

# Reasons for Starting This Translation and comments on Current Translations:

by Pastor Dave Bauscher.

Generally, I decided to translate the NT when Paul Younan asked me to join his translation team at [Peshitta.org](http://Peshitta.org) as a translator in October 2004.

Stephen Silver and Larry Kelsey were team editors and Paul Younan was the team leader. Paul agreed to send me software to help me with the translation work, but he never followed through on this due, perhaps, to his time consuming job as software engineer in Chicago. We occasionally heard from Paul on the forum, but the translation project never got off the ground. That forum still remains on [Peshitta.org](http://Peshitta.org) and is visible to members who sign in.

Steve went about compiling the Aramaic text, comparing and digitizing the Khabouris ms. with the 1905 edition.

I decided to start translating an interlinear on my own, starting with Matthew in 2005. I published Volume 1 in Jan. '06 and finished the NT in Dec. '06, publishing the whole NT in Jan. '07.

In my opinion, as well as that of many others, Paul Younan's interlinear was by far the best translation of the Peshitta available in 2004, but it covered only Matthew through Acts 15, and he never seemed willing to finish it. I had a copy of it and by correspondence with Paul on the forum over the previous two years and by studying his work and style of translation, along with my intensive study of Aramaic, making use of the same materials that Paul had been using (Thackston's Introduction to Syriac, ), since written Aramaic must be studied to learn it, even by one who is a fluent speaker of the language, as Paul is, I think I have adopted his style and approach to translation to some extent, as a pupil adopts his teacher's methods and thinking to some extent.

I know he approves of the translation work I have done, as I sent him copies of the interlinear and the plain English edition when I first published them, and he expressed to me: "They are awesome. I love it".

## Lamsa's Translation:

Lamsa's translation of the entire Peshitta (OT and NT) in English is the only such translation to date. Lamsa's work is not carefully done and contains far too many accommodations to the King James Version and to the Massoretic Hebrew Old Testament text to be accepted as an accurate representation of the Peshitta Bible. Lamsa also allowed some of his heterodox beliefs to override acceptable translation of Aramaic words and therefore translated "Shada" ("demons") as "lunatics" in some places, since he believed demon possession was a superstition to be explained as mental illness.

I have not done a systematic study of Lamsa's beliefs, though I have seen enough to see that he is not a safe guide in his translation, as he allows his personal beliefs to taint and abort legitimate translation principles. By far, most of his work is reliably done, but the layman generally will not know where he goes wrong, so I cannot recommend Lamsa's work to the general public.

### **The Ethridge Translation:**

John Wesley Etheridge produced a very literal translation of the Peshitta in 1846.

#### **An example follows from Mark 1:1-13**

*THE beginning of the Gospel of Jeshu Meshicha, the Son of Aloha. As it is written in Eshaia the prophet:-*

*Behold, I send my angel before thy face,  
Who shall make straight \* thy way.  
The voice which crieth in the desert,  
Prepare the way of the Lord,  
Make level his paths.*

*Juchanon was in the desert, baptizing, and proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And all the region of Jehud and all the sons of Urishlem went out to him; and he baptized them in Jurdan the river, while they were confessing their sins. But Juchanon himself was clothed with a garment of the hair of camels, and engirded with a belt of leather upon his loins; and his food was locusts and wilderness honey. And he proclaimed and said, Behold, (One) cometh after me, who is mightier than I; he, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to bow myself to unloose. I have baptized you with waters; but he shall baptize you with the Spirit of Holiness.*

*And it was in those days that Jeshu came from Natsrath of Galila, and was baptized in Jurdan by Juchanon. And as soon as he had ascended from the waters, he saw the heavens part asunder, and the Spirit, as a dove, descend upon him. And the voice was from the heavens, Thou art my Son, the Beloved: in thee I have delighted. And immediately the Spirit led him forth into the desert. And he was there in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satana: and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.*

#### **And Acts 1:1-11**

*THE former writing, O Theophilus, I wrote concerning all those (things) which our Lord Jeshu Meshiha began to do and to teach, until that day in which he was taken up, after that he had instructed 1 those apostles whom he had chosen by the Holy Spirit: to whom also he showed himself alive, after he had suffered, with many signs, for forty days, appearing to them, and discoursing on the kingdom of Aloha. And when he had eaten bread with them, he directed them that from*

*Urishlem they should not remove; but await the promise of the Father, which, [said he,] you have heard from me. For Juhanon baptized with waters, but you shall be baptized with the Spirit of Holiness after days not many.*

*But they when assembled asked him, and said to him, Our Lord, at this time wilt thou restore 2 the kingdom to Israel ? He saith to them, This is not yours to know the time or the times which the Father hath reposed in his own authority: but when the Spirit of Holiness hath come upon you, you shall receive power to be made unto me the witnesses, in Urishlem and in all Jehud, and also among the Shomroyee, and unto the confines of the earth.*

*And as these he said, while they beheld him, he was taken up, and the cloud received him, and he was covered from their eyes. And while they looked to the heavens 3 as he went, two men were found standing with them in white vestments; and they said to them, Men, Galiloyee, why stand you looking to the heavens 3 ? this Jeshu who is taken up from you into the heavens will so come as you have seen him ascend into the heavens.*

Etheridge is much more literal than Lamsa, but also much less readable. He also uses archaic Elizabethan English of the King James Version, and the transliterations of many names and words throughout are unrecognizable. For "God" he supplies, "Aloha".

### **The Murdock Translation:**

James Murdock's is the best of the three translations among Lamsa,'s Etheridge's and Murdock's. Murdock's also used the KJV's archaic English and relied on Anglicized Greek name forms: Jesus, John, Mary, Paul, James, etc. I had found enough minor errors in Murdock to justify another translation, plus the fact that he and the others relied on the Harklean Version of the Western five books- 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation, instead of the critical collated editions of John Gwynn for those books published in 1897 & in 1909. Gwynn's editions are used in the 1905 Syriac Peshitta NT I have translated.

Another fact that compelled me to translate the 1905 Peshitta NT was that I perceived that the Name of God had been ignored in all the other translations I had read, except for Younan's interlinear, which translated "Marya" - the Aramaic rendering of YHWH as "LORD", to indicate that it is the Tetragrammaton Sacred Name of God.

No one had done an interlinear NT that was still in print, and I was convinced that an interlinear was the best format with which to start, as it comports to my view of verbal inspiration of scripture, making a word for word translation the most reverent and accurate way to translate. A plain English prose translation can then be formed from the interlinear, with a knowledge of Aramaic idioms and how to

represent them in English.

**The Janet Magiera Translation:**

Several other translations have been published since 2006. Janet Magiera published hers in June 2006; it is an English only prose edition. I have seen samples of her work, but I do not have a copy of her NT. She appears to have outdone her mentor Dr. Lamsa, in that she translates more objectively and has also translated the critical 1905 Peshitta edition I used. I cannot judge her translation by the limited knowledge I have of it.

**The AENT Translation:**

Andrew Gabriel Roth has also published a 2008 translation called The Aramaic English New Testament. A friend sent me a copy and asked me to evaluate it. I am absolutely sure that Andrew has reproduced two other translations in this volume with minor revisions of certain words and names throughout by search and replace word processing, amounting to changing about 5% of the text. The other 95% is Paul Younan's English only translation of the Gospels and Acts 1-15, taken from his interlinear by Lawrence Sheets and posted on [http://aramaicpeshitta.com/AramaicNTtools/peshitta\\_interlinear.htm](http://aramaicpeshitta.com/AramaicNTtools/peshitta_interlinear.htm)

Andrew used James Murdock's translation of Acts 16 through the rest of the New Testament. Galatians is the only exception, which Andrew appears to have translated himself.

If Roth had credited Younan and Murdock for their translations as his sources which he lightly revised, he would be guiltless of the charge of plagiarism. As it is, he is guilty. He never credited those men for his English translation text, and theirs comprises 95% of the text, down to word for word agreement and word order, even misspellings and grammar errors are duplicated in places.

May his own conscience judge him and bring him to repentance before he stands at the Judgment Seat of our Lord Messiah.

God knows this testimony is true. Anyone who accesses <http://aramaicpeshitta.com/> can verify this for himself if he has a copy of Andrew's NT by comparing Younan's English only and Murdock's translation with his AENT. Murdock's was revised a while back into modern English and posted online and Andrew most likely used the revised edition of Murdock; otherwise he revised it to modern English himself with a word processor, such as MS Word.