

Hausa version of the Bible: between Hebrew and Arabic

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The present paper is aimed at the analysis of certain lexical aspects of the Hausa version of the Old Testament. Our previous analysis has demonstrated that the translation of the Old Testament into Hausa (Litafi Mai-Tsarki, Tsofon Alkawali) has been based on the Masoretic version of the Hebrew Bible, cf. Philippe Cassuto, Victor Porkhomovsky. Bible stories of Joseph and Moses and their translations into Hausa. // "African collection of papers", St. Petersburg, "Nauka", 2008, pp. 499-510. (In Russian).

It is necessary to emphasize that the Hausa translation of the Bible has been made in and for the situation, where a certain norm of lexical usage has been already formed in the general context of Islam. It makes a significant difference between the Hausa situation and the ones of the translation of the Bible into European languages. In the former case the vocabulary of a monotheistic religion has already been formed and could be used for the translation of the Bible. The translation of the Koran into Hausa is of major importance in this respect. On the other hand, the Arabic version of the Bible should also be taken into consideration. Thus, the major focus of our paper is aimed at the contrastive lexical analysis of the Hausa version of the Bible with the original Masoretic version, the Arabic version and the Hausa translation of the Koran.

The comparison with European versions provides a necessary framework for our study. English and French translations are chosen for this purpose since these two European languages are of major importance in the Hausa area.