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Canon and Biblical Text in the Slavonic Tradition in Russia

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Abstract

In order to gain a better understanding of the situation in Russia with regard to biblical canon and biblical text, particularly in the Russian Orthodox Church, this article reflects on the notion of non-canonical books, the role of tradition and its roots in the development of the canon in early Eastern Christianity, as well as the Russian Orthodox Church's acceptance of multiple authoritative versions of biblical books. This is followed by a brief discussion of the Slavonic Bible and the Russian Synodal Translation, particularly their sometimes hybrid textual base. The article closes with some thoughts on what this complex situation might mean for Bible translation projects in Orthodox contexts in Russia.

Keywords

biblical canon, non-canonical books, Orthodox Church, Slavonic Bible, Synodal Translation, Russian Bible Society

Introduction

In the Russian Orthodox Church, the Bible includes non-canonical as well as canonical books.[1] This article summarizes the developments through the centuries that led to this situation. We will also see the way in which the Russian Orthodox Church accepts multiple authoritative versions of biblical books and how this has had a bearing on the textual base of the Slavonic Bible and on the principles behind the textual base of the Russian Synodal

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Translation. Against this background, the key question for us will be, what can be said about the appropriate textual base of the Old Testament (including non-canonical books) and the New Testament in Bible translation projects in Orthodox contexts in Russia?

Non-canonical books in the church in Russia

The Old Testament, as it functions in the Russian Orthodox Church, contains the thirty-nine books which are part of what other traditions call the protocanon, as well as eleven other books. These eleven "non-canonical" books are put in different places in the Old Testament; they are not put together as one group of books. In, for example, the Russian Synodal Translation (see below), they are marked as non-canonical by an asterisk and a note: "2 Ездры" (3 Esdras in the Vulgate, ’Εσδρας Α′ in the Septuagint); Tobit; Judith; Wisdom of Solomon; Sirach (Ecclesiasticus); Letter of Jeremiah; Baruch; 1, 2, and 3 Maccabees; and finally "3 Ездры" (4 Esdras in the Vulgate). To these books should be added the non-canonical sections of Daniel (i.e., Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon); Esther; Psalms (i.e., Ps 151); and the Prayer of Manasseh placed at the end of 2 Chronicles. These sections are not included separately, but as part of these respective books.

Tradition, not debate

No explicit distinction was made between "canonical" and "non-canonical" books in either Judaism[2] or early Christianity, and the Orthodox Church considers itself to be standing in that tradition. This is already clear from the New Testament. For example, 1 Enoch (1.9) is quoted explicitly in Jude 14–15:

> It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying,
>
> "See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they

[2] At least not after Flavius Josephus's reference in *Contra Apionem* 1:8 to "only twenty-two books . . . , which are justly believed to be divine," written before Artaxerxes I, i.e., still before and during the era of the prophets. Josephus adds that history "written since Artaxerxes . . . has not been considered to be of the same authority . . . because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time."

> have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (NRSV)

When the New Testament quotes from non-canonical writings associated with the Old Testament, this is evidence that they were used in ways similar to the canonical books of the Old Testament.[3]

The question should be asked on which tradition the Russian inclusion of eleven non-canonical books is based. For this we need to look into the history of the early development of the canon, the period of synodal and patristic statements about the canon (Oikonomos 1991, 20–21).[4] Of the non-canonical books just mentioned, in 367 C.E. Athanasius already referred to "the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit" as books that were "not included in the canon but recommended by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us," while he included Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah as part of Jeremiah (Athanasius, 39th Festal Letter, §7).

The Synod of Laodicea (363–364) defined a narrow canon: the books that "should be read" included the books which Protestant churches would later regard as canonical, as well as Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah, while "the non-canonical books should not be read in the church." The Synod of Carthage (397, confirmed in 419; see Fig. 1) defined a somewhat broader canon which included Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, 1 and 2 Maccabees (but not Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah), stating that "besides the canonical Scriptures nothing be read in church as divine Scripture." Between the two of them, these canons include the books which the Roman Catholic Church would later regard as canonical and deuterocanonical. The Quinisext Council, otherwise known as the Synod in Trullo at Constantinople (691–692), confirmed these diverse decisions without making a specific choice between them (Rüger 1991, 153–54).

The Synod of Rome (382) had been the first to use the term "canonical" in reference to those books which were included in the broader list of Carthage and which the Roman Catholic Church would later confirm to be canonical (i.e., including the deuterocanonical ones confirmed as canonical during the Council of Trent of 1545−1546, and excluding 3 Esdras/'Εσδρας Α′ and 3 Maccabees). The term canonical in this sense was not adopted

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[3] See the "Index of Allusions and Verbal Parallels" in UBS[5], 864–83, esp. 882–83, and "Loci citati vel allegati" in NA[28], esp. 869–78.

[4] As Oikonomos points out (1991, 22), many of the "deuterocanonical" books are quoted by theologians of the early church, for example, the deuterocanonical parts of Esther in Clement of Rome and Origen.

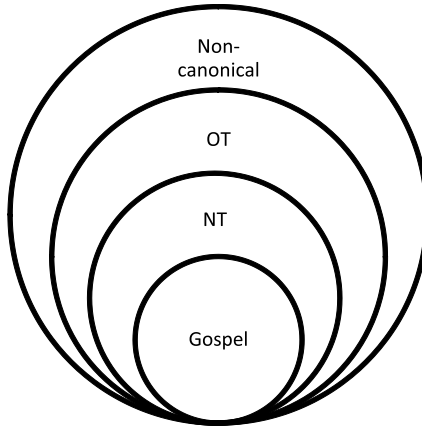
Figure 1. Carthage, location of the Synod of Carthage. (All photos are by the author.)

by the Eastern Church. In the Eastern Church, the difference between the narrow Laodicean canon and the wider Carthaginian canon did not become an issue for discussion. The non-canonical books gradually came to be regarded as part of the church's tradition—for example, passages from Wisdom of Solomon, like other Old Testament passages, came to be used in the liturgy—but no canon boundaries were fixed.

After the Reformation and its influence, the seventeenth century saw a brief exception to this situation. However, the discussions that ensued in the Eastern Church at that time did not lead to the exclusion of any non-canonical book: the Synod of Constantinople (1642) decided that the non-canonical books "are not to be rejected as heathen or profane, but are called good and virtuous, and are not to be abandoned" (Oikonomos 1991, 23). In line with this, Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow would write in his Catechism in 1822 that "we should accept these books [those that do not exist in Hebrew] too. St. Athanasius the Great says about them: 'they are destined by the fathers for those who enter the church'" (Desnitsky 2006, 96).

Hence, the status of books (whether canonical or non-canonical) is based only on the church's traditional use. No debate as to whether the canon should be open or closed took place in the East (Desnitsky 2006, 92–96). For example, it was not actually discussed how many books of Maccabees should be included. Instead, a Euler diagram may be the most practical way

to illustrate the respective status of the various parts of the biblical canon in the East:



Books, not one textual version of books

Crucially, the lack of discussion not only meant that the number of books was not fixed—it also meant that no textual version of the books was chosen as canonical by the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church has always acknowledged the coexistence of several authoritative versions of the Scriptures, in different languages (see below). In the East, the original composition of the Bible and its translation were both associated with direct divine revelation. Augustine of Hippo already regarded both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Septuagint (LXX) as inspired; he attributed the prophetic gift to the original LXX translators as well. For Augustine, the LXX was the manifestation of Scripture precisely as translation and revelation, without displacing the original.[5] It is in line with this position that the "Orthodox believe that the changes in the LXX were made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are to be accepted as part of God's continuing revelation" (Ware 1963, 208). (In the Russian Orthodox Church, the Slavonic Bible is

[5] For more on this, see Burrus (2012), who cites Augustine: "For the same Spirit that was in the prophets when they delivered those messages was present in person in the seventy men [the translators of the LXX according to tradition—*LdR*] also. . . . And the Spirit could say that very thing in different ways" (74, cited from *De civitate Dei* 18.43; compare also 15.23); for Augustine, the LXX has become the "instantiation of scriptural multiplicity" (78) and fundamental multilingualism of the biblical text. Thus, variant readings could contribute mutually to a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance of the text. As Gallagher notes, "Augustine maintained the importance and originality of the Hebrew but rejected the idea that the Church's Bible should match textually the Hebrew Bible" (2012, 103, also 208–9).

often held in similarly high regard, as authoritative for Russia.) Thus, the concept of canonicity refers to books, not to one particular text version of a book.

Multiple authoritative versions of books—an "Apostolic" approach

The use of the broad *canon* did not imply acceptance of the *text* of the LXX only. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk summarizes the situation in the Orthodox Church as follows:

> Православная Церковь никогда не канонизировала какой-то один текст или перевод, какую-то одну рукопись или одно издание Священного Писания. Единого общепринятого текста Библии в православной традиции нет.
>
> [The Orthodox Church never canonized any one particular text or translation, or any one particular manuscript or any one publication of the Holy Scriptures. There is not a one and only generally accepted text of the Bible in Orthodox tradition.] (Hilarion 2013, 3)

Significantly, the metropolitan finds justification for this in the fact that the apostolic church did not canonize any particular type of text either:

> Апостольская Церковь не настаивала на канонизации какого-то одного типа библейского текста. Не делает так и Православная Церковь.
>
> [The Apostolic Church did not strive towards canonizing any one particular type of biblical text. The Orthodox Church does not do this either.] (Hilarion 2013, 4)

What the apostolic church did do is illustrated by the New Testament: the New Testament does not always quote from one and the same version of the Old Testament. While it often quotes from the Greek Septuagint, it does quote from the Hebrew text in a number of cases, for example in Matt 12.18, where it quotes from the Hebrew of Isa 42.1 (Hilarion 2013, 4).[6]

As mentioned above in connection with Augustine, the LXX has a particularly important role in Orthodox tradition. "Неверно, однако, было бы утверждать, что именно Септуагинта и только Септуагинта является Библией Православия" [It would be wrong, however, to maintain

[6] Other examples are Matt 2.15 (quoting from the Hebrew of Hos 11.1) and Matt 11.10 // Mark 1.2 // Luke 7.27 (quoting from the Hebrew of Mal 3.1). Augustine himself acknowledges that the apostles quoted from both the Hebrew and the LXX (*De civitate Dei* 15.14; 18.44).

that precisely the Septuagint and only the Septuagint forms the Orthodox Bible] (Hilarion 2013, 3).

This implies that the Orthodox Church regards neither the Hebrew nor the Greek nor the Slavonic texts as exclusively authoritative. Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, who was opposed to the canonization of the Greek Septuagint and of the Slavonic Bible,[7] wrote concerning the Slavonic Bible in particular,

> Святейший Синод по трудам исправления славянской Библии не провосгласил текста славянского исключительно самостоятельным.
>
> [In the process of improving the Slavonic Bible the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church did not proclaim the Slavonic text as exclusively independent.] (Quoted by Hilarion 2013, 4)

At least in principle, this allows room for textual eclecticism, also in translation. This is already illustrated by the Slavonic Bible itself.

The Slavonic Bible

Biblical translation into Slavonic, the oldest attested Slavic language, dates back to the ninth century, when it began as part of the missions of the brothers Sts. Cyril and Methodius (see Fig. 2) from Thessaloniki (hence the Southern Slavic basis of the language of the translation). Slavonic was to become the liturgical language (Church Slavonic) in the Orthodox Church in a number of countries, particularly Russia.

The Slavonic Bible is itself a textually more hybrid version than is often supposed. The extent of this eclecticism is still a subject for research and debate. The Slavonic Bible is not simply a daughter translation of the LXX in the Old Testament and the Byzantine Greek text in the New.

In general, the Slavonic Old Testament is based on the LXX. However, when we look into this in more detail, the picture turns out to be more complicated. Parts of the Old Testament in the first full Slavonic Bible (the Gennadius Bible, Novgorod, 1499) are actually based on the Vulgate and the Masoretic Text (MT). The following canonical and non-canonical books in the Gennadius Bible were translated from the Vulgate: 1 and 2 Chronicles, 1 Ездры (i.e., Ezra), Nehemiah, 2 Ездры (3 Esdras in the Vulgate), 3 Ездры (4 Esdras in the Vulgate), Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Jeremiah 1−25

[7] This is noted in Batalden 2013 (132), an important work on the history of biblical translation in Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with an annotated bibliography of the Russian Bible from 1794 to 1991.

Figure 2. Sts. Methodius and Cyril—San Clemente, Rome, where Cyril's remains are interred.

and 46−51, and 1 and 2 Maccabees (Alekseev 1999, 197; Alekseev 2004, 21). With regard to Esther, in all its first 167 verses the Slavonic book of Esther in the Gennadius Bible corresponds verse by verse to the 167 verses in the MT, and these are followed by the Additions to Esther, translated from the Vulgate.[8] Some Eastern Slavonic manuscripts of the Pentateuch contain Hebrew-based glosses.[9]

In general, the Slavonic New Testament is based on the Byzantine New Testament text. However, "it also contains not a few earlier readings of the Western and Caesarean types" (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 121).[10]

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[8] Thus, the Slavonic Esther differs significantly from either of the known Greek texts, i.e., the Old Greek and the Alpha texts (Lunt and Taube 1998, 3, 5, 8, 9, 18). Even if an (otherwise unknown) 167-verse Greek version of Esther stood as an intermediary between the Hebrew MT and the Gennadius Bible, as Lunt and Taube propose (on pp. 7, 10, 65, 140, 246), the MT was still its ultimate source, and the fact remains that the Slavonic Esther in the Gennadius Bible was not based on the Old Greek or the Alpha text. Only Maksim Grek's later Slavonic translation of Esther would be based on the Old Greek (Lunt and Taube 1998, 8, 254). On the translation of the Slavonic Esther from the MT see also Alekseev 1999, 180–82, and Alekseev 2004, 18–19.

[9] As noted by Alekseev (1999, 182–84, esp. 183), for example, "егееешеръегее [egeeesher' egee]" in Exod 3.14.

[10] On the subject of non-Byzantine readings in the Slavonic New Testament, see Metzger, 1977, 415–20, 429–30.

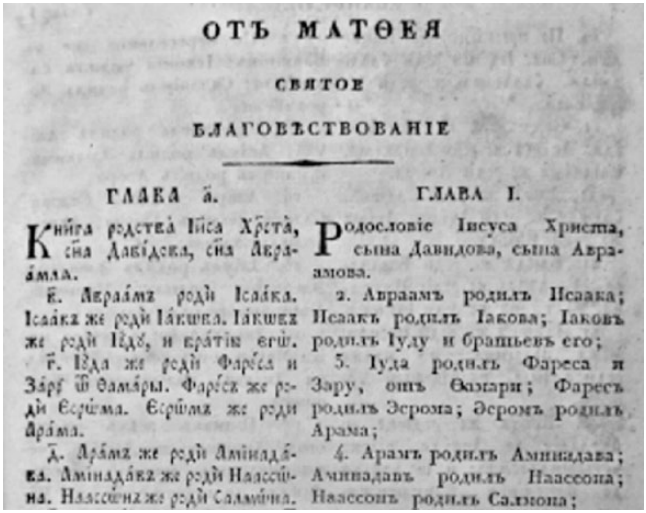
The first printed edition of the Slavonic Bible, which was based on the Gennadius Bible, was published in Ostrog in 1581. A revision was published in Moscow in 1663. Then in 1712 Czar Peter the Great gave orders to revise the Slavonic text again so as to bring it entirely in line with the LXX (eventually leading to the Elizabeth Bible of 1751). However, in spite of this standardization, corrections were still made in consideration of the Vulgate and the MT as well, and those that were made on the basis of the LXX disregarded and hampered the comprehensibility of the Slavonic text (Tixomirov 2006, 3; Batalden 2013, 123).

To a certain extent, then, the Slavonic text is still a hybrid version, and not simply a daughter translation, of the LXX (or of any one specific version for that matter). For this reason, it does not seem advisable to use the Slavonic Bible as the base text for translation projects in Russia, not even for exclusively Orthodox translation projects. It would in any case not be clear which form and edition should be used as the base text. (If, theoretically, the Slavonic Bible had been a daughter translation, the current UBS Guidelines for Confessional Scripture Translation would have allowed for a translation from the Slavonic Bible.[11])

The Russian Bible Society's translation of the New Testament (1821), Psalter (1822), and Octateuch (1824–1825)

Russian Orthodox liturgy is sung in Slavonic, thus lending authority to the Slavonic Bible (though its authority, as we have shown, is not the same as exclusive canonical status of its text). This situation has contributed to the fact that the Bible in its entirety was translated into Russian only relatively late—in the nineteenth century (Batalden 2013, 41). The turning point was Czar Alexander I's decree in 1816, in which he authorized the Russian Bible Society to translate the New Testament into Russian for publication alongside the Slavonic text (Batalden 2013, 57). This New Testament was published as a diglot in 1821 (see Fig. 3). Significantly, this Russian New Testament was published for the first time on its own (i.e., not as a part of a diglot) in 1823 (Batalden 2013, 61, 65; Tixomirov 2006, 9). The translators were guided by the Elizabeth Slavonic Bible of 1751, while

[11] "The UBS recommends that the Masoretic text or the Septuagint should be used as base text. In particular circumstances where churches have their own long-standing tradition of using a daughter translation this may be followed" (from the UBS Guidelines on Translation, Section C: Guidelines for Confessional Scripture Translation, p. 8). The Guidelines are quoted in UBS 2004.



ОТЪ МАѲѢЯ

СВЯТОЕ

БЛАГОВѢСТВОВАНІЕ

ГЛАВА а.

Кни́га родства́ Іи́са Хр҃ста́, сы́на Дави́дова, сы́на Авраа́мля.

в. Авраа́мъ роди́ Исаа́ка. Исаа́къ же роди́ Іа́кова. Іа́ковъ же роди́ Іу́ду, и бра́тію его́.

г. Іу́да же роди́ Фарре́са и Зара́ и҃ѳамары́. Фарре́съ же роди́ Есро́ма. Есро́мъ же роди́ Арра́ма.

д. Арра́мъ же роди́ Аминада́ва. Аминада́въ же роди́ Наассо́на. Наассо́нъ же роди́ Салмо́на.

ГЛАВА I.

Родословіе Іисуса Христа, сына Давидова, сына Авраамова.

2. Авраамъ родилъ Исаака; Исаакъ родилъ Іакова; Іаковъ родилъ Іуду и братьевъ его;

3. Іуда родилъ Фареса и Зару, отъ Ѳамари; Фаресъ родилъ Эсрома; Эсромъ родилъ Арама;

4. Арамъ родилъ Аминадава; Аминадавъ родилъ Наассона; Наассонъ родилъ Салмона;

Figure 3. First four verses of Matthew in the Slavonic/Russian New Testament diglot (Russian Bible Society, third printing 1822).

also employing the Greek *textus receptus* as published in Moscow in 1811 (Batalden 2013, 64).

Generally, the question which text or texts should be regarded as authoritative and used as the base text for translation became acute, leading to a "controversy over the abortive Russian attempt to canonize the Greek Septuagint Old Testament text, as opposed to the Hebrew Masoretic counterpart" (Batalden 2013, 8). The debate over the textual base for the Russian Old Testament would continue throughout the nineteenth century, and into the present (Batalden 2013, 68).

The first edition of the Russian Psalter (1822) already set the pattern in modern Russian Old Testament translation: translation from the Hebrew MT, but with incorporation of LXX readings, LXX numeration, and inclusion of Psalm 151, as explained in its preface (Batalden 2013, 69).

Before the Russian Bible Society's closure in 1826, its translation of the Octateuch (i.e., the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth) of 1824–1825 was made from the MT, compared with the LXX, with variant LXX readings[12] in square brackets footnoted at the bottom of the page (Batalden

[12] According to Alekseev (2000, 51) these variant readings were from the Slavonic Bible. See also Tixomirov (2006, 17–18).

2013, 71, 73, 218). The roles of the MT and the LXX would be virtually the same in subsequent synodal translations in Russia.

This translation of the Octateuch under the supervision of Gerasim Pavskii was to be the starting point of Pavskii's translation of the Old Testament exclusively from the Hebrew. Although controversial,[13] his Hebrew-based translation—he also translated the Prophetic and Wisdom Books (Tixomirov 2006, 18)—would exert a powerful influence on subsequent translation of the Old Testament into Russian, including, for example, on the, also Hebrew-based, Russian translation by St. Makarii (Archimandrite Mikhail Glukharev), the missionary to the Altai, in the period between 1830 and 1844 (Batalden 2013, 116–17, 121; Tixomirov 2006, 21).[14]

The Russian Synodal Translation of the New Testament (1860–1862)

In 1858 the Holy Synod made a resolution to resume translation of the Bible into Russian. This resolution was authorized by Czar Alexander II. The Gospels were published in 1860 and the remaining New Testament books in 1862. As in the case of the Russian Bible Society's translation, the translators used the Greek *textus receptus* (published in Moscow in 1811) as well as the Slavonic Bible. Thus, the *textus receptus* was the base of the Synodal New Testament translation under Moscow Metropolitan Filaret's oversight (1860–1862).[15]

This textual base would be questioned later, on the eve of the Russian Revolution, particularly by Nikolai Glubokovskii, but would be defended uncritically again during Soviet times (Batalden 2013, 194–95). Bishop Kassian Bezobrazov's translation of the New Testament from 1951 onwards (since he had been the chief translator, it came to be named after him) was based on the Nestle edition of the Greek text (Nestle and Nestle 1945) but, significantly, this translation took place outside Russia, in the Orthodox context of the Russian diaspora and the St. Sergius Theological Institute in

[13] In 1842 the Holy Synod created an investigatory commission to locate copies of Pavskii's translation in order to have them returned to the Synod. For more on the Pavskii affair, see Batalden 2013 (96–112).

[14] Tixomirov points out that, unlike the Russian Bible Society's Octateuch translation, Makarii's translation does not include LXX-based variants. To a large extent Makarii's translation is even oriented to the Hebrew pronunciation of proper names (Tixomirov 2006, 22).

[15] As noted in Batalden 2013 (109, 137). Bakker (1996, 131, 166–67) points out that the Synodal Translation is "still under the spell of the Slavic Version" in, for example, Acts 19, where its explicit mention of the gods "Diopet" (v. 35) and "Artemis" (v. 37) has no Greek parallel.

Paris, at the instigation of the British and Foreign Bible Society (Batalden 2013, 197). Because of its textual base the Kassian translation met with strong opposition in Russia itself.

The Russian Synodal Translation (1876)

In the aftermath of the Pavskii affair, the Ober-prokurator of the Holy Synod, Protasov, had made an attempt to declare the Greek Septuagint text inviolable, effectively canonizing the Greek text (Batalden 2013, 123). Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev took a similar position (Tixomirov 2006, 26). However, Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, being opposed to this, had prepared the textual principles behind the Synodal Translation in 1845. These principles were published and presented to the Holy Synod in 1858 (Filaret 1858), the year in which translation into Russian was actually resumed, well before the translation's publication in 1876 with the blessing of the Holy Synod. (The sections of the Old Testament had been published in four separate parts between 1868 and 1875.)

Thus, unlike Protasov, Filaret of Moscow sought to recognize the authority of both the Hebrew and Greek texts in Old Testament translation.[16] This led to the following translation principles:

- In the Old Testament, the Russian Synodal Translation is based on the MT, but with additions and variants from the LXX. Parts of the text that are missing from the MT but present in the LXX were included in the translation (and often put between square brackets) if found in the Slavonic Bible in those places. For example, in Deut 32.43-44; Josh 24.34-36; 1 Kgs (3 Kgdms) 2.35 (portrait of Solomon); 2 Chr 35.20 (LXX 35.19a-19d); the end of/after 2 Chr 36 (The Prayer of Manasseh); the end of Job 42; Ps 151. However, the translation does not include all the LXX's pluses (additions in comparison with the MT).[17] At the end of Jer 2.28, for example, the translation does not render the LXX's plus, even though the Slavonic Bible has it.[18]

[16] Filaret's arguments are summarized in Batalden 2013 (123–24). At the same time, Filaret was committed to maintaining the use of Church Slavonic, not modern Russian, as the sacred language for liturgical worship (Batalden, 130–31).

[17] Tixomirov notes that in the cases where there is no addition in the LXX, but where there is a significant difference in thought, amount, or order between the Hebrew and Greek texts, the translators were forced to base themselves, quite arbitrarily, on one or the other text. In such cases they often followed the Slavonic Bible (Tixomirov 2006, 27).

[18] The LXX's plus can be rendered as follows: "and as many as the streets of Jerusalem have they sacrificed to Baal."

- The exegesis in the translation is often based on the LXX. A good example is Gen 2.2: "God finished . . . *by/towards* the seventh day (к седьмому дню)." Although it is claimed that it is the Hebrew text (ביום השביעי) that is followed, clearly this translation has the LXX (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ) in mind.
- In dogmatically sensitive matters, the translation is guided by the LXX and to a lesser extent by the Slavonic Bible. (Translation is to "be guided by doctrinal standards set forth in the early Greek and Byzantine patristic tradition."[19])

In Metropolitan Hilarion's summary,

> . . . под его [Филарета] руководством Синодальный перевод был сделан (в первые в православном мире) непосредственно с еврейского масоретского текста, с учетом, в отдельных случаях, чтений Септуагинты.
>
> [. . . under Filaret's leadership, the Synodal Translation was made (for the first time in the Orthodox world) directly from the Hebrew MT, taking into account the Septuagint reading in individual cases.] (Hilarion 2013, 4)[20]

At the level of whole books, the situation of the Synodal Translation is twofold. The order of chapters in Jeremiah follows that of the MT, not the LXX. At the same time, the Synodal Translation has a longer version of books where the text of the LXX is longer than the MT; this applies to Daniel and Esther. In addition, the Synodal Translation includes the Prayer of Manasseh (from the Odes in the LXX) in 2 Chronicles as its final passage. In each of these books, though, the non-canonical sections are indicated with square brackets (only with a note in Dan 13−14).

Because of its complicated textual history, one of the books that deserves some more attention here is Esther. From which text were the canonical parts of Esther translated? And the non-canonical parts?

- First of all, it is noteworthy that the Synodal Translation does not contain a full translation of Esther from the Greek. In consistency with the above-mentioned principles, in Esther the Synodal Translation actually follows the Hebrew MT, except for the spelling of just a few of the proper names (for example, Artaxerx instead of Ahasueros).[21]

[19] As quoted in Batalden 2013 (109).
[20] Similarly Alekseev 2000 (52).
[21] It should be noted that the end of Esth 3.10 follows the LXX: чтобы скрепить указ

- Second, as in other books, the Synodal Translation has additions inside the Hebrew-based chapters in square brackets; these additions are from the LXX text (the Old Greek, not the shorter Alpha-text).[22]
- Third, in the non-canonical parts (often referred to as the six Additions)[23] of Esther, the Synodal Translation has followed the LXX (again, the Old Greek, hardly the Alpha-text); the Synodal Translation has put these parts in square brackets as well.

As part of the Synodal Translation, the non-canonical books were translated from the Greek and in the case of 3 Ездры (4 Esdras in the Vulgate) from Latin.

With regard to the order of books, the non-canonical books were inserted into each of the final three sections (the historical, poetic, and prophetic sections) of the Synodal Translation (Batalden 2013, 145).

In conclusion, the Synodal Translation demonstrates which books are regarded as part of the Bible by the Russian Orthodox Church. Being an Orthodox Bible, it states that the Old Testament includes the thirty-nine canonical and eleven non-canonical books. As the already-mentioned UBS Guidelines for Confessional Scripture Translation state, "The scope of the canon of the Church for whom the translation is intended should be respected as well as its canonical order of books" (UBS 2004, 8). The Synodal Translation is also indicative of the fact that the LXX was never the only ecclesiastical text of the Old Testament in Russia.

Other translations into Russian, for example, Iungerov's translation of the Psalms, the Prophets, and Wisdom books from the LXX (1890−1915) were not Synod-authorized.[24]

After its publication, the choice of the source texts of the Synodal Translation continued to be challenged, both for the Old and the New Testament: the Hebrew MT on the one hand and the *textus receptus* on the other continued to be seen as controversial (Batalden 2013, 205). But to date, this Russian translation has been the only one that was prepared and published with the authority of the Holy Synod.

против Иудеев (in order to seal the decree against the Judeans).

[22] These LXX-based additions in square brackets occur in 1.1; 2.3, 21; 3.7, 12; 4.1, 2, 8; 5.1, 2, 4, 8 (from Addition D); 6.1, 4, 10, 13; 9.19, 26.

[23] For a discussion of the multiform text situation of Esther, see Burke and Houser 2006, 44–56.

[24] As noted by Batalden (2013, 158, 193) and Alekseev (2000, 53 n. 3).

Implications for Bible translation in Russia

We saw how the non-canonical books came to be regarded as part of the Orthodox Church's tradition. With regard to the canon, then, a translation in Russia that is intended (also) for an Orthodox audience should not be regarded as complete without the non-canonical books and the non-canonical parts of Daniel, Esther, Psalms (Ps 151), and 2 Chronicles (Prayer of Manasseh). The Russian Orthodox Church includes the non-canonical as well as canonical books in the Bible.

With regard to the *textual base* of the Old and New Testaments, we saw how the Russian Orthodox Church has accepted multiple authoritative textual versions of biblical books. In this situation of textual eclecticism, the question concerning a specific and solid textual base for modern translations for an Orthodox audience becomes all the more pressing.

Since the Slavonic text is a more hybrid version than has often been supposed, it does not seem advisable to use the Slavonic Bible as the base text for translation projects in Russia, not even for exclusively Orthodox translation projects.

It is quite possible, but by no means certain, that the Russian Orthodox Church would, in the case of a new translation into Russian, follow exactly in the footsteps of the Synodal Translation of 1876. In a statement released on November 28, 2013, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Kyril I, only spoke of some lexical and stylistic adaptations of the Synodal Translation and correction of some mistakes; he did not touch on its textual base. However, since the Synodal Translation carries Synodal authority, it may therefore be seen by some as a precedent for the textual base of other translations.

For translations for an Orthodox audience, the Hebrew MT on the one hand and even a critical edition of the Greek New Testament text on the other (cf. Bishop Kassian's translation) are still feasible textual bases, although footnotes and careful comments should be included on the differences with the readings that were followed by the Synodal Translation. The same applies to translations for an interconfessionally diverse audience in an Orthodox context.[25]

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[25] For example, the Современный русский перевод [Contemporary Russian Version] is a translation from the textual base mentioned here, but it does not comment on differences with the Synodal Translation and does not include the non-canonical books.

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