

RECENT POLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: TRENDS AND TENDENCIES

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In the last decade, the selection of New Testament versions available to the Polish reader has broadened significantly and has become much more diversified in both confessional and stylistic terms. This paper offers an overview of seven recent Polish NT translations, followed by some observations concerning contemporary trends and tendencies in Bible translation and publishing in Poland, particularly as regards audience considerations. However, in order to properly understand and appreciate the current situation in this field, it is necessary to consider the broader background of the existing Polish Bible versions.

I.

The “golden age” of Bible translation in Poland and its legacy

Even though the beginnings of the Polish Bible may be traced to the thirteenth century, it was only the sixteenth century—much like in other parts of Europe—that saw a revived and widespread interest in the Bible, resulting in a number of translational endeavors subsequently made widely available with the popularization of print. The religious diversity and zeal brought about by the Reformation was directly reflected in the emergence of new Bible versions since “the ambition of every larger religious faction was to have their own, confessionally distinct version of the whole Bible or at least the NT.”¹ Consequently, in 1551-1553 in Królewiec the first printed Lutheran translation of the NT was published, counterweighed as soon as 1556 by the Catholic version printed in Kraków. In the following decades, complete translations of the Bible were released: first the Catholic Leopolitan Bible (*Biblia Leopoldy*, 1561), then the Reformed Brest Bible (*Biblia brzeska*, 1563), and the Arian Nieśwież Bible (*Biblia nieświeska*, 1572, 1574, and 1589).

However, by far the most important Polish Bible version of the sixteenth century was the work of the Jesuit Jakub Wujek of Wągrowiec. Unlike the Protestant translations made from the original languages Wujek’s version was based predominantly on the Vulgate. In an age of fierce doctrinal and confessional controversies, the polemical role of Wujek’s Bible was obvious from the outset, which the translator admitted openly in the Preface.² His heavily annotated text,

1 Maria Kossowska, *Biblia w języku polskim* (2 vols.; Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1968-1969), 1:151.

2 *Ibid.*, 2:100.

published posthumously in 1599, considered by many to be more exact and faithful than its predecessors, was to become the dominant Polish version for the next three centuries, assuming a role readily comparable to the Authorized (King James) Version of 1611 in the English context. It is generally acknowledged that the contemporary Polish language has to a significant extent been modeled on the language of Wujek's Bible.³

Within the next several decades, a similar status to Wujek's Bible in the Catholic Church was achieved by Daniel Mikołajewski's Gdańsk Bible (*Biblia gdańska*) in Polish Protestant circles. Although intended as a joint endeavor of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Moravian Brothers in what was to be a mere revision of the Brest Bible, Mikołajewski's work turned out to be a completely new translation. Consequently, the Gdańsk Bible (1632) gradually gained popularity because of its faithfulness, clarity, and literary merits, becoming the standard Protestant version for subsequent generations well up to the second part of the twentieth century.

In the next three centuries no attempts were made to translate the entire Bible into Polish. Instead, numerous editions of the two major versions—Wujek's Bible in the Catholic camp and the Gdańsk Bible among the Protestants—were published, often involving more or less extensive improvements, such as elimination of obsolete grammatical forms, modernization of spelling, inclusion of comments, etc., but always explicitly presented as mere revisions of the honored texts.⁴ Again, this is largely parallel to the Anglo-American context in which the status of the Authorized Version remained practically unchallenged for over three centuries.

The twentieth century

This situation was to change radically in the years following the Second World War. The increasing expectations and hopes for a modern Polish version of the Bible, particularly in view of the pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council, were finally fulfilled with the publication of the Millennium Bible (*Biblia Tysiąclecia*) in 1965, commemorating the one thousandth anniversary of the Baptism of Poland (A.D. 966). The first Catholic translation made directly from the original languages was completed by a group of scholars (including Kazimierz Romaniuk, who later was to translate the entire Bible on his own) of the Benedictine abbey in Tyniec near Kraków (hence it is also referred to as the Tyniec Bible [*Biblia tyniecka*]). Before long, it became the official translation of the Catholic Church approved for use in liturgy, superseding Wujek's Bible in this capacity.

As of today, five editions of the Millennium Bible have been released while the total number of copies is estimated to have reached four million.⁵ The success of the Millennium Bible—by far the most popular among modern Polish versions—should not only be attributed to the formal endorsement of the Catholic Church

3 Michał Heller, "Ten przekład tkwi nam w uszach i sercu" in *Od Biblii Wujka do współczesnego języka religijnego* (ed. Z. Adamek and S. Koziaara; Tarnów: Biblos, 1999), 11; Michał Wojciechowski, "Polskie przekłady biblijne," in *Encyklopedia biblijna* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier; Warszawa: Vocatio, 1999), 983. The body of literature on the role of Wujek's Bible in shaping the "biblical style" in Polish is immense. For a good and diversified summary, see, e.g., Adamek and Koziaara, *Od Biblii Wujka*.

4 A comprehensive record of the numerous editions of both major versions has been offered by Kossowska, *Biblia w języku polskim*, 2:113-67.

5 Wojciechowski, "Polskie przekłady biblijne," 984.

but primarily to its clear and contemporary style paired with sound scholarship and supreme literary quality; after all, the editorial committee incorporated leading Polish exegetes, theologians, and philologists. As is typical of modern Catholic translations, the Millennium Bible contains extensive comments in the form of footnotes, a glossary, and chronological tables, while individual books are preceded by introductions. Under the influence of the Millennium Bible the overall style of biblical Polish has been modernized and the language of Wujek's Bible has become increasingly dated.

About the same time, a new Protestant version of the NT appeared (1966), followed by the entire Bible several years later (1975). Produced predominantly by Lutherans, though in consultation with representatives of other churches, it was published by the Polish division of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Warsaw, which is why it is commonly referred to as the Warsaw Bible (*Biblia warszawska*) or the British Bible (*Biblia brytyjska*). It is a very literal translation, oftentimes noticeably dependent on its seventeenth-century predecessor, the Gdańsk Bible, especially in the spheres of vocabulary and syntax, even though it follows the critical text. Unsurprisingly, it is often praised for its faithfulness and editorial simplicity (providing no annotations or comments but only selected cross-references and paragraph headings) and criticized because of its excessive literalness.

About a decade after the first release of the Millennium Bible, there appeared another Catholic translation of the entire Bible, published in 1973-1975 in Poznań (hence it naturally became known as the Poznań Bible [*Biblia poznańska*]). The translation project began in the 1930's as a revision of Wujek's Bible but was soon interrupted by the Second World War. In the 1960's the work was resumed but under new translation principles, changed because of the dynamic development of biblical studies and the post-conciliar restoration of the status of the original languages. Like the two other versions described above, the Poznań Bible was a group endeavor of two dozen translators. Even though the declared philosophy was to secure "a far reaching faithfulness to the original, sometimes giving it primacy over the beauty of the Polish language,"⁶ the translation reads very well because of its contemporary style and punctuation and is almost completely free from the lexical and syntactic archaisms found in the Warsaw Bible and—to a lesser extent—the Millennium Bible. The text is accompanied by footnoted comments and cross-references as well as introductions to particular books, all published in a single volume of almost 2000 pages (sadly, its extensiveness practically precludes it from becoming a Bible for everyday use).

II.

Just as the celebrations in the 1960s of Poland's one thousand years of Christian history provided a stimulus for producing several new translations of the Bible, so did the dawn of the third millennium of Christianity. The recent decade has seen the publication of a handful of both complete NT versions and samples, yet it seems that these have not yet become broadly known. Neither—to the best of my knowledge—have they been analyzed in terms of their target audiences and

6 From the introductory *Comments of the translators of the Old Testament*.

the related translational, editorial, and publishing decisions. Let us briefly focus on each of these new versions before we pass on to a comparative examination of the various audience-related aspects.

Warsaw-Praga Bible

Among the most recent Polish versions the Warsaw-Praga Bible (*Biblia warszawsko-praska*) holds a special place for several reasons. Kazimierz Romaniuk, the first bishop of the newly established Catholic diocese in Warsaw-Praga (hence the name of the version), was the first translator in 365 years to render the entire Bible into Polish completely on his own, which puts him on equal ranks with Wujek and Mikołajewski (in addition, his translation—unlike Wujek’s—was made directly from the original languages). The NT was published first in 1976 and the complete Bible in 1998.

Regarding his methodology, Romaniuk declares in the Preface to have given up “excessive literalness of the translation in favor of its clarity and readability.” As a result of this approach, the Warsaw-Praga Bible reads exceedingly well, almost as a piece of contemporary literature, i.e., without creating an impression of antiquity. One of its most apparent characteristics is the stylistic homogeneity of the entire text; the lack of noticeable diversity between the styles of Matthew, Mark, John, and Paul—so striking in the original languages—is, however, compensated by the overall impression of coherence and continuity.

In spite of the translator’s attempts to “reduce the explanatory notes to the necessary minimum” (as asserted in the Preface), the various notes providing theological, textual, or factual comments as well as cross-references abound on almost every page. This, in conjunction with introductions to particular books as well as numerous section headings, has resulted in the unparalleled size of the volume which includes 2,400 pages in the B6 format (by way of comparison, the Millennium Bible in the slightly larger A5 format has almost one thousand fewer pages). It is also noteworthy that the Warsaw-Praga Bible was published by the Bible Society in Poland, an organization historically associated with Protestant circles.

Popowski’s NT

A recent NT version directly inspired by the celebrations of two millennia of Christianity is the *New Testament: A Translation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* (*Nowy Testament: Przekład na Wielki Jubileusz Roku 2000*) by Remigiusz Popowski, SDB. Published in Warsaw, it was made from the original Greek, although the actual textual basis is not stated.

Popowski, a prominent Catholic scholar in biblical studies, has also authored two Greek-Polish dictionaries and co-authored the first Polish interlinear translation of the NT. Against this background, the strong lexicographic focus of Popowski’s NT seems quite natural. Among the translations referred to so far, his translation is probably the most literal, sometimes to the extent of compromising the requirements of Polish grammar and/or literary style.⁷ In some passages, the

⁷ For instance, see Popowski’s translation of καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν in John 1.3b as *bez Niego nie stało się ani jedno, cokolwiek się stało* (lit. “without Him not one happened [out of] whatever

etymological meaning of particular words is offered in the text, with the contextual sense given in the footnote: for example, the verb ἐσκήνωσεν in the famous phrase “and the word became flesh and dwelt among us” in John 1.14 was translated as *swój namiot postawiło [wśród nas]* (put up his tent [among us]) and supplemented with a note explaining that “this picturesque expression may be translated as ‘and dwelt among us.’” Most of the plentiful notes provide information regarding the alternative or metaphorical meaning of the given word or phrase, explain the cultural or linguistic context, or specify the reference made in the text, one of the most frequent comments being “What is meant here is . . .” As mentioned before, Popowski’s NT gives an impression of a very literal rendering but at the same time avoids a number of traditionally “religious” terms, instead offering lexical solutions derived from everyday language. Summing up, the characteristics outlined above as well as the elegant edition and large format (i.e., B5) of this version result in its predominantly scholarly, rather than pastoral, profile.

Ecumenical translation

The version that has recently received the most attention is probably the Ecumenical Translation for the Third Millennium (*Przekład ekumeniczny na trzecie tysiąclecie*) of the NT and Psalms. Published in 2001 by the Bible Society, the Ecumenical Translation is the work of an interdenominational group of translators representing the following churches: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Seventh Day Adventists. In addition, representatives of the Old Catholic Church of the Mariavites, the Polish National Catholic Church, the Churches of Christ, and the Baptist Church were consulted, which yields a total of eleven denominations involved in its making.

The translators declare in the Preface that although their fundamental principle was to remain faithful to the original, they occasionally abandoned literalness in favor of greater clarity, e.g., by adjusting typically Semitic or Greek syntactic structures to the requirements of contemporary Polish or by avoiding complex subordinate sentences. Some words of particular theological and/or confessional significance—like μετανοέω—were rendered by several different Polish equivalents depending on the context. The numerous footnotes typically provide cross-references, sometimes along with historical or linguistic comments; theological or doctrinal notes, for obvious reasons, are very few.

As regards the actual ecumenical character of this version, in spite of the formal endorsement by the eleven represented denominations, the leading role of the Roman Catholic Church is readily noticeable, from the composition of the interdenominational group of translators⁸ to the editing and verification of the text,⁹

happened”). In sentences like this, both Polish and English grammar require a nominal element: *one* should be followed by a noun, such as, e.g., *thing*. Although it may be argued that the numeral *jedno* is used nominally here, such a use cannot be considered natural in Polish.

⁸ Among the twenty translators listed on the title page, as many as nine represent the Roman Catholic Church.

⁹ Both the editorial work and the verification of the translation were done exclusively by Roman Catholic scholars. Interestingly, all members of the verification team had previously been involved in confessional translation projects, i.e., the Millennium Bible and the Warsaw-Praga Bible.

as well as the rendering of some passages.¹⁰ Whether the Ecumenical Translation will become a truly common version used among Christians of various persuasions is still an open question.

Paulists' translation

Toward the end of the twentieth century, a group of Catholic scholars began working on another translation of the Bible. Although arising parallel to the Ecumenical Translation and using almost the same textual basis, the project headed by the Society of St. Paul had a completely different profile. It was strictly confessional, that is, developed exclusively by Roman Catholic scholars, intended for private reading (rather than public use), and clearly targeted at the young reader. The first part, containing the NT and Psalms, was published in 2005. Since the purpose of the editors was to “faithfully render the content of the Scripture and explain it in a correct, contemporary, and communicative Polish,”¹¹ their version naturally leans toward functional equivalence with its predominant focus on the reader. In this pursuit, complex or antiquated forms and structures oftentimes found in the traditional versions were to be avoided.

The editors admit to have striven to update and modernize the language of the Bible in order to make it understandable for the contemporary reader “whose vocabulary has been impoverished by the media,” but sought to achieve this without compromising the wealth and beauty of the Polish language.¹² It seems that they have largely succeeded, for the new version is both easy to read and stylistically appealing, though not entirely void of traditional notions.

The main text is accompanied by comments of two kinds: explanations of unfamiliar or significant words along with short theological comments and cross-references are provided in the margin, while the bottom part of the page, sometimes up to half of it, is reserved for a thematic commentary related to the given passage. The result is a truly “pastoral” version offering several levels of meaning to suit the needs of the readers, including those without any theological background, and in this respect the Paulists’ version differs from the otherwise stylistically similar Millennium Bible. Consequently, the editors will certainly face a challenging task should they attempt to offer a comparably thorough yet accessible commentary to the OT.

Jewish New Testament

2004 saw the publication of the Polish version of David H. Stern’s *Jewish New Testament – A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses Its Jewishness* along with his *Jewish New Testament Commentary* in a single volume. As a messianic Jew, Stern has striven in his NT “to express its original and essential Jewishness”¹³

10 E. g., Matt 16.22-23 and parallel texts.

11 From the Foreword of the editors.

12 From an interview with the editors published online at <http://www.paulus.pl/index.php?mod=wydawnictwo&menu=przeklad>.

13 David H Stern, *Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses Its Jewishness* (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., 1989), ix.

in opposition to most English translations which “present its message in a Gentile-Christian linguistic, cultural and theological framework.”¹⁴

Consequently, he has sought to adjust the text of the NT accordingly in these three spheres by (a) introducing—or, as he would assert, restoring—distinctly Jewish vocabulary and idiom (including Hebrew and Yiddish terms substituted for traditional renderings of proper names); (b) presenting the Jewish cultural and religious heritage as the proper context of the NT writings, otherwise somewhat unclear; and (c) “undoing the harm” done by the tradition of NT translations “thoroughly permeated by Gentile-Christian theologies which de-emphasize the Jews as still God’s people, the *Torah* as still valid, and God as still One.”¹⁵

As a result, the *Jewish New Testament* in both English and Polish is easily recognizable against the other versions owing to its distinctive “foreignization” (to use Lawrence Venuti’s famous term) as well as its copious notes and comments. Printed on high quality paper, big (B5) and heavy, it’s certainly not meant as a Bible for everyday personal reading but rather as an academic reference work.

New Covenant

The newest version in our corpus is the *New Covenant (Nowe Przymierze)* by the Evangelical Bible Institute, published in the last few weeks of 2007. The translation is mostly the work of Dr. Piotr Zaremba, a Baptist pastor in Poznań. Regarding its profile, the version is presented in the Preface as “a literary rendering of the New Testament, which means that the requirements of the Polish language take precedence over the language of the original.”¹⁶ However, “when it comes to theological ideas, the . . . translation conveys the message of the original literally, i.e., the Polish language submits to the Greek way of expression.”¹⁷

Interestingly, it is also indicated in the Preface that the translation “is the first one ever to be done within Polish Evangelical circles” though “it is not, by any means, a one-denomination translation.”¹⁸ The language and style of the version is remarkably up-to-date, with a number of traditional and religious notions (such as *blogostawiony* [blessed], *wyznawać* [confess], or *Pocieszyciel* [Comforter]) simplified or replaced by more contemporary terms (i.e., *szczęśliwy* [happy], *przyznawać się* [admit], and *Opiekun* [Caretaker]).

The text is presented in a single-column format with section headings; every book is preceded by short information regarding its author, date and place of origin, purpose, and topic. The relative scarcity and brevity of explanatory comments (on average one in every 10-15 pages) is counterbalanced by numerous cross-references filling most page margins. The translation is available in both a regular and pocket format, as well as in hard cover and in paperback.

Good Reading

The last translation presented here is also the most unusual. It is a rendering of the Gospel of John into Polish hip-hop slang, entitled *Dobra Czytanka wg św. ziom’a*

14 Ibid., ix.

15 Ibid., xix.

16 Preface, xi.

17 Ibid., xii.

18 Ibid., xiii.

Janka (lit. The Good Reading according to St. Pal Johnny).¹⁹ The text was available online for some time before it was finally published in 2006. It is not based directly on the Greek but on three Polish versions: the Millennium Bible, the Warsaw Bible, and the Gdańsk Bible. The slang expressions found in *Good Reading* are typically single words and only rarely longer units, which generally makes them relatively easy to understand, even for the reader unfamiliar with hip-hop slang. In addition to expressions clearly classified as slang, the translators make frequent use of words and structures especially characteristic of spoken Polish and representing a low language register or typical of colloquial discourse but not confined to a particular social group.

Some solutions offered by the authors clearly enhance the communicativeness of the text, particularly from the point of view of younger readers deprived of or rebelling against a theological background. Colorful slang expressions paired with a simplified lexis, colloquial syntax, and a general tendency to avoid traditionally “religious” terms, undoubtedly make the message of the Gospel more relevant and appealing to the target audience. The design of the printed version of *Good Reading* is clearly meant to resemble popular black and white comic books, using checked notebook paper, a Courier font typical of a typewriter, tilted column layout and sketchy drawings providing contemporary illustrations to selected verses.

III.

Having presented the selected contemporary Polish NT versions, let us now pass on to consider some trends and tendencies related to audience considerations.

Awareness of an audience

The first observation regarding the new versions, particularly against the background of the earlier translations, is the apparent awareness of the translators that there *is* an audience. The clearest evidence of this recognition is the introductory sections. The Gdańsk Bible used among Protestants until the mid-1970s had no preface whatsoever, the Warsaw Bible only carried a half-page note from the editors, and the Millennium Bible a two-page preface—but even then they addressed a general audience, without specifying its profile. By contrast, the recent versions are provided with prefaces or introductions which tend to be fairly extensive, typically ranging between four and eight pages (though the introduction to the *Jewish New Testament* has almost thirty while Romaniuk is content with a single page).

Readership profile

In addition to sheer size, the focus of the introductory materials has definitely shifted towards the reader who often becomes quite clearly defined. Romaniuk humbly mentions the members of his diocese as the anticipated readership of the Warsaw-Praga Bible. The Paulists’ version indirectly identifies its readership when discussing the editorial aids “particularly helpful at the first reading of the biblical text.” Likewise, both the *Jewish New Testament* and Popowski’s NT assume a low level of biblical literacy by providing extensive and oftentimes basic facts

¹⁹ See Piotr Blumczyński, “The Gospel in Slang: With Special Reference to the Polish Context,” *The Bible Translator*, 58.1 (2007): 19-30.

about the origins of the Bible, its cultural context, literary characteristics, original languages, etc. The *New Covenant* presents itself as a translation “addressed to the whole society, but in particular: (1) to the people who are largely unfamiliar with the culture of New Testament times; and (2) to those who are active in the fields of evangelism, Christian education, counseling, and preaching.”²⁰ Finally, the target readership of *Good Reading* is described as “young people . . . looking for ideals and values in their lives.”²¹ Clearly, most authors of the recent Polish versions are aware that their work won’t simply reach the unidentified general reader but specifically targeted groups for whom the respective translations were made.

Temporal limitation

The recognition of certain synchronic limitations (in terms of readership appeal) is often carried over to the diachronic dimension as well. Namely, most translators referred to above seem to be aware that their versions are of limited temporal applicability—which quite naturally follows from the fact that they are addressed to a specific group. The temporal entrenchment of Popowski’s NT indicated in its very title—*A Translation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000*—becomes more and more evident with every passing year and from the perspective of 2010 the version no longer carries an air of novelty. The attempt to offer a slang version of the Gospel of John is also doomed from a long-term perspective because non-standard varieties of language, and particularly sociolects, are by definition very dynamic and prone to change. In ten years from now the Polish hip-hop slang will have changed significantly, especially in the field of vocabulary, and *Good Reading* will likely be viewed as dated (actually, there’s no better reason for future slang users to reject it!).

Nowhere has the awareness of the temporal aspect been expressed more explicitly than in the Preface to the *New Covenant* (which, interestingly, is offered in both Polish and English). In the section titled “Not for Generations to Come” we find the following assertion: “It was not the goal of the translators and publishers to provide the reader with a translation that would be used for generations to come. Rather, the translation was purported to answer the needs of an ever-changing reality.” Even though the argument regarding the relatively short life of Bible translations has been around for quite some time, typically in debates against functional equivalence, it is interesting that it is now being recognized and admitted by some translators, especially against the bold claims of others (as evidenced by the very name of, e.g., *The Ecumenical Translation for the Third Millennium!*)

Plurality of Bible versions

All of the above mentioned factors related to the awareness of the various limitations regarding the audience profile and temporal applicability lead to the growing recognition of plurality of Bible versions. It seems that in the popular religious discourse in Poland the diachronic idea of Bible translations superseding rather than complementing one another is still cherished by many. However, after examining the introductory sections, comments, and notes accompanying the seven

20 Preface, xi.

21 “From the Publisher,” 5.

versions described here, it may be concluded that each of them is presented to the audience as “a” and not “the” translation (even though the Polish language does not have articles!). Sometimes we find explicit references to other versions (e.g., Popowski, discussing the contemporary context, mentions the Millennium Bible while the Primate of Poland in the Foreword to the Paulists’ version also refers to the Warsaw-Praga Bible and the Ecumenical Translation); more often, however, it is on the basis of the various emphases articulated by the authors and editors that the reader realizes that there could be—and have been—other approaches to translating the Bible into Polish. As a Bible translation researcher but also a believer, I consider this insight as particularly valuable because it helps undermine the often dogmatic attachment to the verbiage of a certain venerable version observable in some ecclesiastical circles (somewhat reminiscent of “KJV-only” sentiments in the English speaking world).

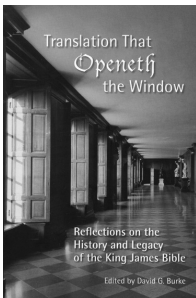
Graphical layout

Finally, if Bible versions are to compete with one another, they need to appeal to prospective buyers. This recognition is clearly reflected in the graphical layout and binding of a majority of the modern versions. Against the default format of the Polish Bible—black or dark red hardcover, preferably leather, usually with gold lettering—the covers of most versions discussed here are practically indistinguishable from either academic volumes or paperback fiction books. Modern Polish Bible versions clearly want to pass as attractive, accessible, and reader-friendly, which marks a significant shift in publishing—and marketing—policy. Whether the perception of the Bible by Polish society, still remarkably conservative and traditional in its religious views, will change accordingly, is yet an open question.

Translation That Openeth the Window: Reflections on the History and Legacy of the King James Bible

Edited by David G. Burke

“Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light” (Preface, KJV).



In celebration of the work of the KJV translators, the authors of this volume, representing a wide range of disciplines and perspectives, examine the cultural and religious monument that is the King James Bible.

Looking at the historical context in which the translation was born and evaluating its lasting impact throughout the English-speaking world, the essays open a window on the KJV and its influence throughout the centuries.