DOI: https://doi.org/10.28977/jbtr.2008.10.23.172

Translations of the Bible and Communities of Believers:

A historical and functional perspective on translating the Bible

Lourens de Vries*

1. Introduction

The notion of the skopos (or goal) of a Bible translation is often associated with specific functions or with special audiences that Bible translations may have, like study Bibles, common language translations, liturgical translations, Bibles for children, for Muslims, and so on. Although such specific functional elements belong to the skopos of Bible translations, the core of the skopos of Bible translations is formed by theological and hermeneutic elements that define the notion 'Bible' for a given community and that emerge from the specific spirituality of that community. Such complex and sometimes partly implicit notions of 'Bible' define the target or goal of every new translation of the Bible.

The various Jewish and Christian communities have created their own Bibles in the course of their histories of translation. These creative translation histories involve the selection of textual traditions, of books to be included in the Bible, views on the relationship between the human authors and the Divine Author of the Bible, and different answers to the crucial question of the hermeneutical division of labour between tradition/Church, individual believer and Bible translation. Such basic assumptions about the Bible determine how the Bible functions in the various communities and form the framework to further define notions as 'study Bible' or 'Church Bible'.

In this article it is argued that skopos factors are essential to solve the problems of selectivity and underdetermination (section 2), an example of skopos analysis of a specific translation is presented (section 3), paratext

* The Chairs of Bible Translation and General Linguistics at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and a United Bible Societies translation consultant.

(elements such as prefaces, notes, titles, pericopes) is discussed as an important indicator of the skopos of a translation (section 4), style choices in Bible translations are analysed as determined by skopos factors (section 5), and the translational approach to contextual implications is linked to skopos factors (section 6).

2. Selectivity, 'underdetermination' and the skopos of translations

For most translators it is almost a platitude to say that a single translation can never show all aspects of its source text. "It is, at least it almost always is, impossible to approximate all the dimensions of the original text at the same time"[1]). Translators have to choose and in that process inevitably some aspects of the source are lost. Furthermore, although some translations are excluded as wrong by the source text, there remains too much choice, since any text always can be translated in more than one way, with source texts legitimating these various ways of rendering the text. Source texts, however brilliantly analysed, 'underdetermine' their possible interpretations and translations, especially texts from Antiquity like the Bible.

Translators solve problems of selectivity and 'underdetermination' intrinsic to translation by invoking criteria *outside* their source texts. It is their only option, whether they are aware of it or not. These external criteria emerge from a complex and heterogeneous set of factors collectively referred to in translation studies as the skopos or function of the translation in the target community. Take a simple Greek clause like pantes (all) zētousin (seek) se (you) in Mark 1:37. The Dutch *Nieuwe Vertaling* translates this clause as 'Allen (all) zoeken (seek) u (you)' and this translation shows one aspect of the source well, namely the syntax of the Greek clause but does not show the durative aspect that the Greek verb has in this verse. If translators decide to translate the durative aspect, there are various possibilities in Dutch, all equally supported by the source text. For example, the Dutch *Goed Nieuws Bijbel* has 'Iedereen loopt u te zoeken' with the durative auxiliary *lopen* 'to walk', the *Nieuwe Bijbel Vertaling* has another

1) J. O. y Gasset, "The Misery and Splendor of Translation", L. Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, E. Allen, trans. (London: Routledge, 1937/2000), 49-64.

construction (with a form of *zijn* ‘to be’: ‘Iedereen is naar u op zoek’, literally ‘everyone is for you on the look’). But the versions that reflect the durative aspect cannot at the same time reflect the syntax of the Greek clause. Conveying both the durative aspect and the syntax of the Greek source in one Dutch clause is simply impossible. Translators have to decide which aspect of the source should get priority in the translation (selectivity).

At the same time this example shows the problem of ‘underdetermination’: the Greek source text legitimates multiple Dutch translations like ‘Iedereen is naar u op zoek’, ‘Iedereen loopt u te zoeken’ en ‘Allen zoeken u’. Translators are constantly confronted with such multiple legitimate possibilities and with source texts that are silent and refuse translators to tell which translation is the ‘best’. When source texts fall silent, the translator has to turn away from it and find the answer elsewhere, and the answer is in the target or goal of the translation: what kind of text does the translator want to make, and for whom, and what kinds of things is his or her audience wanting to do with the text?

The term skopos was introduced to translation studies by Hans Vermeer[2] who views translation as action and grounded the idea of skopos not so much in selectivity and ‘underdetermination’ as I do but rather in the intrinsically purposive nature of all human action. For Christiane Nord[3] “translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text (translation skopos)”.

It is important to notice that source texts also *exclude* some translations like ‘Sommigen (Some) zoeken (seek) u (you).’ This is not trivial. In my understanding, the skopos approach is not necessarily a form of extreme relativism that wants to dethrone source texts. Following Nord[4] I use the skopos approach combined with a interpersonal loyalty notion (‘function plus loyalty’). Loyalty to audiences and commissioners and loyalty to the writers of the source

---

2) H. J. Vermeer, “Skopos and Commission in Translational Action”, L. Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, A. Chesterman, trans. (London: Routledge, 2000), 221-232.

3) C. Nord, *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-oriented Text Analysis* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991).

4) C. Nord, “Skopos, Loyalty and Translational Conventions”, *Target* 3:1 (1991b), 91-109; C. Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997).

texts. Translating *pantes zetousin se* with 'Some are looking for you' or with 'Nobody is looking for you' would be disloyal to the obvious communicative intentions of the writer. With obvious intentions I mean intentions and meanings about which there is now and always has been consensus among those who can read biblical Greek. It is when the source text legitimates multiple interpretations and translations that skopos factors are needed to reach a decision, or when the translator is forced by the target language to choose between two aspects of the source that cannot be rendered in a single translation.

3. An example of a community-based notion of "Bible": the skopos of the Statenvertaling of 1637

The best known and most influential translation of the Bible into Dutch is the translation commissioned by the *Staten-Generaal*, the highest authority in the young Republic, and translated according to the decisions of the Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) of the Reformed Churches, the *Statenvertaling* (SV*)*.[5] The Reformed Church, although not a state-church, was the only church recognized by the highest authority in the Republic, other churches and religions were tolerated as long as they kept a low profile. This calvinistic Reformed Church was the community for which the SV was intended to function, but the SV was also to function in the national context as the Bible of the young Republic. The SV was intended to replace the Deux-Aes Bible that had been the major Dutch Bible for Reformed people in the Low Countries since 1561. The Deux-Aes Bible was inconsistent because its Old Testament was a Dutch adaptation of Luther's relatively free German translation whereas its New Testament was a much more literal translation clearly showing the influence of the so-called Bible of Calvin.[6]

The fact that this Deux-Aes Bible was an adaptation from a German version clashed with the growing national consciousness and its too 'free' Old Testament clashed with the Dutch Reformed spirituality that took the Word of

5) I heavily rely in this section on C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers* (Haarlem: Nederlands Bijbel Genootschap, 1993).
6) Ibid., 179.

God to be inspired by the Holy Spirit in such a way that only a very literal translation was appropriate.[7] Both the national and the Reformed element in the skopos of this version were prominently expressed in the paratext: the title page of the first printed edition of translation of 1637 mentioned the *Staten Generael van de Vereenighde Nederlanden* in the center of the page in the biggest type, with a picture of the Dutch Lion at the bottom of the page. Just under the *Staten Generael* the *Synode Nationael* is mentioned. The title page mentions both text (*Uyt de Oorspronckelijcke talen in onse Nederlandsche tale getrouwelijck overgeset*[8]) and paratext (*Met nieuwe bijgevoegde Verklaringen op de duystere plaatsen, aenteeckeningen vande ghelijck-luydende texten ende nieuwe registers over beyde de TESTAMENTEN*[9]).

According to de Bruin and Broeyer, Reformed notions of inspiration made the Dutch translators perceive the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek source texts as the language of the Holy Spirit and in this inspiration theology the Spirit became so tightly connected to the Word that the Word almost completely 'absorbed' the Spirit.[10] Noticing that the Hebrew word *moreh* occurs twice in Joel 2:23 the translators of the SV remarked, 'Dit kan den H. Geest alsoo belieft hebben, om de beteeckeninge van 't eerste Moreh t' onderscheyden van 't tweede.'[11] It would not be correct to see a explicit 'mechanical' theology of inspiration behind the strong preference for a literal translation. Explicit, rational theories of 'organic' or 'mechanic' inspiration would develop much later, in the 19th century context of emerging modernity, as a response to historical criticism.[12] The central notion in the hermeneutics behind the *Statenvertaling* is the idea of a personal and sovereign God calling his chosen ones through his Word and this led to an attitude of obediance, awe and humbleness before that Word.

God is not just speaking through the Bible (divine inspiration), He speaks

---

7) Ibid., 204.

8) From the original languages into our Dutch language faithfully translated.

9) With newly added explanations of obscure places, references to parallel texts and new tables of contents of both Testaments.

10) Ibid., 271.

11) The Holy Spirit may have wanted it this way to distinguish the significance of the first Moreh from the second. The example is from C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel*, 271.

12) See W. Balke, *De Reformatie: Mythe en werkelijkheid* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2002), 15.

clearly in his Word (*perspicuitas*), God's Word contains an essentially *clear* proclamation of salvation for His chosen ones, even when the Scriptures contained *duystere plaatsen* (parts that were not clear). The *klaarheid der waarheid,* the clarity of the (scriptural) truth, a favourite Dutch Reformed expression for the perspicuity of the Scriptures, should be understood in the context of the importance attached in Reformed Theology to the unmediated, direct access of every believer, guided by the Holy Spirit and applying the hermeneutics of *schrift met schrift vergelijken* (comparing Scripture with Scripture), to the knowledge of salvation in the Holy Scriptures, without mediation by clergy or tradition (*sola scriptura*). Lay theology was essential in this context and the translation of Scriptures should be as clear as possible to serve the community of lay theologians.

Luther wanted to convey the clear meaning of the Scriptures, as revealed to him under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *in the translation*. In the words of Schwartz, 'the ultimate intention was to make clear his theological interpretation of the text, an interpretation based on inspiration'.[13] And this inspirational theology of translation was the basis for Luther's translation rather than a communicative theory of translation *avant la lettre.*[14] The translators of the *Statenvertaling* shared Luther's view on the clarity of the Scriptural meaning as revealed through the Spirit to God's children but saw it more as a task for the community of believers to derive the 'knowlegde of salvation' from God's Holy Word, with the help of the *nota marginalia* and other paratextual means. Whereas in Luthers inspirational theology of translation the emphasis is on the inspired translator who conveys the clear meaning of the Scriptures in the translation under the guidance of the Spirit, the Dutch followers of Calvin emphasized the working of the Spirit in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek scriptures on the one hand and in the hearts of God's children reading the Bible on the other. They did not extend the divine inspiration doctrine to the translator.

Both the motives of the *perspicuitas* of the Scriptures and of the divine inspiration determined the religious skopos of the *Statenvertaling*. Two translators, Baudartius and Bogerman, explicitly formulated the link between

13) W. Schwartz, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation. Some Reformation Controversies and their Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 208.

14) W. Schwartz, *Biblical Translation*, 207-209.

their inspiration views and their translation skopos when they wrote that they had wanted to remain as close as possible to ‘de oorspronkelijke woorden Godts, die in den Hebreuschen ende Chaldeuschen text staen.’[15] It is important to see both motives, of the sacred aspect of the biblical texts, of God speaking through that Word, and of the *perspicuitas*, in the intended skopos of the SV The translation of the Bible had to reflect both the sacred inspiration and the *perspicuitas*. The inspiration notions led to a selection of *form* aspects of the source text as the key aspect to be retained in the translation, nouns stayed nouns, verbs verbs and Hebrew and Greek syntax were followed as much as possible. The translators and the commissioners of the SV were aware of the fact that giving preference to this form aspect would do damage to conveying the meaning and message of the Scriptures and would create tensions with the idea of the *perspicuitas*. De Brune, secretary of the *Staten van Zeeland,* a calvinist with a good knowledge of the Hebrew text remarks in 1644 that ‘de Nieuwe Over-zetters den Hebreeuwsen text zoo gantsch nauw end' nae hebben uytghedruckt, dat zy oock veeltijdts de ordre end’ stellinghe der woorden hebben naeghevolght···waerdeur de zin niet zoo klaer end’ onbekommert wert uytghedruckt’[16]

To solve this dilemma the Synod of Dordrecht decided that the translators should combine paratext and text in such a way that both key elements in the religious function of the text, the divine inspiration and the *perspicuitas*, could be done justice. When a literal translation would lead to obscure Dutch, the translators could opt for a more free translation but should then give the literal translation in a marginal note as in the note to the translation *with sijnen heyligen arm* (with his holy arm) of Isa 52:10 that says ‘Hebr. den arm sijner heyligheyt. D (=Dat is) sijne Goddelicke almachtigheyt, die hy in het verlossen sijnes volcx bewesen heeft.’[17] Similarly, in Isa 52:1 (*ir hakodesh*) the SV text chooses the free but clear translation *heylige stadt* (holy city) and gives the

15) The original words of God that are in the Hebrew and Aramaic text.

16) ‘The new translators have expressed the Hebrew text so precise and close that they also often followed the order and position of the words... because of which the sense was not expressed all that clear and fluent’ (C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel*, 308).

17) Hebr(ew). The arm of his holiness. That is his divine omnipotence which he proved in the saving of his people. Example quoted in C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel*, 273.

'inspired' word order of the Hebrew in marginal note number 3, *Hebr*. ghy Stadt der heylichheydt (Hebr. you city of the holiness). Alternatively, the translators could give the more difficult, literal translation in the main text and give the clearer, more free version in a marginal note. In most cases the translators used the latter option.[18] It is clear that the *nota marginalia* were crucial to balance the *perspicuitas* and the inspiration motives and that text and paratext together ensured that this translation could perform the religious functions the Reformed leaders and communities in the Netherlands demanded.

Another paratextual way out of this dilemma was to add words in the translation to clarify the sense but to put square brackets around these words and to print them in a different type to indicate that they were human additions to the sacred text. Both the use of brackets and the extreme syntactic interference from the biblical languages can be seen in the translation of 1 Cor 12:3 'ende niemant en kan seggen Jesum den Heere [**te zijn**]' where the SV follows the Greek syntax *oudeis dunatai eipein Kurion Iēsoun* and adds *te zijn* 'to be' between brackets in an effort to repair some of the *perspicuitas* problems created by the word-by-word translation.

Such hebraisms and hellenisms of the SV that obscured the clarity of the truth were seen as negative side-effects of the *getrouwelijcke* (faithful) rendering of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Words of God written under the control of the Holy Spirit and paratext was invoked to mitigate these negative effects.

This is very different from the translation tradition of the Orthodox Churches in the East where the Sacred Inspiration is also present but not balanced by the Reformation idea of *perspicuitas*.[19] There the Septuagintanisms and Hellenisms of the Slavonic translations and the resulting strangeness and otherness of the text are positively welcomed because the 'Orthodox tradition views language as an intrinsically inadequate tool for comprehending the holy, and therefore as performing verbally a symbolic role analogous to that enacted visually by icons. Just as the icon makes no claim to be a photographic − or even essentially pictorial − depiction of the scene or event it represents, but rather a window onto the timeless reality to which it testifies and a mysterious means of mediating that

18) C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel*, 274.

19) See S. Crisp, "Icon of the Ineffable? An Orthodox View of Language and its Implications for Bible Translation," Paper for the Triennial Translation Workshop of the United Bible Societies, Malaga 2000.

reality to the worshipper, so the language of Scripture cannot be a series of logical propositions with a single intended meaning…The implications of this understanding of language for Bible translation are quite considerable. Since the way in which language relates to the realities described in the Bible is seen as a complex and mysterious process, an Orthodox approach would tend to maintain in some way the status of the text as a window onto another world by preserving a sense of the distance between the (modern) reader and the (ancient) text, and by marking in some way the inherent strangeness or otherness of that text.'[20].

The skopos of Bible translations for Orthodox communities is different from how the Bible functioned for the Dutch Reformed of the 17th century: for the Orthodox the Bible functions primarily in the liturgy and as an icon in the sense indicated by Crisp. It is the Fathers, the patristic tradition, that forms the exegetical and hermeneutical key to the Bible but these understandings of the Holy Writ are not mediated in the translation but in the teaching of the Church. The paratextual elements of the SV most clearly reflect the different religious function of the Dutch Bible: they give laypeople, individual believers, access to the plain truths of the Scriptures, *de klaarheid der waarheid*. The clarifying marginal notes in the SV are based on the Reformed assumption that the Hebrew and Greek source texts are in principle and as a whole clear but *become* obscure and strange *in the translation*. This strangeness, obscureness and otherness are not seen as inherent to the sacred nature of the language of Scripture.

If one just compared the *texts* of the Eastern versions and the SV one could easily conclude that all these literal translations serve similar sacral-ritual functions and are based on similar theologies of language. Once the combination of text *and* paratext is taken into account, the vast differences between these translations comes to the fore and the link between these translations and the very different religious functions they serve.

The Reformed notion of inspiration by the Holy Spirit was also relevant to problems of canonicity. During the Synod of Dordrecht the deputies could not reach agreement on the place of the deuterocanonicals in the translation. Already in 1561, in the Dutch adaptation of the French *Confession de Foy,* the Dutch Reformed had expressed that 'we receive these books as holy and canonical not so much because the church accepts them as such but rather because the Holy

20) S. Crisp, "Icon of the Ineffable?" 6, 7.

Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God' (*Belydenisse des Geloofs*, article V, my translation). The more radical Reformed thinkers among the Synod members, like Gomarus, did not want the *Apocrypha* to be included in the translation. But because people were used to the Deux-Aes Bible that included the deuterocanonicals, there was a clash between the goals of the Synod and what people expected from a translation of the Bible. By deciding that the deuterocanonicals[21] should be placed behind all the canonical books (that is after the New Testament), with separate pagination, with a separate introduction, and in a different type, the Synod prescribed paratextual elements to bridge the gap between intended and expected skopos. The title page preceding the deuterocanonicals explicitly pointed to their human (that is non-inspired) origin and the introduction to the deuterocanonicals warned the readers to be aware of the heresies they contained.

Summarizing, the skopos of the SV comprises a complex set of heterogeneous elements. First of all, elements such as the inspiration doctrine and the *perspicuitas* doctrine including the emphasis on lay theology and Reformed hermeneutics of comparing Scripture with Scripture. These factors determine the place and function of Bible translations in the spiritual life of the Dutch Reformed communities of the 17th century. Because of the emphasis in the inspiration doctrine was on the work of the Spirit in the source text and in the believing reader or listener, the translation had to focus on what God *said* in the Bible, not what God *meant.* The Holy Spirit would make clear what God meant in the Bible when His children carefully and diligently studied what He had said and how He said it. The extensive paratextual helps in the SV were fallible, human means to clarify what God had meant. Unlike God's Word such paratextual explanations were always open for discussion. What God had said in his Word remained forever but human ideas about what He had meant changed with the times and even Calvin and Luther, with all their insights, were fallible humans and their hermeneutic position did in principle not differ from other children of God who bowed obediently for His Holy Word.

Apart from these 'theological' elements there were political elements in the

21) The *Statenvertaling* included 3 Maccabees, 3 and 4 Ezra and the Prayer of Manashe in the Apocrypha section, although article VI of the Dutch Confession of Faith did not mention 3 Maccabees. According to C. C. de Bruin and F. G. M. Broeyer, *De Statenbijbel*, 236, the translators probably just followed the Deux-Aes Bible here.

skopos of the SV: the young Republic wanted its very own Dutch Bible translated from the Hebrew and Greek sources instead of one translated from German or French sources. Finally, the function and place of the SV was co-determined by its predecessor, the Deux-Aes Bible that had contributed also to the notion 'Bible', to expectation patterns about the Bible.

The SV was primarily a Church Bible but its rich paratextual helps made it also suitable for private reading and as a study Bible. It should be kept in mind that the Dutch Reformed notion of inspiration emphasized the role of the Spirit in the source, the inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and in the target, in the heart and mind of the believing individual reader when he read and studied the Word of God. Ultimately it was not the tradition of the Church or the clergy who told the Christian what the Bible meant to say: it was the Spirit who worked through the Word in the heart of the believer. Therefore the SV was designed for both liturgical and private use and the paratextual features of the SV helped the SV to function as study Bible and Bible for private devotion.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Dutch Reformed view of the Bible is the relation between Spirit and Word, with the Word as the key to evaluate all things claimed by people to originate from the Spirit. In their inspiration theology the Spirit became indeed very tightly connected to the Word. Anyone who claimed to be led by the Spirit had to pass the test of the Word to see whether what he said was consistent with the Word of God. Inspired translators who claimed to know what God meant in His Word because they were led by the Spirit and wanted to communicate that meaning in the translation were a threat to the role of the Word as an *independent* judge of human opinions and interpretations. Luther's German Bible translation in an adapted Dutch version could not play the role the Bible had to have in the eyes of the Dutch Reformed congregations, as the infallible Word of God, uncontaminated with fallible human ideas and interpretations.

4. Paratextual features and the skopos of Bible translation

We saw that the skopos of the SV comprises a complex set of heterogeneous elements, theological and spirituality related elements such as the inspiration

doctrine and the *perspicuitas* doctrine including the emphasis on lay theology and Reformed hermeneutics of comparing Scripture with Scripture, national elements, and the relationship with previous translations that had won authority, especially the Deux-Aes Bible. How is this skopos reflected in paratextual elements? The need to balance perspicuity and inspiration motives is reflected in the marginal notes and in the way text and marginal notes interact. Inspiration motives also led to separate pagination, a separate place and a separate introduction for deuterocanonicals. Within the text of the canonicals, brackets and small type were used for Dutch words which were added to conform to the grammar of Dutch and seen as additions to the inspired Word of God. The national and political elements in the skopos were reflected in the title page text and the Dutch Lion on the title page. The SV indicated traditional pericope divisions only by placing summary titles with verse numbers above each chapter. There were no blank lines dividing pericopes, with pericope titles above each section.

5. Skopos and the style of Bible translations

Bible translators constantly make style decisions: lexical choices (e.g. in terms of high, intermediate or low register), grammatical choices (e.g. passive or active construction, participles or finitre verbs, etc.), choices in the area of clause combining (do I use one long sentence or do I cut it into 2 or 3 shorter sentences), choices in the field of discourse organization (how do I introduce and track the participants, what do I emphasize, what do I present as background material), and so on. The style choices of translators of the Bible are determined by (a) the specific stylistic features of Biblical genres, e.g. parallellisms in psalms and (b) the specific stylistic features of genres in target communities. Bible translations always *mediate* between genres of source and target genres, and therefore always combine style elements from source genres with style elements from target genres and the *skopos* of Bible translations determines how translators mediate between source and target styles. For example, a translation of the Song of Songs will always reflect both stylistic features of Israelite love poetry and features of love songs in the target community.

Compare the stylistic choices in these English versions of Luke 1.1-4:

TEV Luke 1.1-4

Dear Theophilus:

1. Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us.

2. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message.

3 And so, Your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you.

4. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught.

NIV Luke 1.1-4

1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

RSV Luke 1.1-4

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us,

2 just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,

3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

4 that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

If we restrict ourselves to two aspects of style, clause combining choices and register (lexical choices), we see that ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν with its rather formal and literary register, is rendered by RSV as “compile a narrative”, by

NIV as “draw up an account” and by TEV as “write a report”. The register of RSV is high, NIV intermediate and TEV’s lexical choice is again a bit lower than NIV. These lexical choices reflect the skopos or function of these versions: TEV is ‘common language’ translation with church-external functions, RSV is a typical translation for traditional Church audiences and NIV steers a middle course in functional terms: it tries to style for clarity, like TEV but without distancing itself too much from the style expected by American evangelical audiences in Bible translations. The functional differences between these three versions is also reflected in clause combing choices: RSV has one long sentence, like the Greek, NIV has two sentences and TEV four sentences. Again, NIV steers a middle course (2 sentences) between the traditional Church translation (RSV: 1 sentence) and the external, common language version (TEV: 4 sentences).

In Luke 1.1-4, it is very clear that the dedication to Theophilus has a special style in the Greek, a literary and studied style of a preface to an important book, in which the author mentions his sources, his methods and the highly placed person to whom the book is dedicated. The skopos of the Bible translations determine the style goals of their translators. TEV tries to reach unchurched audiences not used to reading complex written texts and according styles for clarity, choosing frequent words of common usage (write a report), avoiding relatively rare and difficult words and combination of words (compile a narrative), uses short, simple sentences, marks participants very clearly (“Dear Theophilus”)and explicitly, marks interclausal relations explicitly (“*because* I have carefully studied…”) and so on. The RSV, on the other hand, tries to follow the style of the source closely, for example it does not break up the long sentence, it uses conjunctions like *inasmuch* , lexical choices like *ministers of the word.* The register and syntactic complexity are very high, and the solemn and learned style of the Greek source is captured to a certain extent by this version. NIV styles for both clarity and the special effects of solemness and literariness of the source. Since NIV functions for church audiences, it aims at clarity for those audiences, and not for unchurched audiences. This gives the NIV a wider range of stylistic choices, including choices like “fulfill” from traditional church vocabulary and words from relatively high registers like “investigate” and “undertake”. Again, NIV steers a middle course between RSV and TEV type translations, and this explains partly why it was such a huge success: people wanted a Bible translation

that was on the one hand much clearer than the traditional Church versions but on the other hand had a sufficient stylistic continuity with those versions to make it suitable for Church usages.

6. Skopos and the division of interpretative labour

For reasons of space, I limit myself to the relation between the skopos or function of a translation and the explication of contextual implications. Contextual implications are inferred by language users solely on the basis of the (verbal, situational, cultural-historical) context of the utterance. When I say “it rained cats and dogs and I am soaked” an obvious inference of the addressee will be that I meant that I am wet BECAUSE of the rain. This causal inference, however, is nowhere expressed in the utterance form, it is a contextual implication or inference of causality.

Such gaps between what is meant and what is said constantly occur in normal verbal communication. If speakers or writers would explicate all the information that is normally inferred by addressees, they would need very many, boring and needless words to get simple messages across. Apart from this quantitative reason, there are important qualitative reasons for the gap. If someone calls God his rock, he or she means a whole range of things, a range cannot be delineated very sharply, a quality of open-endedness that is precisely the point of using a metaphor. Utterances do not *express* what people want to communicate but rather they *mediate* speakers' intentions within a given context shared between speaker/writer and audience.

The causal inference in the example “it rained cats and dogs and I am soaked” is not part of the meaning of the sentence in a more narrow, semantic sense. Grice[22] gave the distinction between meaning and contextual implications a definitive place in semantic theory. Gutt[23] formulates some major consequences of the Gricean distinctions for translation theory.

Contextual implications have two characteristics that make them tricky for

22) H. Grice, “Logic and Conversation”, P. Cole and J. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics*, 3 (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 41-58.

23) E. G. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

translators. First, when the translator has no longer direct access to the original utterance context (primary context), it becomes hard to establish what the contextual implications of an utterance are. In the case of ancient texts like those in the Bible access to the primary context is extremely limited. Furthermore, not all contextual implications have the same status: some are strong, others are weak contextual implications; in fact, some contextual implications are so weak that we are not sure whether they are writer/speaker-intended implications at all. In the exegetical process of reconstructing the contextual implications of a biblical utterance, inevitably there is interpretative interference from the historical, theological and cultural context of the translator.

The second source of difficulties is this: given that a translator has established what the contextual implications are and how strong they are, as soon as the translator explicates contextual implications, a new series of difficulties emerges since in the process of explicating information, that information is essentially changed: it is now *asserted* information having its own contexual implications and the explication causes changes in *focality and emphasis* in the message.

In all translations there are unavoidable shifts in the area of contextual implications: some implications become explicit in the translation and explicated elements from the source become contextually implied in the translation. The structural differences between languages cause thousands of such shifts in translations. For example, Indonesian does not have number distinctions in nouns but Greek has. This leads to shifts from explicated number meanings in the source (singular/plural) to contextually implied number information in the translation. Whatever the function of a Bible translation, such shifts cannot be avoided, there is no choice. However, there are also many situations in which it is up to the translator to decide whether and to which extent contextual implications of the source become explicit in the translation.

The gap in normal, unmarked primary communication between what is meant and what is expressed, should not be confused with deliberate, intended polyinterpretability. When I say, it rained and I am soaked, I trust that you infer the causal relationship and I do not intend to leave open any other interpretations. Intended polyinterpretability is in most speech communities linked to certain genres of texts like some types of poetry or other marked forms of language.

The question how to handle the normal, unmarked interpretative gap between expression and intention in the translation should be answered primarily on the basis of the answer to another question: what kind of audiences is going to use the text and what kinds of things they are going to do with it. By choosing specific lexical, morphosyntactic and other devices speakers and writers of all languages can manage and adjust levels of explication and implication in their utterances. Adnominal genitives in the New Testament are famous for their low level of explication. The adnominal genitive just predicates that there is a meaningful relation between the (pro)noun in the genitive and the headnominal. It is up to the addressee to infer the nature of that relation in the context of the utterance. When writers of New Testament Greek want to increase the level of explication, they may choose and indeed do choose more specific morphosyntactic devices. Compare *tèn ek theou dikaiosunèn* 'the righteousness from God' in Philippians 3.9a with the source preposition *ek* and in Romans 1.17 *dikaiosunè theou* 'righteousness of God'.

Now consider the phrase *en prautèti sophias* in James 3.13 (literally: with humility/gentleness of wisdom). The genitive *sophias* expresses only the fact that wisdom somehow qualifies the humility (or gentleness) and the author left it to his readers to infer the specific nature of that qualification. In terms of the explication/implication balance, translators into Dutch have a number of options. (For the sake of illustrating the argument I discuss the translation of biblical phrases in isolation, without taking into account the translation of the verses, pericopes and books that they are part of). The first would be to choose a construction in Dutch with more or less the same level of explication:

(a) met wijze zachtmoedigheid/nederigheid (with wise gentleness/humility)

The second option would be something like (b) which changes the level of explication rather drastically:

(b) met zachtmoedigheid/nederigheid die uit wijsheid voortkomt (with gentleness/humility that comes from wisdom)

Now translations of type (a) and (b) differ crucially in terms of the division of interpretative labour: (a) leaves it to the reader to infer the precise ways in which

wisdom qualifies the humility while (b) explicates the relation between humility and wisdom as one of source: humility comes from wisdom.

In transforming possible and indeed likely contextual implications like the source relation in our example into expressed information in the translation, in changing what was *possibly meant* in the source into what is *positively asserted* in the translation, the nature of the information changes essentially: the source relation between wisdom and humility becomes much more focal in the translated text than in the original; also, the translator takes the responsibility for presenting the contextually implied source relation as asserted information.

Although all languages have ranges of constructions that allow language users to manage levels of explication, it is dangerous to assume from superficial formal similarities across languages that constructions of similar form can be used for the same things. Although there are functional overlaps, there are also usages of the NT Greek adnominal genitive which are impossible in Dutch, for example the (semitising) usage of the genitive to express a quality of the referent of the head nominal as in *huios tès anomias,* literally 'son of lawlessness'. Therefore, choosing target language forms with comparable levels of explication and implication as source forms is something very different from translating literally or translating with the aim to create maximal formal correspondence with the source.

The point of translation (a) ("with wise humility" for *en prautèti sophias* in James 3.13) is not that it closer to the source form than (b) ("with humility that comes from wisdom"). Both (a) and (b) deviate from the morphosyntax of the Greek phrase. A formal equivalence type of rendering in Dutch would be solution (c) in which the preposition *van* signals the genitive case:

(c) met zachtmoedigheid van wijsheid (with gentleness of wisdom)

In translation (c) Greek nouns have been translated with Dutch nouns, and the Greek order of those nouns is also retained. Solutions of type (c) could be called form-oriented, of type (b) interpretation-oriented and of type (a) meaning-oriented. Notice that I employ the distinction meaning and interpretation here in the sense of Grice (1975) as outlined above.

Translations of type (c) that concentrate on the form of the source and

translations of type (a) that focus on the expressed meanings of the source *both* keep closer to the Greek than interpretation-oriented versions. If one thinks in a dichotomy of free versus literal translations, types (a) and (c) could easily be lumped together as “literal” translations. This would not do justice to the essential differences between them. The aim of (a) is not to stay close to the *form* but to the *expressed meanings* of the source, leaving contextual implications to the reader to infer. For example, whereas form-oriented translations try to translate nouns with nouns, and verbs with verbs, keeping wordcategories constant across languages is not at all a goal of type (a) translations. Also, translating a source word with the same target word all the time irrespective of contextually determined senses of words, just to reflect the lexical form of the source, is not an aim of type (a) translations whereas such concordance or verbal consistency is a typical aim of form-oriented translations

It is clear that meaning-oriented translations of type (a) that leave a lot of interpretative work to the readers or listeners, are harder to understand and less accessible. On the other hand, such translations suffer less from the interpretative inference from the translators' theological and cultural context that is unavoidable in interpretation-oriented translations that explicate contextual implications of complex texts of antiquity for which the primary contexts have become inaccessible. Form-oriented translations are hardest to understand since they not only leave a lot of interpretative work to the reader but also suffer from lexical and morphosyntactic interference from the source language.

7. Concluding remarks

The various Jewish and Christian communities have created their own Bibles in the course of their histories of translation. These creative translation histories involve the selection of textual traditions, of books to be included in the Bible, views on the relationship between the human authors and the Divine Author of the Bible, and different answers to the crucial question of the hermeneutical division of labour between tradition/Church, individual believer and Bible translation. Taken together these assumptions form community-based notions of “Bible”. Once a community has a firmly rooted notion of “Bible” it will define

the boundaries within which new translations of the Bible are accepted as "Bible".

When Bible translation is seen as an academic, scholarly enterprise based on a "science"of translation and on biblical scholarship, such community notions of Bible can easily be perceived a threat to the work of the Bible translators. However, there is more positive way of looking at these community notions of "Bible" and their role in the translation process, namely as hermeneutically essential to the solution of problems of selectivity and "underdetermination". It is possible to exclude bad translations of the Bible on the basis of the academic and scholarly analysis of the source texts but after exclusion of such bad translations a crucial problem remains: how to choose between multiple translations that are legitimated by the data of the source text. When the source remains silent, the goal of the translation must provide the answer, the function of the Bible translation for the community that is going to use the translation. Central to the skopos of Bible translations are basic assumptions about the Bible. These assumptions can be secular or religious in nature. In this article I explicated a number of basic assumptions about the Bible in the skopos of the *Statenvertaling.* The Synod of Dordrecht wanted a Bible that was different from Lutheran, message-oriented Bible because they could not accept the extension of the inspiration doctrine to the inspired translator who 'knew' what God meant in His Word and translated what he knew to be the message and the meaning. The concentration on what God had said in His Word, rather than on what He meant, led to a type of translation that was much more difficult to understand than the original texts. This created a conflict with another basic assumption about the Bible, that God spoke clearly in His Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Word. The extensive paratextual helps in the SV were meant to solve this dilemma of inspiration and perspicuity doctrines.

Calvinistic, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions have different conceptualizations of inspiration, perspicuity and the interpretative division of labour between Church, translator and indivual reader/listener. Of course, within these traditions there are important variations and continuous re-interpretations. For example, the Calvinistic tradition of the late 20th century did no longer, as a rule, apply the notion of inspiration to the word order patterns of Hebrew or Greek grammar but the premodern distrust of inspired translators who knew

what God meant remained alive long enough to meet its postmodern counterpart.

The way communities construe these notions of inspiration, perspicuity, message and meaning is not to be judged by translation theorists, it is simply none of their business. It is crucial to acknowledge that translation theories can describe and analyse but not prescribe the skopos for Bible translations because what people do and want to do with the Bible in their communities, given their spirituality and their histories of hermeneutics and theology, is not something that can be judged on the basis of translation or communication theories.

* 참고문헌(References)

Balke, W., *De Reformatie: Mythe en werkelijkheid*, Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2002.

Comrie, B., *Tense*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1985.

Crisp, S., "Icon of the Ineffable? An Orthodox View of Language and its Implications for Bible Translation," Paper for the Triennial Translation Workshop of the United Bible Societies, Malaga 2000.

de Bruin, C. C. and Broeyer, F. G. M., *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, Haarlem, 1993.

de Vries, L., "Paratext and the Skopos of Bible translations", W. F. Smelik, A. den Hollander, and U. B. Schmidt, eds., *Paratext and Megatext as Channels of Jewish and Christian Traditions*, Leiden, Boston: Brill Publishers, 2003, 176-193.

Ellingworth, P., "Translating the Language of Leadership," *the Bible Translator-Technical Papers*, 49 (January, 1998), 126-138.

Gasset, J. O. y, "The Misery and Splendor of Translation", L. Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, E. Allen, trans., London: Routledge, 1937/2000, 49-64.

Genette, G., *Psalimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981.

Genette, G., *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Grice, H., "Logic and Conversation," P. Cole and J. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics* 3, New York: Academic Press, 1975, 41-58.

Gutt, E. A., *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Nord, C., "Skopos, Loyalty and Translational Conventions", *Target* 3:1 (1997), 91-109.

Nord, C., *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-oriented Text Analysis*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991.

Nord, C., *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained*, Manchester: St Jerome, 1991b.

Prickett, S., *Words and the Word: Language, Poetics and Biblical Interpretation*,

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Pym, A., *Method in Translation History*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1998.

Schwartz, W., *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation. Some Reformation Controversies and their Background*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

Sperber, D., and Wilson, D., *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

Vermeer, H. J., "Skopos and Commission in Translational Action", L. Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, Andrew Chesterman, trans., London: Routledge, 2000, 221-232.

<Abstract>

성경 번역과 신앙인 공동체: 성경 번역에 대한 역사적, 기능적 관점

라우런스 드 프리스 교수
(암스테르담 자유대학교, 세계성서공회연합회 번역 자문위원)

성경 번역을 포함해, 번역된 본문에는 그 번역본을 사용하는 공동체를 위한 특정한 기능이 있다. “성경”의 전통을 기반으로 하고 공동체를 기반으로 하는 성경 번역의 경우, 이 기능들은 번역의 형식과 유형을 결정한다. 이 글은 신앙인 공동체를 위해 성경 번역이 갖는 종교적 역할과 번역된 성경의 텍스트적, 경전적, 문체적, 그리고 파라텍스트적 특징들을 논한다.

번역학 학문 분야의 관점에서 성경에 대한 공동체적 신학은 성경 번역의 학문적 질을 위협한다기보다는 선택과 다중해석성이라는 번역 문제를 해결하는 데 본질적이며 창조적인 기여를 한다.

학계의 역할은 잘못된 번역을 제외시키고 원본에 대한 학문적 분석에 의해 정당화된, 가능한 번역들의 범위를 정하는 것이다. 그러나 정당화된 선택의 범위 내에서 이미 주어진 번역 해결책 중 하나를 선택하는 것은 학문적 기반 위에서만 되어질 수 있는 것이 아니다. 정당화된 다양한 번역들의 선택에 대하여 원천 본문(source text)은 침묵하기 때문이다. 그러므로 번역자가 대상 공동체(target communities)를 위한 성경 번역의 종교적, 문화적 기능에 관심을 갖는 것은 해석학적으로, 또 번역학적으로 필요불가결한 것이다.