



Sociocultural Power of Biblical Translation in Early Modern Europe: The Cases of the Ostroh Bible (1581) and the King James Bible (1611)

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Abstract: This paper presents sociocultural profiles of the Ostroh Bible (1581) and the King James Version of the Bible (1611) in terms of their agency, authoritative status and regulative functions. Despite scholarly and popular attention given to both texts, no attempts have been made so far to compare them. This paper intends to break the mold and focuses on the causes and results of the collective agency of the two versions at the textual, paratextual and extratextual levels as well as on the gatekeeping role of these translations and the ways they affected the development of their respective cultures. It is also demonstrated that the OB and the KJV performed the function of “the second originals.” Also subject to analysis are the prefaces to the two editions, which disclose information about important translation figures and deal with issues of universal and sacred history.

Keywords: biblical translation, Ostroh Bible, King James Bible, translation research, religious studies, textual, extratextual and paratextual agency

*Dedicated to the 440th anniversary of the Ostroh Bible
and the 410th anniversary of the King James Bible*

The recent wave of academic interest in the sociocultural plane of translation brings the question of power and agency to the forefront of Translation Studies and opens up new avenues for exploring deceptively exhausted subjects, such as the analysis of authorized or canonized Bible translations.

One may argue that the power-related approach viewing translation as a “[...] cultural political practice, constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, affirming or transgressing discursive values and institutional limits in the target-language culture”¹ is hardly applicable to the Holy Scripture, which is a unique and true spiritual message. Yet the history of Bible translations demonstrates the inescapable interference of ideological factors. This seems perfectly reasonable, as its sacred status makes the Bible the most influential text in the world culture.

¹ Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 19.

The sociocultural approach to the study of Bible translations fosters a reconsideration of the ideological role that the basic (most authoritative or even authorized) Bible translations have played in establishing the religious space of a nation and influencing its cultural space.

This paper is an attempt to compare sociocultural profiles of the Ostroh Bible (1581) and the King James Version of the Bible (1611) in terms of their agency, authoritative status and regulative functions.

1. The Ostroh Bible and the King James Bible: Agency and Empowerment Parallels

Two early modern Bibles came out within 30 years at the opposite sides of Europe, and albeit revised, they still have an impact on today's believers. Both publications share immense authority: the OB provided the *Textus Receptus* for Slavia Orthodoxa (and, in a way, paved the way for vernacular translations); the King James Bible set a standard of high-flown style for the whole Anglophone world. These external factors of authority, patronage and openness do not fully reveal the internal factors underlying the translators' principles of correctness, social axiology and orientation toward reader-friendliness. It is fascinating how the writers conveyed the message of valuable reading by applying a rich systems of topoi or imagery.

Sherry Simon emphasizes that “[...] translations undertaken in times of cultural transition sometimes acquired the status of originals”² and, besides the Septuagint and the Vulgate, uses the KJV as an obvious example. Not only did the KJV become the source for subsequent Protestant translations into many languages, but it also triggered the continuous revising process beginning with the Revised Version of the New Testament (1881) and the Old Testament (1885) and the American Standard Version (1901) (which were also revised), up to the most recognized New King James Version of the Bible (1982).

The OB in the Ukrainian religious space also acquired the status of “the second original,” the first complete Church Slavonic translation in print and the most authoritative text of the Holy Scripture, which for centuries was used for liturgy and quoted in sermons and theological literature. All subsequent Church Slavonic versions of the Bible produced in Russia (Moscow Bible 1663, Elizabeth Bible 1751) were nothing but Russianized variants of the OB. The most glaringly distinctive example of the colonization policy implemented in the Moscow Bible is the replacement in the preface of the phrase “народ руський / Rus'ian people” with “народ великороссийский / Great Russian people.”

² Simon, “Translators,” 160.

These revised editions of the OB made a far-reaching impact on translations of the Holy Scriptures into Ukrainian, such as the Gospels and Psalms translated by Pylyp Morachevskyi in the 1860s.

Even more interesting is the fact that the seminal edition of the Greek Bible *Vetus Testamentum Graecum* in five volumes edited by Robert Holmes and James Parsons (1798–1823) relied on some of the data taken from the OB.³

The status of the OB as “the second original” resonated more tangibly in 2006 when Rafayil Turkoniak (Torkoniak) translated it into modern Ukrainian and was awarded the most prestigious Ukrainian state prize for works of culture – the Taras Shevchenko National Prize.

Both the OB and the KJV are indispensable components of the English and Ukrainian cultural spaces, respectively, and sources of the Biblical register manifested in the literature and phraseology. Known as “the noblest monument of the English prose,” “the most celebrated book in the English-speaking world,”⁴ the KJV, as George Steiner aptly argues, is “the domesticated Bible,” “felt not so much as import from abroad as an element of the native past of the English people.”⁵ “No book has had greater influence on the English language” (Alan G. Thomas), especially on its idiomatic layer, and this aspect is thoroughly analyzed in David Crystal’s book *Begat. The King James Bible and the English Language*.⁶ The KJV had a huge impact on the English literature. As Northrop Frye aptly demonstrates in his seminal book *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature* (1982), modulations from the KJV constantly resonate in the writings of the 19th century, much like proverbs in literatures of other cultures.⁷

Likewise, the style of *The Kobzar* by Taras Shevchenko, who established the Ukrainian national poetic canon, was greatly influenced by the Elizabeth Bible, which is a revised version of the OB. At the same time, Church Slavonic expressions entered the idiomatic vocabulary of the Ukrainian language, often with ironic connotations (e.g. *ізбиєніє младенцев* “massacre of the innocents,” *явлення Христа народові* “the appearance of Christ before the people,” *притча во язицех* “the by-word” etc.).

Nevertheless, the *skopos*, i.e. the purpose of translation behind the KJV and the OB, was not only a scholarly collaborative effort “to create out of many good Bibles one principal good one.” Of course, the agents involved in the projects also had no intention or ability to predict the extent to which they would affect their respective languages and literature. Their activism lay in the theological and political dimensions, which were closely intertwined. The KJV aroused from the attempts to

3 Evseev, “Rukopisnoe predanie slavyanskoy Biblii,” 3.

4 Campbell, *Bible*, 1.

5 Steiner, *After Babel*, 365.

6 Crystal, *Begat*.

7 Frye, *The Great Code*.

organize Christianity in the post-Reformation period and became a mighty weapon in the struggle against Roman Catholic domination; identically, the OB aimed at reducing the expansion of Roman Catholicism in its strive to reconvert Orthodox Ukrainians into the Latin Rite.

Yet amidst all the tremendous good they brought, the OB and the KJV at the time of their publication played the role of powerful ideological instruments designed to take under control the religious and cultural spaces of the respective nations.

Gordon Campbell⁸ and Roy E. Ciampa⁹ view the KJV as a commitment to promote more peaceful coexistence of Anglicans and Puritans, although on royal terms. To this end, the scholars from both camps were summoned to come up with a Bible that would be acceptable to both groups. Nevertheless, in reality only moderate Puritans were involved in the project, as the King firmly rejected Presbyterianism in favor of Episcopal Anglican Church. The KJV was primarily to challenge and suppress the popular Geneva Bible (1560) favored by Puritans for its democratic marginal notes and lexical changes in tune with the idea of “the dominion by grace.” Among the rules outlined in the instructions to translators, particularly noteworthy is the demand to use the “Old Ecclesiastical Words” (like “church,” “bishop,” “priest” and “charity”) rather than recently proposed alternatives (“congregation,” “elder,” “minister” and “love”).¹⁰

The above considerations have triggered somewhat extreme endeavors to shatter the authority of the KJV. Most conspicuous is the viewpoint of Giles Fraser, who dubs the KJV “A Fetish for the Bible” and explains the explosion of its popularity by the ban on publishing the Geneva Bible since 1640s and even by the success of Handel’s *Messiah*, whose libretto was a compilation of verses from the 1611 translation.¹¹ Similarly, the success and positive impact of the Ostroh project is marred by the fact that it irremediably interrupted the process of translating the Bible into Ukrainian. The 16th century partial translations of the Bible into Ukrainian (the most renown is the Peresopnytsia Gospel, 1561) attest to the penetration of the Reformation ideas into Ukraine. For example, Vasyl Tiapynskyi and Valentyn Nehalevskyi, who produced two partial translations of the Gospels, represented Socinianism, the extreme wing of Protestantism and, apart from reinterpreting theological dogmas, ardently championed the right of common people to read the word of God in their native tongue. The authority of the OB deepened the gap between the Church Slavonic language and the vernacular and discontinued any further attempts to produce a Ukrainian version of the Holy Scripture for almost three centuries. It is not surprising that

⁸ Campbell, *Bible*, 32–34.

⁹ Ciampa, “Ideological Challenges,” 140–141.

¹⁰ Campbell, *Bible*, 36.

¹¹ Fraser, “A Fetish for the Bible.”

Ivan Franko¹² and Dmytro Chyzhevskiy¹³ regarded this “coherently Church Slavonic text without Ukrainian elements” a conservative phenomenon of its time. Maksym Strikha rightly maintains that with time the OB “[...] rather established the idea of Ukrainian and Russian unity, since this very text laid the foundation for the Moscow (1663) and St.-Petersburg (1751) «canonized» editions of the Holy Scripture.”¹⁴ It is also possible to draw a parallel between the persistence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate to use Church Slavonic for liturgy and the King James Only movement in some religious societies and communities in the United States of America and Great Britain who believe that KJV is infallible and divinely inspired. Compare: “We believe the King James ‘Authorized Version’ Bible to be the perfect and infallible word of God. We believe the Bible was inspired in its origination and then divinely preserved throughout its various generations and languages until it reached us in its final form” (online Bible Believers’ Church Directory)¹⁵ – “The temple is, in fact, the door to the spiritual Heaven. Therefore, its objects are also detached from the world: icons, thurible, frankincense, candles etc. The same pertains to the Church Slavonic language. It is our verbal “thurible” put into the censer of our hearts when we pray and censer to the Almighty God.”¹⁶

In terms of agency, both projects resulted from collective translation, which is a model established by Septuagint allegedly produced by seventy-two scholars. Sherry Simon identifies three reasons for collective translation of the Bible: 1) to serve as a proof of a direct link between translation and divine presence; 2) to ensure institutional guidance and control over the translation process; 3) to shield the individual translator from oppression and mistreatment via shared responsibility.¹⁷ In this case study, the criteria of objectivity can complement this list.

The KJV project was accomplished by people of different backgrounds – theological (Anglican and Puritan) and educational (priests and lay linguists) – in order to minimize the individual prejudices and preferences of the translators. To this end, six translation panels or companies, two each at Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge, worked on separate parts of the Bible and scrutinized each other’s contributions.

The OB was prepared by the committee of the foremost scholars from the Ostroh Academy, such as Herasym Smotrytskyi, Dionysius Rallis-Palaeologus, Yevstaphiy Nafanayil, and printed by Ivan Fedorovych.

The power relationship between the royal patrons of the projects and their translators is represented in the translators’ prefaces, which, according to André Lefevere, “[...] invariably follow a precise schema that emphasizes the central position of

¹² Franko, “Suchasni doslidy,” 405.

¹³ Chyzhevskiy, *Istoriya ukrayinskoyi literatury*, 229.

¹⁴ Strikha, M., *Ukrayinskyi pereklad*, 39.

¹⁵ Campbell, *Bible*, 265.

¹⁶ Chyzenko, “Chomu tserkva.”

¹⁷ Simon, “Translators,” 163.

the initiator of the translation.”¹⁸ Yet in this case study, the pivotal role of the patrons of the KJV and the OB, King James I and Prince Kostiantyn of Ostroh, is not a mere sign of reverence and veneration. Both projects grew out of plans put forward by these royal and learned men who summoned the foremost scholars and linguists of their time to work on the translation. At the same time, the patrons had a hold on the paratextual agency, which according to Kaisa Koskinen¹⁹ and Outi Paloposki²⁰ consisted of inserting and adding notes and prefaces, and extratextual agency consisting of selecting books to be translated, as well as the use of different editions and intermediary translation.

King James’ paratextual agency is manifested in one of the fifteen rules set out to be observed by the translators, namely to avoid notes on the margins: “No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.”²¹ This requirement can be explained by the King’s dislike of the popular Geneva Bible (1560) or rather “[...] of the politics preached in the margins of the Geneva Bible,”²² such as the anti-monarchical note in Exod 1:19 allowing disobedience to Kings.

Prince Kostiantyn’s paratextual agency is even more tangible as he authored the first preface to the translation done under his aegis.

The extratextual dimension of both projects lies in their relay nature, namely the use of intermediary sources rather than new translations from Old Hebrew and Greek. The King James Bible translators were supposed to rely heavily on the Bishops’ Bible (1568). The requirement was set out as the first rule in the instruction for the translators: “The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.”²³ Yet the intermediary source itself was just a revision of the Great Bible and the Geneva Bible, which in turn were revisions of their predecessors – William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale and Thomas Matthew’s Bibles. As many of the King James Bible translators were well-versed in Hebrew and Greek, they also consulted the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.

The derivative character of the translation is openly acknowledged in the preface, “The Translators to the Reader,” which was regrettably removed from the King James Bible by the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society in 1804: “Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that

¹⁸ Lefevere, “Translators,” 136.

¹⁹ Koskinen, *Beyond Ambivalence*, 99.

²⁰ Paloposki, “Limits of Freedom,” 191.

²¹ Campbell, *Bible*, 36.

²² Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 71.

²³ Campbell, *Bible*, 35.

we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, ... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one.”²⁴

It is widely held that the OB is for the most part a revision of the so called Hennadiyevs'ka Bible (1499). This assumption is allegedly based on the evidence Prince Kostiantyn himself provided in his Preface while expressing his gratitude to Prince Ivan Vasilievich of Moscow for the manuscript of the complete Bible. Yet the conclusion seems rather inconsequential, since later in the Preface the author grieves over “the divergences and damaged text” of the Hennadiyevs'ka Bible, which made him collect “a lot of other Bibles, different writings and in different languages” with a view to analyzing and comparing their content.²⁵ Ivan Ohiyenko, an eminent Bible Studies specialist and a translator of the complete Bible into Ukrainian (1962), also argues that the texts of the OB and the Moscow manuscript differ considerably. His comparative analysis attests to the fact that the translators used other sources, both Church Slavonic, especially Southern Slavonic, and Greek ones.²⁶ This position is supported by Rafayil Turkoniak, the translator of the OB into Ukrainian: “It (*the OB*) is a critical elaborated translation done independently by the Ostroh scholars where very little remains from the Hennadiyevs'ka Bible.”²⁷ It is likely that the translators of the OB used two editions of the Greek Holy Scriptures – Complutensis and Aldina, as well the Vulgate, Masoretic Hebrew texts and different Slavonic and non-Slavonic translations.²⁸ Paradoxically, the OB, which was intended to become a stronghold against the pervasive Protestantism, might have been partly based on the Polish translation of the New Testament by Symon Budny, one of the most prominent activists of the Socinian movement.²⁹

2. Prefaces as Sources for Research on Translation and Translation History

The then monumental editions had similar structures of prefaces. A preface to or by the Royal Authority signified the eminence of the publication and the sanctioning approval, which was to protect the book and its makers against all adversaries. The two editions were powerful instruments in the fight against Roman Catholic domination. The Church of England evolved in a Protestant church and implemented the Protestant policy of biblical translation into vernacular, while the OB was the fruit of

²⁴ KJV, [6–16].

²⁵ OB, [8].

²⁶ Ohiyenko, “Ostrozka Bibliya.”

²⁷ Turkoniak, “Ostrozka Bibliya,” 1053–1054.

²⁸ Tsurkan, *Slavyanskiy perevod Biblii*, 213.

²⁹ Frick, *Polish Sacred Philology*, 114.

Orthodox-Protestant cooperation. This is why the patronage of editions like these was so crucial, and it was realized in double prefaces: the first one was composed by the Royal Authority (that of Prince Kostiantyn of Ostroh in the OB) or dedicated to the Royal Authority (in the KJV); the second one was a preface from the translators to the readers where they had an opportunity to dwell upon a wide range of biblical, theological, literary and historical issues.

Meanwhile, practice shows that prefaces are not common in translation editions,³⁰ although they serve a number of guiding functions, such as explaining the status of a translation in a national polysystem or justifying translation strategies that have been applied in the translation. From the latter perspective, the value of prefaces differs in the two – English and Ukrainian – traditions of translation studies: it is much higher in Ukrainian translation studies, as they help to reconstruct the translation theory of the time, about which we know nothing specific (in the form of books and treatises). However, the translators' need to speak to their readers shows which topics were of top-ranking authority. The terms used to describe the implementation of this most important task are the key to the reconstruction of theoretical views on translation as a system. Indeed, they are highly relevant for translation theory and praxis: "Translators writing prefaces could help build bridges between the theory and practice of translation and develop a more professional meta-language."³¹ In certain periods in the history of some national cultures, prefaces serve as full-fledged theoretical papers.

Despite a number of differences, the prefaces share some of the same features: the act of rendering the Truth/Wisdom for a wider readership reflected the key social and religious values for evaluating the texts. As of today, translation prefaces cover the following topics: "1) Difficulties in undertaking the translation, 2) Information on the translator, 3) Information on the source text, 4) Acknowledgements and dedications, 5) The origin of the translation, 6) Clarification of the title, and 7) General approach and specific procedures in translating."³² Judging by the prefaces in the OB and the KJV, we can easily deduce that the repertoire of translation issues has remained unchanged since the Renaissance. Having taken a look at the 10th-century prologue attributed to St. Constantine the Philosopher, a Byzantine translator, theologian and missionary to the Slavs,³³ it can be concluded that the repertoire grew from pinpointing the main translation and interpretation obstacles to presenting the translation within social, political and cultural contexts covering the issues of sacred history and even state-building.

³⁰ Dimitriu, "Translators' prefaces," 194.

³¹ Dimitriu, "Translators' Prefaces," 203.

³² Haroon, "The Translator's Preface," 106.

³³ Matchauzerova, *Drevnerusskie teorii*, 31–34.

3. Acknowledgement of Translation Nations and Scholars

The role of the prefaces is similar in praising and establishing the authority of the Churches whose efforts contributed to the translations. The Church of England was not so well established 100 years after its inception by Henry VIII. This is why the Bible project was not only to help resolve religious disputes in society, but also to strengthen the Church of England, which through this translation could resist the power of the Roman Catholic church. It also reflected the societal turmoil of other European nations and the issue of translating the Bible into vernacular languages. In Ukraine, the political prestige of the Ukrainians who were Orthodox was under threat. Ukraine was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and its ethnic population was discriminated against after Lithuania converted from Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism. A large-scale publication, such as the printed translation of the whole Bible, raised and strengthened the prestige of the Church of Kyiv, thus uniting Slavia Orthodoxa (especially Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Wallachia, as well as strengthening ties with Bulgaria, Serbia and Muscovy) and resisting the assimilationist practices of the Polish and Hungarian gentry.

The differences between the two publications demonstrate the dissimilarity of academic development in the two countries that benefitted from the sacred history of biblical translation, as well as Latin scholarship. One obvious difference lies in acknowledging the predecessors: John Trevisa (fl. 1342–1402) is praised, while Francysk Skaryna (1470–1552) is not even mentioned, although his contribution to the praxis of biblical translation was definitely well-known and accepted. The mention of John Trivisa in the text of this authority was like a sanction for promoting his theoretical views. The fundamental tenet of Trevisa's views was the possibility of understanding a foreign-language message that emerges through translation: "Sith the time that the great and high tower of Babylon was builded, men have spoken with divers tongues, in such wise that divers men be strange to other and understand not others' speech."³⁴ Understanding is the key motif of his reflections, and it is similarly reiterated in the OB: "But when you think of the High, understand the Lord's words that He not only commands to read, but also to study; and after studying, to keep."³⁵ This can be fulfilled only if the foreign text is available in the language spoken by the reader.

In his treatise, Trivisa contemplates which genre is better for translation: poetry or prose. His answer favors prose: "In prose, for commonly prose is more clear than rhyme, more easy and more plain to know and understand."³⁶ Although the Bible is a poetic book as well, the principle of prose translation dominates in biblical

³⁴ Weissbort – Eysteinsson, *Translation*, 47.

³⁵ OB, [7–8].

³⁶ Weissbort – Eysteinsson, *Translation*, 50.

translation. The reason is the same, i.e. the clarity of style and the simplicity of understanding. The value of verbal culture is vital for the OB, as it is reiterated numerously, e.g. in describing Paul the Apostle: “He, wonderfully caught up to the third heaven, is a faith-worthy witness and a great utterer of the divine mysteries; he heard unspoken words, which you can say to a person.”³⁷ The attitude towards the Word is the common ground of Trivisa’s and OB translators’ views that unite the KJV and the OB without any direct and superficial connection. However, it is voiced more clearly in the KJV: “it is necessary to have translations in a readiness. Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.”³⁸

The KJV pays significant attention to the respect towards other nations, and its motivations are as follows: “The Apostle excepteth no tongue; not Hebrew the ancientest, not Greeke the most copious, not Latine the finest.”³⁹ The leading idea of the OB is the unity of Slavia Orthodoxa that uses the “Slavonic” (actually: Church Slavonic) language in Church. The patron of the OB, Prince Kostiantyn of Ostroh, dedicates this magnificent undertaking: “To you in Christ, – as was prophesied by the Eternal God before all worlds – those ones, chosen among the Rus nation, and all those ones who speak the Slavonic language and who are united in the Orthodoxy of this Church, Christian people of every profession.”⁴⁰ The Slavonic unity is based on the authority of the Orthodox Church and the Church Slavonic language.

Although the main purpose of printing both the OB and the KJV is the “common good” and salvation,⁴¹ the same idea was voiced by Francysk Skaryna under the influence of the 1506 Czech Bible. His focus on vernacular language was not crystallized by himself nor officially supported, perhaps due to social and political turmoil impacting religious life. Nevertheless, the numerous manuscripts of his translation testify to the widespread approval of his undertaking. Francysk Skaryna managed to publish 20 books from the Old Testament in Church Slavonic along with elements of Bookish Middle Ukrainian as well as Belarusian and Ukrainian vernacular. He tried to make his translation reader-friendly by simplifying or adding annotations to the text.⁴² His strategies were to pave the way for new, later biblical translation projects, the essence of which was again summarized – although not in the Ukrainian context, but the universal translation praxis – in the KJV: the translation is “also for the behoof and edifying of the unlearned which hungered and thirsted after Righteousnesse, and had souls to be saved as well as they, they provided Translations into the vulgar

³⁷ OB, [8].

³⁸ KJV, [6].

³⁹ KJV, [6].

⁴⁰ OB, [3].

⁴¹ Cf. OB, [7] and KJV, [4].

⁴² Shmiher, *Perekladoznavchyi analiz*, 41–42.

for their Countrymen, insomuch that most nations under heaven did shortly after their conversion, hear CHRIST speaking unto them in their mother tongue, not by the voice of their Minister only, but also by the written word translated.”⁴³ The 1561 vernacular translation of the Gospels into Middle Ukrainian (the Peresopnytsia Gospels) sprang from these visions, and the policy of vernacular translation flourished in abundant printed and written Homiliary Gospels, although the official printings were sanctioned some centuries later. In this respect, the KJV shows the importance of the State in biblical translation, although it states how significant the translation of the Bible is for the existence of the State.⁴⁴

4. Universal and Sacred History

Place names help historians track the migration of influences, while they also mark the borders of cultural spaces. The collections of these names clearly delineate two civilizations presented in the OB and the KJV: the former is oriented toward the Orthodox Orient; the latter, toward the wider European Christendom. The knowledge of geography is tightly intertwined with historical references, especially those to the sacred history which was seen as the highest authority in religious disputes. This could certainly also leave some room for the manipulation of historical facts.

The OB was the voice of the nation that was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, suffering from political and religious discrimination and, thus, striving for a powerful Protective Authority. As the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople was itself under the threat of physical liquidation, it could not perform the function of the Protective Authority, although it gave blessings, sanctions, and had enough moral authority to consolidate creative efforts in all Orthodox countries, and not only in them. The preface contains the following geographical references:⁴⁵

- Constantinople (the highest spiritual authority);
- Rus (historical sacrum);
- Lithuania (a political center);
- Muscovy (the most north-eastern Orthodox Country, heir of the cultural and religious legacy of Novgorod);
- Roman lands (the value of all-inclusiveness);
- Candia (Crete);
- Greece (monasteries with recognized spiritual authority);
- Bulgaria (monasteries with recognized spiritual authority);

⁴³ KJV, [8].

⁴⁴ Cf. KJV, [4].

⁴⁵ OB, [5].

- Serbia (monasteries with recognized spiritual authority);
- Egypt (the place where the Septuagint was created).

This list marks the boundaries of the alternative Orthodox Christendom as seen by academia in the Volyn city of Ostroh. The idea of common faith helped various nations preserve their religious identity which, at that time, was a fundamental component of their national identity, and sometimes the confessional component even dominated over the ethnic one.

The historical geography of the KJV is much richer,⁴⁶ and it can be grouped into several domains:

- ideological space (Christendom as sacrum; Rome as an adversary);
- sacred space (Syria and Israel, as well as Jerusalem, as topoi in sacred history);
- topoi of early biblical missional space (Greece, Egypt, Asia, Africa);
- Christian space (also including Dalmatia [today's Croatia], India, Persia, Ethiopia, Armenia, Scythia and Sauromatia [today's Ukraine], Poland);
- Royal Possessions (Great Britain, France, Ireland).

Religious geography was just formed at the time⁴⁷ the two Bibles were printed. Religion was an instrument of power which was to support both British and Orthodox "nations." History, especially sacred history, but also historical geography, was a powerful tool in arguing against Roman Catholicism in an attempt to draw a line between the local "Us" and the foreign "Other."

The historical authority was also exercised by mentioning the names of political figures (David, Constantine, Theodosius, Justinian), biblical scholars (Aquila, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, Theodoret) and biblical translators (Jerome, Ulfilas, John Bishop of Sevil, Bede, Efnard, King Alfred, Methodius, Valdo Bishop of Frising, Valdus and some more). The curious connection between the OB and the KJV lies in the reference to the Polish-Language Protestant Brest Bible published at the behest of Mikolaj Radziwill. This 1563 Bible translation project was so well-known in Europe that the English translators mentioned it in their preface. Taking into account the fact that the Orthodox and Protestants cooperated on religious matters, the Brest Bible was among sources that inspired the publication of the OB.

⁴⁶ KJV, [4, 6, 8–10].

⁴⁷ Matlovič – Matlovičová, "Geografický determinizmus," 133–134.

Conclusions

The sociocultural profiles of the Ostroh Bible and the King James Bible overlap at a few distinctive points, such as: the role of “the second original” in the popular prototypical perception, liturgy and literary tradition and the subsequent production of translations; collective translation agency to ensure objectivity, shared responsibility and divine inspiration; the absolute paratextual and extratextual agency of the royal patrons, who gathered translators, set out the rules for translation and made themselves visible in the paratexts; the function of the ideological instrument.

The topoi mentioned in the prefaces show how their authors conceptualized themselves. Over the next centuries, the all-inclusiveness hinted at in 1611 resulted in many successful large-scale geopolitical projects, while the conservative and closed Orthodox Orient became partially orthodox in terms of doctrine and tradition, but without the dynamic progress and flexibility with regard to future forms of political life. At the same time, as in any war-like situation, the significance of what is not said but meant stays the same. However, unlike the reader of the time, today’s reader cannot decipher the codes and values contained in the prefaces, although the 1611 preface is more explicit, while the 1581 version is addressed more to a narrow circle of theologians. What is impressive is that the idea of the Divine Law as a foundation of an earthly State is more debated in the English preface, while the Ukrainians did not seize this chance to rediscuss – and spiritually restore – the values and grandeur of the State of Kyivan Rus. The difference between the Western Reasonability and the Eastern Abstractness shows the two extreme markers of European cultural space.

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