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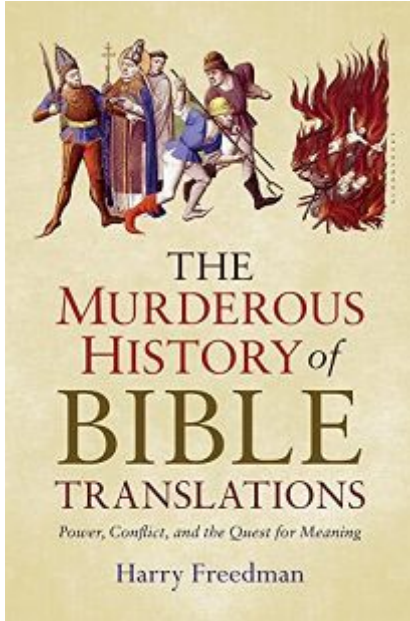
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The Murderous History of Bible Translations: Power, Conflict, and the Quest for Meaning

Harry Freedman. Bloomsbury, \$28 (256p) ISBN 978-1-63286-601-1

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Aramaic and Hebrew scholar Freedman (*The Gospels' Veiled Agenda*) vividly explains how and why scripture has been translated, beginning shortly after the death of Alexander the Great, and carrying through to the present day, including the recent Queen James Bible. The author is open about his populist aim—to tell “the story of the translated Bible,” without being a lengthy comprehensive history that would appeal more to scholars—and he succeeds in achieving that goal. Freedman buttresses his contention that while most translations were undertaken to provide access to

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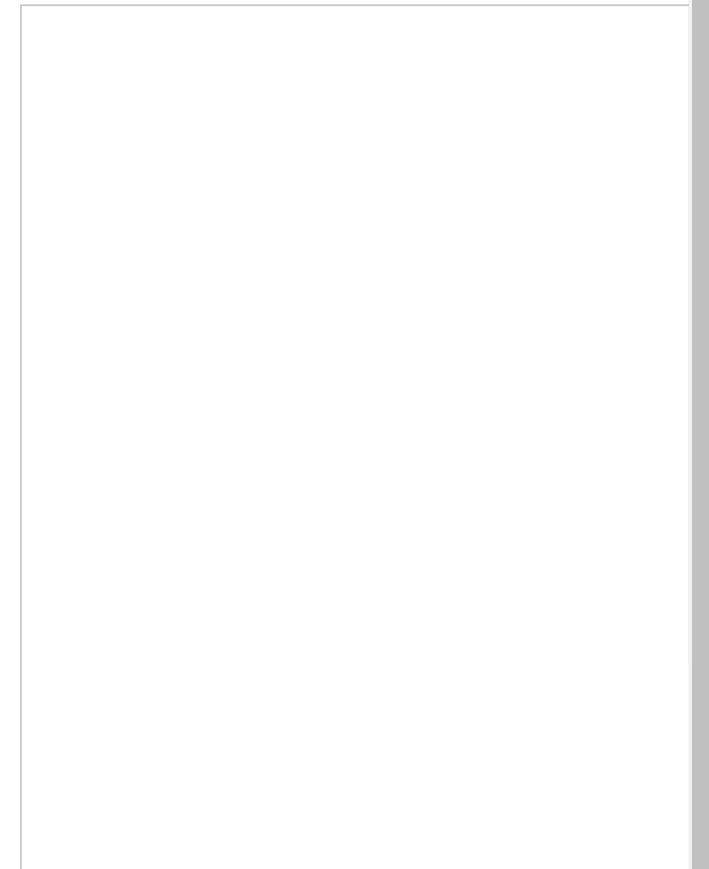
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the masses, and thus be “radical, liberating, and inspirational,” religious conservatives used translations for the opposite reason, as a “barrier to social evolution.” Freedman also demonstrates the enduring power of word choices, for example, how Jerome’s Vulgate presentation of Moses spawned anti-Semitic superstitions that all Jews had horns, and, even more significantly, how the Septuagint translating the Hebrew word *almah* as *virgin* instead of *young woman* bolstered Christian assertions that the Hebrew Bible foretold the birth of Jesus. For those interested in the complex history of Bible translation, this is a must-read. (Nov.)

DETAILS

