered Hebrew as a responsible hypothesis, though the evidence for Aramaic continues to be rather stronger. In general, the continuing vitality of Hebrew as a medium of communication down to the first century C.E. and the early second has recently been demonstrated by the use of it in the Qumran documents, and that not only in strictly religious texts but in casual documents such as letters. Thus the Qumran evidence ... convinced many that Hebrew was still alive and in use as a spoken medium.*[711]
>
> In his survey of the epigraphic data from this era [i.e., the Second Temple period], [Joseph] Naveh argues that there is considerable evidence for the survival of Hebrew as a spoken dialect.[712] That evidence includes the occurrence even in Aramaic texts of Hebrew by-names and nicknames and of Hebrew words for everyday items. *On the basis of this argument, Naveh asserts the following: "Aramaic gradually replaced Hebrew and became the dominant language ... However the Hebrew language (and to a certain extent the [old] Hebrew script) also had a day to day use." And he concludes, "In Second Temple times the Aramaic language was widely accepted among the Judeans ... and served as a written and a spoken language ... still many continued to speak Hebrew."*[713]

Hebrew scholar Takamitsu Muraoka, while acknowledging the obvious presence of Hebrew at Qumran, cautions against the temptation to read too much, or too little, into these discoveries:

> Qumran Hebrew reveals features that are so organically integrated into the texture of the language and other features that can be adequately accounted for only in terms of phonological processes and development such that it must have had its basis in a community that used Hebrew as a means of oral communication. It is hardly an artificial and merely biblicizing means of literary creativity, but a natural, vibrant idiom. Since the notion of writing as one talks is a fairly modern development, none of the documents is likely to reveal the writer's spoken Hebrew in full, which equally holds for Mishnaic

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[711] James Barr, "Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the Hellenistic Age," in William D. Davies, Louis Finkelstein and John Sturdy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Vol. 2: The Hellenistic Age, 83.

[712] Joseph Naveh, "Hebrew versus Aramaic in the Epigraphic Finds of the Second Temple: Bar-Kokhba Period." [Hebrew]. *Leshonenu* 56 (1991-92), 301-16, quoting 301, 315.

[713] As cited in Goodblatt, 56.

> Hebrew. As is the case with every natural language, the written register feeds on the spoken form.[714]

While Chouraqui's presumption of Hebrew as Jesus' predominant language certainly cannot be said to be the *majority* view among scholars today, nevertheless there is clearly a small but very respectable body of specialists whose Hebrew-dominance theory is at least defensible within the range of modern scholarly viewpoints. Chouraqui's hypothesizing as to Hebrew under-texts in the Gospels is, therefore, a legitimate expression of a larger stream of scholarship which continues to explore a complicated question—one whose contours have already changed significantly in the last sixty years, and will likely continue to evolve in coming decades.

Ipsissima Verba? The Historicity of Gospel Materials

One of the challenging questions raised by Chouraqui's use of Hebrew retroversions is that of the historical authenticity of the Jesus traditions that he is trying to reconstruct from the Greek. While there is perhaps little difficulty in re-rendering Jewish cultic or liturgical terms in Hebrew (*tzitzit, shofar, Shabbat, Pesach*), the matter becomes considerably more tenuous when we look at the *words* attributed to Jesus. From antiquity onwards, scholars have had to grapple with the fact that, while there is substantial overlap (and occasionally verbatim parallels) in the words of Jesus recorded in different gospels, there is also enough variation (frequently substantial) to render untenable the pre-critical Christian view of the gospels-as-verbatim-transcript. A Gospel synopsis is the classic tool for highlighting both these similarities and differences. The issues are even more pronounced—and the discussion more vexed—when one examines the Synoptics vis-à-vis the Gospel of John.

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[714] Takamitsu Muraoka, "Hebrew," in Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Vol. 1, 344.

In addition to the linguistic arguments, the debate is further complicated by a wide range of confessional stances regarding the literal historicity of Jesus' words as the Gospels record them. Many mainline Protestant churches, and official Catholic teaching[715], would argue for a more nuanced approach: while we may occasionally succeed in retrieving or reconstructing the actual words of Jesus in their original tongue(s), more often than not, the evidence available to us allows us access only to the *ipsissima vox Jesu*—Jesus' "actual voice," rather than his "actual words". The Gospels would, therefore, constitute a reliable guide to Jesus' themes and overall teachings, but the specific words he used are largely unrecoverable by modern methods. Graham Stanton is perhaps representative of this school when he says that, while we cannot claim that the gospels preserve "Gospel truth" in terms of absolute historical reliability in every word and detail, nevertheless, they faithfully recount the message of Jesus as the evangelists sought to proclaim it.[716] Many evangelical Protestant groups, however, would strongly disagree with this line of argument, suggesting that the Gospels *do*, in fact, preserve the actual (though translated) words of Jesus, and that the careful use of scholarly methods can give us access to large chunks of Jesus' original speech. They would tend to reject the conclusions of source and redaction critics about the origins, collection and shaping of gospel traditions, in favour of the "plenary verbal inspiration" of the gospels as we possess them.[717]

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[715] See, for example, the instruction *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* [On the Historical Truth of the Gospels], published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission on April 21, 1964, which distinguishes three "stages" in the elaboration of the present written gospels. For the full text of this document, see: David A. Lysik, ed., *The Bible Documents: A Parish Resource* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001), 33-48; or, Dean P. Bechard, ed., *The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), . See also: Joseph G. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*. Tesi Gregoriana 50 (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University), 1999.

[716] See Stanton, *Gospel Truth? New Light on Jesus & the Gospels* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 7, 191-92.

[717] See, for example: Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998): "... much evidence favors the *ipsissima verba* perspective. On occasions when Jesus used the Greek language—which conceivably could have been most of the time—it is quite possible that His

At the opposite, more skeptical, end of the theological spectrum would be more radical scholars, such as the members of the Jesus Seminar, whose in-depth discussions of the gospels concluded that fewer than 20% of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (and almost none of the Gospel of John) could reliably be traced back to the historical Nazarene.[718] Although their work has been criticized by other Jesus scholars for some of its more questionable working assumptions[719], their verdict remains one of the facets of Jesus scholarship most familiar to the media and to the general public.

Hundreds of books and thousands of scholarly monographs have been devoted, either to this question in general, or to specific instances in which a word or

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listeners took down what He said in shorthand or retained what He said in their highly trained memories. A general consensus acknowledges that minds of that day in that culture were much more adept in remembering details than the average Western mind of the twentieth century ... If the Gospels do contain the very words of Jesus, what is one to make of their disagreements in wording when recording the same discourse or conversation? The fact that no single gospel records everything spoken on a given occasion furnishes an adequate response to that challenge. It is probable, in fact, that no combination of parallel accounts records the entirety of a speech or dialogue. Christ undoubtedly repeated some of His teachings with slightly differing wording on different occasions. He very probably did so on the same occasion too. So instances where parallel accounts report the same substance in slightly different forms may easily he traceable to different but similar statements on the same occasion, with each writer selecting for his account only a part of what was said ... Even the slightest redactional change of Jesus' words by a gospel writer would have altered the meaning of Jesus' utterances on a given historical occasion. It is important to a sound view of biblical inspiration that readers have the precise intended sense of Jesus' teaching, not an altered sense that a writer conveyed because of a particular theological theme he wanted to emphasize."(368-69, 371-72); ETA LINNEMANN, *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific is "Scientific Theology"?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001). See also the very good article by the moderate evangelical scholar DARRELL L. BOCK, "The Words of Jesus in the Gospels: Live, Jive or Memorex?," in MICHAEL J. WILKINS AND J.P. MORELAND, eds., *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 73-99—for which Bock received considerable criticism from within evangelical Protestant circles.

[718] R.W. FUNK AND R.W. HOOVER, eds. *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1993), 5.

[719] See, for example: LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996); RAYMOND E. BROWN, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 819-23 (Appendix I); PHILIP JENKINS, *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); DAVID BOULTON, "The Jesus Seminar," in BOULTON, *Who on Earth was Jesus? The Modern Quest for the Jesus of History* (Washington, DC: O Books, 2008), 160-198 (Chapter 7).

phrase is being examined. Certainly, the work of Joachim Jeremias[720] and Matthew Black[721] in an earlier generation, and of others more recently[722], demonstrates that the quest to go back as far as possible to the "original Jesus" has lost none of its interest or energy; linguistic advances and archæological discoveries continue to fuel this discussion and, indeed, the entire "Third Quest for the Historical Jesus".

In light of this ongoing controversy, is Chouraqui therefore naïve in assuming that *everything* attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels is historical, and therefore can form the basis for a Greek-to-Hebrew retroversion? Does his translation serve to fuel a certain type of literalism or fideism that refuses to grapple with the results of modern critical study?

It is hard to deny that, by its very nature, such an enterprise will tend to be attractive to those who may assume they at last possess "Jesus' own words," as verified by a scholar and native Hebrew-speaker. I have no doubt that some more "fundamentalist" readers have seized upon Chouraqui's work as long-awaited proof of the verbatim truth of the Gospels, taking us "beyond the veil" of Greek and back to Jesus' own sayings.

I do not believe, however, that such was ever Chouraqui's intention. Not only was he a well-educated and well-read man, presumably conversant with such key issues in Christian exegesis, but one must recall that he remained until his death a faithful Jew. To appropriate his work for the purposes of Christian apologetics is, I firmly believe, contrary to his purpose, which was to demonstrate unequivocally the rootedness of Jesus within the first-century socio-religious world of Judaism. His goal

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[720] *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Scribner, 1966); *The Prayers of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

[721] *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts; With an Appendix on The Son of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

[722] Eric Edelmann, *Jésus parlait araméen : À la recherche de l'enseignement originel* (Gordes, France: Éditions du Relié, 2000); David M. Goldenberg, "Retroversion to Jesus' *Ipsissima Verba* and the Vocabulary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic: The Case of *mata'* and *qarta'*" in *Biblica* 77 (1996), 64-83; and several of the writings of the late David Flusser, of Joseph Fitzmyer, Geza Vermes, Frédéric Manns and James Charlesworth, among many others.

was to enable Christians and Jews to speak to each other with greater understanding and insight—and not to provide a "club" which could be used to "prove" the claims of Christianity over Judaism or other religions.

And a *translator* is not a source or redaction critic; the two tasks, while related, are not the same. Insofar as Chouraqui saw his role as that of a communicator (rather than a critic), he chose to be bound by the commonly-accepted form of the New Testament which all modern translators use: the UBS[4]/Nestle-Aland[27] edition of the Greek New Testament. While matters of textual criticism are certainly germane to such a translator's work, questions of how or why the text came to have its present form are largely of secondary and subsequent interest, and cannot be definitive for the translator's task. As well, the fact that there is such a broad range of opinions among competent scholars as to the exact contours of the historical Jesus' words (from the less-than-twenty-percent of the Jesus Seminar to the close-to-one-hundred percent of many evangelical exegetes), it would be improper for a translator to make such choices for his/her reader—although such conclusions are certainly appropriate in the kinds of editorial and textual notes that Chouraqui provides so generously in *L'Univers de la Bible.*

Are there texts about whose presence in the original text there is almost unanimous doubt today? Perhaps the closest we could come is the *pericope adulteræ*, the text about the woman caught in adultery (currently found in John 8:3-11), which scholars today admit was not a part of the earliest manuscripts we possess, and which "floated" in various locations in later copies.[723] While many hold to it as "authentic to

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[723] "External evidence is as follows. For the omission of 7:53-8:11: 𝔓[66,75] ℵ B L N T W Δ Θ Ψ 0141 0211 33 565 1241 1424* 2768 *al*. In addition codices A and C are defective in this part of John, but it appears that neither contained the pericope because careful measurement shows that there would not have been enough space on the missing pages to include the pericope 7:53-8:11 along with the rest of the text. Among the mss that include 7:53-8:11 are D Ï lat. In addition E S Λ 1424[mg] *al* include part or all of the passage with asterisks or obeli, 225 places the pericope after John 7:36, Ë[1] places it after John 21:25, {115} after John 8:12, Ë[13] after Luke 21:38, and the corrector of 1333 includes it after Luke 24:53. (For a more complete discussion of the locations where this "floating"

Jesus' attitudes,"[724] nevertheless its absence in the most ancient extant layers of the gospels raises serious questions for textual critics, and most contemporary translations either mark it off as doubtful or else print it at the end of John.[725] As noted above (in Chapter 4), Chouraqui has dutifully flagged the issue in *La Bible Chouraqui,* and has included a more extensive textual note in *L'Univers de la Bible.* In the absence of a convincing consensus regarding other sayings, prudence would seem to suggest that a translator refrain from any temptation to edit the text in favour of a particular theory. Nevertheless, perhaps Chouraqui should have placed somewhat greater emphasis on the strictly *hypothetical* and *subjective* nature of his retroversions, making it clear that they represented only his own best guess, and were in no way guaranteed as the authentic words of Jesus. Readers without background in these convoluted and centuries-old debates could be forgiven for assuming that the presence of such Hebrew terms indicates a new level of scholarly consensus that is not the case.

Conclusions

André Chouraqui was a passionate man, a person of vision and of conviction. Imaginative, creative and intellectually curious, he left his imprint on many domains,

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text has ended up, as well as a minority opinion on the authenticity of the passage, see M. A. Robinson, 'Preliminary Observations regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* Based upon Fresh Collations of nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts containing the Passage,' *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 13 [2000]: 35-59, especially 41-42.)" From the text-critical notes to the New English Translation [NET Bible]; online at:
http://net.bible.org/verse.php?book=Joh&chapter=7&verse=53

[724] "The question may be asked whether this incident, although not an original part of the Gospel of John, should be regarded as an authentic tradition about Jesus. It could well be that it is ancient and may indeed represent an unusual instance where such a tradition survived outside of the bounds of the canonical literature. However, even that needs to be nuanced (see B.D. Ehrman, 'Jesus and the Adulteress,' *NTS* 34 [1988]: 24–44)." *Ibid.* ; See Lee Strobel's interview with Daniel B. Wallace, whose comments on this issue would be shared by many Christian scholars: "There's a distinction we need to make … Is it *literarily* authentic—in other words, did John actually write this story? My answer is an unquestionable no. Is it *historically* authentic? Did it really happen? My answer is a highly qualified yes …" Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 91.

[725] See, for example, Ben Witherington III's personal approach to this thorny subject in *Biblical Archæology Review* magazine 34:4 (July-Aug. 2008); online at:
http://www.bib-arch.org/bar/article.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=34&Issue=4&ArticleID=6

including politics, religion and culture. It was his biblical translations, however, that brought him to the attention of a much wider francophone readership, who discovered in his work a strikingly different model of how ancient texts could—or *should*—be translated.

To deliberately overturn centuries of literary and theological custom—to challenge the conventions of literary translation of a world classic, in one of the world's great literary languages—was certainly an act of daring. Some of Chouraqui's critics have rejected him out-of-hand as an interloper, defying the canons of "acceptable" French, and creating a biblical version that is uncomfortable, awkward and pedantic, unsuitable for devotional or liturgical use. They have argued that the strange hybrid language of his version obscures more than it illuminates, and that his claims for its accuracy and cultural insight are exaggerated.

These critics, however, seem to be in the minority. The popularity of the Chouraqui Bible in the past three decades demonstrates that it is meeting a need on the part of the reading public—a need for a version whose raw power and unaccustomed phrases can give a new *élan* to the Bible. These people seek a Bible that is clearly informed by the best of contemporary scholarship, but that is not constrained by institutional interpretations. At a time when many people describe themselves as "spiritual, but not religious," there is an obvious interest in a Bible that is not beholden to denominational interests, that can dispense with traditional theological terminology, and can suggest new ways of reading very old texts.

As we have seen, there has been high praise for Chouraqui's achievement, from biblical scholars who appreciate it as a linguistically subtle and culturally informed version, to French linguists, who appreciate its attentiveness to rhythm and sound, and its attempt to unite *form* and *content* in new ways. While many of Chouraqui's supporters find reason to critique some aspect or another of his work, these criticisms are generally in the context of a broad agreement with what he has tried to do.

Recognizing it for the monument it is, they can also acknowledge that it is merely a first tentative step toward a new model of French Bible, which will need to be further refined and developed by others. It is, in many senses, a pioneering effort (like the Buber-Rosenzweig German version and the English Torah of Everett Fox), and it shares both the virtues and the shortcomings of many pioneering works. Especially in such a massive work, undertaken by a single individual, a certain amount of ambivalence and debate is to be expected—and even Chouraqui's devotees do not always share *all* of his working assumptions or methods.

What many people *do* admire about Chouraqui is his breadth of knowledge and study, his willingness to experiment, his refusal to "dumb down" some of the more challenging aspects of his work, and his undeniable commitment to interfaith relationships. They can delight in certain uniquely Chouraquian turns of phrase, can learn from his commentary, and can allow their assumptions to be challenged in ways that are ultimately profitable.

The specific richness of André Chouraqui's work lies, I believe, in its ability to reconcile seeming opposites: religious faith and scientific inquiry; beauty and accuracy; antiquity and modernity; East and West; Jewish and Christian. It breathes zeal without extremism, and it communicates an openness and a freshness that invite the reader into the conversation. Whatever its limitations, *La Bible Chouraqui* is a work that entices without pressure, and that tries to speak God's words with respect, humility and a love that is evident on every page.

Chapter 7 • Conclusions

It is one of the sad ironies of history that André Chouraqui—a man who dedicated his life to building bridges between people of different religions, nations, cultures and languages—should be, in the final years of his life, a figure whose accomplishments were most familiar to those who were either Jewish or francophone (or both). After a rich, diverse and productive life as a religious, political and cultural "Renaissance man," Chouraqui's declining health meant that, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, he was not as visible a presence in the public eye as he had been for the previous fifty years, decades during which he was fêted as a diplomat and political leader, writer and essayist, public speaker, religious commentator and ceaseless advocate of peace and dialogue between factions in the Middle East.

Chouraqui's lifetime literary output ran to more than thirty books, two stage plays and several literary translations (of ibn Paquda, ibn Gabirol and the letters of his own grandfather, Abraham Meyer), not to mention hundreds of articles, speeches and lectures worldwide. His writings were translated into more than fifteen languages. However, it was almost certainly his biblical translations which gave Chouraqui the most pride and satisfaction—a project he had aspired to since his initial translations of the Psalms and the Song of Songs in the 1950s. They represented the fruit of a lifetime of study, reflection and prayer, and the evolution of his own religious experience, from the Jewish orthodoxy of his childhood, through the secular forgetfulness of the French school system, through his reappropriation of his Jewish heritage in university and the rabbinic seminary, his wartime experiences in the Underground, and a renewed, Jerusalem-rooted sense of Jewishness, which both demanded and facilitated his outreach to the two other major faiths of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Chouraqui's translation of the New Testament is unique in the annals of biblical translation for at least three reasons. Firstly, there is the fact that their author chose to

translate the uniquely Christian part of the Bible, while himself remaining firmly rooted in Judaism, without any personal desire to convert, or to convert others. Secondly, there is the specific methodology he employed, a methodology that shares much in common with earlier Jewish and Christian translations, but which is also unprecedented in many ways in its emphasis on etymology, and its desire to "liberate" the text from inherited sectarian or "orthodox" interpretations. Thirdly, there is the purpose for which he translated: to build bridges of understanding between the Jewish and Christian faiths, by reminding Christians of how Jewish their Testament was, and helping Jews to see how Jewish the Christian Testament was.[726] Chouraqui's translation cannot, therefore, be artificially severed from his larger life-project, which was to highlight the linguistic, literary and theological congruencies which unite Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in order to promote understanding, dialogue and collaboration. I do not believe that any other biblical translation in history has combined these three characteristics. Other "Jewish-Christian" Bibles, produced in recent decades, have clearly been intended for evangelistic purposes, and earlier New Testament translations by Jews were largely of a defensive nature. For André Chouraqui, his biblical work was always a component in a larger hope, which was to enable the children of Abraham to come together at last in peace, respect and mutual enrichment, with their sacred texts as source and foundation.

Because the Chouraqui Bible is almost completely the work of a single man, it places André Chouraqui among the ranks of a very small élite of individuals who, down through the ages, have succeeded in translating the entire Bible themselves into various vernaculars—distinguished figures such as St. Jerome, John Wyclif

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[726] "Ma grâce, si vous voulez, c'est d'avoir exprimé un double mouvement, celui du retour de l'Église à ses sources hébraïques et, du côté des juifs, celui de l'insertion dans l'histoire du peuple juif de l'histoire de Jésus. La convergence de ces deux courants de pensée, qui sont centraux, d'une part chez les juifs, d'autre part chez les chrétiens, par leur confluence a provoqué ma traduction du Nouveau Testament." ANDRÉ CHOURAQUI, *Retour aux racines: Entretiens avec Jacques Deschanel* (Paris: Centurion, 1981), 131.

[Wycliffe],[727] William Tyndale, Martin Luther, Canon Émile Osty[728] and Msgr. Ronald Knox.[729] This accomplishment, while deserving of admiration, involves both benefits and potential pitfalls vis-à-vis the modern trend toward translation by committee. It meant that Chouraqui, more so than most translators, was personally familiar with the entire corpus on which he worked, and was thus able to discern and highlight key recurring themes and terms. He could consciously unify his vocabulary and style, to demonstrate the theological unity that he firmly believed linked the Jewish, Christian

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[727] "The claim for Wyclif's responsibility for this immense work goes back to the chronicler Henry Knighton, writing not later than 1394: the gospel, which Christ had entrusted to clerks and the doctors of the church, Wyclif 'translated from Latin into the language not of angels but of Englishmen, so that he made that common and open to the laity, and to women who were able to read, which used to be for literate and perceptive clerks' (Knighton's Chronicle, 242–4). Critical investigation of the processes that lie behind the final translation ... indicates that one person certainly cannot be regarded as solely responsible; a large team of academic helpers must have been involved. Whether Wyclif himself participated at an early stage seems irretrievable, though the multitude of his Latin writings from 1378 onwards can hardly have left him time. The association of biblical translation with his followers, an association which by 1407 was so close as to be an identifying mark, confirms Wyclif's inspiration as a crucial factor in the collaborative labours. The continued use of the term 'Wycliffite Bible' seems therefore justifiable, even if Wyclif's direct participation in its production seems improbable." Anne Hudson and Anthony Kenny, 'Wyclif , John (*d.* 1384)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30122, accessed 16 Sept 2008]

[728] Osty (1887-1981), a Parisian priest and professor of Scripture, prepared this version together with Father Joseph Trinquet, initially in 22 fascicles, and later in a single volume. "En 1973, le chanoine Émile Osty publie une nouvelle traduction intégrale de la Bible (22 vol.), fruit de trente années de recherches, dans laquelle il s'est efforcé de « conserver l'allure pittoresque et souvent heurtée de l'original » ; c'est l'œuvre à la fois d'un savant et d'un poète." Henri Van Hoof, *Histoire de la traduction en Occident: France, Grande-Bretagne, Allemagne, Russie, Pays-Bas* (Paris: Duculot, 1991), 113; "Le chanoine Osty, lui, a voulu respecter « le texte original jusqu'au scrupule » et s'est efforcé d'être cohérent dans l'emploi du vocabulaire pour échapper « au reproche de fantaisie et de manque de constance, mérité par tant de versions qui sont l'œuvre d'une pluralité d'auteurs » ; de plus, il n'a eu « recours à l'équivalence que dans les cas où le littéralisme eût abouti au contresens, au grotesque ou à l'indécence »." Jean-Claude Margot, *Traduire sans trahir: la théorie de la traduction et son application aux textes bibliques* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1990), 20-21.

[729] "In 1955 Monsignor Ronald Knox [1888-1957], of Great Britain, published a translation of the Bible from the Vulgate, 'in the light of the Hebrew and Greek Originals'. It is, conceivably, the last Bible to be translated into English by a single person." "English Bible, History of," in Watson E. Mills and Roger Aubrey Bullard, eds., *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 252. Sometimes called the Westminster Version, Knox's version of the New Testament was published in 1944, and his Old Testament in 1949. His New Testament (slightly altered to remove archaic pronouns) can be found online at:
http://www.cormacburke.or.ke/book/knox_bible

and Muslim sacred texts. Obviously, this could also be a hazard, imposing this conformity in an artificial and sometimes arbitrary manner, to fit a pre-conceived vision that could at times function like a Procrustean bed. At times, the translated text can bear the imprint of the translator to such a degree that it becomes the translation which draws attention to itself, rather than being a "transparent" medium which allows as much of the original to show through as possible. There are certainly times when, in his earnestness, Chouraqui himself becomes the focus on the reader's attention, and this can become a distraction, particularly in a text intended for devotion and study.

The recurring questions about Chouraqui's work are: is it actually a *translation?*[730] A *valid* translation? A *good* translation? Since the canons of judgement for a translation are a function of its intended purpose, we must judge Chouraqui's work, not by some objective, Platonic ideal, but by the degree to which it does that for which it was created. Comparison with other versions may, thus, be less than helpful here, since the goals of each translation often differ significantly, and Chouraqui's goals are demonstrably different from those of most other translators.

Chouraqui seems to have had at least three target audiences in mind: (1) those who, lacking knowledge of the biblical languages, seek a version which adheres as closely as possible to the wording and structure of the original text, and thus gives them a sense of the "flavour" of the Greek or Hebrew; (2) Jews and Christians who wish to better understand and explore the connectedness of their two faiths; (3) those

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[730] As opposed to more of a word-for-word *"transliteration/transcription,"* as some characterize strict formal-correspondence versions: "The limits of translation are represented by transcription or transliteration, in which 100 per cent of the ST [=source text] surface elements are preserved, and free text production (in the target culture), in which none of the ST surface elements are preserved. Between these two poles we find several forms of translation, which are characterized by different percentages of adaptation, depending on the translation *skopos* [=the function which the text is to perform]." Christiane Nord, *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur 94 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 33. This strict *verbo verbum* correspondence is perhaps most pronounced in interlinear translations and similar glosses.

who, by dint of repeated hearing or reading, have become blasé about the Bible, and numb to its possible meaning(s).

Chouraqui attempts in his biblical translations (and particularly in his New Testament) to offer features that will be of value to each of these constituencies. By his willingness to sacrifice French syntax to the shape of Greek phrasing, he provides a largely literal version that allows the source-language to shine through, in a way similar to the earlier German edition of the Hebrew Scriptures by Buber and Rosenzweig and the later English Torah of Everett Fox. By his consistent attention to the specifically Jewish content and language of the Gospels, and his care in highlighting these facets of the text, he has created a version which is both more Jewishly-steeped and more Hebraically-oriented than almost any other modern version. Christian readers are stunned to discover here Jesus' thorough insertion into the religion, politics, culture and land of first-century Israel, and many Jews are similarly amazed to realize how the Nazarene fits comfortably into the familiar landscape of Second Temple Judaism—how he is surprisingly at home in the rich mosaic of pre-70 C.E. Jewish groups, with their concerns, their emphases and their passionate debates. Chouraqui's deliberate avoidance of "historically sanctified" expressions means that even those familiar with the Bible find in his renderings a newness, a freshness and a provocative reinterpretation of terms that opens up the Gospels and allows them to be heard in unaccustomed ways. In light of his intended readership(s), I would judge his translation largely successful. Although many have insisted that a French translation calls for a particular *style* of translation (something more refined, literary and elegant), others have argued that this is a philosophical/æsthetic criterion which is not inherent in the translation enterprise *per se*, and that translation-as-classic-literature is not the only (or even necessarily the best) model available to the translator. Chouraqui, who certainly appreciated translation into a more traditional key, and had earlier shown himself eminently capable of

producing such translations, believed that the traditional canons of French literature were simply too constricting for his specific purposes. His work was not undertaken in ignorance of the French literary heritage, but was rather a conscious departure from it, to privilege other values and a different purpose. To put it more colloquially, because he knew and understood "the rules," he felt justified in "breaking" them when no other alternative would allow him to pursue his enterprise, which he had come to see as vitally important.

But is it in fact *a* translation, and a *French* translation? To my mind, it is simultaneously *less than* a French translation, and *more than* one. Inasmuch as Chouraqui chooses to import Hebrew terms that are not familiar to most French readers, we can say that it is somewhat less than a thoroughly *French* translation; I would suspect that the proportions (for the New Testament) are roughly 95% French and 5% Hebrew translation. Chouraqui's occasional importing and "recycling" of older French terms, unfamiliar to all but scholars of historic French, is also challenging, since it thus requires even native French readers to go to unusual lengths to seek out the meaning of those terms. The coining of new words based on existing lexemes ("Chouraquisms") defies readers to use their existing vocabulary as a stepping-stone to new and extended meanings; they are invited to follow him as he "stretches" French into new shapes and sounds to accommodate his interpretations. Although his neologisms are deeply rooted in French, they are *not* themselves French, and will be found in no French dictionary. Chouraqui is certainly not the first author to think along these lines (consider, for example, Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky," or the English-based invented languages used by many science-fiction writers).

These techniques seem to me a part of what I consider Chouraqui's "reverse targum" technique. Instead of taking an obscure language and translating it into one better known (historically, Hebrew into Aramaic), he deliberately translates from *better*-known into *lesser*-known terms. His goal in this is clear: to heighten the readers'

sense of cultural and linguistic "strangeness" in approaching the text, and, thus, to slow them down and provoke a necessary re-thinking of the text and its possible meanings. He wishes his readers to step out of their literary and religious comfort zones, and to allow the text, seemingly so familiar and comfortable, to challenge them in new (or perhaps very old?) ways. He repeatedly hammers home that this is *not* modern European literature, and should not be read as such. "Alterity" is for Chouraqui one of the key virtues in translating ancient texts from very different cultures. The reader must grapple honestly with the "otherness" of the text, with its distance from his/her own world and assumptions, before he/she can engage the text with integrity, understanding and, ultimately, with profit.

Chouraqui's translation is *more* than a translation, in that he incorporates into his renderings several philosophical and linguistic presuppositions that are, properly speaking, beyond the usual purview of a translator. His emphasis on the Semitic quality of the text, and his highlighting of Jewish concepts and terms, seem to emphasize the interpretive role of the translator—never absent—by importing cultural assumptions and criteria that are not part of the source text itself. Chouraqui incorporates in his translation aspects that many other authors would present either in footnotes or in an accompanying commentary. At times, he seems to blur (and even cross) the line that distinguishes the roles of translator and commentator, to yield what Cyril Aslanov calls an "ultra-semantic" or "ultra-informative" type of translation.[731] On the level of syntax, Chouraqui is solidly in the "formal equivalence" (vs. dynamic equivalence) camp; on the level of situating his text within its cultural and historical milieu, one could describe him as a "maximalist," attempting to fit as much information as possible into the text itself. Whether the text can *bear* the weight of all this linguistic and cultural encoding is a question that Chouraqui's translations have consistently raised. While these orientations may ordinarily be seen as extremes (and

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[731] *Pour comprendre la Bible*, 17.

even, perhaps, as eccentric to some), they seem, nevertheless, to suit Chouraqui's specific purpose, and to further his goals in significant ways. Three decades of largely positive reaction have seemed to generally affirm the value of what he has tried to do.

For these same reasons, however, and because of several of the small inconsistencies in Chouraqui's translation, I do not think that *La Bible Chouraqui* would serve well as someone's primary or sole translation. I would not certainly present it to a biblical neophyte as his/her first plunge into the world of Jewish and Christian Scripture, because of the complex questions it raises (some of which remain unresolved), which may simply be overwhelming and off-putting. As brilliant and thoughtful as they are, Chouraqui's Gospels incorporate much that remains hypothetical and tendentious, which a non-specialist reader could assume represents the agreed conclusions of contemporary scholarship, even where this is not the case. In some few cases, his conclusions are at odds with the conventional thinking of biblical scholars. Although his suggestions are generally backed by at least a minority of scholars, many of his readers may not realize that some of the ideas incorporated into his translation are less than widely accepted.

I believe, however, that the Chouraqui version provides a particularly excellent, informative and helpful adjunct to a more "mainstream" New Testament, providing alternative renderings, allowing the reader to compare and contrast the different wordings, and to weigh for him/herself Chouraqui's particular readings, linguistic speculations and cultural-religious insights. It is the type of book that any francophone seriously interested in the Bible would want to keep on their bookshelf alongside one of the more popular and better-known versions, for purposes of study and reflection. Chouraqui's style and method almost guarantee that his version will stand out as quite different, and will no doubt provoke questions and offer illuminations as the reader delves into it. It is of particular value to those with at least some previous biblical

formation, and is intriguing to those with some background in Hebrew and/or Greek, who can often appreciate more easily the points Chouraqui is trying to meet.

In addition, it should be recalled that Chouraqui's version exists in several forms and formats, including the original book-by-book Desclée edition of the 1970s, the ten-volume *L'Univers de la Bible* edition of the mid-1980s, the single-volume *Bible Chouraqui* (last published in 2003), and an online version (http://nachouraqui.tripod.com/id90.htm), each of which differs at least slightly from the others. Which of these editions has the greatest potential value for the student of the Gospels?

While any of these versions can certainly be used profitably, one who has perused the hardcover *L'Univers de la Bible* edition is immediately struck, when reading the other versions, at their sparseness by comparison. The edition in *L'Univers de la Bible* is tremendously enriched by the voluminous notes which accompany it, by the hundreds of photographs which explain it, and by the substantial editorial essays examining key issues or traditions of reading. It wonderfully combines a translation, a commentary, an encyclopædia, and an introduction to Christian hermeneutics.[732] It is an awesome achievement of scholarship, research and collaboration, with few equals in modern publishing.

As a result, one can only be disappointed that *L'Univers de la Bible* has been out of print for more than twenty years, since it is, I believe, the edition of Chouraqui's biblical work that best expresses his vision in its breadth, and best communicates the scope of his learning and insights. Its notes alone make it a formidable resource for scholars and students. Without them, the *Bible Chouraqui*, even with its subsequent corrections and improvements, seems strangely stripped-down and lacking; it is a mere shadow of the earlier, greater work. While it is accessible to a much broader

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[732] As regards the earlier volumes, *L'Univers de la Bible* also offers very useful starting-points for understanding *Jewish* and *Muslim* hermeneutical traditions as well. These are marked in the text by a Star of David and a crescent moon, respectively; Christian traditional readings are marked by a fish.

public, this abridged edition lacks much of the richness, depth and background information necessary to properly appreciate the options Chouraqui has chosen and their rationale. One may disagree with Chouraqui over particular translational choices while still appreciating the passionate dedication and uncommon erudition his work represents *in toto*.

What seems highly desirable at this point is to see a re-editing, correction and updating of *L'Univers de la Bible*, incorporating Chouraqui's own later revisions, and making good some of the minor difficulties and inconsistencies that have been pointed out in this work and others. The goal of such a revision would not be to undo or reject Chouraqui's efforts, but rather to make a good resource even better and more serviceable for another generation, in which more and more people are reading the Bible and seeking assistance in understanding it.

In the thirty-five years since André Chouraqui first embarked on his personal scriptural triathlon (i.e. Old Testament, New Testament and Qur'an), many translators have come to appreciate (and, in some cases, even to adopt) Chouraqui's wordings. The Jewish-Christian dialogue, whose participants are one of his key target audiences, has continued to expand and deepen, creating a correspondingly greater need for New Testament materials, both accurate and sensitive, which will facilitate interreligious conversations and promote this *rapprochement* in creative ways. Although his dream of the New Testament as a shared meeting-ground of Jews and Christians is still a distant one, nevertheless Chouraqui's version of the New Testament has brought home to many French-speaking Christians the distinctively Jewish pedigree of Christianity, and has encouraged a consequent re-thinking of their attitudes toward Judaism, then and now. As many people commented at the time of his death in 2007,[733] it will remain for a long time a unique and valuable resource that will bring Jews and Christians together in discussion and study, as Chouraqui himself so fervently hoped and dreamed.

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[733] Cf. Chapter 2, for the text of several of these post-mortem tributes.

One of the inevitable questions raised by André Chouraqui and his interfaith work lies in his specifically *Sephardic* identity. To what degree was his remarkable life and work shaped by his background as a North African Jew of Spanish heritage ... and would similar results have been as likely coming from an Ashkenazi (Eastern and Central European) Jew?

It is hard to deny that Chouraqui's youth, spent in a multicultural, multilingual and religiously pluralistic community, enkindled in him a curiosity about (and a familiarity with) Christianity and Islam that was fostered by his family, and furthered by his education in Paris. His formative years were spent in a fairly liberal and outward-looking environment.[734] It is hard to imagine a similar dynamic in Lithuania, Poland or Russia, where the Jewish community was so frequently the victim of Christian anti-Jewish pogroms and discrimination, and thus tended to maintain (in many respects) a very clear distance from their Christian neighbours. This separation, externally imposed to a large degree in many regions, was reinforced internally by social and religious taboos that effectively limited Jewish-Christian interaction, especially in terms of religious discussion.[735] While there is much evidence of *business*

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[734] "Mon grand-père, qui était un juif dans toute la plénitude du terme, instruit de ses traditions, parfait talmudiste, bibliste émérite, intègre vis-à-vis son Dieu et qui respectait tous les commandments, qui mangeait kasher ... eh bien, mon grand-père n'a pas hésité à mettre sa fille aînée à l'école de Sœur Ibaldine, une religieuse catholique qui tenait le jardin d'enfants le meilleur d'Aïn-Témouchent : les filles d'Abraham Meyer devaient avoir, comme les fils d'Abraham Meyer, la meilleure éducation, fût-elle donnée par des chrétiennes et par des religieuses. Il était pleinement ouvert à cela, voici déjà un siècle. Et non seulement Abraham Meyer, mais tout le monde. On n'a jamais su se fermer devant le monde extérieur." CHOURAQUI, *Retour*, 105.

[735] See, e.g., JON BLOOMBERG, "Politics and Community in Eastern Europe," in BLOOMBERG, *The Jewish World in the Modern Age* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2004), 11-38. "In a few large cities, between a third and a half of the total population was Jewish, while in most small towns (the so-called *shtetls*), they constituted two-thirds of the population or more. The Jewish *shtetls* were surrounded by a sea of Christian villages, where only about one percent of the population was Jewish ... This network of hundreds of Jewish communities conducted its separate life in its own three languages: Hebrew of the Bible, the prayer book, the incessant flow of religious books, and official correspondence; Aramaic of the Talmud and Rabbinic knowledge; and Yiddish as the language of home and community life, folklore and modern literature ..." BENJAMIN HARSHAV, *The Polyphony of Jewish Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 152. "[R]eference to Christianity was rare for a more fundamental reason than fear. It was a central and telling fact of Jewish life and learning that neither the people nor their rabbis took much interest in other

relationships between Jews and Christians in Eastern European communities, nevertheless there was a broad theological and social chasm between the two faiths that effectively precluded theological exchange or exploration of each others' beliefs.

Although Chouraqui's Algerian Jewish community was not spared anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic attacks,[736] these seemed to have been more sporadic, and not marked by the constant and systematic anti-Jewish prejudices, laws and violence to which many Ashkenazi Jews were subjected for centuries. He did not, therefore, come out of the same experience of social exclusion and hostility that was the common experience of many Eastern European Jews.[737] Nor did the Sephardic community, overall, experience the murderous wrath of Nazism to nearly the same degree:

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religious systems *per se* and, where any thought at all was given to Christianity specifically, it was as to a religion that to a Jewish mind unfailingly verged on the idolatrous. The doctrines that most obviously separated it from Judaism (the Messianic status of Jesus, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection) were, in so far as they were known about, apt to be dismissed as rubbishy paganism. Many of the commonest of Christian practices (adoration of Saints, for example) struck Jews as pantheistic ... in any event, the Jews' abhorrence of Christianity, the intensely negative light in which non-Jewish society had always been regarded, and the deeply ingrained suspicion and fear in which all forms of non-Jewish authority were commonly held all went beyond the theological. The Christian world in which the Jews of the greater part of Europe were embedded struck them as barbarous and hypocritical beyond repair ... The lesson of Exile in Europe was that as much by sword as by word the masters of Christendom had sought to bring about if not the death of Jewry, at any rate its decimation; and that failing that, they had sought to ensure that Jews lived out their lives in the greatest possible moral and material squalor and degradation." David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*. Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 104-5.

[736] "... au lycée de garçons d'Oran, j'avais des amis juifs qui étaient comme moi sur la défensive, en proie aux mauvais démons de l'antisémitisme, prôné par un journal antisémite virulent, *Le Petit Oranais*. Certains de nos condisciples nous persécutaient littéralement ... J'ai grandi au milieu d'une haie de croix gammées, dessinées au goudron sur les murs de nos maisons par ces antisémites qui pactisaient avec le nazisme ... De 1933 à 1940, des croix gammées couvraient les murs de l'Oranie, dessinées par les fanatiques de l'antisémitisme ... Je pouvais prendre un journal très épais ou un livre de cinq cents pages et, du premier coup d'œil, je voyais la phrase qui était injurieuse pour les juifs, et cela nous faisait affreusement souffrir ... C'était douloureux. Cela faisait toujours mal." Chouraqui, *Retour*, 29-30.

[737] "Dans ma jeunesse, dans mon enfance, j'étais le fruit du judaïsme traditionnel, mais du judaïsme traditionnel tel qu'il était vécu par les sephardim ; et là, il y a une nuance fort importante. Mon judaïsme à Aïn-Témouchent n'était pas le même que celui de mon homologue à Varsovie ou à Moscou ou à Odessa ... Nous n'avons jamais quitté les rives de la Méditerranée. Nous sommes passés de l'hébreu à l'araméen, de l'araméen à l'arabe sans jamais travers le cap du russe ou du polonais ou de l'allemand ou du grec. Nous sommes restés très proches de nos racines. D'autre part, nous n'avons jamais eu à affronter les persécutions qui ont défiguré, avec

> Though there were significant differences, not only between the treatment of Jews in eastern and western Europe, but also in the various satellite states under Nazi control, the pattern remained basically the same for Ashkenazic Jews: isolation, ghettoization, deportation, and murder. Among Sephardic Jews, only the Greek Jews conformed to this basic pattern. Indeed, the Jews of Greece suffered on a scale met by few other prewar communities, and only approximately 10 percent of the population survived the war. Of the large Jewish community of Salonika, the survival rate was less than 4 percent. Greek Jews, however, accounted for only some 75,000 of the nearly 325,000 total Sephardic population in Europe. Approximately a quarter of a million Sephardim lived in North Africa. Nazi control over Jews in Africa was markedly different than that over Jews in Greece. It was not surprising that the persecution in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya was rather unlike that which was experienced by European Jews, whether the Ashkenazim or the Sephardim of Greece ... Generally speaking, the very centrality of anti-Semitism to the political culture of most European nations was not present in Sephardic regions. To be sure, there were anti-Semitic agitations ... Nevertheless, taken as a whole, anti-Semitic agitation in Sephardic lands during the interwar period was minor and limited to the fringes of popular opinion. Furthermore, unlike anti-Semitic activity in many other European countries, anti-Semitic activity in Sephardic lands lacked official support and was often condemned by the respective governments.[738]

Chouraqui's native Jewish community, therefore, was not as directly or brutally impacted by the Nazi atrocities as were the larger Ashkenazi communities in Europe. It may be that this enabled him to view European Christians with slightly more optimism that some Ashkenazim, and thus to consider the prospect of dialogue with European Christians in a somewhat different light.

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celui des chrétiens, le visage des juifs en terre chrétienne. Les relations entre groupes humains ne sont jamais drôles, et je ne veux pas dépeindre le passé des juifs en pays musulman tout en rose ; il n'y a pas d'histoire toute rose. Mais par comparaison à ce qu'ont vécu nos frères en terre chrétienne, notre passé en pays islamique est fort positif. Il n'y a pas eu d'Inquisition et, bien entendu, il n'y a pas eu Hitler. Il n'y a jamais eu d'expulsions massives, ni de génocide systématique. Il y a eu ici et là des massacres, mais ces massacres n'étaient jamais faits en temps de paix ; ils étaient le plus souvent commis par des souverains déments ou des tyrans qu, avant de tuer les juifs, massacraient d'abord leurs propres citoyens." CHOURAQUI, *Retour*, 103-04.

[738] See HENRY ABRAMSON, "A Double Occlusion: Sephardim and the Holocaust," in ZION ZOHAR, ed., *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 287, 288.

While it would be a gross oversimplification to characterize the history of Eastern Europe's Jews as more "inward-focussed" (versus the more "other-directed" spirit of the Sephardim), nevertheless their very different historical experiences did help to mold those communities in significantly different ways. While both groups were small minorities in a culture of a different religion (Christian for the Ashkenazim, Christian or Muslim for the Sephardim), North Africa's Jews benefitted, for much of the second millennium, from their status as *dhimmis*, as "protected ones" according to Islamic law. While this generally meant inferior social and economic status, nevertheless it also accorded a certain degree of safety and stability to their lives that was seldom the case for Europe's Jews, frequently attacked or expelled by their Christian "hosts". As a result, Ashkenazi Judaism was forced, again and again, to rely on its own inner-community resources as its primary source of support and defence in times of trouble. While Sephardic Jews were not immune to exclusion or social difficulties, their centuries-old linguistic and social insertion into their largely Arab settings often meant that they could be viewed more as neighbours, rather than as foreigners or interlopers.[739] Their history, both their Andalusian heritage and their subsequent life in predominantly Muslim lands, equipped them well for the task of dialogue, of being "bridges" between divergent languages, cultures and religions; it was their lived experience.

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[739] [Concerning Chouraqui's experience as a Jew in a largely Muslim region:]"Au IXe siècle, la charte d'Omar, qui apparaît aujourd'hui comme un texte inadmissible dans n'importe quelle société démocratique, mais au IXe siècle la charte d'Omar concédait aux non-musulmans un droit à la protection de sa personne et de ses biens dans la cité islamique, ce qui constituait une vraie révolution et, en définitive, un progrès remarquable dans l'économie des sociétés humaines et des religions. Alors, notre judaïsme était souriant, détendu, ouvert, accueillant jusqu'au syncrétisme ; l'Afrique du Nord d'ailleurs est traditionellement une terre de syncrétisme." CHOURAQUI, *Retour*, 104. As Chouraqui comments, it would take the French and American Revolutions before such freedoms and protection would be accorded to Jews in Europe and North America.
This traditional presentation has more recently been called into question by scholars. See the excellent chapter "Myth and Counter-Myth," in MARK R. COHEN, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3-14, and the earlier study by BAT YE'OR, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985).

In the twentieth century, sometimes the greater challenge for them was in trying to negotiate a similar dialogue with their Ashkenazi cousins, especially in the young state of Israel, where Sephardic Jews were frequently misunderstood, treated with suspicion, or discriminated against as a minority, even within modern Judaism. Steeped in these experiences, these outlooks, these dynamics (as well as his own personal life history), it is not difficult to understand why a North African Jew like Chouraqui should become a prominent advocate of inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue in the late twentieth century. As Armand Abécassis commented, frankly but hopefully, at the close of a May 2003 symposium on Sephardic identity and its particular contribution to Jewish life:

> En Israël, territoire situé dans une région arabo-musulmane, le dialogue entre les Sépharades et les Ashkénazes est une dure épreuve pour ces derniers, car ils ont à apprendre, à connaître et à signifier positivement la place centrale occupée, pour des raisons géographiques historiques et spirituelles, par la culture sépharade. En dehors d'Israël, dans les régions occupées par les Ashkénazes et par les Sépharades qui s'y sont installés aujourd'hui, le dialogue est une dure épreuve aussi pour ces derniers, car ils ont à connaître et à signifier positivement la place centrale occupée, pour des raisons historiques géographiques et spirituelles, par la culture ashkénaze ... *Le judaïsme sépharade ou, mieux, le modèle sépharade du Judaïsme, ancré dans ses origines espagnoles et andalouses, est porteur non d'une nostalgie ou d'une curiosité scientifique uniquement, mais aussi et surtout d'une dialectique constitutive de la culture et de la civilisation de ce troisième millénaire.* On ne peut le réduire à un folklore ni à un objet de science ni à une pure mémoire du passé. *Il doit être prêt à assumer son rôle de médiateur entre les cultures dont il porte la marque, la dialectique et le témoignage. Il est à la convergence de la culture occidentale et de la culture orientale,* nées toutes deux autour de la Méditerranée ...[740]

It is therefore no accident, I believe, that Chouraqui took on the mantle he did. His Sephardic background, the attitudes inculcated early on by his family, his own personal history, and the political and historical events of the twentieth century

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[740] Armand Abécassis, "Discours de clôture," in Jean-Claude Lasry, Joseph Josy Lévy, and Yolande Cohen, eds., *Identités sépharades et modernité*. Sainte-Foy, Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007, 328-29; my italics.

combined to create exceptionally fertile circumstances in which he could become the spokesperson for a different Jewish approach to Christianity, one which has gained such energy in the last sixty years. He was both a beneficiary of that changed approach, and a major shaper of it, not only in the francophone world, but also in Israel and throughout the Middle East. His biblical translations are both *informed by* those intellectual and religious currents, and intend to significantly *advance* them.

No doubt, there is much of André Chouraqui's legacy that will continue to impact scholarship and society even in the wake of his 2007 death. His poetry, his legal works, his literary translations and his many conferences and interviews—all of these offer a rich fund of reflection and insight that can provide much-needed inspiration for future generations. I am convinced that it is his biblical work, however, that will remain his most lasting monument, a testimony to a life lived in the service of dialogue, despite some of the ugliest historical and social experiences of the twentieth century. Only rarely have religious scholars so deliberately conceived of biblical (and Qur'anic) texts as bridges between differing faiths, and as paths to greater mutual understanding and respect. In a post-9/11 world, when such bonds are simultaneously more tenuous and more essential than ever, every resource which promotes peaceful, constructive discourse, and which seeks to counteract religious violence, is a boon.

André Chouraqui stands out in that field, as a dedicated and indefatigable pioneer at a time well before interreligious dialogue became socially acceptable, commonplace, and "politically correct". His biblical translations were always at the service of that greater vision, and were without question works of deep faith, unwavering hope and unshakeable love—the three virtues which Paul says are the only three things that truly endure (I Cor 13:13). Imbued with those virtues, may André Chouraqui's work prove similarly enduring.

Yᵉhi ratzonᵉ<u>k</u>a, IHVH[ADONAI]*!*

Insh'Allah!

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[741] Dalman's name is rendered inconsistently from one English publication to another; in some it is "Gustaf" and in others it is "Gustav". In addition, some of his earlier works are listed under his birth name, Gustaf Armin *Marx*, which he later changed to Gustaf Hermann *Dalman*, the maiden name of his Swedish-born mother: "Geboren am 9. Juni 1855 in Niesky als Gustaf Marx, nahm er 1886 den Namen seines mütterlich-schwedischen Geschlechts Dalman an. Otto Procksch nennt in seinem Nachruf auf Dalman als Grund dafür dessen 'stille, leidenschaftliche Liebe zu Schweden'." "Geschichte des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts," in Hans-Jürgen Zobel, ed. *Altes Testament, Literatursammlung und Heilige Schrift: gesammelte Aufsatze zur Entstehung, Geschichte und Auslegung des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 231.

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There is no doubt that the sufferings endured by the Jews are also for the Catholic Church a motive of sincere sorrow, especially when one thinks of the indifference and, sometimes, the resentment which, in particular historical circumstances, have divided Jews and Christians. Indeed, this evokes in us still firmer resolutions to cooperate for justice and true peace.

(Pope John Paul II, Letter to Archbishop John May of St. Louis, August 8, 1987; as cited in Johannes Cardinal Willebrands. *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations.* New York: Paulist Press, 1992, 124).

The Catholic Church is close and is a friend to you.
Yes, we love you and we cannot fail to love you.
(Pope Benedict XVI, addressing Rome's
Chief Rabbi, Riccardo di Segni, January 16, 2006)