

ISABEL HOFMEYR

The Portable Bunyan

A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINCETON AND OXFORD

ISABEL HOFMEYR

The Portable Bunyan

A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINCETON AND OXFORD

Copyright © 2004 by Princeton University Press

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 3 Market Place, Woodstock,
Oxfordshire OX20 1SY

In South Africa by Wits University Press, PO Wits, 2050 Johannesburg

ISBN 1-86814-403-8

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hofmeyr, Isabel.

The portable Bunyan : a transnational history of *The pilgrim's progress* / Isabel Hofmeyr.

p. cm. — (Translation/transnation)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-691-11655-5 (acid-free paper) — ISBN 0-691-11656-3 (pbk. : acid-free paper)

1. Bunyan, John, 1628-1688. *Pilgrim's progress*. 2. Bunyan, John, 1628-1688—Translations into African languages—History and criticism. 3. English language—Translating into African languages. 4. Bunyan, John, 1628-1688—Appreciation—Africa. 5. Christian fiction, English—History and criticism. 6. African literature—English influences. 7. Bunyan, John, 1628-1688—Influence. 8. Translating and interpreting—Africa. 9. Christianity and literature—Africa. 10. Books and reading—Africa. I. Title. II. Series.

PR3330.A9H64 2004

828'.407—dc21

2003044491

British Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available

This book has been composed in Minion

Printed on acid-free paper. ∞

www.pupress.princeton.edu

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TRANSLATION | TRANSNATION

SERIES EDITOR EMILY APTER

Writing Outside the Nation

BY AZADE SEYHAN

The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel

EDITED BY MARGARET COHEN AND CAROLYN DEVER

Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing

BY KIRSTEN SILVA GRUESZ

Experimental Nations: Or, the Invention of the Maghreb

BY REDA BENSMATIA

What Is World Literature?

BY DAVID DAMROSCH

The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress

BY ISABEL HOFMEYER

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A major theme of this study is that texts are made across time and space. This book is no exception and was forged on two continents and across nearly a decade. Its making depended on the kindness, comradeship, and forbearance of many.

I am fortunate in having a vibrant intellectual community in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am indebted to numerous colleagues who commented on papers, recommended readings, chased up details, undertook translation, scanned pictures, prepared tables, offered encouragement, and scanned the horizon for bits of “Bunyaniana.” My thanks to Michelle Adler, Muff Andersson, Dinesh Balliah, Rayda Becker, Molly Bill, Philip Bonner, Belinda Bozzoli, David Bunn, David Coplan, Bill Domeris, Paul Germond, Carolyn Hamilton, Simonne Horwitz, Judith Ingg, Cynthia Kros, Tawana Kupe, Karen Lazar, Mark Leon, Tom Lodge, Mufunanji Magalasi, Kgafela Magogodi, Achille Mbembe, Libby Meintjes, Phaswane Mpe, Pam Nichols, Anita Nettleton, Gerrit Olivier, Deborah Posel, Yvonne Reed, Colin Richards, Dumisani Sibiya, Pippa Stein, Jane Taylor, Michael Titlestad, Ulrike Kistner, and Susan van Zyl. A special word of thanks to my colleagues in African Literature, Merle Govind, James Ogude, Dan Ojwang, and Bheki Peterson, who provide a collegial and intellectually engaged environment, which makes such books possible.

Beyond the university, other colleagues offered assistance and support. Catherine Burns and Keith Breckenridge invited me to Durban on several occasions to present papers. Greg Cuthbertson was always willing to discuss his rich grasp of Nonconformist missions with me. Jeff Opland generously sent me his outstanding translations of Xhosa poems. Terry Barringer was an indefatigable tracker of information on Bunyan in the mission world as was Louise Pirouet. Liz Gunner invited me to speak

in Pietermaritzburg and furnished friendship and academic comradeship. Catherine Woeber provided enthusiasm and many points of detail on mission history. Jeff Guy shared his voluminous knowledge on Zulu history and the Colenso family with me. Stephanie Newell generously read the entire manuscript and commented perceptively on it, as did Sarah Nuttall, whose friendship and insight meant much during the final stages of the project. Michael Bath, Margaret Soenser Breen, Bernth Lindfors, Karen Middleton, Rosemary Guillebaud, Jack Thompson, Jim Grenfell, Las Newman, Patricia Sills, and Luise White went out of their way to provide me with information.

When I first started this book, many interlocutors, on hearing that my research had to do with evangelical missionaries, edged away nervously. A small handful, however, grasped the project's importance immediately. Tim Couzens first made me realize, many years ago, that such a project was possible and continued to send me material on Bunyan. Tony Morphet's magisterial knowledge of many things, including the English Revolution, was always illuminating. John Peel saw to the heart of the project and offered key insights from his deep understanding of African Christianity. Stephen Gray volunteered interest and insights from his catholic knowledge of African literature and forwarded me examples of Bunyan in Africa. Simon Gikandi showed a generous interest in the book and helped it along its path in significant ways. Karin Barber's fine grasp of textual anthropology contributed much to sharpening my understanding of what I was doing.

Much of the research was undertaken on a sabbatical trip to England in 1998. The unstinting intellectual and material generosity of Shula and Isaac Marks made this trip, and indeed much of this book, possible. Shula's continued interest in this, and all other southern African Studies research, remains an inspiration to us all. In Britain and Europe, a community of Africanist and other scholars offered friendship, seminar opportunities, and support. Thanks to Jo Beale, William Beinart, Anna Davin, Wayne Dooling, Saul Dubow, Deborah Gaitskell, Deborah James and Patrick Pearson, Paul la Hausse, Jennifer Law, John Lonsdale, John McCracken, Ato Quayson, Jenny Robinson, Hilary Sapiro, Stan Trapido, Flora Veit-Wild, and Brian Willan. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, hosted me for the duration of the sabbatical. There, David Appleyard, Graeme Furniss, Akin Oyetade, Graeme Rosenberg, and Ridder Samson answered questions and provided information. Annie Coombes was a transcontinental friend and comrade without peer.

As with all research, this book was enabled by wonderful librarians and archivists. Carole Holden, whose work at the British Library is so important for scholars of Africa, offered interest and assistance. Susan Mills and Jennifer Thorp at the Baptist Missionary Society Archives at the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, where I did the bulk of research, were consistently helpful. Alan Cirket at the Bunyan Meeting House Museum allowed me access to their collection despite building operations. Margaret Acton at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh, helped with reproducing photographs. Sandy Fold and the staff of the Cory Library were outstanding. Brian Whitewick from Camden Road Chapel in London generously provided access to the church's papers. Rosemary Seton at SOAS was helpful throughout. Albert Brutsch and Stephen Gill of the remarkable Morija Museum and Archive in Lesotho were every researcher's dream archivists. At the University of the Witwatersrand, Carol Archibald, Fay Blain, Peter Duncan, Sefora Leeto, Pinky Matai, Jay Mathe, Margaret Northey, and Michelle Pickover patiently dealt with a decade worth of queries.

Family and friends assisted in numerous ways with this text. My parents, Syrith and Haldane Hofmeyr have provided a lifetime of unstinting support. Jan and Angela Hofmeyr and family and Elise and Kevin Tait and family are always there and readily answered biblical and theological questions. Jon Hyslop's family offered moral support: my thanks to Robert Hyslop and Mary Park. A great sadness is that Marilyn Hyslop did not live to see the book. Helen Struthers and Bridget and Rosamund Lamont provided friendship, holiday companionship, and fridge magnets. My final thanks are to Jon Hyslop whose care, companionship, and conversation are woven into every page of this book.

Generous financial assistance from various funders made this book possible. The opinions and conclusions expressed in this book are mine alone. My thanks to the Centre for Science Development (now the National Research Foundation) and the University of the Witwatersrand for funding. The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust provided a most generous Traveling Fellowship.

During the course of doing this research, I made use of different archives and I am appreciative of their permission to reproduce material. The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) of Didcot, U.K. granted permission to consult and select my own quotations and visual material from their archive material that is housed in the Angus Library at Regent's

Park College, Oxford. Permission from the Council for World Mission to use material from the London Missionary Society (LMS) Papers housed at the SOAS, University of London, is gratefully acknowledged. Permission from the United Society for Christian Literature (USCL) to cite from the Religious Tract Society (RTS)/USCL Papers (also housed at SOAS) is acknowledged. The Church's Commission on Mission granted permission to quote from the papers of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa (ICCLA), which forms part of the Conference of British Missionary Societies/International Missionary Council collection housed at SOAS. The Regions Beyond Mission Union (RBMU), whose papers are housed at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, granted permission to reproduce material. The Lovedale Press granted permission to quote from material in the Lovedale Collection. I am grateful to the Bunyan Collection, Bedford Library, Bedford, for access to and use of material, likewise to the Joint Matriculation Board of the South African Universities, University of South Africa, Pretoria (JMB), for access to and use of examination papers. I am grateful for the assistance provided from the following archives, whose material I consulted but which I did not cite: Church Mission Society (CMS) Papers, University of Birmingham; Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Papers, Edinburgh; Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand; Morija Museum and Archive, Morija, Lesotho; Manuscripts Collection, University of Edinburgh Library; Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.

Sections of the introduction, chapter 2, and chapter 10 appeared in an article "How Bunyan Became English: Missionaries, Translation, and the Discipline of English Literature," *Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 84–119, and are reprinted here with the permission of the publisher, University of Chicago Press (© 2002 by the North American Conference on British Studies. All rights reserved). An earlier version of chapter 6 appeared in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 2 (2002): 1–17, and sections of that article are reproduced here with the permission of the journal. Routledge granted permission to reprint sections of the introduction, which appeared previously in "Bunyan in Africa: Text and Transition," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 3, no. 3 (2001): 322–55 (<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/routledge/1369801X.html>).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CMA	Christian and Missionary Alliance
CMS	Church Mission Society
ICCLA	International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa
JMB	Joint Matriculation Board
LMS	London Missionary Society
NAD	Native Affairs Department
PEMS	Paris Evangelical Mission Society
RBMU	Regions Beyond Mission Union
RTS	Religious Tract Society
SCA	Students' Christian Association
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
USCL	United Society for Christian Literature

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS *vii*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS *ix*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS *xiii*

PROLOGUE *i*

INTRODUCTION .

Portable Texts: Bunyan, Translation, and Transnationality *11*

PART ONE

BUNYAN IN THE PROTESTANT ATLANTIC

1

The Congo on Camden Road *45*

2

Making Bunyan Familiar in the Mission Domain *56*

3

Translating Bunyan *76*

4

Mata's Hermeneutic: Internationally Made Ways of
 Reading Bunyan *98*

PART TWO

BUNYAN, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND AFRICA

5

John Bunyan Luthuli: African Mission Elites and
The Pilgrim's Progress 113

6

Dreams, Documents, and Passports to Heaven: African Christian
Interpretations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* 137

7

African Protestant Masculinities in the Empire: Ethel M. Dell,
Thomas Mofolo, and Mr. Great-heart 151

8

Illustrating Bunyan 173

9

Bunyan in the African Novel 191

PART THREE

POST-BUNYAN

10

How Bunyan Became English 217

CONCLUSION

Lifting the Tollgates 228

APPENDIX 1

Bunyan Translations by Language 240

APPENDIX 2

A Social Profile of Bunyan Translators 244

NOTES 247

BIBLIOGRAPHY 281

INDEX 307

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Figure 1.</i> Bunyan frontispiece, 1679	7
<i>Figure 2.</i> Bunyan frontispiece by C. J. Montague from the Ndebele edition, 1902	8
<i>Figure 3.</i> Bunyan frontispiece by W.F.P. Burton used in various African editions	9
<i>Figure 4.</i> Joseph Jackson Fuller	36
<i>Figure 5.</i> Thomas Lewis	48
<i>Figure 6.</i> Gwen Lewis	49
<i>Figure 7.</i> Example of Religious Tract Society postcard version of <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> , part 2	63
<i>Figure 8.</i> Use of Bunyan wallchart in Sunday school class, Upper Congo, 1920s	64
<i>Figure 9.</i> RTS book stall at missionary exhibition, 1911	66
<i>Figure 10.</i> A display from a missionary exhibition, 1909	66
<i>Figure 11.</i> Christian leaves the City of Destruction	154
<i>Figure 12.</i> The Slough of Despond	155
<i>Figure 13.</i> Christian loses his burden	156
<i>Figure 14.</i> Hill Difficulty	157
<i>Figure 15.</i> The casting aside of Ignorance	158
<i>Figure 16.</i> Evangelist points the way	159
<i>Figure 17.</i> Photographic illustration from the Kongo edition, 1920s	177
<i>Figure 18.</i> Section of collage of photographic illustrations from Kongo edition, 1920s	178
<i>Figure 19.</i> Illustration for the Lingala edition by W.F.P. Burton, 1930s	179
<i>Figure 20.</i> Illustration from the Kamba edition	180

The Portable Bunyan

largely excised from the critical record. The historiography of Bunyan consequently presents a paradox: an intellectual of the world with a transnational circulation is remembered only as a national writer with a local presence.

This book seeks to explain how this paradoxical set of circumstances has come about: How has a writer with a global reach been turned into a local writer of England? In fashioning an answer to this question, this book directs attention to the interconnections between missions, translation, and the discipline of English literature. Briefly put, the argument presented here suggests that British Protestant mission organizations translated and disseminated the text both “at home” and “abroad.” This international circulation was in turn publicized by Nonconformists “at home” to improve the standing of their most revered writer, still regarded with class and denominational suspicion by the Anglican establishment. This mission publicity popularized the idea of Bunyan as a “universal” writer, an idea taken up by the emerging discipline of English literature. Its intellectual project, however, was less about “universality” than about constructing literature as a way of denoting the cultural and racial distinctiveness of Britons in the empire. Bunyan, long associated by missions with the black colonized bodies of empire, did not fit neatly into this grid. The solution to the “problem” was forged by changing the meaning of the word “universality.” Instead of betokening the literal spread of a text to different societies, it became a more abstract word concerned with “human nature.” The positive properties of universality could be retained while Bunyan was lifted above the societies of empire that threatened to “contaminate” him. In this way, Bunyan could be repackaged as a local writer of England.

This book also asks what happens if we reintegrate this divided terrain of Bunyan scholarship. What new insights might we derive if we resist the divisions of a “local” and “global” Bunyan and instead read him in one integrated field? Arising out of this agenda, this book asks how one might prosecute an analysis of a transnational and translingual text, like *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. What made this particular text so translatable?

This book’s method of answering this question is perhaps best captured in the implied pun of its title, *The Portable Bunyan*. Read strictly, the title suggests that this book could be a small volume of selected excerpts from Bunyan’s work aimed at a popular audience. Such a volume would come into being by a process of textual selection and reconfiguration. It is, this book suggests, such processes, writ large, that make texts translatable. Put another way: when books travel, they change

shape. They are excised, summarized, abridged, and bowdlerized by the new intellectual formations into which they migrate. These formations “select” novel configurations of older texts and make them accessible to new audiences. In addressing questions of translatability, this book foregrounds these procedures of intellectual reshaping. It also suggests that such methods of textual creation are stretched across time and space and unfold in different places, often at the same time. Such an approach requires us to consider the space of empire as intellectually integrated (rather than being segregated between “metropole” and “colony”). It also allows us to understand how a text like *The Pilgrim’s Progress* becomes a transnational “archive” that opens up novel possibilities for international addressivity. As a transnational and translingual text, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* furnished an arena in which various intellectual positions could be accommodated, while also providing a vehicle through which these positions could be dispersed into an international arena.

In addition to summarizing this book’s method, its title also signals that not all Bunyan’s work proved portable. Bunyan was a prolific writer and intellectual who produced volumes of sermons, tracts, and narratives. Of these, it was only *The Pilgrim’s Progress* that proved portable (although there were a handful of mission translations of some of his sermons, *The Holy War*, and his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*).¹

A final intention in the conceit of the title relates to the ability of a portable volume to travel and range broadly. Similarly, and of necessity, this book has a wide geographical and historical focus. Its primary focus is on Africa, the site of eighty translations. The continent is, however, understood as part of a broader diasporic and imperial history in the Protestant Atlantic. The story presented here consequently weaves together African literary and intellectual traditions, nineteenth-century British history, African Christianity and mission, Caribbean history, and debates on English literature. It shuttles between London, Georgia, Kingston, Jamaica, Bedford (Bunyan’s hometown), and several regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

The Pilgrim’s Progress is no longer widely read today. For those unfamiliar with the plot, we set out a brief synopsis. In the first scene, a man in rags, oppressed by a burden on his back, is reading a book. He is distressed and agitated because he knows the City of Destruction in which he lives faces certain damnation. While he maunders in the field, Evangelist approaches and advises him to flee, pointing him in the direction of the Wicket Gate and a distant shining light. Christian, for such is the

hero's name, takes off in that direction, running hard with his fingers in his ears to block out the entreaties of his wife and family whom he leaves behind. Two of his townsmen, Obstinate and Pliable, follow to try and knock some sense into him. They are unsuccessful and Obstinate harrumphs home. Pliable, however, is won over by Christian's arguments and decides to join him. Soon, they stumble into the Slough of Despond. Disgusted, Pliable scrambles out and heads for home, leaving Christian to struggle on alone.

After being assisted from the Slough by Help, Christian meets one of the many false pilgrims who will try to mislead him. This one is Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, who advises him to leave the road and head toward the town of Morality where Legality can ease him of his burden. Christian follows his advice. However, the mountain that he has to pass has a dangerous looking overhang and emits flashes of fire. Christian stands undecided until Evangelist comes striding along and berates him for leaving the prescribed route. Christian recommences his journey and arrives at the Wicket Gate, where he is given entry and directed to follow the narrow way. Shortly afterwards, Christian arrives at the Interpreter's House, the first of several places of instruction. Here he is shown various visual allegorical tableaux that teach him key points of belief and doctrine.

The next leg of his journey takes him to the Cross, where the burden of sin falls from his shoulders. Three Shining Ones appear and fit him with new clothes, place the mark of election on his forehead, and give him a roll that he is to hand in at the gates of the Celestial City. Thus fortified, he sets off and, after various interludes, struggles up Hill Difficulty only to fall asleep at an arbor along the way and lose his precious roll, which he has to backtrack to retrieve. He then comes to his second place of instruction, the Palace Beautiful where he is outfitted with a sword and armor. These he soon needs as he is confronted in the Valley of Humiliation by the dragon Apollyon, whom, after a taxing battle, he puts to flight.

After stumbling through the horrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he meets up with a companion, Faithful. They encounter further false pilgrims and then find themselves in Vanity Fair, a town of overheated commerce, greed, and political corruption. Here they are soon at odds with the venal townsfolk and are charged with sedition. Faithful is burned at the stake. Christian is imprisoned but manages to escape and shortly afterward encounters a second companion, Hopeful. Their journey goes well until Christian takes the wrong turn and they end up on the property of Giant Despair, who imprisons them in a

dungeon that they eventually escape when Christian belatedly recalls that he carries the key to the prison cell. Their next port of call is the Delectable Mountains, where they are again instructed and given directions to their destination. They encounter additional smooth-tongued travelers, whom they put right on matters of doctrine, and after going astray once again, they pass through the Enchanted Ground and finally arrive at Beulah Land, heaven's waiting room from where one is summoned to heaven by crossing the River of Death. With some difficulty, Christian and Hopeful get across the waters and, after handing over their certificates, enter the gates of heaven. Ignorance, one of their overconfident part-time fellow travelers, arrives shortly afterwards, can produce no certificate, and is thrown straight down into hell.

In the second part of the story, Christian's wife, Christiana, receives a letter from heaven summoning her to join her husband. She sets off with her children and a neighbor, Mercy. They pass through the Slough of Despond, enter the Wicket Gate, and are entertained and instructed at the Interpreter's House. The chivalrous knight, Mr. Great-heart, a manservant of the Interpreter, is sent to accompany the party. They proceed at a much more leisurely pace than Christian, who makes his journey in a few days, and thus their journey takes several years. Their route generally retraces that of Christian—they go up Hill Difficulty, they come to Palace Beautiful, and they pass uneventfully through Vanity Fair, staying with a trusted friend. Much of the action comes from Great-heart who dispatches several giants and demolishes Doubting Castle, home of Giant Despair. In Beulah Land, Christiana and the co-pilgrims Stand-fast, Valiant-for-Truth, and Feeble-mind each in turn receive their summons and make their way across the River of Death to the Celestial City.

The story itself comes to us in a double frame. The first of these is "An Author's Apology for his Book" in which Bunyan, in rhyming couplets, justifies his story to a Puritan audience that may find it too worldly. (Part 2 likewise has an apology. This one, however, performs a slightly different task—it proclaims the authenticity of Bunyan's version as opposed to the "imitations" and "spurious continuations"² that flooded the market in the wake of the phenomenal success of part 1. Bunyan also urges his creation to travel widely and convert people, and this "talking book" enters a dialogue with its author.) The second frame is that of a narrator who sees the events unfolding in his dream and relays them to us. He, like Christian, is a vagabond sleeping here and there, and his dream comes to him as he lies in the "den" in the "wilder-