



Gergely JUHÁSZ, *Translating Resurrection. An Early Sixteenth-Century Exegetical Debate in Antwerp between the Protestant Bible Translators William Tyndale and George Joye in Its Historical and Theological Context*, PhD Dissertation, K.U.Leuven, lxxii + 428 pp.

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## ABSTRACT

καταβαινόντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους,  
διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς,  
ἵνα μηδενὶ διηγήσωνται ἃ εἶδον,  
εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ.  
Καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς, συζητοῦντες  
τί ἐστὶ τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι  
(E<sup>1522</sup>, Mk 9:9-10)

*As they cam dounte from the hill/ he charged them/  
that they shulde tell no man what they had sene/  
tyll the sonne of man were ryfen from deeth agayne  
And they kepte that jainge within them  
and demaunded won of another/  
what that ryfinge from deeth agayne shulde meane?  
(J<sup>1534</sup> The Gospel of S. Marke. The.IX. Chapter. B)*

My PhD dissertation in Theology presents an exegetical debate from the history of New Testament exegesis between the Protestant Bible Translators William Tyndale and George Joye in 1534-1535, both working at the time in Antwerp. My study fills the gap in the new interest in Joye by presenting an original view of the Tyndale-Joye debate based on first hand evidence and placing it into its proper historico-theological context.

After initially situating the Tyndale-Joye debate in its political and historical context, I introduce the two parties as well as the available sources concerning the debate (among which most importantly Joye's *Apologie*), and give a synopsis of the *status quaestionis* in my **first, introductory chapter**. I show how what I call the 'conservative consensus' (the general opinion in the literature) has fallen short of adequately portraying the debate due to methodological fallacies and lack of interest in Joye's person and works. I recognise that some authors do present the reader with specific insights into the debate and its background, but none can be said to have treated the issue impartially or exhaustively. The evaluation of Joye underwent a major change in the second half of the twentieth century. In the last few decades, there has been a new interest in studying Joye's achievements independently from his quarrel with Tyndale. His works and person have received some scholarly attention, but the consideration of his debate with Tyndale and of Joye's *Apologie* has stagnated.

The sixteenth-century interest in issues concerning some kind of afterlife existence is neither exceptional nor without precedent. In order to illustrate and position Tyndale and Joye's debate on the fate of the dead, and its broader ideological context within the sixteenth century, a brief bird's eye view of the eschatological ideas that have influenced the debate is presented in the **second chapter**. I restrict my survey to the extent to which these concepts were relevant and effective to the Tyndale-Joye controversy. First I present the biblical passages that were used in the sixteenth century for establishing a theology of post-mortem existence. Subsequently the Church Fathers' position is discussed especially with regard to the various heterodox positions, as these were frequently cited by Catholic polemicists in order to refute the

Reformers. I argue that during the Middle Ages four intertwined tendencies can be observed in connection with notions about death and afterlife: (1) a prevalent fascination with post-mortem existence in general, and Purgatory in particular, manifesting itself in legends and mystical writings as well as in the increasing popularity of the veneration of saints and their relics and of the suffrages for the souls of the dead; (2) speculative scholastic theology ruminating on issues of afterlife, fertilised by the rediscovery of Aristotle's philosophy in the 13th century, engendering the birth of the Averroistic school as well as the systematic theology of Thomas Aquinas, (3) the appearance of heterodox movements and religious radicals denying some aspect of the teaching of the Church, and consequently, (4) a series of official proclamations stipulating the belief in ever more detail in the language of the philosophy of the time.

**Chapter three** concentrates on the quest for an understanding of after-life issues in the sixteenth century, the immediate historico-theological context of the debate between Tyndale and Joye. I present the interpretative solutions to the problems of translation of various biblical texts and how they caused dogmatic disagreements at the dawn of the early Reformation period. I present the ideas of *inter alios* Wessel Gansfort, Desiderius Erasmus, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Martin Luther, Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt, Gerhard Westerburg, Philip Melanchthon, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Bartholomaeus Westheimer, Heinrich Bullinger, Thomas More, John Fisher and John Frith. Here, too, the principles of reference and relevance to the Tyndale-Joye controversy are primordial in selecting and presenting the material. My main focus is the contextualisation of the Tyndale-Joye controversy by situating it against its immediate religious and exegetical background of the early sixteenth century as it was understood by the parties. I show that not only the question of soul sleep vs. immortality of the soul was a much debated issue at the time, but that also many beliefs concerning a post-mortem existence were called into question and it is against this background that the Tyndale-Joye debate has to be understood. These questions have never been studied with regard to the Tyndale-Joye controversy. Nonetheless, as I demonstrate, many of these theological works had a direct influence on the debate and Joye explicitly refers to some of them in his *Apologye*. I pay some attention to a number of personal arguments in various debates on this subject in the era. These are given as samples of the language and the style of the contemporary way of debating such issues, to familiarise the reader with the tone of such debates at the time in order to be able to make a better assessment of arguments of the same kind in the Tyndale-Joye debate and help to place Tyndale's and Joye's similar notes of harsh accusation within the wider context.

The **fourth chapter** treats the actual controversy between Tyndale and Joye. I present Tyndale's translation strategy in his NT editions. I discuss the earliest traces of the controversy preserved only in manuscript form: Joye's letter to Hugh Latimer under the name of John Coke, intercepted by a spy of Cromwell. In this letter Joye points to his exegetical arguments on the subject. I present the circumstances that led to the publication of Tyndale's NT with Joye's corrections and the actual variations he introduced into the work (most importantly the change of Tyndale's "resurreccion" translating forms and cognates of the verbs ἀνίστημι and ἐγείρω into "the lyfe after this" or some other similar expression in Mk 12:18-27 *et par.*; Lk 14:14; Jn 5:29; Acts 23:6,8; 24:15,21; and Heb 11:35, referring to the intermediate state of the soul rather than to the bodily resurrection). I examine Tyndale's 'unfriendly' letter printed in his

second NT edition. Based on the available evidence I reconstruct an original and plausible scenario for the documented attempt to reach a reconciliation between Tyndale and Joye and how it was doomed to fail. I describe briefly Joye's second NT revision with its concluding remarks on the debated issue. I present a detailed study of Joye's *Apologie*, in which the following aspects are treated: (1) Joye's non-theological arguments, (2) Joye's theological arguments: the belief of the Sadducees, Joye's understanding of the term 'resurrection' in passages where he altered Tyndale's translation, Joye's understanding of the term 'resurrection' in passages which are left unaltered, Joye's other exegetical arguments, (3) Joye's scholarship and use of sources (I show how Joye, contrary to the conservative consensus, was a meticulous scholar indicating his sources, sometimes even providing page numbers, and how his understanding of the term 'resurrectio' was identical to that of Zwingli, Melancthon and Westheimer), (4) Joye's style and translation strategy. I argue that Joye's inclination to variations in the translations is part and parcel of his universal translation strategy according to which he tries to render the original text in such a way that it does not necessitate any further explanations, remarks, marginal notes or other reading aids.

In my **conclusion** I reflect on the question of how the debate between William Tyndale and George Joye contributed to the laying of the foundations of a new Protestant eschatology. Thanks to the Reformers, the Christian message was re-thought and re-formulated for the men and women of the early modern era. The debate placed the emphasis on the need for solid scriptural arguments in matters of faith. A new methodology of exegesis emerged, in which the historical and grammatical analyses of the text in its context rather than the symbolic-aesthetic and associative character of the sacred text predominated. I also argue that the answers offered by the Reformers from various denominations were related to their respective anthropology: whether time and space are inherent constituents of the human person or whether these are earthly dimensions that have no meaning 'beyond' death. Martin Luther, followed by William Tyndale and John Frith, seems to have opted for the second position, while other Reformers, like Huldrych Zwingli, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger and George Joye apparently upheld the traditional view and claimed that both body and soul are subject to time. The question of soul sleep versus intermediate state of the soul can thus be seen to have hinged not on the issue of an eschatological time-table for the human person, but on that of the nature of the human person. The Tyndale-Joye debate on 'translating resurrection' has to be positioned in the context of this broader debate on the fate and nature of the human person, and cannot be reduced to a merely etymological question. Finally, to the fundamental question, whether Joye was in the right to change "resurreccion" to "lyfe after this" in those places, I answer the following:

"If Joye had been my student, I would have underlined his "lyfe after this" in red and would have put a big red question mark in the margin. I would also have asked him to explain his choice of words for the translation. We can be grateful that Tyndale's second foreword in the November 1534 revision put this question mark alongside Joye's translation and that it provoked Joye's *Apologie*. Although the available historical evidence suggests otherwise, I would like to believe that Joye's *Apologie* might have satisfied Tyndale." (JUHÁSZ, *Translating Resurrection*, p. 410)