

Arthur John Arberry as an Interpreter of the Holy Qur'an

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Abstract

Latin was the first Western language in which the Holy Qur'an was translated. In 1143, An Englishman Robert of Ketton completed his Latin translation of the Islamic scripture. Andrae du Ryer rendered the Holy Qur'an into French and published it in 1647. Alexander Ross was the first English translator who published his translation in 1649 that was actually based on du Ryer's French translation. In 1734, Geogre Sale published his English translation of the Holy Qur'an directly from Arabic. Afterwards, J.M.Rodwell, E.H.Palmer and Richard Bell published their translations of the Holy Qur'an. Arthur John Arberry was also an English translator who published two works on Quranic translation. In 1953, he published "The Holy Koran: An Introduction with Selections" in which various passages of the Qur'an had been translated. In 1955, he published complete rendering of the Holy Qur'an. In this paper both of the supra-mentioned works have been analyzed and his errors and lacunae pointed out.

Key words: Koran, Translation, Interpretation, Orientalism

Introduction

Arthur John Arberry (1905—69) was a highly prolific scholar of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic Studies. He was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. He spent several years in the Middle East perfecting his Arabic and Persian language skills. For two years (1932-34), he served as Head of the Department of Classics at Cairo

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University in Egypt. In 1934, he returned home to become the Assistant Librarian at the Library of the India Office, a post recently vacated by C.A. Storey. Cambridge University awarded him the degree of Litt.D. in 1936. On September 1, 1939 (during World War II), he was transferred to another Civil Service department, to the War Office's Postal Censorship Department in Liverpool and, six months later, to the Ministry of Information, London. In 1944, Arberry was appointed to the Professorship of Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. After two years, he was elected as Professor of Arabic and Head of the Near and Middle East Department and in the following year he joined his alma mater Pembroke College, Cambridge as Sir Thomas Adam's Professor of Arabic, a post which he held for the remainder of his life. The prolific writer and translator published 90 books, which appear under his name in the catalogue of the Cambridge University Library, more than 70 articles in scholarly journals, in addition to numerous reviews and contributions to encyclopaedias.¹

Arberry wrote on different topics pertaining to oriental learning. He not only translated from Arabic and Persian literature but even rendered some of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's poetry into English. He wrote on Islamic mysticism, Islamic civilization and orientalism. He devoted a lot of time to comprehend the Holy Qur'an and tried to present it in English with integrity. In 1953, he published "The Holy Koran: An Introduction with Selections" in which he included translation of various passages of the Qur'an and small surahs under 71 titles². Gibb estimates that these selected passages amount only to one-sixth of the entire Qur'an.³ He begins with the first surah of the Book, al-Fatihah, 'The opening prayer' in his words.⁴ The first section represents the Qur'anic teachings on God, His unity, His attributes, and the evidences of His existence to be seen in nature. The second group collects together some of the personal experiences of the Prophet and offers fine examples of rhetorical artistry. The third and longest section comprises those parts which recount the experiences of earlier prophets.

In this work, Arberry seems different from previous translators of the Holy Qur'an. Rightly did Gibb observe: "it can be confidently said that this

version offers to the English reader a much more faithful and comprehensible outline both of its ethical and religious teaching and of its literary quality than any previous translation".⁵

In the beginning, he has written an introduction in 22 pages that contains a brief review of the English Qur'anic renderings published in the West before him. He mentioned Edward William Lane, Stanley Lane-Poole, George Sale, E.H.Palmer, J.M.Rodwell and Marmaduke Pickthall. The other orientalist mentioned here are D.S. Margoliouth, H.A.R. Gibb, R.A. Nicholson, Thomas Carlyle, R. Blachère, Dr.J. -C. Mardus and Theodor Noldeke. Arberry tried to repudiate the wrong approach of the orientalist. Unsatisfied by the work done and methodology used by his predecessors, he deviated from their tradition with an urge that 'it is best to make a fresh beginning'⁶. He confesses to his readers that even though he was not a Muslim; his intention was to endeavour fairly, not only philologically but also imaginatively, by making the effort always to approach and apprehend these scriptures as if he believed them to be divinely inspired.⁷

According to Rosenthal, Arberry's Introduction is important for two reasons: his treatment of the style and his insistence on treating the Qur'an as the Muslim believer's inspiring Scripture.⁸ The language of the Holy Qur'an is allusive, rhymed, heavily charged with emotional overtones, many of which lie in its sentence structure and rhythms. Professor Arberry has acutely set himself, to analyze at least one of these aesthetic qualities; its rhythmic structure. He aimed to preserve in his translation corresponding (but not, of course, identical) English rhythmical structures.⁹ The bibliography given in the end, manifests that he had consulted vast literature pertaining to the Qur'an in European languages like French, German, Italian and Latin besides English.¹⁰ Margaret Smith recognizes it a 'good bibliography of Qur'anic Literature'¹¹ in her review.

Later on, Arthur John Arberry published complete translation of the Holy Qur'an in English language under the title "The Koran Interpreted" in 1955. It was printed in two volumes; the first volume contains translation of 20 surahs and remaining 94 surahs are in the second volume.¹² Each volume has its own preface, and the second volume contains an index to the entire work. Later on, it was printed in single volume. Praising

Arberry's achievement, S.A. Skilliter thinks that "The Koran Interpreted" was Arberry's master-work for which he was especially qualified".¹³

In the preface, he has traced the history of the English translations of the Holy Qur'an before him and discussed brief history of its compilation. He has mainly devoted it to the study of English translations of Sale (1734), Rodwell(1861), Palmer(1880), Pickthall (1930), and Richard Bell (1937-39). He has referred to the contents of some surahs and also told about the difference in his translation and those of his predecessors. He tells his readers that 'all previous versions of the Koran, like the original text itself, having been printed as continuous prose, the rhapsodic nature of its composition has been largely lost to ear and sight; by showing the text as here presented, some faint impression may be given of its drastic impact and most moving beauty.'¹⁴ He argued that the Qur'an should be ranked among the greatest masterpieces of mankind on the basis of his study pertaining to the intricate and richly varied rhymes.¹⁵ He concedes the orthodox claim that the Koran (like all other literary masterpieces) is untranslatable and calls modestly and honestly his version a mere interpretation. According to Arberry, the Holy Qur'an is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both. He has tried to compose clear and unmannered English, avoiding the Biblical style favoured by some of his predecessors. There is one feature of antique usage which he has retained; it is absolutely necessary, if confusion is to be avoided, to mark the distinction between the second person singular and the second person plural. He did not add footnotes anywhere.

The author of "The Koran Interpreted" has been careful in rendering the Muslim scripture. Some examples are quoted below:

1. Arberry translates the verse 3:45 as: "And they devised, and God devised, and God is the best of devisers."¹⁶ He avoided the rendering like 'God is the best of plotters' as translators like Maulana 'Abdul Majid Daryabadi did.¹⁷
2. His translation of the verse 12:24 is worth-reading that pertains to the Prophet Yusuf. "For she desired him; and he would have taken her, but he saw the proof of his Lord."¹⁸
3. In the verse 12:76, he showed extra care while translating '*kidna*'. His rendering 'We contrived'¹⁹ is quite appropriate.

4. He rendered initial part of the verse 66:12 into English carefully as: "And Mary, Imran's daughter who guarded her virginity".²⁰
5. Unlike some Western scholars, he never misspelled the name of the Prophet of

Islam²¹, upon whom be peace and greeting.

6. His translation of verses 26:224-26 is very accurate: "And the poets---the perverse follow them; hast not thou seen how they wander in every valley and how they say that which they do not?"²²

Praising this translation Dr.Falahi says that here 'the translation done by A.J. Arberry is appropriate'. According to him the word *al-ghawun* may be translated as 'the erring', 'those straying in evil', 'misled', 'misguided' and such like that. But 'the perverse' translated by Arberry to convey the sense of persons quite contrary to established moral values, is bold and satisfactory expression.²³

Here it is pertinent to mention that there are minor variations on his previously published translation of selected passages of the Holy Qur'an. e.g. Compare the rendering of the first five verses of surah 96. In "The Holy Koran : An Introduction With Selections", Arberry's translation is as follows:

"RECITE: In the Name of thy Lord,who created---Created Man of a clinging.

RECITE: and thy Lord is the most Generous

Who taught by the Calamus

Taught Man that he knew not." ²⁴

But he used 'Pen' for *Qalam* and 'blood-clot' for '*alaq* instead of 'Calamus' and 'clinging' in "The Koran Interpreted"²⁵ but his first rendering of '*alaq* was more appropriate. According to Dr. Maurice Bucaille and some Muslim exegetes, "something which clings" is the translation of the word '*alaq*.²⁶ Actually, it is an embryonic stage of human development that resembles leech.²⁷ Dr. Muhammad Tahir al-Qadri had rendered '*alaq* as 'a hanging mass (clinging) like a leech' in his Qur'anic translation.²⁸

There are some drawbacks in its printing. Firstly, it does not contain Arabic text because it was mainly intended for English readers. Secondly, every verse has not been numbered and the fifth consecutive verse of each Surah is numbered. It would have been more beneficial for readers if the individual division of verses had been brought out. Thirdly, the numbers mentioned against the verses are incorrect. Perhaps he has used the Arabic text from Gustavus Fluegel's "*Corani textus arabicus*" which has different verse numbering. Fourthly, he has not followed proper system of transliteration. Under the influence of his predecessors, he transliterated the Qur'an as *Koran*, Al-Hijr as *el-Hijr*, Luqman as *Lokman* and Quraysh as *Koraish*.

Arberry has translated the titles of some surahs in quite a different way. In the following table, these names are quoted from three translations:

Surah No.	Arabic	Arberry's Rendering	Pickthall's Rendering	A.Y. 'Ali's Rendering
7	Al-A'raf	The Battlements	The Heights	The Heights
25.	Al-Furqan	Salvation	The Criterion	The Criterion
30.	Ar-Rum	The Greeks	The Romans	The Roman Empire
39.	Az-Zumar	The Companies	The Troops	The Crowds

45.	Al-Jathiyah	Hobbling	Crouching	Bowing the Knee
56.	Al-Waqi'ah	The Terror	The Event	The Inevitable Event
59.	Al-Hashr	The Mustering	Exile	The Gathering or Banishment
67.	Al-Mulk	The Kingdom	The Sovereignty	Dominion
83.	Al-Mutaffifin	The Stinters	Defrauding	Dealing in Fraud
88.	Al-Ghashiyah	The Enveloper	The Overwhelming	The Overwhelming Event
93.	Ad-Duha	The Forenoon	The Morning Hours	The Glorious Morning Light
94.	Ash-Sharh	The Expanding	Solace	The Expansion
103.	Al-'Asr	Afternoon	The Declining Day	Time through the Ages
110.	An-Nasr	Help	Triumph	Help
111.	Al-Masad	Perish	Palm Fibre	(The Father of)Flame

No human work is completely free from errors and shortcomings: To err is human. Arberry's translation also has some lacunae. Some Muslim scholars like Muhammad Mohar 'Ali²⁹, A.R.Kidwai³⁰, Abdel Moneim A.Hosni³¹ and Towqueer 'Alam Falahi³² have pointed out some errors, distortion and mistranslation in his work. Some scholars have criticized his work vehemently. Criticizing Arberry's rendering Dr. Muhammad Mohar 'Ali (1932-2007) says, "His translation, though an improvement upon that of Palmer, contains many of the mistakes and misinterpretations characteristics of the orientalist. It is also difficult to understand many of the passages of the translation independently of the text." ³³

Lexical Gap

An attempt has been made to present some lacunae in this work in the following:

1. He has rendered "*al-Rahman*" into "the Merciful" in *Bismillah* and "the All-Merciful" in *al-Fatihah*. Similarly, "*al-Rahim*" has been translated into "the compassionate" and "the All-Compassionate" respectively.³⁴ This shows inconsistency in his work. Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali has rendered these Divine names into "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful".³⁵ Muhammad Asad has used "the Most Gracious" and "the Dispenser of Grace".³⁶ Unlike Arberry, these translators have translated these divine epithets in similar way through out their work.
2. Arberry has mistranslated the last part of 4:147 as "God is All-thankful, All-knowing".³⁷ He has used 'All-thankful' as equivalent of *Shakir*. According to lexicographers God is said to be *Shakir* in the sense of giving rewards to men for their obedience.³⁸ So, when it is used for God the translation should not be thankful or grateful. That is why, the Muslim translators have rendered it in a different way as under:
"Allah was ever Responsive, Aware". (Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall³⁹)

“It is God that recogniseth (all good), and knoweth all things”.
(‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali⁴⁰)

“God is always responsive to gratitude, All-knowing”.
(Muhammad Asad⁴¹)

3. He translates *Shakur* as ‘All-grateful’⁴² in verse 2:158 but when this epithet is applied to God, according to E.W.Lane, it means ‘He who approves or rewards, or forgives, much or largely’. It is He Who gives large reward for small or a few, works: He in whose estimation small, or few, works performed by His servants increase, and who multiplies his reward to them.⁴³ So it may Correctly be translated as ‘Responsive’ as done by Pickthall.⁴⁴
4. The translator has misunderstood “*al-Nabi al-Ummi*” as “the Prophet of the common folk”.⁴⁵ It should be translated as “the unlettered Prophet”.⁴⁶
5. His translation of verse 15:53 is incorrect: “They said, ‘Be not afraid; behold, we give thee good tidings of a cunning boy.’”⁴⁷ A similar mistranslation can be read in verse 51:28 saying, “They said, ‘be not afraid!’ And they gave him good tidings of a cunning boy.”⁴⁸ The fallacy of his rendering is evident from his translation itself. ‘A cunning boy’ would not be foretold as a blessing for a Prophet. The Arabic words used in the verses are *ghulam* and ‘*alim*. The former means ‘a boy, a youth, frequently used in the Koran for a son’⁴⁹ while the latter means ‘learned, knowing, wise’.⁵⁰ So, ‘a boy possessing wisdom’ should be used instead of ‘cunning boy’.
6. In some verses Arberry has left out some Arabic words from the text either knowingly or unknowingly. Examples are quoted here:
 - a. In verse 3:43, he has left out *ma‘ ar-raki‘in* (with those who bow). His translation is as under: “Mary, be obedient to the Lord, prostrating and bowing before Him.”⁵¹ Its complete translation

would be “Mary, be obedient to the Lord, prostrating and bowing before Him with those who bow.”

- b. He has translated verse 60:12 as “O Prophet, when believing women come to thee, swearing fealty to thee upon the terms that they will not associate with God anything, and will not steal, neither commit adultery, nor slay their children, nor bring a calumny they forge between their hands and their feet, nor disobey thee in aught honourable, ask God’s forgiveness for them; God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.”⁵² Arberry skipped the Arabic phrase *fabayi ‘unna* meaning ‘then accept their allegiance’.
7. The translation of the verse 10:88 is incorrect: Moses said, ‘Our Lord, Thou hast given to Pharaoh and his Council adornment and possessions in this present life .Our Lord, let them go astray from Thy way; Our Lord, obliterate their possessions, and harden their hearts so that they do not believe till they see the painful chastisement’.⁵³

Asad has correctly and beautifully translated it as follows:

“And Moses prayed: “O Our Sustainer! Verily, splendour and riches hast Thou vouchsafed ,in the life of this world, unto Pharaoh and his great ones—with the result, O our Sustainer, that they are leading[others]astray from Thy path! O our Sustainer! Wipe out their riches, and hardened their hearts, so that they may not attain to faith ere they see the grievous suffering [that awaits them]!”⁵⁴

8. His translation of verse 67:1 is as follows: “Blessed be He in whose hand is the Kingdom.”⁵⁵ He has used ‘the kingdom’ as equivalent of *al-mulk* that is incorrect. It has been rendered into ‘sovereignty’ by Pickthall⁵⁶ and ‘dominion’ by both ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali⁵⁷ and Muhammad Asad.⁵⁸
9. Arberry translates verse 8:59 as “And thou art not to suppose that they who disbelieve have outstripped Me; they cannot frustrate My will.”⁵⁹This translation is incorrect and needs a critical approach. The use of ‘thou are not to suppose’ for *la-yahsabanna* is a blunder committed by Arberry. This conjugation shows to be Third Person and Singular Number, whereas Arberry used the Second person in translating the same. His translation ‘are not to

suppose' is also inaccurate because the tense of verb is Aorist for emphasis (mudari' athqal). This conjugation, in no way, allows such kind of translation. Therefore, the exact translation of *la-yahsabanna* would be as 'let not those who disbelieve, suppose'. The word *sabaqu* is simple Past, not perfect as Arberry has translated as 'have outstripped'. 'Can outstrip' is accurate translation of the verb *sabaqu*. The word 'Me' is also deviation from exact sense. It must have been given under brackets because of being an addition on the part of translator. ⁶⁰Pickthall translates it correctly as follows: "And let not those who disbelieve suppose that they can outright (Allah's Purpose). They cannot escape." ⁶¹

10. He has translated the first part of verse 9:64 as "The hypocrites are afraid, lest a sura should be sent down against them, telling thee what is in their hearts." ⁶²Arberry has translated the word *tunabi'u hum* as 'telling thee' which is absolutely false. He could neither translate the verb nor pronoun correctly. The word *Tanbih* of Arabic is meant for information, proclamation, admonition and somewhat for intimation but conclusively not for 'telling' as used by Arberry ⁶³ and the pronoun *hum* means 'them'. Similarly, he translates *tunazzala 'alayhim* as 'sent down against them'. The text of the verse has been correctly translated by Pickthall as "The hypocrites fear lest a sura should be revealed exposing what is in their hearts." ⁶⁴ Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali's rendering runs, "The hypocrites are afraid lest a sura should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts." ⁶⁵
11. *Furqan* means 'a distinction or criterion' but Arberry mistranslates it as 'salvation'. He translates verse 2:53 as "And when We gave to Moses the book and the salvation, that haply you should be guided." ⁶⁶ Both Pickthall and Abdullah Yusuf Ali translate it as 'criterion'. ⁶⁷ Similarly, Arberry translates *yaum al-furqan* as 'the day of salvation' ⁶⁸ in verse 8:41. It should be correctly translated as 'the Day of Discrimination' ⁶⁹ or 'the Day of Testing'. ⁷⁰
12. In verse 7:157, he translates the phrase *yahmuru hum bi'l-ma'rufi yanhauna 'an'l-munkar* as 'bidding them to honour, and forbidding them dishonour'. ⁷¹ The Arabic words *ma'ruf* and *munkar* cannot be translated as honour and dishonour. Therefore, the translation of Arberry is incorrect. Abdullah Yusuf Ali renders it correctly as 'For he commands them what is just and forbids them what is

evil'⁷²and Pickthall also translates it in appropriate manner as 'He will enjoin on them what is right and forbid them what is wrong'.⁷³

13. Arberry translates verse 2:58 as follows: And say unburdening; We will forgive you your transgressions, and increase the good-doers."

⁷⁴ His translation is incorrect if the meanings of the words *hittatun* and *khatayakum* in the text are kept in mind. The former means 'a putting down, remembrance of sins, forgiveness'⁷⁵ and the latter denotes 'your sins'. Pickthall has correctly translated the verse as "and say: "Repentence." We will forgive your sins and will increase(rewards) for the right-doers."⁷⁶

14. He translates verses 11:25 as "And We sent Noah to his people: 'I am for you a warner, and a bearer of good tidings.'⁷⁷ The phrase 'a bearer of good tidings' is actually the translation of Arabic word *Bashir* that does not exist in the text. The text contains *nazirun mubin* meaning 'a plain warner'. Its correct translation by Pickthall is as "And We sent Noah to his people(and he said):I am a plain Warner to you."⁷⁸

15. The Arabic word from triconsonantal root *s-k-n* means 'to rest, dwell or abide'⁷⁹ but Arberry erroneously translates it as 'inherit' in verse 7:19 as follows: "O Adam, inherit thou and thy wife, the Garden, and eat of where you will..."⁸⁰ The Word *uskun* has been rendered as 'dwell' by both Pickthall⁸¹ and A. Yusuf Ali.⁸²

16. According to Hosni, Arberry's attempt to reproduce 'the sublime rhetoric' of the original or devise varied rhythms or rhythmic pattern to suit changes in subject- matter or tone in the original have not always been successful."⁸³

In this attempt, he ignored the original text leaving out some words untranslated in his translation. For instance, look at his translation of the first

four verses of Surah 51:

By the swift scatters

And the burden-bearer

And the smooth runners

And the partitioners.⁸⁴

In the fourth verse Arberry skipped the word *amrann* meaning 'by command'.

17. There are many mistakes of pronouns in the Arberry's translation.

Analysis of Arberry's and Pickthall's Translations

Arberry's translation

Pickthall's translation

Q 3.115 And whatever good *you* do, *you* shall not be denied the just reward of it.⁸⁵

And whatever good *they* do, *they* will not be denied the reward of it.⁸⁶

Q 9.70 Has there not come to *you* the tidings of those who were before *you*.⁸⁷

Has not the fame of those before *them* reached *them*.⁸⁸

Q11.46 Said He, 'Noah, he is not of thy family; *it is a deed not righteous*. Do not ask of Me that whereof thou hast no knowledge.⁸⁹

He said: O Noah! He is not of your household; *he is of evil conduct*, so ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge.⁹⁰

Q25.62 And He it is who made the night and day a succession, *for whom He desires to remember or He desires to be thankful*.⁹¹

And He it is Who hath appointed night and day in succession, *for him who desires to remember, or desires thankfulness*.⁹²

Q 26.108 So *serve you God*, and obey you me.⁹³

So *keep your duty to Allah*, and obey

Q32.23 Indeed, We gave Moses me.⁹⁴
the Book; so be not in doubt
concerning the encounter with
him.⁹⁵

Q 12.61 They said, 'We will solicit
him of *our* father; that we will do'.⁹⁷

Q 11.30 O my people, who will
help me against God, if I drive *you*
away.⁹⁹

We verily gave Moses the
Scripture; so be not in doubt of his
receiving *it*.⁹⁶

They said: We will try to win him
from *his* father; that we will surely
do.⁹⁸

And O my people! Who would
deliver me from Allah if I thrust
them away .¹⁰⁰

Commentaries on The Koran Interpreted

Apart from these shortcomings of Arberry's rendering, we cannot deny the fact that the translator made a sincere and diligent effort. He was a great scholar who tried his best to present the Holy Qur'an as he understood it. That is why; many authors of the east and west have praised his translation. Some scholars' remarks are quoted below.

A.R.Kidwai comments on Arberry's translation:

"A.J.Arberry's The Koran Interpreted no doubt stands out above the other English renderings by non-Muslims in terms of both its approach and quality".¹⁰¹

Khaleel Mohammed has assessed Arberry's English translation of the Holy Qur'an as follows:

"He rendered the Qur'an into understandable English and separated text from tradition. The translation is without prejudice and is probably the best around. The Arberry version has earned the admiration of intellectuals

worldwide and having been reprinted several times, remains the reference of choice for most academics.”¹⁰²

E.I.J. Rosenthal, who was a reader in Oriental Studies at University of Cambridge has praised the rendering of Arberry in a beautiful way. He states:

“Here again we see all the qualities of this re-creator in English of Persian and Arabic literary treasures: a superb mastery of the original tongue, a fine sense of style and great sympathy and genuine understanding. As the title implies, it is not a literal translation, but an imaginative rendering which always captures the spirit and ,I am convinced, the meaning of the original Arabic.”¹⁰³

Nabia Abbott thinks that Arberry displays a masterly command of the classical Arabic and an intimate knowledge of the Qur’an itself both as a seventh century book and as the living ,vibrant and rhythmical message that is still chanted from minaret tops throughout the Muslim world .To these qualifications are added a musical ear ,poetic diction ,and a touch of mysticism—all of which combine with the above to produce an interpretation of the Qur’an that is genuine and artistic to a degree unattained by previous translators.¹⁰⁴

Abraham I. Katsh observes: “Arberry’s version breaks new ground .It is scholarly, accurate, and remarkably successful in recapturing the charm and the rhythm of the original text. Hence it becomes a must for the scholar and the student of Islam”¹⁰⁵

Joseph A .Devenny considers that “The Koran Interpreted” is a meritorious attempt to solve a literary problem and introduces the Westerners ‘sweet music’ of the Qur’an. He writes:

“Out of the manifold stylistic beauty of the Koran,a gem whose loveliness is not at once compelling to the uncultivated Westerner ,Arberry has been concerned to reproduce ,not so much rhyme itself ,as what he conceives to be the effect of Koranic rhyme .He is further concerned to render the very abruptness-of-presentation of much that is most arresting in the Glorious Koran.For both purposes he relies upon a single literary device in English

,viz., rhythm . Koranic rhyme serves, as he analyzes it, as a termination and a connection .This function he renders, generally, by translating a single Koranic verse into several successive English lines of loose rhythm rounded off by a much shorter line .The abruptness-of-presentation he conveys by corresponding variation of his loosely rhythmic English lines.”¹⁰⁶

Charles J. Adams calls it the most successful English translation of the Qur'an which captures much of the flavor of original Arabic in addition to representing the best of critical scholarship. ¹⁰⁷Andrew Christmann says that Arberry created the most frequently used and referred to translation of the twentieth century¹⁰⁸. Isma'il Ibrahim Nawwab considers “The Koran Interpreted(1955),a two-volume elegant version by the versatile and fair-minded scholar A.J.Arberry (d.1969),the doyen of orientalist translators of modern times”. ¹⁰⁹

Dr.Tawqueer 'Alam Falahi says, “I am not hesitant to say that Arberry having grip over Arabic, looks scrupulous in the appropriate usage of words in the most places of his translation.” ¹¹⁰

The author agrees with Nabia Abbott who considers that ‘Linguistic blunders, religious bias, political overtones, and Higher Criticism are restrained or banished.’ ¹¹¹ Arberry's interpretation is the best translation of the Holy Qur'an into English among the English renderings by non-Muslims. It would be more useful if Professor Arberry had appended commentary or footnotes to this translation of the Qur'an. In 1967, Professor W. Montgomery Watt published “Companion to the Qur'an: Based on the Arberry translation”. ¹¹² It provides a volume of footnotes designed for use with the Arberry translation .The aim was to provide the chief background material needed to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the Qur'an in translation. Such material falls under two heads, namely, that the concerning questions of translation, and that concerning questions of interpretation. ¹¹³ Watt has told about the period of revelation of each surah. He has also given Arabic titles of surahs. Arberry has used a simple form of transliteration of Arabic names but Watt adopted scholarly system of transliteration. If Arberry's translation is published along with Watt's exegetical notes, it would be more useful for

readers. Each surah should also contain its Arabic title and all verses should be numbered properly so that researchers can consult it easily.

Conclusion

The British orientalist have been working on Qur'anic studies since twelfth century. The first translation of the Qur'an in any Western language was in Latin done by Robert of Ketton in 1143 A.D. who originally belonged to England. This translation was published in 1543 by Theodor Bibliander. Alexander Ross published the first English translation of the Muslim Scripture in 1649 that was actually the translation of Du Ryer's French translation. George Sale translated the Qur'an directly from Arabic and published it in 1734 from London. His translation was followed by the renderings of J.M.Rodwell (1861), E.H. Palmer (1880), Richard Bell(1937-39) and Arthur J.Arberry(1955).E.W.Lane(1843),Stanley Lane-Poole(1882) and Arthur Jeffery(1958) published their selections as well. Arberry can be considered as the last famous orientalist who published his version of the Qur'an. He was different from his predecessors because he neither adopted chronological order of the Qur'an nor have any negative agenda in his *The Koran Interpreted*. His renderings of some verses can be criticized but his intension should not be objected. As an interpreter of the Qur'an he would always be remembered not only in the West but also by the scholars of the East and his translation would be regarded as an authoritative version of the Muslim Scripture among the English speaking Westerners.

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