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EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURAL, VALUE OR HABITUAL GAPS IN SLOVAK TRANSLATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Behavioural, value or habitual gaps are present in all kinds of texts, including translations of the New Testament. These gaps usually trigger situations where we have the impression of undesirable tension between verbal and non-verbal behaviour as we are unable to interpret the non-verbal behaviour correctly. Our difficulties may be based on insufficient cultural knowledge, but they can also arise from our cultural expectations of people's behaviour or values. The following paper describes five different examples of such gaps in selected Slovak translations of the New Testament.

Keywords: New Testament, Translation, Non-equivalent Lexica

The paper is dedicated to the textual situations in which culture-specific background knowledge interferes with the comprehension of a translation in such a way, that it forces the target reader to make an additional effort in processing the meaning during the reading/hearing of the translation. The translated text need not always be incomprehensible in the proper meaning of the word, but it can include some kind of behavioural, value or habitual gap that makes it sound unnatural or unaccustomed. It can also lessen the appellative function of the translated text or insufficiently transform the behaviour, which is obvious in face-to-face communication, into the appropriate written form. The recognition of such contexts is usually based more on the translator's ability to intuit the problematic passages in the text, than on any precisely defined categories. Methodologically the paper draws on functionalist approaches to Bible translation.¹

According to Nord² “the “channel reduction” that takes place in writing down something felt, seen or heard, is followed by “channel amplifi-

¹ REISS (1981, 1983), NORD (2001, 2002), and DE VRIES (2001, 2003).

² NORD (2002: 110).

cation” in the act of reception. What is “brought back to life” is the situation described in the text, where agents (fictitious or real) are involved in communicative or non-communicative actions. It is fairly obvious that the ability to “bring back to life” something written down in the text presupposes that the translator and reader have experienced analogous situations, where people have acted or reacted in a similar way.” If translators fail to take the culture-dependent nature of the communication seriously and prefer unquestioned traditional renderings which sound familiar, even though they may not be of the latest fashion, the reader can face the problem of conveying the contextually derived implications of the source text when it differs substantially from his or her own. The following text offers several examples of the cultural gaps described above.

In comparing the translation solutions of Mark 14:3–5 in selected Slovak Bible translations, several potential problems or gaps have been identified. Besides the two realia objects, the comprehension can also be influenced by an incorrect collocation or shift in the register when the translation chooses an inappropriately high or low language style. The slight differences in the vocabulary chosen for describing what happened in the house in Bethany give each of the Slovak translations a specific colour. See the following table:

| Greek Text ³ Mark 14 | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| 3/ Καὶ ὄντος αὐτοῦ ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ, κατακειμένου αὐτοῦ ἦλθεν γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς, συντρίψασα τὴν ἀλάβαστρον κατέχεεν αὐτοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς. | A keď bol v Betánii, v dome Šimo- na Malomoc- ného, a sedel za stolom, prišla žena, ktorá mala <i>alabastroví</i> <i>nádobu nar- dovej masti,</i> <i>pravej a veľ-</i> <i>mi drahej,</i> <i>a rozbišúc</i> <i>alabastroví</i> <i>nádobu vy-</i> <i>liala masť</i> na jeho hlavu. | Keď bol v Betánii, v dome Šimona Malomoc- ného a sedel za stolom, prišla žena <i>s alabastro-</i> <i>vou nádobou</i> <i>drahocennej</i> <i>masti z pra-</i> <i>vej nardy.</i> <i>Rozbila ala-</i> <i>bastroví ná-</i> <i>dobu a masť</i> na hlavu. | Keď bol v Betánii, v dome Šimona Ma- lomocného a sedel pri stole, prišla žena s <i>ala-</i> <i>bastrovou</i> <i>nádobou pra-</i> <i>vého vzác-</i> <i>neho nardo-</i> <i>vého oleja.</i> <i>Nádobu</i> <i>rozbila a olej</i> <i>mu vyliala</i> na hlavu. | Keď bol Ježiš v Be- tánii v dome Šimona Malomoc- ného a sedel za stolom, prišla žena <i>s alabastro-</i> <i>vou nádobou</i> <i>vzácného</i> <i>vonného</i> <i>oleja z pra-</i> <i>vého nardu.</i> <i>Rozbila ala-</i> <i>baster a olej</i> <i>mu vyliala</i> na hlavu. | Ježiš bol v tom čase v Betánii hos- tóm Šimona, ktorý kedysi trpel malo- mocnosťou. Práve sedeli pri stole, keď do domu vstúpila žena s <i>ala-</i> <i>bastrovou</i> <i>nádobkou</i> drahocenné- ho voňavého <i>oleja z pravé-</i> <i>ho nardu.</i> |

³ Greek text, the Septuagint text, the Vulgate text and the Kralice Bible text come from critical editions available in the software application BibleWorks 8. In the text of the article, Slovak versions are referred to according to the denomination/religious group

| Greek Text Mark 14 | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | | <i>Rozbila nádobku a olej vyliala Ježišovi na hlavu.</i> |
| | ...she had an alabaster vessel of... ointment of spikenard, ... and having broken the alabaster vessel, she poured the ointment on his head... ⁴ | ...she came with an alabaster vessel of... ointment of spikenard ...she broke the alabaster vessel and poured the ointment on his head | ...she came with an alabaster vessel of... oil of spikenard ...she broke the vessel and poured the oil on his head | ...she came with an alabaster vessel of... oil of spikenard ...she broke the alabaster and poured the oil on his head | ...she came with a small alabaster vessel of oil of spikenard ...she broke the small vessel and poured the oil on his head |
| 4/ ἦσαν δὲ τινες ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἑαυτοῦς· εἰς τί ἡ ἀπόλεια αὐτῆ τοῦ μύρου γέγονεν; | Ale boli niektorí prítomní, ktorí sa mrzeli u seba na to a hovorili: <i>Načo bola táto strata masti?</i> Some have been annoyed with themselves and said: What was this loss of ointment for? | Ale niektorí mrzeli sa medzi sebou: <i>Načo bola táto strata masti?</i> Some have been annoyed with each other and said: What was this loss of ointment for? | Niektorí sa hnevali a hovorili si: <i>“Načo takto mrhať voňavý olej?!”</i> Some were angry and said to themselves: Why should the oil be squandered this way? | Niektorí namrzene šomrali: <i>Načo také plytvanie olejom?</i> Some were murmuring indignantly: Why such a waste of oil? | Niektorí sa rozhorčovali: <i>Načo také zbytočné mrhanie?</i> Some got outraged: Why such a needless waste? |
| 5/ ἤδύνατο γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ μύρον πρᾶθῆναι ἐπάνω δηναρίων τριακοσίων καὶ δοθῆναι | Lebo toto sa mohlo predat' za viac ako tristo denárov, a mohli sa dať chudobným. | Lebo táto masť sa mohla predat' za viac ako tristo denárov a dať (ich) | Veď sa mohol tento olej predat' za viac ako tristo denárov a tie rozdat' | Veď tento voňavý olej sa mohol predat' za viac ako tristo denárov | Veď ten olej má obrovskú cenu! Mali sme ho radšej predat' a peniaze rozdat' chudobným! |

that prepared the translation. The only exception where the name of the translator of the version is known, is Roháček's version. For details on particular versions, see Literature.

4 In order to document slight differences between particular versions, the English translations of the samples of the text are as literal as possible.

| Greek Text Mark 14 | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------|
| τοῖς πτωχοῖς· καὶ ἐνεβριμῶντο αὐτῇ. | <i>A hnevom obrátili sa na ňu.</i> | chudobným. <i>I dohovárali jej.</i> | chudobným. <i>A osopovali sa na ňu.</i> | a peniaze sa mohli dať chudobným. <i>A osopovali sa na ňu.</i> | ø |
| | And they were murmu- ring at her. | And were reprimanding her. | And they snapped at her. | And they snapped at her. | ø |

First of all there is the question of the substance signified as *μύρον* in verse 3. In Roháček's and Protestant versions it is translated using the word *mast'* (ointment) which is a rather viscous but still semi-solid substance applied to something by rubbing it in, and not by pouring. Even if the consecrated ointment of spikenard is a mixture consisting of oil and balsam, the texture and structure may not be clear to the reader as the substitution does not imply this possible meaning. The interpretation and translation of the substance stored in the vessel influences also the verb *καταχέω* (to pour out, to pour down over⁵), because if the substance stored in it is not a liquid, it cannot be poured.⁶

According to the Catholic, Ecumenical and Free versions the vessel contains oil, which it is possible to pour, but another habitual gap is connected with the breaking of the vessel. If it is broken by the woman's hand, we have to presume that the alabaster must be easily breakable. It is also important to ask where she broke it. Since, when the vessel containing liquid is broken, the content spills over immediately and the woman would have to break it above Jesus' head to pour its content on him. The natural question arises how she did so.

The whole situation is confused here and the answer lies within the shape of the vessel called *ἀλάβαστρος*⁷ (*ἀλάβαστρον*), although the term does not imply the shape of the vessel or its sealing, but the material which it is made of. An *ἀλάβαστρος* is used for carrying perfumes and falls into the category of small jugs. It is usually made of yellow or creamy calcareous sinter,⁸ which is the motivation for its name. The vessel has a rather long neck

⁵ The occurrence of the verb in the New Testament texts is limited, but the extra-biblical evidence confirms its meaning sufficiently.

⁶ Originally, oil, rather than alcohol, was the perfume base.

⁷ The term is used only in Matthew 26:7, Mark 14:3 and Luke 7:37.

⁸ BEN-DOR (1945: 97).

which would be broken off when the contents were used.⁹ In Greek breaking the vessel would imply the improper way of opening, while in Slovak it would mean to destroy it. Both verbs συντρίβω¹⁰ and *rozbit'* (to break) make different distinctions in the meaning, but in the given context the verb *otvorit'* (to open) or *zbavit' pečate, uzáveru* (to unseal) has the right propositional meaning. Of the Slovak translations, only the Ecumenical version recognized the passage as a translation problem. This is probably the reason why the loanword was selected to render Greek ἀλάβαστρον, instead of the more general term *vessel* used by all other versions.

The story goes on to describe the response of other people to such an act.¹¹ In verse 4, the verb ἀγανακτέω expresses the outrage motivated by the woman's action. The preposition used in this context is assessed¹² as problematic (ἦσαν δέ τινες ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἑαυτούς). The literal translation of the expression in Roháček's version *mrzeli sa u seba* (they were annoyed with themselves) or the slightly different rendering in the Protestant version *mrzeli sa medzi sebou* (they were annoyed with each other) does not reflect the situation properly. Acceptable translation solution is offered by the Ecumenical version again. It describes the grumpy reaction of the attendees which ends with the accusing question in the second part of the verse. Again, the literalistic translation of Roháček's and Protestant versions concentrates on the formal signs and preserves the word class of the source text words, which diverts the reader's attention needlessly. The Catholic, Ecumenical and Free versions demonstrate that the change of the emphasis and the reconstruction of the sentence as done, for example, in the Catholic version can have a more natural impact.

The end of the verse 5 mirrors the atmosphere of a short story. Therefore, it is important to frame the passage with the appropriate verb. The Greek verb ἐμβριμάομαι expresses the anger and displeasure of the people present

⁹ LOUW & NIDA (1989: s. v. ἀλάβαστρος).

¹⁰ Variant reading uses verb θραύω [to break, to destroy] attested form The Septuagint.

¹¹ The same drew the attention of Martin Luther, who wrote (LUTHER 1960: 189): "For example, Judas... says, in Matthew 26:8 *Ut quid perditio haec?* and in Mark 14:4 *Ut quid perditio ista unguenti facta est?* If I follow these literalistic asses I would have to translate it thus: *Why has this loss of ointment happened?* But what kind of German is that? What German says: *Loss of the ointment has happened?* If he understands that at all, he thinks that the ointment is lost and must be looked for and found again... But German would say: *Why this waste?* or *Why this extravagance?*; *Indeed, It's a shame about the ointment.* That is good German, from which it is understood that Magdalene had wasted the ointment that she poured out and been extravagant. That was what Judas meant, for he thought he could have used it to better advantage."

¹² DANKER & BAUER (2000: s. v. πρὸς).

in this place and their reproachful reaction. The Roháček and Protestant versions are again less expressive and do not reflect the tenseness of the situation. The verbs chosen by the Catholic and Ecumenical versions are more suitable.

A similar shift in expressivity is present in the Parable of the Unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23–34). After a lord has forgiven his servant, the same person meets his own debtor and forces him severely to pay his debt back. None of our translations is wrong in any sense, the propositional meaning of the source text is preserved, but the picture is somehow static, more descriptive than dynamic. In contrast to that, the situation is highly tense. The verb κρατέω primarily signifies the exercise of power or taking control of another person and in the given context it represents a forcible action. The equivalent chosen by Roháček's, Protestant and Ecumenical versions is too neutral for such a situation. The participle in the second part of the verse used in the Semitic manner retards the dynamics of the act and there is no need to translate it by a participle as in the Roháček or Protestant versions.¹³ The visualization of the violent situation seems to be the best in the Catholic version, which uses an idiom that is utterly appropriate here.

| Greek Text Matthew 18 | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 28/ ἐξελθὼν δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος εὗρεν ἕνα τῶν συνδούλων αὐτοῦ, ὃς ὄφειλεν αὐτῷ ἑκατὸν δηνάρια, καὶ κρατήσας αὐτὸν ἔπνιγεν λέγων· ἀπόδος εἴ τι ὀφείλεις. | Ale ten istý sluha vyjdúc našiel jedného zo svojich spolusluhov, ktorý mu bol dlžen sto denárov, a <i>pochytil ho a hrdúsil, hovoriac:</i> Zaplať mi, čo si dlžen! | Keď tento sluha vyšiel, stretol jedného zo svojich spolusluhov, ktorý mu bol dlžen sto denárov. <i>Chytil ho a škrtil, hovoriac:</i> Zaplať, čo si dlžen! | No len čo ten sluha vyšiel, stretol sa so svojím spolusluhom, ktorý mu dlhoval sto denárov. <i>Chytil ho pod krk a kričal:</i> "Vráť, čo mi dlhuješ!" | Len čo ten sluha odišiel, stretol jedného zo svojich spolusluhov, ktorý mu bol dlžný sto denárov. <i>Chytil ho, škrtil a volal:</i> Vráť, čo si dlžen! | No len čo ten muž odišiel od kráľa, stretol známeho, ktorý mu bol dlžný nepatrnú sumu. <i>Schmatol ho a kričal:</i> Hneď mi vráť, čo si mi dlžný! |
| | He took him and throttled him saying | He took him and choked him, saying | He grabbed him by throat and shouted | He took him, choked him and exclaimed | He grabbed him and shouted |

¹³ The majority of modern translations omit it when used after verbs of saying because it is redundant. Some transform it into a definite verb, especially in such expressions as ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν (Matthew 11:25), ἐλάλησεν λέγων (Matthew 13:3).

An interesting example of a habitual gap and its acculturation can also be found in the parallel passages of Matthew 26:20–23, Mark 14:18–20 and in John 13:23–26.

| Greek Text | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Matthew 26 20/ Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης ἀνάκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα. | A keď bol večer, <i>sadnul za stôl</i> i s dvanástimi. | Keď sa zvečeri- lo, <i>sadol si za stôl</i> s dvanástimi učeníkmi. | Keď sa zvečeri- lo, <i>zasadol s Dvanásti- mi za stôl</i> . | Keď sa zvečeri- lo, <i>zasadol s Dvanásti- mi k stolu</i> . | Keď sa zotmelo, <i>večeral so svojimi dvanástimi učeníkmi</i> . |
| | ...he sat down at the table | ...he sat down at the table | ...he sat down at the table | ...he sat down at the table | ...he was dining |
| Mark 14 18/ καὶ ἀνακειμένῳ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσθιόντων ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με ὁ ἐσθίων μετ' ἐμοῦ. | <i>A keď sedeli za stolum</i> a jedli, povedal Ježiš: Amen, hovorím, že jeden z vás ma zradí, ktorý je so mnou. | <i>Ako sedeli za stolum</i> a jedli, povedal Ježiš: Veru, hovorím Vám, že jeden z vás ma zradí, ten, čo je so mnou. | <i>A keď boli pri stole</i> a jedli, Ježiš povedal: Veru, hovorím vám: Jeden z vás ma zradí, ten, čo je so mnou. | Potom, <i>ako zaujali miesto pri stole</i> a jedli, Ježiš povedal: Amen, hovorím vám, jeden z vás ma zradí – ten, čo je so mnou. | Keď <i>sedeli pri stole</i> a jedli, obrátil sa na nich: Počujte, čo vám teraz poviem: Jeden z vás, ktorí ste teraz so mnou pri stole, ma zradí. |
| | ...they were sitting at the table | ...as they were sitting at the table | ...they were at the table | ...they took up their place at the table | ...they were sitting at the table |
| John 13 23/ ἦν ἀνακειμένος εἰς ἕκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς. | A jeden z jeho učeníkov, ktorého miloval Ježiš, <i>súc za stolum bol opretý na hrudi Ježišovej</i> ; | Jeden z Jeho učeníkov, ktorého Ježiš miloval, <i>spočíval na prsiach Ježišových</i> . | Jeden z jeho učeníkov, ten, ktorého Ježiš miloval, <i>bol celkom pri Ježišovej hrudi</i> . | Jeden z jeho učeníkov, ktorého si Ježiš obľúbil, <i>sedel za stolum</i> ¹⁴ naklonený v tesnej blízkosti Ježišovej hrude. | Po Ježišovom <i>boku, opretý o jeho hrud'</i> , <i>sedel</i> učeník, ktorého mal Ježiš veľmi rád. |

¹⁴ Ecumenical version (1995: 206) comments here: “gr. ležal pri stole...” (“in Greek: ‘he was lying at the table’”).

| Greek Text | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| | ...being at the table leaning on Jesus' bosom | ...one of the disciples was resting on Jesus' bosom | ...one of the disciples was quite close to Jesus' bosom | ...was sitting at the table, leaning closely to Jesus' bosom | ...sat side by side with Jesus, resting on his bosom |
| 25/ ἀναπεσῶν οὖν ἐκεῖνος οὕτως ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λέγει αὐτῷ· κύριε, τίς ἐστιν; | A on <i>pri-</i> <i>vinúc sa</i> <i>k hrudi</i> <i>Ježišovej</i> <i>povedal mu:</i> Pane, kto je to? | On <i>sa teda</i> <i>naklonil</i> <i>k hrudi</i> <i>Ježišovej</i> a povedal Mu: Pane, kto je to? | On <i>sa na-</i> <i>klonil k Ježi-</i> <i>šovej hrudi</i> a spýtal sa: “Pane, kto je to?” | <i>Ten sa</i> <i>naklonil</i> <i>k Ježišovej</i> <i>hrudi</i> , aby sa ho opýtal: Pane, kto je to? | <i>Naklonil sa</i> <i>teda bližšie</i> <i>k Ježišovi</i> a spýtal sa ho: “Pane, kto je to?!” |
| | ...snuggling to the bosom of Jesus | ...he leaned back on the bosom of Jesus | ...he leaned back on Jesus' bosom | ...he leaned back on Jesus' bosom | ...he leaned closer to Jesus |

The first translation problem is connected to the verb ἀνάκειμαι referring to the 1st-century Middle Eastern practice of eating. When dining, the participants did not sit at the table but reclined on their left side on the floor. The diner's head was close to the low table, while his or her feet were far from it. The situation described here is the *seder* meal and on such occasion families recline comfortably. The reclining position is of Persian origin and symbolizes freedom and independence. The custom is preserved even in the poorest families.¹⁵ Even if such a custom is well known from the abundant film adaptations depicting it, our translations follow an old¹⁶ cultural substitution and acculturate the dining posture to put it in accord with the modern practice of sitting during a meal. The cultural substitution is retained even in the newest translations (Catholic, Ecumenical or Free versions), even though there is an apparent tendency to render the text in a more free way, omitting¹⁷ the precise description of the dining position (Ecumenical version: Mark 14:18 and Free version: Matthew 26:20).

¹⁵ SCHACHAR (1975: 18).

¹⁶ In the OCS texts (Codex Marianus, Codex Zographensis, Codex Assemanianus, Savvina Kniga) we find a lying position, but the Kralice Bible and the Camaldolite translation already specify a sitting position. The Vulgate has the verb *discumbere* as the lying position was natural also for the Roman world.

¹⁷ A similar translation solution in LOUW & NIDA (1989: s. v. κόλπος); it is proposed to concentrate either on the reclining position (if it is natural for the given society) or on the act of eating.

This is even more obvious in John's text, which implicitly verifies the lying position of Jesus and the apostles. The position of Jesus' beloved apostle τῷ κόλπῳ signifies the place of honour which is partly reflected only by the Free version's translation of John 13:23 (the place of honour in Slovak is on the right side). From the rendering in other translations, it is especially difficult to imagine how the apostle *was sitting*. He is really close to Jesus, leans towards his chest/or already has his head on his chest (Roháček's version, Ecumenical version) while he is sitting at his side. Moreover, in the verse 25 the apostle, even if already close to Jesus, leans even closer (?). According to the source text, he is lying side by side with Jesus, close to him and when asked he leans closer, or turns back, if Jesus is lying behind him, which would be an appropriate thing to do under the circumstances. The Ecumenical version offers the original reading in its note to John 13:23, explaining that the source text position is *lying down at the table*, and the Catholic version has a detailed description of the dining posture in the note apparatus to explicate the situation.¹⁸

Another incoherent action in the same passage is the custom of eating. New Testament people ate with their hands and no cutlery was used. As the meal was predominantly poor, often dips consisting of oil and herbs were served together with the meal in a large pot such as the τρύβλιον,¹⁹ and the people present shared it together. This is what is presented in the passages of Matthew 26:23, Mark 14:20 and John 13:26. The Greek verb ἐμβάπτω does not imply the sharing of the meal, but if attention is called to the act of dipping (as in the Slovak verb *namočiť*, *namáčať*) it diverts the reader's attention from the core of the information to something that is only peripheral and the habitual gap is not bridged. An explanation of the custom in a note to the verse is offered only by the Catholic version.

Attention should also be paid to the shape and form of the bread (ψωμίον) explicitly named in John 13:26. For the traditional flatbread loafs of bread broken into pieces, our translations insert the word *skyva/smidka*.²⁰ This bookish expression implies a slice of bread and can be seen as an undesirable acculturation. The Free version is more explicit here, but it offers the

¹⁸ The reclining position is also found in Luke 7:36ff. and Mark 2:15ff.; the Slovak versions again imply sitting rather than lying, even if such a rendering is problematic especially in Luke's account.

¹⁹ For KELSO (1962a: 850) a τρύβλιον is a large dish (30 centimetres in diameter and somewhat less than that in height) out of which the meal was eaten. The practice of dipping with somebody into the one bowl (ἐμβάπτειν μετά τινος τὴν χεῖρα ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ) means to share a meal. It is an allusion to Psalm 41:10 (9).

²⁰ MAJTÁN (2000: s.v. skyva) originally a small piece, later exclusively about a slice of bread.

reader neutral and culturally uncontaminated information. The particular translation solutions are offered in the following table:

| Greek text | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Matthew 26 23/ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ὁ ἑμβάψας μετ' ἐμοῦ τὴν χεῖρα ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ οὗτός με παραδώσει. | A on odpovedal a riekol: <i>Ktorý omočí ruku so mnou v mise, ten ma zradí.</i> ... who is moistening his hand with me in the bowl | Odpovedal: <i>Kto omočil so mnou ruku v mise, ten ma zradí.</i> ... who moistened his hand with me in the bowl | On odpovedal: <i>Kto so mnou namáča ruku v mise, ten ma zradí.</i> ... who is dipping his hand with me in the bowl | On odpovedal: <i>Kto so mnou namočil ruku v mise, ten ma zradí.</i> ... who has dipped his hand with me in the bowl | Odpovedal: Je to ten, <i>ktorý si naberá z misy zároveň so mnou.</i> ... who was taking the meal from the bowl together with me |
| Mark 14 20/ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· εἰς τῶν δώδεκα, ὁ ἑμβαπτόμενος μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς τὸ τρύβλιον. | A on odpovedal a riekol im: <i>Jeden z dvanástich, ktorý si so mnou máča do misy.</i> ... who is dipping with me into the bowl | Odpovedal im. <i>Jeden z dvanástich, ktorý so mnou omáča v tejže mise.</i> ... who is dipping in the same bowl as me | On im odpovedal: <i>Jeden z Dvanástich, čo so mnou namáča v mise.</i> ... who is dipping with me into the bowl | On im však povedal: <i>Jeden z Dvanástich, ktorý si so mnou namáča chlieb v tej istej mise.</i> ... who is dipping with me into the same bowl | Zopakoval im: Je to jeden z vás dvanástich, <i>ktorý si naberá z jednej misy so mnou.</i> ... who is taking his meal from the same bowl as me |
| John 13 26/ ἀποκρίνεται [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς· ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ᾧ ἐγὼ βάψω τὸ ψωμίον καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ. Βάψας οὖν τὸ ψωμίον [λαμβάνει καὶ] δίδωσιν Ἰούδα Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου. | A Ježiš odpovedal: <i>Ten je, komu ja omočím skyvu chleba a dám mu.</i> A omočiac skyvu dal Judášovi Šimona Iškariotského. | Ježiš odpovedal: <i>Ten je to, komu podám omočenú skyvu.</i> Nato omočiac skyvu, vzal ju a podal Judášovi, synovi Šimona Iškariotského. | Ježiš odpovedal: <i>“Ten, komu podám namočenú smidku.”</i> Namočil chleba a dal ju Judášovi, synovi Šimona Iškariotského. | Ježiš odpovedal: <i>Ten, komu podám namočenú skyvu.</i> Nato namočil skyvu, vzal ju a podal Judášovi, synovi Šimona Iškariotského. | Je to <i>ten, pre ktorého namočím kúsok chleba</i> a podám mu ho, povedal Ježiš. <i>Namočil chlieb</i> a podal ho Judášovi, synovi Šimona Iškariotského. |

| Greek text | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| | ...the one for whom I will dip the slice of bread | ...the one to whom I pass the moistened slice of bread | ...the one to whom I pass the moistened slice of bread | ...the one to whom I pass the moistened slice of bread | ...the one for whom I will dip the piece of bread |

Also instructive is the habitual and value gap in John 2:4, where the conversation between Jesus and his mother can come as strange to an uninformed reader. The hosts have not prepared enough wine and Mary exhorts Jesus to help them. His answer sounds quite rude when translated literally, as we would not expect Jesus to speak to his mother in such a way. Compare the following verse in different translations:

| Greek text | Roháček's version | Protestant version | Catholic version | Ecumenical version | Free version |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| John 2 4/ [καί] λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὐπω ἔκει ἡ ὥρα μου | A Ježiš jej povedal: <i>Čo mám s tebou, ženo?</i> Ešte neprišla moja hodina. | Odpovedal jej Ježiš: <i>Žena, čo máňa a teba do toho?</i> Ešte neprišla moja hodina. | Ježiš jej odpovedal: <i>“Čo máňa a teba do toho, žena? Ešte neprišla moja hodina.”</i> | Ježiš jej hovorí: <i>Čo to znamená pre máňa a pre teba?</i> ²¹ Ešte neprišla moja hodina. | <i>Nemôžem ti v tom pomôcť,</i> povedal jej. Ešte nenasťal môj čas konať zázraky. |
| | What do I have to do with you, woman? | Woman, what do you and me have to do with it? | What do you and me have to do with it, woman? | What does it mean for you and for me, woman? | I cannot help you with that. |

As a detailed note in the Catholic version shows, there are two problems to be solved here when translating the verse. The first of them is the literal translation of the idiom of Semitic origin τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί which is explained as follows. The equivalent Hebrew expression in the Old Testament had two basic meanings:²² (1) as a defence of the unjustly threatened party of the conversation, with the meaning “What have I done to you that you should do this to me?” (cf. Judges 11:12, 2 Chronicles 35:21, 1 Kings

²¹ Ecumenical version (1995:182) comments here: “*Čo my máme spoločného?*” (“What do I have in common with you?”).

²² BUCK (1956: 149–150).

17:18); (2) an attempt to avoid becoming involved in a matter that does not concern oneself, with the meaning “That is your business, how am I involved?” (2 Kings 3:13, Hosea 14:8). The first option implies hostility, and the second mere disengagement. Understanding John’s text as implying disengagement better fits the context. However, the answer in the four versions here sounds exactly like a rebuke or an attempt to hush someone.

There is also the strange way in which Jesus addresses his mother, using the word *γυνή*. The vocative *ὦ γυναί* is by no means a disrespectful form of address²³ in Greek and in the Gospel of John it is used in other four cases (4:21, 8:10, 19:26, 20:15). Even if this expression is qualified as slightly disrespectful in several instances (Matthew 15:28, Luke 22:57, John 2:4), we think that this is not the case, as there is no substantial difference in the three cases quoted when compared to other usages. The best way of rendering it would probably be omission, as can be seen in the Free version.

The number of scientific publications related to Bible translation in the Slovak context in the period after 1989 is slowly but steadily growing. In the past, the study of biblical texts was mainly focused on the thorough description of the historical development of the Slovak language as attested by various Bible translations. Surprisingly little has been published about the translation methods and strategies used in the modern Bible translations published in Slovakia. Almost all the existing works are prefaces published together with newly prepared translations, which, understandably, have a rather dedicatory character. Translations are usually offered to the audience in their final shape and are rarely critically assessed from a linguistic and translational perspective. Little is known about the functional profile of particular Bible translation projects; in fact, even basic information about the source text of a particular translation is difficult to ascertain.

The functional profile of some Slovak versions was formulated before the translation work started (e.g. the Protestant version seeks to follow the wording of the Kralice Bible as closely as possible, the concordant character of the version is preferable as well; the Catholic version has to incorporate the note apparatus and actualize and acculturate the the biblical message), therefore they can be assessed based on to what extent they are consistent with the profile they claim. In other versions the functional profile is too generally formulated to serve as a basis for assessment (e.g. the Free version is prepared for those who “grew up without any theological background, and who have never read the Bible”).

²³ DANKER & BAUER (2000: s. v. *γυνή*).

The presence of behavioural, value or habitual gaps in Slovak versions of Bible is far from being something extraordinary. Such gaps are present in all translations examined, irrespective of the version's language, provenance or timeframe. However, it is questionable how one can assess such shifts in the different versions that were based on various assumptions about the character of the Bible text and Bible translation as such. Classical approaches to (Bible) translation tend to draw the line between foreignizing (literal translations) and domesticating (free translations) strategies, but the culture-specific background or culture of the source text did not play an important role within these separate discourses until recently in our context. As a result we can find odd cultural substitutions in traditional and literalistic versions (in the Slovak context these are Roháček's and Protestant versions) that claim to be "faithful" to the source text in all possible respects, but the very same odd substitutions are found in the most recent versions and even in those that could be regarded as a free ones. The presence of culture gaps is apparently only secondarily connected to the preference for foreignizing or domesticating strategies. Slovak versions in general fail to take the highly context-dependent nature of the communication seriously enough and they do not have a satisfactory way of conveying the contextually derived implications of the source text to readers whose contextual environment substantially differs from that of the source readers. In some versions the culture gaps present in the text of the version are balanced by the note apparatus (Catholic and Ecumenical versions).

The presence of the cultural gaps always has implications for fidelity, readability associative thinking and the cultural expectations of the reader. In majority of Slovak versions in general the gaps are not bridged. The usage of old and approved cultural substitutions makes the wording of many passages of the translated text to sound out of tune and makes high demands on the reader. On the other hand, when it comes to particular solutions in particular passages, the Catholic, Ecumenical and Free versions often come up with interesting translation solutions that do not go against the original wording, but still sound fresh and natural. Offering these insights, the author hopes to provide an impetus to discussion about the nature of modern biblical translation in Slovak.

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RESUMÉ

Texty historického charakteru prirodzene obsahujú rozličné typy reálií a kultúrne špecifických situácií, ktoré si od čitateľa/poslucháča vyžadujú zvýšené interpretačné úsilie, prípadne aj znalosť širších historických a kultúrnych súvislostí. Príspevok prezentuje niekoľko textových situácií excerpovaných z piatich rozličných slovenských prekladov Novej zmluvy, ktoré svojim charakterom môžu modernému príjemcovi znieť cudzo alebo neprirodzene. V žiadnom z uvedených prípadov nemožno prekladom vyčítať faktické pochybenie v úzkom zmysle slova. Zakaždým však máme do činenia s neprekonanou kultúrnou priepasťou medzi pôvodným a moderným príjemcom textu vyvolanou behaviorálnymi a habituálnymi konceptmi, prípadne spoločensky definovanými hodnotami či posunmi v registri. Zároveň možno v ponúkanom materiáli objaviť i prekladateľsky zaujímavé a inovatívne riešenia, a tie jasne poukazujú na skutočnosť, že úspešnosť prekladateľských riešení často súvisí skôr s prekladateľovou schopnosťou rozpoznať problematické kontexty, než s príklonom k niektorej z prekladateľských stratégií.

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