Shoghi Effendi: An approach to his artistic contribution to style in English literature and to standards in translation

NOBEL PERDU
ISMAEL VELASCO
Universidad de Almería

LITERARY ANALYSIS

1. SOME TECHNICAL AND LITERARY FEATURES OF SHOGHI EFFENDI'S ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Although short references to the subject are frequent, we have often searched —unsuccessfully so far— for comprehensive analysis of Shoghi Effendi's literary style and technical features of his translations and his own writings. In the Introduction to the English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas mention is made of the elevated style chosen by Bahá'u'lláh («of exalted and emotive character») to faithfully express contents of great precision of meaning; reference is also made to the style used by Shoghi Effendi in the parts he translated into English, reminiscent of that used in the XVIIth Century for the Bible, combining exactness of meaning with evoking a certain meditative reverence. By indicating that the result achieves the difficult balance of reproducing the elevated tone of the original without losing accessibility to the contemporary reader, we find that his translations «are illumined by his uniquely inspired understanding of the purport and implications of the originals.» This balance between contrasts, in which it is so easy to fail by excess or simply not to reach the standard, is mentioned again to combine recuperation of the implicit in the Arabic (which can at times sound criptic or at least confusing in English) without adding to or limiting its meanings[1] , and as a challenge for translators working on the rest of the what Shoghi Effendi left untranslated. The concept of balance reappears to describe the challenge of striking the balance between beauty and clarity of expression on the one hand, and literalness on the other.

Our intention in this presentation is not to give full satisfaction to filling in the vacuum of comprehensive analysis of Shoghi Effendi's style in translation and his own writings, but at least to encourage others much better prepared than we are to dive deeply into the field. Our contribution is the following:

2. Vocabulary

2.a. Aesthetic Reflections: Shoghi Effendi's Distinctive Translation Vocabulary

Words are the raw material out of which the Bahá'í scriptures fashion sacred meaning, and the task of the translator is, as has been said, to find in the rich linguistic resources of the target language the material to approximate both the semantic content and spiritual effect of the original. In this pursuit Shoghi Effendi clearly crafted an immensely rich and profoundly original conception, harnessing the resources of a mature and diverse tradition in English to forge a vehicle fit to transmit the spiritual impact of sacred scripture into a new language. This was a lifelong project, as Ruhiyyih Khanum instructs us:

> «From his Beirut days until practically the end of his life Shoghi Effendi had the habit of writing vocabularies and typical English phrases in notebooks. Hundreds of words and sentences have been recorded and these clearly indicate the years of careful study and he put into mastering a language he loved and revelled in. For him there was no second to English.»[2]

Before plunging into a stylistic analysis of Shoghi Effendi's use of these resources, it must be stressed that, naturally, very far from exhausting or adopting indiscriminatingly the wealth of English vocabulary available to him, Shoghi Effendi was highly selective and precise in his choice of words, and it is the purpose of this section to carry out an analysis, however preliminary, of this process of selection.

We have availed ourselves of the advantages of computerized analysis to process quickly and precisely large amounts of information, though naturally the interpretive lens that chooses the material, dictates the questions, and weaves a narrative out of the numbers is the authors' own. Moreover, it must be emphasised that this computerised analysis is altogether preliminary, and in the nature of a stimulus to other scholars to plunge more seriously into this field. We have used only the most rudimentary statistical analyses available, and hence our results should be seen as a search of general trends, rather than an exact examination at the level of detail. It is hoped that following this first attempt in print at computerized analysis of Bahá'í texts, more rigorous and in-depth statistical studies will ensue.

One of the first points to be made from this preliminary analysis,[3] is that Shoghi Effendi's translation vocabulary is indeed distinctive, even within his own literary labours. Whereas in Shoghi Effendi's own writings in English he makes use of approximately 18,800 words,[4] in the scriptural translations published during his ministry[5] Shoghi Effendi limits himself to approximately 9600 words. These figures would suggest, or rather confirm, that the selection of a translation vocabulary by Shoghi Effendi was an exceptionally conscientious and selective labour, and that in reading his translations we should bear in mind that each word used is part of carefully and laboriously crafted linguistic edifice, that consciously excludes linguistically as much as it includes. Indeed, even a superficial and uninformed reading of Shoghi

Effendi's translations immediately signals to the reader that he has entered a unique and possibly unfamiliar linguistic landscape, and evokes a reading experience that is qualitatively different from that obtaining with most other texts. It is suggested, therefore, that the very choice of a distinctive vocabulary for his scriptural translations is part of an aesthetic of the sacred, that signals scriptural translation as «liminal space» where the reader is transported from a familiar world of language, into one in which the dominant characteristic may be said to be Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the* Holy, a sense of the numinous reminiscent of God's instruction to Moses from the burning bush:

> «Has the story of Moses come to thee? When he saw the fire and said to his family, 'Tarry ye; verily, I perceive a fire! Haply I may bring you therefrom a brand, or may find guidance by the fire.' And when he came to it he was called to, 'O Moses! verily, I am thy Lord, so take off thy sandals; verily, thou art in the holy valley Tuva, and I have chosen thee. So listen to what is inspired thee»[6]

The distinctive wordscape of Shoghi Effendi's translations, it is suggested, likewise calls implicitly but inescapably for a reverential response to the text, no less than a metaphorical divestment of our sandals, that is, a suspension of our familiar language patterns, be they colloquial or literary, without which it is difficult to achieve stylistic empathy. It may further be argued that the aesthetic leap is greater now than it was at the time of Shoghi Effendi, where such a step was expected of scripture and it would have seemed inappropriate to render the sacred word in everyday or even current literary language. Today the opposite is largely the case, as the genre of scriptural translation has lost vigour and currency, and even been consciously subsumed to other, more contemporary if less reverential genres.

Rudolf Otto's sense of the numinous as a spiritual aesthetic has become to a greater or lesser degree unfashionable. The idea of a *mysterium tremendum* with its characteristic sense of absolute unapproachability, of power, and urgency or forcefulness, and the corresponding human response of perplexity and astonishment, of creature consciousness and self-effacement, of a sense of unworthiness and a need for «covering», calling forth a state of supplication and a consciousness of grace; such an aesthetic, seems ill at ease with the individualism and emphasis on immanence over transcendence that seems to pervade contemporary aesthetics of the sacred. And yet, it is suggested, this sense of the numinous, of an underlying *mysterium tremendum*, may well be the touchstone of Shoghi Effendi's aesthetic of scriptural translation, resonating with the tone of authority and transcendence dominating Bahá'u'lláh's writings. Accordingly, it is suggested, his choice of vocabulary, as well as his extraordinary usage of the same that will be treated in a subsequent section, is designed, on the one hand, to transmit the original's numinosity, and evoke in English readers the corresponding spiritual response. Where there is resistance to such a response as is implicit in the concept of a *mysterium tremendum*, it is suggested, there will likewise be a sense of aesthetic distance from Shoghi Effendi's style. To the degree to which such a response is embraced, to that extent will Shoghi Effendi's style fulfil

its purpose of transmitting the *mysterium tremendum* breathed by the original text into the soul of the reader.

It is proposed that this is one of the key aesthetic factors determining Shoghi Effendi's choice of translation vocabulary, and that what largely differentiates his own writings and historical translations from his scriptural translations is precisely the sense of numinosity that pervades the latter in contrast to the former. Whereas we must «take off our sandals» to even approach aesthetically Shoghi Effendi's translations, we can largely keep them on when reading other texts from his pen. This is pursued not only by the use of distinctive vocabulary in his translations of course, but also by the distinctive use of that vocabulary, which will be dealt with later.

2.b.   Interpretive Translation: Shoghi Effendi's Translation Vocabulary in Relation to the Original

It has not been possible to carry out a rigorous statistical analysis, however preliminary, of Baha'u'llah's original writings in Arabic and Persian. A start has been made however, as an approximation to such an analysis, by using CTA, a basic concordance programme and translation tool, to compare the vocabulary used in Bahá'u'lláh's original writings translated by Shoghi Effendi, to the vocabulary used by Shoghi Effendi himself in his translations. The immediate finding is that whereas Bahá'u'lláh uses approximately 24,600 original words in the Arabic and Persian writings in question[7] , Shoghi Effendi uses only some 8,700 words to render the same content into English. A number of reservations must be expressed about these numbers. In the first instance, CTA cannot always differentiate between a prefixed word, such as, in Arabic, *bi'l-qadar*, where *qadar* stands for decree, and *bi'l* for «through the». Instead of seeing this as three distinct words and making correlations accordingly, CTA will frequently consider such a construction as a distinctive word in its own right. Moreover, whereas the word count of Shoghi Effendi's translations is for just one language, the word count of Baha'u'llah's writings conflates Arabic and Persian, two distinct languages with a great deal of shared vocabulary but also with a very wide range of distinctive semantic fields. Hence the comparison is not strictly fair, as it is to be expected that an author will use more words when writing in two separate languages than one translating into a single tongue.

Nonetheless it was thought worthwhile to submit, awaiting more rigorous testing, the CTA finding as a hypothesis, positing that in fact the linguistic range of Shoghi Effendi's translations is considerably narrower than that of the texts in their original languages. Notwithstanding all the caveats expressed above, the difference in linguistic range is nearly three times ampler in Bahá'u'lláh than in Shoghi Effendi. While this is likely to be reduced through more rigorous word-counts of the original, it is unlikely to be eradicated. Indeed, the very fact that Shoghi Effendi was translating two different authorial languages into a single one is likely to result in a reduction of linguistic range. As a control on these assumptions, the hypothesis was submitted to a scholarly list bringing together some of the most accomplished and experienced translators of

Bahá'u'lláh's writings into English.[8] In fact the hypothesis was uncontroversial, and «rang true» to many experts, though no objective criterion was adduced, other than extensive familiarity with the corpus in question. Finally, the fact that Shoghi Effendi's translation vocabulary represents already a halving of his total literary vocabulary, the likelihood is that an element of concision is indeed at work in Shoghi Effendi's scriptural translations, and that the disproportion between the original texts and their translation by Shoghi Effendi is likely to remain.

What this indicates is that Shoghi Effendi's translations are characterised by a considerable degree of freedom, and that literalness did not necessarily equate with faithfulness in Shoghi Effendi's eyes. Examples of this abound, some of which have been examined in some detail in print. In the *Kitab-i Iqan* Bahá'u'lláh writes, for instance,

> *az qalb-ra zunun-at-i muta'alliqih bi-subuhat-i jalal*

This, literally translated, as for instance in the Ali Kuli-Khan translation, would read:

> «the heart from doubts which pertain to the veils of glory»

While in Shoghi Effendi this reads:

> «the mind from vain imaginings»[9]

Whereas «mind» is a less obvious but still literal translation of *qalb* (typically translated heart) which in Persian is not only the seat of the emotions but of understanding too, the translation of *subuhat-i jalal* is a departure from the literal meaning, which is «veils of glory», replacing it with «vain imaginings». In fact in Shoghi Effendi's translation the implicit allusion to an influential Shí'í tradition is lost, although in a subsequent section of the very same book, Shoghi Effendi recovers this meaning, translating the very same words as «veils of glory» in the context of Bahá'u'lláh's exposition of that same tradition:[10]

> «And, now, strive thou to comprehend the meaning of this sayung of 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful: «Piercing the veils of glory, unaided.» Among these «veils of glory» are the divines and doctors living in the days of the Manifestations of God, who, because of their want of discernment and their love and eagerness for leadership, have failed to submit to the Cause of God, nay, have even refused to incline their ears unto the divine Melody.»[11]

Clearly, in the first instance, Shoghi Effendi chose to make vocabulary changes to preserve semantic clarity all the while preserving the numinous effect of the text. Both as translator and as authorized interpreter of the words of Baha'u'llah, Shoghi Effendi judged the intent of the first occurrence of «veils of glory» to refer to «vain imaginings» more generally. In addition, Bahá'u'lláh clarifies subsequently that this refers most particularly to wayward religious leaders. While a footnote apparatus could have established this link, an in addition, established the connection with the original

Islamic tradition, with a brief explanation of its context, yet such a course may have sacrificed or interrupted the numinous charge, the liminal character of the text. The absence of expository footnotes, in any case, is a choice characterising all of Shoghi Effendi's scriptural translations. In the absence of such an apparatus, it may be surmised that Shoghi Effendi felt the impact and intent of the passage in question would be best conveyed by a substitution of the original vocabulary by a different but in some way equivalent vocabulary in the target language.

This example, one of many, illustrates that for Shoghi Effendi equivalence in vocabulary did not always equate to equivalence in meaning in the deepest sense. This is supported by Ruhiyyih Khanum's testimony on the subject:

> «Once — only once, alas, in our busy, harassed life — Shoghi Effendi said to me that I now knew enough Persian to understand the original and he read a paragraph of one of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets and said, «How can one translate that into English?» For about two hours we tried, that is he tried and I feebly followed him. When I would suggest a sentence, which did convey the meaning, Shoghi Effendi said «Ah, but that is not translation! You cannot change and leave out words in the original and just put what you think it means in English.» He pointed out that a translator must be absolutely faithful to his original text and that in some cases this meant that what came out in another language was ugly and even meaningless. As Bahá'u'lláh is always sublimely beautiful in His words this could not be done. In the end he gave it up and said he did not think it could ever be properly translated into English, and this passage was far from being one of the more abstruse and mystical works of Bahá'u'lláh.» (Ruhiyyih Khanum, The Priceless Pearl, pág.203)

In other words, a translation that preserved the literal meaning but failed to convey the effect was not, in Shoghi Effendi's view, one that was «faithful to his original text». This is a perspective shared by some important translation theorists. In particular, Eugene Nida argued for two types of equivalence between a source text and its target language. On the one hand there is formal equivalence, that «focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content» ;[12] and on the other is dynamic equivalence which is based on the principle of «equivalent effect».[13] Clearly for Shoghi Effendi, as the anecdote above shows, both conditions were crucial to his pursuit of faithfulness, and while making full use of the elasticity of the English language and of his authority as interpreter to harmonise both dimensions, he would rather not translate a text than achieve formal correspondence at the expense of dynamic equivalence, and viceversa. To the aesthetic of the holy must be added, then, the equilibrium of formal and dynamic equivalence as principles influencing Shoghi Effendi's selection of translation vocabulary.

But there is one more distinctive aspect to Shoghi Effendi's translation vocabulary that goes beyond literal flexibility to achieve equivalence of effect. In some cases, Shoghi Effendi's translations are not simply equivalent renderings but acts of exposition. For instance, in the Kitab-i Aqdas.paragraph 181, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

> *qad is.tirab al-nazm min hadha an— Nazm al-a'zam wa ikhtilaf at-tartíb bihadha'l-badí*

Earl E. Elder has given a literal translation as:

> «Order (*al-nazm*) has been disturbed by this Most Great Order, and arrangement has been made different through this innovation»

Shoghi Effendi translates:

> «The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System»

Here *nazm* is translated as «world's equilibrium», as «World Order», and indirectly as «System». *Tartib* is translated as «mankind's ordered life». Here we face a lexical expansion, where not only is the very same word in the Arabic (*nazm*) is given a wide range of related meanings, but.the vocabulary choice is not the most obvious or immediately apparent (no other translation of the same passage translates *tartib* as anything approaching «mankind's ordered life», or *ikhtilaf* as «upset through the vibrating influence», or *nazm* as «world's equilibrium»). While all these translation possibilities are of course linguistically warranted, it is in fact a theological vision and interpretation that dictates their choice over more immediately apparent options. In the process, Shoghi Effendi invests the text with meanings that had not been previously intuited even among speakers of the original language.[14]

This is not by any means an isolated example, and it illustrates that Shoghi Effendi's translations are not purely attempts at finding linguistic equivalences between the source and the target language and texts, but also authoritative expository and interpretive works, which is why, within the context of the faith community that is the primary audience of Bahá'í sacred texts, indirect translation into languages other than English from Shoghi Effendi's translations is not simply an expedient, but a means of preserving and diffusing Shoghi Effendi's hermeneutic contribution.

2.c. The question of influence — A Comparative Analysis of Shoghi Effendi's Vocabulary

It has become almost a truism that Shoghi Effendi's translation style has been influenced by the King James Bible. We also know that Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was a constant companion of the Guardian. Finally, Shoghi Effendi himself has stated his appreciation of Rodwell's translation of the Qur'an for its literary merits. Although he also praises George Sale's translation for its scholarly qualities, a comparison shows that Shoghi Effendi mostly followed or slightly adapted Rodwell's translations when it came to his own writings. This suggests that not only was Rodwell influential in relation to Shoghi Effendi's renderings of Baha'u'llah's ubiquitous citations of the Qur'an, but that he is likely to have provided a significant model for scriptural translation into English more generally.[15]

2.c.1. *Shoghi Effendi's Vocabulary: A Comparative Perspective*

On the basis of a comparative lexical analysis, we are in a position to formulate some preliminary ideas about the formation of Shoghi Effendi's translation vocabulary. Lexically speaking, the strongest influence is clearly Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, not surprisingly given the historical testimonies that underscore its pride of place in Shoghi Effendi's library. This is followed by the King James Bible and to a lesser extent Rodwell's translation of the Qur'an. Integrating these three lexical influences, we arrive at the following findings.

Vocabulary size of Shoghi Effendi's translations = 9600

In common with King James:4400
Distinctive from King James: 5200

In common with Rodwell: 4100
Distinctive from Rodwell: 5500

In common with Gibbon: 6600
Distinctive from Gibbon: 3000

In common with King James, Rodwell and Gibbon: 8600 (88%)
Distinctive from King James, Rodwell and Gibbon: 1000 (12%)

It is thus that nearly 90% of Shoghi Effendi's translation vocabulary is accounted for by the three key works of the King James Bible, Rodwell's translation of the Qur'an, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. These would seem, thus, to be the key elements out of which Shoghi Effendi fashioned a distinctive translation vocabulary, itself indicative of great restraint, as it only used 50% of Shoghi Effendi's total lexical range in English. On the other hand, no single model is followed all the way, and each is tempered by the introduction, it turns out, of seemingly foreign elements to it, blended seamlessly into a new literary creation spanning and harmonising the full classical tradition of English literature, including the best of Jacobean, Restoration, Victorian, and Edwardian English. The resulting literary edifice, reminiscent of the architectural creations erected under the guiding vision of Shoghi Effendi on Mount Carmel, is one that even as it throws us back into past glories, nevertheless does so with a sense of timelessness that renews its relevance by the introduction of novel elements into the mix. Shoghi Effendi's translations are not simply the creative response of an individual to the sacred writings of Baha'u'llah, but a grand synthesis of what might be called English majestic writing, a careful and painstaking selection of the lexical elements of the English literary tradition that could best transmit Baha'u'llah's *mysterium tremendum* in a foreign tongue. The systematic

gathering of such lexical elements was, as we have seen, a lifelong quest for Shoghi Effendi since his early youth, and a similar synthetic yet ultimately highly original conception may be seen to be at work in his stylistic manipulation of these same elements to create not only a new translation vocabulary, but an original scriptural style in English. This we shall examine further in the next section.

Before proceeding however, a number of further reflections arising from a comparative analysis of Shoghi Effendi's vocabulary may be made. In particular, the area of word anomalies yields some interesting insights. These are words that occur unusually frequently or unusually seldom in an author, and our reflections here are but a scratching of the surface of the many gems that may lie hidden behind this area of analysis.

It is a well known fact that a very small number of word tokens account for most running words in any given text in English,[16] For instance, the following 15 words account for a full third (33%)[17] of the entire text of Shoghi Effendi's selected translation corpus:

the — 25718
of — 18357
and — 13604
to — 6618
thy — 5396
that — 5274
in — 4917
is — 4147
god — 3532
have — 3078
his — 3051
be — 2794
hath — 2665
thou — 2646
my — 2558

For Rodwell and the King James Bible 17 words account for the same proportion of text, whilst for Gibbon, perhaps surprisingly, only 11 words occupy a third of his 1.5 million words history. These key words may be considered the lexical foundation of the entire edifice, and anomalies here may tell us something about the general character and tone of an author's works, providing leads that may reward further investigation. The fact that the words 'thou' and 'thy', for instance, only appear in Shoghi Effendi's translations in such intense frequency would suggest that his translations, and most likely the source texts, have a distinctively direct tone. Whereas 'he', which appears among the key words accounting for a third of the total text in Rodwell, Gibbon and King James, does not make it into Shoghi Effendi's key vocabulary. We are brought back to Martin Buber's great work *I and Thou* where he

observes that humans relate to that which is other than their selves in two ways, which he has termed I-It and I-Thou. The former is impersonal and objectifying, that latter is involved and relational.

> «To Man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude…in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The primary words are not isolated but combined words. The one primary word is the combination I-Thou. The other primary word is the combination I-it. The I of the primary word I-Thou is…different…from that of the primary word I-it.»[18]

Of the I-It relationship Buber writes:

> «He perceives what exists round about him — simply things, and beings as things …things and events bounded by other things and events, measured by them, comparable with them: he perceives an ordered and detached world. It is to some extent a reliable world, having density and duration. Its organization can be surveyed and brought out again and again; gone over with closed eyes, and verified with open eyes… But you cannot meet others in it. You cannot hold on to life without it, its reliability sustains you; but should you die in it, your grave would be in nothingness.»

Of the I-Thou relationship, on the other hand, Buber states:

> «The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being.The primary word I-it can never be spoken with the whole being… If I face a human being as my Thou and say the primary word I-Thou to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. Thus human being is not He or She, bounded from very other He or She, a specific point in space and time within the next of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. But with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is Thou and fills the heavens. his does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in his light…I do not experience the man to whom I say Thou. But I take my stand in relation to him, in the sanctity of the primary word. Only when I step out of it do I experience him once more.»[19]

For Buber, the I-Thou relationship among human beings is a reflection or approximation of the supreme I-Thou relationship between man and God.The fact that in Shoghi Effendi's translated scriptures Thou is pervasive and foundational suggests a distinctive reading experience in which the reader will be constantly challenged to step from an I-It relationship to the text and its author to an I-Thou relationship which, in the context of a numinous aesthetic, is in turn a stimulus to awe, humility and wonder as an appropriate response to the text.

Another interesting observation at this level of analysis is that whereas Gibbon does not contain any nouns as its foundational word tokens, Shoghi Effendi and Rodwell include the word «god» while the King James Bible includes the word Lord. This highlights immediately the sacred nature of the text as opposed to the secular character of Gibbon's history. But whereas 'god' and 'lord' figure with 'he' at this level of frequency, in Shoghi Effendi's translations 'god' accompanies 'thou' in

frequency level. This suggests a more descriptive and impersonal literary relationship to God in the former texts, and a more direct and interactive one in the latter.

When we stretch the list of key word tokens to those accounting for 50% of running words in a given corpus, we obtain a diversification of word tokens, but less than might perhaps be thought instinctively. Thus, only 53 word tokens account for 50% of total word output. In the King James Bible 55 word tokens account for 50% of all words in the text (out of a total of 12,500 words), while in Rodwell's translation corpus 45 word tokens account for the same percentage of running words. In Gibbon it is 142 words that achieve such frequency. The 55 and 53 most common words respectively are almost identical, including articles, prepositions and auxiliary verbs. In the first three sources no adjectives, and very few nouns appear with such frequencies, while predictably more do so in Gibbon. A look at the nouns that appear at this frequency level gives us a good sense of the thematic centres of a given corpus. In the Bible, thus, the following nouns in order of frequency appear in the list of key words accounting for 50% of the total text (we shall refer to this as the 50% frequency level):

Lord   (8000)
God   (4500)
Man   (2735)
Israel   (2575)
King   (2540)
Son   (2392)

In Rodwell, only two nouns appear:

God
Lord

Whereas in Gibbon, no less than 37 nouns appear, the 10 most common being (the remaining ones being similar in nature):

Emperor
Roman
Empire
Rome
Name
People
Years
Death
City
War

In Shoghi Effendi's selected translation corpus only one noun plays a similarly prominent role, namely

God (3532)

This would suggest that both the Qur'an and the Baha'í scriptures selected for translation by Shoghi Effendi are more single-mindedly theocentric than the King James Bible, a substantial part of which is indeed taken up with historical chronicles and the specific mission of Israel. The Gospels' Christocentrism is reflected in the presence of Son in the list. On the other hand, Gibbon's attention is firmly focused on this world, as is to be expected, and God plays at best a supporting role or even a cameo appearance. The magic of Shoghi Effendi's synthesis may be further gleaned from the fact that what we could call the lexical centre of gravity of his three literary models was so very different, and yet so perfectly harmonised in Shoghi Effendi's translations as to make the provenance of his lexical resources largely undetectable.

Finally, two further word anomalies in this integrated corpus bear mentioning. Shoghi Effendi is the only one among our selected sources to use the words 'O' and 'All' at this frequency level. The word 'O' is an interjection of high register, used as a vocative marker for a direct address to a person or persons. It highlights once more the direct and relational tone permeating Shoghi Effendi's translation corpus, best fitted for Shoghi Effendi's overall aim of using Baha'I scriptures to generate spiritual and physical motion as well as insight among the community of believers. It is also a lexical device of elevated register, functioning to heighten the sense of grandeur of the spearker and/or the addressee. This fits well with the aesthetic of the holy that we noted above. To this may be added the presence of the superlative adverbs most and all, unique among our sources at the 33% and 50% frequency levels respectively. A collocation analysis shows that the word 'most' appears most frequently next to a divine attribute, such as Merciful, Bountiful, Powerful, etc. The word 'all' likewise functions as a superlative in relation to a divine attribute, or else to denote creation/humanity's dependence, subservience, insignificance, or neglect before God. If the ubiquitous presence of thy and thou and of the vocative marker O highlights the immediacy of divine contact in the writings translated by Shoghi Effendi, the pervasive reccurrence of the words 'most' and 'all' in the contexts in which they occur make for an intense sensation of numinosity. Together, they add weight to the suggestion that Shoghi Effendi's lexical strategy was aimed at mediating a direct encounter between the reader and the *mysterium tremendum* latent in Bahá'u'lláh's claims and writings.

3. **Some features of the neo-classical English used by Shoghi Effendi and resources for elevation of register**

If words are the raw material out of which translators create or recreate a literary text, then the translator's style may be said to shape or determine the distinctive use which an author makes of that raw material to craft his creation. Having analysed in some detail Shoghi Effendi's vocabulary, we would like to now focus on the distinctive manner in which he used this unique and carefully chosen vocabulary to achieve his aims as translator. In particular we have found it useful to adopt the concept of register, drawn from translation theorists (most notably M.A.K. Halliday[20]) and denoting: «the clustering of semantic features according to situation type …a configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type»[21] In the case of Shoghi Effendi, as we have seen, the register pursued involves a configuration of semantic resources that English literary culture might associate with a situation of numinosity, of a direct encounter with the holy, with the presence of a *mysterium tremednum*». This may be described as a high or elevated register, in contrast to colloquial speech, which might be described as having a lower register, or slang, which may be described as generally having a still lower register, representing a configuration of semantic resources associated by English speaking cultures with a prosaic or unrefined situation. Of course such judgements are relative, and slang, in certain cultural contexts, may actually function as a high register linguistic style, as is sometimes the case with rap and associated genres in the context of certain youth subcultures. But in general terms, it may be agreed that in literate cultures in English, Shoghi Effendi's translations may be regarded as occupying a very high register, in relation to the register associated with colloquial, day to day speech. This is achieved, as has been hinted, by the harnessing of a distinctive set of semantic resources.

The following is a collection of such resources in an effort leading towards their classification for study. Like the earlier work on lexical analysis, this is a preliminary study designed to break new ground and stimulate further research. We have taken as a case study for close reading primarily the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, complementing the resulting findings by similarly close readings of Section XV of *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh* (1938/1979: XV):

> Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God! I implore Thee, by Thy Name which none hath befittingly recognized, and whose import no soul hath fathomed; I beseech Thee, by Him Who is the Fountain-Head of Thy Revelation and the Day-Spring of Thy signs, to make my heart to be a receptacle of Thy love and of remembrance of Thee. Knit it, then, to Thy most great Ocean, that from it may flow out the living waters of Thy wisdom and the crystal streams of Thy glorification and praise. The limbs of my body testify to Thy unity, and the hair of my head declareth the power of Thy sovereignty and might. I have stood at the door of Thy grace with utter self-effacement and complete abnegation, and clung to the hem of Thy bounty, and fixed mine eyes upon the horizon of Thy gifts.
>
> Do Thou destine for me, O my God, what becometh the greatness of Thy majesty, and assist me, by Thy strengthening grace, so to teach Thy Cause that the dead may speed out of their sepulchers, and rush forth towards Thee, trusting wholly in Thee, and fixing their gaze upon the orient of Thy Cause, and the dawning-place of Thy Revelation.
>
> Thou, verily, art the Most Powerful, the Most High, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

It is suggested, pending further analysis, that the features listed in the following survey, though based on a limited number of texts, are most likely to be broadly applicable to the entire corpus of Shoghi Effendi's mature translations.

3.a. Possessive Adjectives y pronouns and personal pronouns

We note a systematic preference for use of classical possessive adjectives and pronouns, and classical personal pronouns when they refer to God, the Manifestation of God (for example in prayers) and also when addressing kings and rulers (Napoleon III; Francis Joseph I, Emperor of Austria; Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany,) or a town (Ti?ran and also Constantinople). However, upper-case is used only when referring to God or the Manifestation of God. The case of Constantinople is interesting, as it is referred to as «Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas» and it also merits the distinction of «thee, thy, thou, thine»; this contrasts with the use of «you» when addressing the «banks of the Rhine». This is clearly visible in K89-K91:

> O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas! The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been kindled within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendour made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.
>
> O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.
>
> Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of ?a, for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind. He shall, if it be His Will, bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of God which the wolves have scattered.

thine, Thine (adj.) = your, Your: Used for possessors of second person singular (not plural), both for when what is possessed is singular and plural («*Thine utterance*» and «*thine eyes*»).

Thy (possessive adj.) = your (2nd person SINGULAR, not 2nd person PLURAL): What is possessed may be either singular or plural: «*thy face*», «*thy daughters*».

The following outlines the general distribution of the classical use of possessive adjectives, personal and possessive pronouns, verb conjugation and irrecular verbs:

	Subject	Possessive adjectives and pronouns	Object personal pronouns	Verb ending	Irregular verbs
1st person singular	I	my, mine (*)	me	-	am
2nd person singular	thou	thy, thine (*)	thee	-est	art, hast, dost, shalt, wilt
3rd person singular	he, she, it	his, her/hers, its	him, her, it	-eth	is, hath, doth
1st person plural	we	our, ours	us	-	are
2nd person plural	ye	your, yours	you	-	are
3rd person plural	they	their, theirs	them	-	are

(*) As a general rule *my/mine* and *thy/thine* (as adjectives) are used in an analogous way as a/an (depending on the first sound of the following word); «my» and «thy» precede consonant sounds, while «mine» and «thine» precede words beginning with a vowel sound, including *hair, hand, head, heart, home, honour*. However, this distribution is not totally consistent; there are cases of both possibilities in Shoghi Effendi's translations, and during the first 20 years of his translation we can see a tendency to using *thine* when preceding words starting with *h*, like *heart*. Although some opposite cases were modified by him in this sense, prayers were not changed, so in two occasions we can find *thy* followed by letter *h* (*Thy holiness*), in one of the obligatory prayers, and «*Thy handmaiden*» in the prayer for the departed. In *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, there are 29 cases of «*thine heart*» versus only one case of «*thy heart*». If we consider the version of *Gleanings* as a revision of his previous translations, then we could conclude that his gives preference to «*thine*» when followed by *h*. However, in the Aqdas this possibility does not appear even once; instead we find «*Thy holiness*» and «*Thy handmaiden*», but not translated by Shoghi Effendi. In conclusion, there seems to be a certain level of flexibility with this case.

3.b. Majestic «we»: Use of We/I, Us/Me, Our/My

«*We*» is invariably used instead of «*I*», except with literal quotes from the Bible or the Qur'án, y and with «*I swear by*» and «*Verily I say*» combinations.

It is useful to analyse their use in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, another of Bahá'u'lláh's most important works, translated entirely by Shoghi Effendi. Use of «*I*» is restricted to the following cases:

1. In the expression «*I swear by God*» (8 times)
2. «*I swear by Him Who is the true Educator of mankind*» (once)
3. «*Verily, I say*» (twice)
4. In quotes from the Bible, literally taken from King James version, (the other 72 cases).

Even in the two cases in which «*I*» appears in the expression «*Verily I say,*» the same paragraph contains «*We*»:

> **Verily, I say,** so fierce is the blaze of the Bush of love, burning in the Sinai of the heart, that the streaming waters of holy utterance can never quench its flame. Oceans can never allay this Leviathan's burning thirst, and this Phoenix of the undying fire can abide nowhere save in the glow of the countenance of the Well-Beloved. Therefore, O brother! kindle with the oil of wisdom the lamp of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart, and guard it with the globe of understanding, that the breath of the infidel may extinguish not its flame nor dim its brightness. **Thus have We** illuminated the heavens of utterance with the splendours of the Sun of divine wisdom and understanding, that thy heart may find peace, that thou mayest be of those who, on the wings of certitude, have soared unto the heaven of the love of their Lord, the All-Merciful (Bahá'u'lláh, 1989: 61, negrita añadida).

Were they to be questioned concerning those signs that must needs herald the revelation and rise of the sun of the Muhammadan Dispensation, **to which We have** already referred, none of which have been literally fulfilled, and were it to be said to them: «Wherefore have ye rejected the claims advanced by Christians and the peoples of other faiths and regard them as infidels,» knowing not what answer to give, they will reply: «These Books have been corrupted and are not, and never have been, of God.» Reflect: the words of the verses themselves eloquently testify to the truth that they are of God. A similar verse hath been also revealed in the Qur'án, were ye of them that comprehend. **Verily I say**, throughout all this period they have utterly failed to comprehend what is meant by corrupting the text (Bahá'u'lláh, 1989: 83-84, negrita añadida).

On the other hand, «*We*» appears 211 times, frequently used in prophetic sense, when the Manifestation of God speaks in first person.

It is interesting to note that «*Me*» does not appear at all except insides quotes (from the Bible or the Que'án), while «*Us*» / «*us*» does appear 17 times outside quotes.

A similar finding occurs in the distribution of «*My*» and «*Our*»; «My» appears twice in the expression «*God is My witness*», and 7 times in expressions like «*O My brother*»; the rest of possessive adjectives referred to the Manifestation of God appears as «*Our*». There is one case in which «*My*» appears when we might have expected to see «*Our*», although it is wide accompanied by other cases of «*Our*» (Bahá'u'lláh, 1989: 250-1):

> Many a night **We** had no food for sustenance, and many a day **Our** body found no rest. By Him Who hath **My being** between His hands! notwithstanding these showers of afflictions and unceasing calamities, **Our** soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and **Our whole being** evinced an ineffable gladness. For in **Our** solitude **We** were unaware of the harm or benefit, the health or ailment, of any soul. **Alone, We communed with Our spirit**, oblivious of the world and all that is therein. **We** knew not, however, that the mesh of divine destiny exceedeth the vastest of mortal conceptions, and the dart of His decree transcendeth the boldest of human designs. None can escape the snares He setteth, and no soul can find release except through submission to His will. By the righteousness of God! **Our** withdrawal contemplated no return, and **Our** separation hoped for no reunion. The one object of **Our** retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto **Our** companions, the means of injury to any soul, or the cause of sorrow to any heart. Beyond these, **We** cherished no other intention, and apart from them, **We** had no end in view. And yet, each person schemed after his own desire, and pursued his own idle fancy, until the hour when, from the Mystic Source, there came the summons bidding **Us** return whence **We** came. Surrendering **Our** will to His, **We** submitted to His injunction.

In fact the combination «*Our being*» does not appear even once in any of Shoghi Effendi's translations. We do find «*Our whole being*» in the same paragraph on the next line after «*My being*».

If we restrict our search to the parts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas translated by Shoghi Effendi, we find some interesting cases of alternations between *I/We, Me/Us*. See, for example, K85 (bold added):

> **We**, verily, made it a place whereunto the world should turn, that they might remember **Me**, and yet thou hast rejected Him Who is the Object of this remembrance, when He appeared with the Kingdom of God, thy Lord and the Lord of the worlds. **We** have been with thee at all times, and found thee clinging unto the Branch and heedless of the Root. Thy Lord, verily, is a witness unto what   **I** say. **We** grieved to see thee circle round **Our** Name, whilst unaware of **Us**, though **We** were before thy face.

3.c. **Verbs**

<u>Verbs - conjugation</u>: ***hath, becometh, declareth, beseemeth, doth, testifieth, awaiteth, (…), art, hast, seest, willest, pleasest, didst, dost, rulest, hearest, forgivest, concealest, «Thou, verily, art the Most Powerful»***

<u>Verbs - prefix *be-:*</u> ***bewildered, befall, beseemeth, bestir, beloved, betide, betwixt, (bygone); be, behoveth, beware, behold, believe, behests, beseech, beseeching, bestowest.***

<u>Verbs - tenses</u>: Archaic structure is used for the affirmative imperative («do Thou destine for me») and it is combined with normal present-day usage within the same paragraph (K66, bold added):

> **Do thou remember** the one whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? **Take warning**, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him, when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. **Think deeply**, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men.

<u>Verbs - negative</u>: The normal negative structure is usually avoided (e.g. «*they do not bring*» or «*they will not go*»), so in its place we find several alternatives: verbs with negative sense (*deprive, conceal, turn away, abstain, refuse, disbelieve*), rhetorical questions which imply negative sense (*What advantage is there in the earthly things which men possess?*), negative subjects (*none*), negative agents (*to none*), negative prepositions (*but Me*), unfulfilled hypothetical questions which imply a negative sentence (*Did they but know it, they would renounce their all, that their names may be mentioned before His throne. They, verily, are accounted among the dead*), and so forth.

The first occasion that *not* appears combined with the verb *do* is in paragraph K182 (*Take heed that **ye do not** vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause*) and the only other occasion it appears is in the instructions for the Medium Obligatory Prayer (*Guard it, then, from meddling with whatsoever **doth not belong** unto it*). Even these two cases are strongly escorted by measures of elevation of register or tone: «doth», «unto», «whatsoever», «vacillate», «Take heed that», «ye».

<u>Verbs - interrogative</u>: There are only 10 questions in the whole part translated by Shoghi Effendi. Some are rhetorical questions with implied sense (normally negative sense: *Know ye from what heights your Lord, the All-Glorious is calling?*) or the sense

is clarified straight after (*Think ye that ye have recognized the Pen wherewith your Lord, the Lord of all names, commandeth you? Nay, by My life!*). Other cases are warnings (*Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed?*). In both cases in which the auxiliary «do» could have been used, it has been avoided (*know ye…? think ye?*).

<u>Verbs - alternative term to the usual, and variety</u>: We find a selective preference for the use of terms of elevated register or tone (e.g. *utter, err, fathomed, behove*). Just checking the first five paragraphs (545 words) we can notice a clear preference, not only for the selection of the term with elevated tone or register but also for variety: There are 53 verbs in personal form of which 9 are forms of the verb *to* be, while of all the rest only 4 appear twice (*drink, observe, reveal, shine*), and the rest (49 verbs) appear only once:

achieveth	hath endued	representeth
is accounted	have erred	hath it been sent down
hath addressed	hath fixed	shine above, shining
hath attained	hath gone astray	can be smelled
be, are, are, are, is, is, is, is, is	hath inhaled	Were any man to taste
beareth witness	Know	Think not
behoveth… to observe	laid down	to refuse
breaking	Meditate	have revealed, hath evealed
will circle	not to transgress	have risen
have commanded	Observe	have turned back, turneth away
constitute	will be planted	
hath it been decreed	prescribed	We have unsealed
is deprived	reacheth	he might vindicate
can describe	recognize	have violated
Hasten to drink, hath drunk	would renounce	have willed to utter

3.d. Nouns

<u>Common nouns — alternative term to the usual usage</u>: In the text quoted, *orient, remembrance, gaze, receptacle, self-effacement, import* reflect the use of alternative formulae or expressions away from the usual, or less frequent, or with a more archaic tone to elevate the reader from everyday context to a poetic register.

<u>Nouns and adjectives — compound structure for superlatives, elatives and adjectives of intensity</u>: The elative, or «verbal adjective», has been defined by Corriente (1992) as «with a higher level of intensity of the quality, or capable of a greater realization of the action». The fact is that we frequently find terms like: the All-Wise, the Almighty, the Omniscient, the Best-Beloved, the Most Compassionate, the Ever-Forgiving, the Greater Branch, the Most Great Branch, the Greatest Holy Leaf, as a

result of the translation of an Arabic elative. This is a very large subject, as it includes comparatives and superlatives, sidely studied by Corriente (1992), Paret (1964), Fleisch (1990), Wehr (1952), <u>Kh</u>ánsárí (1345 d.H.), Asín (1936/59), Quirk (1985) and Beneito (1997). Its treatment in translation has been quite complex and merits a separate study.

3.e. Vocative

Its very use is infrequent in English language, so it transmits a solemn tone, especially in prayers (*O Lord my God!*) or invocations (*Meditate upon this, O men of insight!*). The admiration sign is used when the vocative appears at the beginning of a sentence; they can also be in the middle of a phrase (*Enter into wedlock, O people, that ye may bring forth one who will make mention of Me*).

3.f. Alteration of the usual order of a phrase

As is well known, the English language allows for very little variety in the order of the elements of a sentence nowadays. But this was not always so, and we frequently find sentences with the classical or traditional order of elements, especially in poetic language, which helps to transmit that traditional or poetic tone. By saying «*I implore Thee, by Thy Name which none hath befittingly recognized, and whose import no soul hath fathomed*», the reversal of the typical order of componets together with the usage of the active voice allows for a rythmical balance structured in two parallel parts; this is followed by *that from it may flow out the living waters of Thy wisdom* in which the inverted presentation of object-verb-subject slowly unlooses the tension which was had been built up.

This licence is not very frequent in the Aqdas, although there are a number of particularly elegant cases: *From My laws the sweet smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks.*

3.g. Complex structure for subordinates

Similar to the previous point, we find the use of compound coordinate and subordinate structures that create networks which are normally not too complex to interpret, as they generally follow a logical order, although they do require special attention (K3): *Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.*

3.h. Couples (and triplets):

A detailed analysis of the prayer quoted above would help to recognize that the same thing is said twice again and again: In *O Lord my God*, it is the same to say *O Lord* as it is to say *my God*, but their combined use contributes a dose of balance, a balance which has been present in the whole text. The following ten quotes contain two parts which are nearly or totally equivalent:

—Thy Name which none hath befittingly recognized, and whose import no soul hath fathomed

—by Him Who is the Fountain-Head of Thy Revelation and the Day-Spring of Thy signs

—make my heart to be a receptacle of Thy love and of remembrance of Thee

—the living waters of Thy wisdom and the crystal streams of Thy glorification and praise (doblete dentro de doblete: «glorification and praise» dentro de «living waters + cristal streams»)

—The limbs of my body testify to Thy unity, and the hair of my head declareth the power of Thy sovereignty and might

—with utter self-ef facement and complete abnegation

—I have stood at the door of Thy grace…, and clung to the hem of Thy bounty, and fixed mine eyes upon the horizon of Thy gifts (triplete)

—the orient of Thy Cause, and the dawning-place of Thy Revelation

—the Most Powerful, the Most High

—the All-Knowing, the All-Wise

The use of this licence has semantic —apart from aesthetic and literary— implications. It can be used to solve ambiguities. Besides it has an influence on the structure of paragraphs as can be seen with the parallel series.

3.i. Metaphors

See some examples like *Day-Spring of Thy signs, that from it may flow out the living waters of Thy wisdom; I beseech Thee, by Him Who is the Fountain-Head of Thy Revelation and the Day-Spring of Thy signs, to make my heart to be a receptacle of Thy love and of remembrance of Thee*. Also, in «that the dead may speed out of their sepulchres» which transmits a nearly photographic image of unsustainable urge. This subject also merits much wider study.

3.j. Parallel series

I have stood at the door of Thy grace…, and clung to the hem of Thy bounty, and fixed mine eyes upon the horizon of Thy gifts, in which the three parts contain perfectly parallel elements, *door of Thy grace / hem of Thy bounty / horizon of Thy gifts*, omission of the subject of the second and third part transmits swiftness and accumulates a tension of energy which reaches relax at the end by fixing one's eyes

on the landscape of the third part, with reference to the delight of gazing on the «horizon» of the gifts of God. *Thou, verily, art the Most Powerful, the Most High, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise*, which are also two couples.

Sperber and Wilson (1986a: 222)[22] explain that coming across structures with syntactic, semantic or phonological parallelism reinforces the reader's or listener's natural tendency to reduce processing effort for processing and searching for parallelisms in form and implicatures. Thus, when the same structure is found in a subsequent expression, this creates an expectation that we will find the most relevant part in the same place as it was in the previous expression. This mechanics has an influence on understanding as something is suggested without necessarily using all the words normally needed to describe it, ellipsis is understood, and rhythm and the forms of the words play a more active role.

3.k. Interpolation:

In the example above, there are several cases of interpolation like *Thou, verily, art the Most Powerful*, in which *verily* adds an oriental flavour; *Do Thou destine for me, O my God, what becometh the greatness of Thy majesty*, inserting the vocative, and two cases in which interpolation contributes a rhythmical effect, inserting a pause at the right moment, helping to maintain the general balance of the whole text, first in *assist me, by Thy strengthening grace, so to teach Thy Cause that…* and later in *Knit it, then, to Thy most great Ocean*.

3.l. Use of upper case

Pronouns and adjectives referred to God, the Manifestation of God and some sacred concepts (apart from names) appear in upper-case. This transmits a strong visual impact, particularly with possessive adjectives. This measure has been consistently used since 1921 and emphatically encouraged for translations into other languages whenever remotely justifiable with historical background. Treatment of this subject is quite complex and it merits separate study.

3.m. Other resources for elevation of register

—intensifiers: *verily*

—density of resources to transmit poetic, reverent, religious, archaic flavour which elevate the tone and register. The very density of resources could be considered a part of style.

—symmetry and balance.

—liquid onomatopoeia like *crystal streams* or «streams of fresh and soft-flowing waters have gushed from the rocks, through the sweetness of the words uttered by your Lord, the Unconstrained; and still ye slumber».

—nay (even more, not only but also)

4. CONCLUSIONS

It has been a great source of satisfaction for the authors to get to know more closely Shoghi Effendi's labour as a translator. The originality of his synthesis of the great tradition of majestic English writing, both lexically and stylistically, into a new departure in the very rich genre of English scriptural translation, all the while retaining a sense of continuity with the ageless monuments of the English language in its classical expressions, promises to achieve the weight and vitality associated with other master-pieces of the genre. His remarkable and youthful mastery of the subtleties of the English language, having been raised not only in a non-English-speaking, but also a non-Western culture, and consequently growing up without cultural referents which for the most part he had to acquire in the course of little over one year in Balliol College, Oxford, provokes a sense of wonder, not only at his evident facility with languages, but his prodigious capacity for work, his constant and intense dedication to the task of preparing himself for the labours of translations.

We are convinced that the translation monument painstakingly erected by Shoghi Effendi holds potentially a potent stimulus for the development of the theory and practice of systematic translation; to the minimum linguistic standardisation required for the translation of a single body of scripture into multiple languages; to the setting of pragmatic, coherent aims in full faithfulness to the text. The present work has not attempted to be comprehensive or definitive. Rather it hopes to act as a stimulus to further research, a marker of an important field yet to explore in greater depth, and a preliminary suggestion of trends and insights that may yield good harvests should they be pursued further. Notwithstanding that Shoghi Effendi passed away nearly 47 years ago and that his major translation labours were conducted largely between 1920 and 1940, we understand that Shoghi Effendi's significance as translator is likely to grow with time, as the Bahá'í community grows further and gains in importance, for whom his translations largely constitute the point of contact with their most sacred writings. At the same time, his contribution to the field of translation is still to be adequately explored. Investigation into this area stands out as a promising line of research.

NOTES

1«The Arabic of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is marked by intense concentration and terseness of expression. It is a characteristic of this style that if a connotation is obvious it should not be explicitly stated. This presents a problem for a reader whose cultural, religious and literary background is entirely different from that of Arabic. A literal translation of a passage which is clear in the Arabic could be obscure in English. It therefore becomes necessary to include in the English translation of such passages that element of the Arabic sentence which is obviously implicit in the original. At the same time, it is vital to avoid extrapolating this process to the point where it would add unjustifiably to the original or limit its meaning. Strinking the right balance between beauty and clarity of expression on the one had, and literalness on the other, is one of the major issues with which tre translators have had to grapple and which as caused repreated reconsideration of the rendering of certain passages». (*El Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, 1993: 10-11).

2Ruhiyyih Khanum, *The Priceless Pearl*, pág. 337

3The results have been produced with the help of the software TextStat

4This figure includes the following works: *God Passes By*, *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, *The Promised Day is Come*, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, and his «Summary Statement to the 1947, Special UN Committee on Palestine»

5Including The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Tablet to the Hague, Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, and the Tablet of the Branch and excluding his earlier, Star of the West and unpublished translations.

6The Qur'an (E.H. Palmer tr), Sura 20:12; cf. Exodus 3.5

7 *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, *Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh*, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.

8T arjuman discussion group

9 *The Book of Certitude*, pág.1

10For an extended discussion of this tradition in the *Book of Certitude* see Christopher Buck, *Symbol and Secret...*, ch.3. For a translation and discussion of the tradition in questions see Stephen Lambden, «Tafsir Hadith al-Haqíqa», in http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/03-THE%20BAB/post%201844/TAFSIR-KUMAYL.htm

11 *The Book of Certitude*, pág.164.

12Nida, Eugene A. and C.R.Taber (1969 / 1982) *The Theory and Practice of Translation,* Leiden: E. J. Brill, pág. 59.

13 *Ibíd.*

14For an extended discussion of Shoghi Ef fendi's usage and translation of the word *Nazm* see Ali Nakhjavani…, and Ismael Velasco…, unpublished paper.

15The same has been observed by Christopher Buck, *Symbol and Secret* pág.173. For a multilinear comparison of Qur'anic translations by Sale, Rodwell and Shoghi Effendi see Brett Zamir, «Qur'án, The Renderings by Rodwell & Sale and Multilinear Qur'án with Bahá'í References by Verse», at http://bahai-library.com/?file=quran_rodwell_sale_zamir.html

16For a good overview of this theme see Nation, P ., & Waring, R. (1997). «Vocabulary size, text coverage, and word lists.» In Schmitt, N., & McCarthy, M. (Eds.) *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition, pedagogy* (pp. 6-19). New York: Cambridge University Press.

17W e shall refer to this level of frequency as the 33% level of frequency.

18Martin Buber , *I and Thou,* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970, pág.3.

19 *Ibíd.* págs.3,8.

20See for instance his book *Language as Social Semiotic*: *The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning.* London: Edward Arnold, 1978.

21 *Ibíd.*, pág.1 11.

22«… reinforces the hearer 's natural tendency to reduce processing effort by looking for matching parallelisms in propositional form and implicatures».