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МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ОБРАЗОВАНИЕТО И НАУКАТА

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In the Language Laboratory of a Medieval Translator

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IBCT - BAS

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Education and science in Medieval Europe

Two cycles:

Trivium: grammar, logic, rhetoric

Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy

The knowledge related to language is a part of the complex knowledge of the world, i.e. of science.

Language is a tool of expression and of sharing new knowledge.

Translation is a bridge to transfer new knowledge.

In this presentation: How a medieval translator, through rendering, transfers a new worldview and constructs a new literary language.

Background

Mid-9th c.

- The Byzantine scholar Constantine-Cyrillus created the first Slavic script
- He and his brother Methodius translate the main liturgical books necessary for their church mission among the Western Slavs
- They apply for this their knowledge of Bulgarian dialects spread around Thessaloniki

885-886

- Their disciples, expelled from Great Moravia, find warm acceptance in the Bulgarian state
- They continue the translation activity

Late 9th – early 11th c.

- Accumulation of a literary production – translated and original – that builds up the cultural basis of *Slavia Orthodoxa* in the Middle Ages

Constantine of Preslav

One of the most famous and prolific among the disciples of Cyrillus and Methodius

Enormous literary heritage of original and translated works belonging to various genres

Uchitel'noe Evangelie ('Didactic Gospel')

- the most voluminous preaching collection of the late 9th c.
- 51 sermons for the Sundays of the church year
- a combination of translated parts and parts authored by Constantine

Scope of the study: **the mastery of the medieval translator**

Constantin's task was extremely difficult, from the cultural and linguistic aspect, as he had to:

- Convey clearly and exactly the Byzantine message;
- To make it understandable for his neophyte audience;
- To preserve the richness of its source text, written in a language with a thousands-year-long tradition;
- By using the means of a language with literary history of only three decades.

Project: *The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav's Uchitel'noe evangelie ('Didactic Gospel'): Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian Word Indices*, financed by the Bulgarian National Science Fund (contract КП-06-Н50/2 of 30.11.2020)

Sources

Slavonic:

4 full copies dated to the 12th – 14th c.:

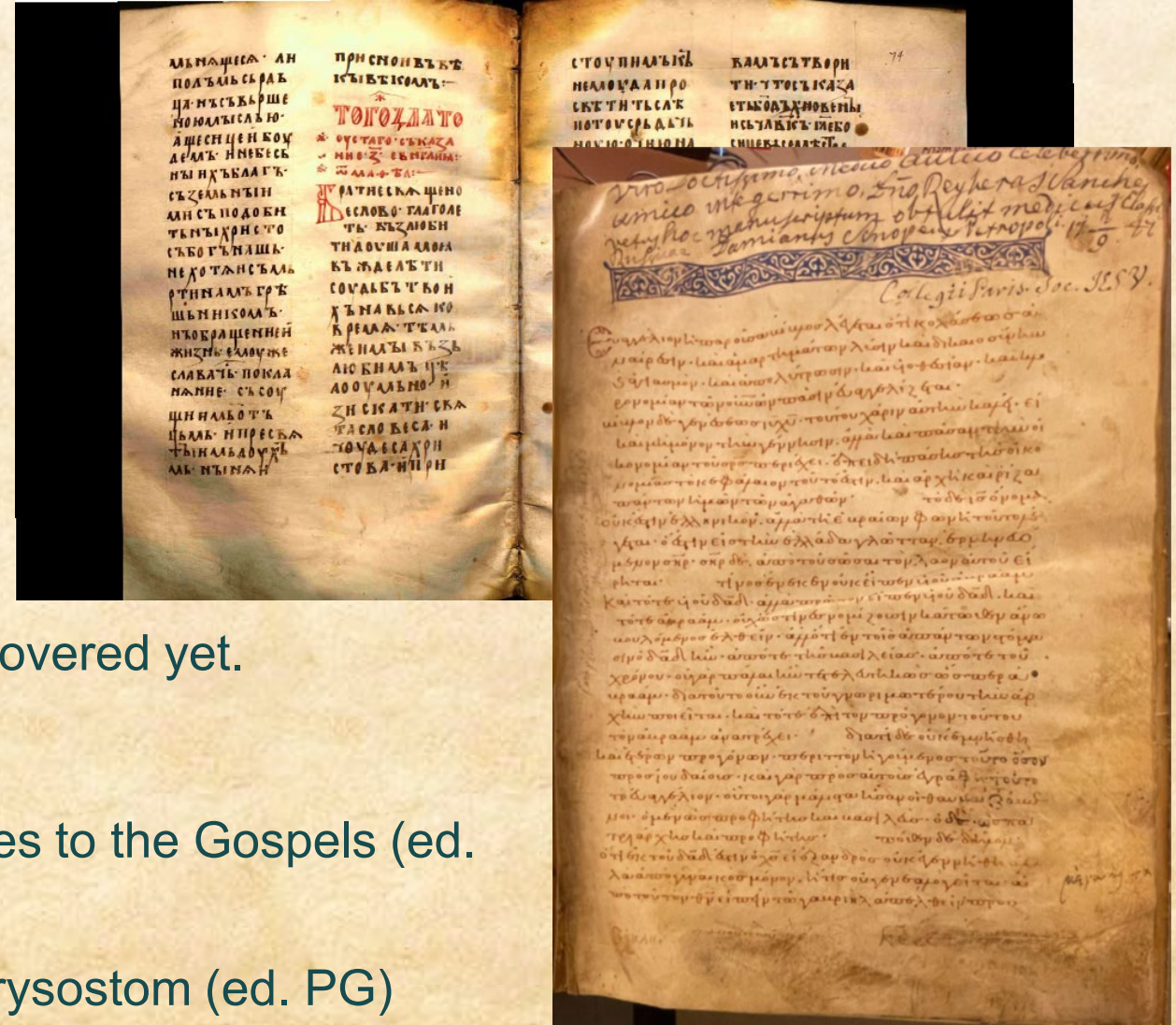
- Synodal (GIM Sin. 262)
- Gil'ferding (RNB Gil'f. 32)
- Vienna (ÖNB Cod. Sl. 12)
- Hilandar (Hil. 385)

Greek:

No exact Byzantine source of **UE** has been discovered yet.

Text parallels are offered by:

- Gospel catenae – selected commentaries to the Gospels (ed. Cramer 1840-1844 and manuscripts)
- The full homilies (sermons) by John Chrysostom (ed. PG)



Translator's main approaches

- Simplification of the complicated Byzantine style
- Enrichment through loan words
- Free translation of specific *realia* unknown to the Slavonic audience
- Creating of new words
- Giving new meanings of existing words

Language situation

Byzantine Greek was the most-well elaborated literary language:

- rich means of expression
- various linguistic devices for expressing nuances of lexical meanings and of modalities

John Chrysostom's style

- rich imagery
- complicated syntax
- exquisite rhetoric

9th-century *Old Bulgarian language* – a literary language with only 30-years history

Simplifying the complex Byzantine way of expression

The translator deviates from the Byzantine model by **dropping out words or phrases or summarizing** the message of the source text

Τί ἂν τις εἴποι τὰς λοιδορίας [τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν τοιούτων], τὰς ὕβρεις, τὰ δανείσματα, τοὺς τόκους, τὰ συναλλάγματα τὰ πολλῆς γέμοντα καπηλείας, τὰς ἐμπορίας τὰς ἀναισχύντους;

*Could anyone describe/tell about the used in this slanders, insults, lendings, loan interests, **deals/contracts, full of trickery, shameless trade/commercial cases.***

КЪТО МОЖЕТЬ НШЕСТИ ОКЛЕВѢТАННІА• ДОСАЖЕННІА ЗАМАННІА• ЛИХВЪТІ• КОУПІЮ [var. сѢКОУПІЕ WHG] СОУЩА

ПЪЛНЪТІ ВСѦКОІА ЛЪСѢТН

*Who can count the acts of slander, blasphemy, lending, loan interests, **trade, executed with all sorts of cunning/fraud.***

Simplifying the complex Byzantine way of expression

The translator deviates from the Byzantine model by **summarizing the message of the source text**

πολεμίως καὶ ἐπιόρκως
hostilely and perjuriously

σοῦ ποστὰ τῆ
opponents

Φέρε οὖν, τὸ τῶν δημιουργῶν γένος καὶ χειροτεχνῶν ἐξετάσωμεν
Let us observe the genus of the masters/artists and craftsmen

πο οὐже неспытанигъ дѣлательнѣ родѣ
Let us look at the working genus

Specific *realia* unknown to the Slavonic people

Asymmetry between cultures

Byzantium – Christian culture based on Antiquity and the Hellenic traditions

Bulgaria – a pagan state just 4 decades before Constantine

➤ Difficulties when specific *realia* and concepts have to be conveyed.

Approaches of the translator:

- direct borrowing of the word
- free translation of the meaning
- creating of new words (neologisms) by translating the elements of the word (calques)
- broadening of the meaning of existing lexemes

Specific *realia* unknown to the Slavonic people

Direct borrowing of words

Loanword

ἵπποδρόμος ‘the Roman circus’ > иподромъ

Loanword or translation

φιλοσοφία ‘philosophy’

- философия

- мъдростъ ‘wisdom’, мъдро разоумнѣ ‘wise reasoning’, разоумъ ‘reasoning’,
разоумъ прѣмъдръ ‘extremely wise reasoning’, прѣмъдростъ ‘extreme wisdom’,
цѣлъ оумъ ‘perfect mind’

more free: тръпѣннѣ ‘patience, endurance’, тѣщаннѣ ‘eagerness, effort’

Specific *realia* unknown to the Slavonic people

Free translation

ψηφος ‘small round worn stone, pebble’ → ‘various uses made of such pebbles... 2. pebble used in voting; that which is carried by vote, a vote; any resolve or decree’

ὅπως αὐτοὶ τὴν ψηφὸν ἐξενέγκωσι, καὶ ἑαυτοὺς καταδικάσωσιν·

To vote for themselves and to condemn themselves.

ДА САМНН НЗДРЕУЕННІА НЗНЕСΟΥТЬ • Н САМНН СѦ ОСΟΥДАТЬ

To present what has been said/decided and to condemn themselves.

The translator does not use **камы** ‘stone’, but a word with the root **рек-/ реу-** ‘speak, say’ → **НЗДРЕУЕННІЕ** ‘statement, verdict’

Specific terms

Creation of new words (neologisms)

Σεληνιάζομαι ‘to be moonstruck, i.e. epileptic’

Cyrillus und Methodius give it descriptively in the Gospel:

Mt 4:24 *мѣсѣмѣнѣиѣ зълѣти недрѣгѣти нмѣти* (to have monthly to have disabilities related to the moon); Mt 7:15 *на новѣ мѣсѣцѣ бѣсновати сѣ* (to go crazy at new moon)

Constantin of Preslav uses:

- Adjective *мѣсѣмѣнѣ* ‘monthly//lunar’ (1x)

- Participles from verbs that he created by morpheme-for-morpheme translation of the respective word (4x) : *мѣсѣцовати* (сѣ) and *мѣсѣмѣнѣновати* (сѣ) ‘*something like monthicate/lunaticate (oneself)*’

In Theophylact of Ohrid’s *Commentary to the Gospels* (Slavonic reception 12th c.): *лѹгнѣствовати*.

Specific terms

Creation of new words (neologisms)

ἐνανθρωπέω ‘put on man's nature’ ВЪΥΛΟΒ΄ΕΥΗΤΗ СΛ

τρισμακάριος ‘thrice-blest’ ТРЪБЛАЖЕНЪ

σκληροκάρδιος ‘hard-hearted, stubborn’ ЖЕСТОСРЪДЪ

αὐτοπηγή ‘self-source’ САΜΟΗΣΤΟΥΒΗΗΚЪ

more freely: ἐπιορκία ‘false swearing, perjury’ прѣстѣпоκλѣтнѣ (from прѣстѣп-
‘to transgress’ and κλѣтнѣ ‘oath’)

Specific terms

Giving new (usually abstract) meanings to existing words

πόλις ‘city or country; country, as dependent on and called after its city, community’

πολιτεία ‘condition and rights of a citizen, citizenship,...., πολιτεῖαι = grants of citizenship; the daily life of a citizen; life, living’

slav. житиє ‘life’

ἐπειδὴ ἔθος τῷ Θεῷ, ὅτε **πολιτείας** τινὸς εἰσαγωγὴν ἔμελλε ποιεῖν, σημεῖα εἰργάζετο, ἐνέχυρα τῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως παρέχων.

*Since God, every time He wanted/intended to introduce some new **way of life**, made signs, giving a pledge for His power*

ПОНЕЖЕ ОБЫЧАЕ БЪВН• ЕГДА ЖИТИЯ ЕТЕРА НАЧАТЪКЪ ХОТѢШЕ ТВОРИТИ• ЗНАМЕНІТА СЪДѢЛАШЕ• ОБРОУЧЕНІЕ СВОЕИ СЛѢ ПОДАТИ

*Since it was the Lord's custom when He wanted to create the beginning of another **life**, He performed signs, giving strength through His power.*

Specific terms

Giving new (usually abstract) meanings to existing words

πολιτεία — житиѣ ‘life’

ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἦσαν τεθραμμένοι, καὶ νόμοις καὶ ἔθεσι καὶ πολιτεία,
Because in the same ones they were brought up: laws, customs and way of life

зани въ нихъ бѣша възспитѣни• н закона н обычан• н житиѣ•

Because in them they were brought up, [in such] law, custom, life

Later:

житиѣ ‘life; dwelling; subsistence’ - in 20 translated texts, жизнь ‘life’ - 6, жителство ‘residence, inhabitancy’ - 7, пожитиѣ ‘temporal residence’ – 3, жителствениѣ ‘residence, inhabitancy’ - 1

градъ ‘town, city’ - 2; гражданскъ ‘urban, i.e. related to town or city’ - 1; гражданинъ ‘citizen’ - 2; гражданство ‘citizenship’ - 2

only in a single text: безаконниѣ ‘respassing the law, wickedness, blame, injustice, crime’; власть ‘power, right, reign’; добродѣтель ‘virtue’; прѣбываниѣ ‘living, wayoflife’; цѣсарствениѣ ‘kingdom, reign, government’; цѣсарство ‘kingdom, reign, government’

Summary and conclusion

- The Old Bulgarian man of letters Constantine of Preslav performed successfully his task:
 - He conveys the ideas and meaning of his sources in a clear and accessible Slavonic text.
 - He significantly contributes to the development and enrichment of the young literary language through: the voluminous translated text in general, the Slavonic neologisms and the addition of new meanings to existing lexems.
- His works become part of the flow of Old Bulgarian writings which spread, during the succeeding centuries, all around the wide area of *Slavia orthodoxa* – from Siberia to Serbia.
- These texts have a strong influence on the construction of the literary languages of the East and South Slavs not only during the Middle Ages but also up to the 19th c.
- Bishop Constantine's work in his "philological laboratory" ranks him among the most prominent creators of a cultural community which has continued its existence even to the present day.

Thank you very much for your attention!

