

Adding a Cubit to Bible Understanding: A Study of Notes in the Chinese Union Version Bible and the Sigao Bible

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Abstract

The note as a paratextual element has played an important role in Bible translation. This article collects the translational notes from the New Testament in the Chinese Protestant Union Version Bible (CUV) and the Chinese Catholic Sigao Bible (SBV) to uncover the ideological leanings of translators as well as the types and functions of translational notes in these versions. With a quantitative and qualitative analysis of eight selected notes, the article shows that: (1) CUV followed the “without note or comment” principle for unbiased comments and thus employed more linguistic notes, but SBV followed the Catholic tradition in writing exegetical comments; (2) the notes help readers understand the reasons for textual variations and the problem of selectivity in translating; and (3) CUV translators took account of the Chinese literati’s taste, whereas SBV aimed to reach the common people. Further research is needed for a more in-depth interpretation.

Keywords

Bible translation, Chinese Union Version Bible, Chinese Sigao Bible, notes

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I. Introduction

There is a consensus that a translation can never show all aspects of the source text. Translators make choices that retain some aspects of the source text and sacrifice others (de Vries 2008, 173). Interlinear notes or footnotes help to explain the purpose of, and solutions to, translation selectivity. This translation selectivity can commonly be seen in Chinese Bible translations.

Bible translation in China has a long history. The earliest record of a Chinese translation of the Bible is found on a stone stele named *Daqin jingjiao liuxing zhongguo bei* 大秦景教流行中国碑 (the Nestorian Stele), which states that during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 A.D.) the emperor Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (598–649 A.D.) permitted the Nestorian priest Olopen to translate the Christian Scriptures and introduce them to the Chinese people (Hong 2002, 239). At various times thereafter, several hundred Western missionaries and Chinese collaborators were committed to Chinese Bible translation. Currently, the Bible Society in Taiwan is working on the translation of indigenous language versions, such as Pinuyumayan, Amis, and modern Taiwanese, which are expected to be published in 2021.¹ The translation of the Bible has provided Chinese-speaking Christians around the world with an accurate, readable record of Scripture. The publication of the Mandarin Bible in China “contributed to the standardization and enrichment of Mandarin” (Mak 2017, 296).

Despite the long history, the most influential translations today are the Chinese Union Version (CUV) for Protestants and the *Sigao Shengjing* 思高圣经 (the Scotus Bible or SBV) for Catholics. In 1890, Protestant missionaries working in China held a conference in Shanghai, expecting to create a common translation for all Chinese Protestant denominations. Thus, an executive translation committee was created with sixteen Protestant missionaries appointed to this challenging translation project. The product was the 1919 CUV. It is regarded as a unique and authoritative version among all Mandarin Bible translations produced by Protestant missionaries (Mak 2017, 296), and has been the focus of scholars of Chinese Christianity, biblical studies, and Bible translation.

As the first complete Catholic Bible in Chinese, SBV remains as a landmark amongst Chinese-speaking Catholics. This version was translated between 1935 and 1968 in Beijing and Hong Kong by an Italian Franciscan friar, Gabriele Allegra (1907–1976), and his Chinese and European Catholic collaborators. The translation method they followed was mainly “word for word,” and exegetical notes were also employed. Today, SBV is still used in the liturgy and in the official documents of Chinese-speaking

¹ See the homepage of the Bible Society in Taiwan at <http://bstwn.org/>.

Catholics (de Gruttola 2017, 101). Nevertheless, this translation has hardly been examined in Mainland China.

The work of translating the Bible into Chinese has always been confronted with endless challenges. How to render culturally loaded terms into appropriate Chinese has always been of great importance. "Without note or comment" was an important principle of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in its global work of Bible translation, including work in China. This principle ruled out "any note or comment of a doctrinal character from the Bibles it translated" in order to get "support from different Protestant denominations and to avoid theological controversy" (Mak 2015, 331). This held true for the BFBS's enterprise of Bible translation in China. But it met a new challenge. On account of cultural and religious differences, it was far from easy for a Chinese person to understand the Christian teachings by reading the biblical text alone (Mak 2015, 332). Without notes, it was hard for them to grasp the meaning of key terms such as "the Holy Spirit," "the Trinity," or "Passover." Hence, brief explanatory notes were needed in the Chinese Bible.

Both CUV and SBV have translational notes or footnotes, and each book of SBV contains an introduction added by the translators to outline its main theme. According to Genette (1997, 2), notes, footnotes, and introductions are basic types of paratextual material, which is "a threshold" for interpretation. Translators' notes and footnotes can function as the "second voice" in their translations and provide the reader with a chance to "interpret his or her own text fruitfully" (Paloposki 2010, 91). With these devices, the social, historical, cultural, and aesthetic information of the source text can be largely conveyed and explained in the translated text.

This article is concerned with notes and footnotes in these two Chinese Bible versions. It is hoped that the quantitative and qualitative analysis offered will help readers recognize the types and functions of translation notes and point to implications for future Bible revisions.

However, before moving to the investigation, a brief review of the study of paratextual material in Bible translation is required. In the following sections, categorization according to Peter Newmark and a discussion on the functions of notes will be presented. Then the implications of translators' ideologies will be discussed. I will conclude by noting the limitations of the article and suggesting future development in paratextual studies for Chinese Bible translation.

2. Review of studies on paratextual materials

Genette's notion of paratext has greatly influenced translation studies. Recent research in Bible translation has concentrated on paratextual

features such as footnotes, pericope headings, and visual messages. On the basis of RSV and GNB, Noel Osborn (1982) investigates “four basic types of textual footnotes” and “two basic types of translational footnotes” to help translators understand the function of the footnote. Christiane Nord (2012) studies a corpus of pericope titles collected from nine Bible versions and indicates six functions of section headings. Lourens de Vries (2003) focuses on the relation between the skopos and paratext of Bible translation, highlighting that the skopos of a translation is reflected by paratextual means. William Yarchin (2019) scrutinizes some ancient and modern Scripture versions and remarks that in printing practice the visual appearance of a name-substitute² for the ineffability of God’s name creates a disturbance in the text.

Most studies pertaining to Chinese Bible translations take a diachronic approach, and discussions of the paratextual elements are rare. Cao Jian (2006) discusses the topic of sectional titles in Schereschewsky’s OT translation into Mandarin (1874). On the basis of Gen 1–4, Cao examines the pericope headings with regard to their nature, skopos, and functions in the translation. He concludes that headings in Schereschewsky’s version, which was the basis of the CUV OT translation, clarify meaning. An-Ting Yi (2018) has investigated the notes from five contemporary Chinese Protestant Bibles with an analytical framework based on *Skopostheorie*. Yi concludes that paratextual elements help to disclose “the contexts of Bible versions and their translation decisions” (56).

In comparative studies of CUV and SBV and in chronological studies of different Chinese Bible versions, notes have been neglected (Yi 2018, 76). The main reason for the neglect is partly because paratextual elements—including interlinear notes and footnotes—are peripheral, which results in limited attention being given to their potential. Since reading notes reduces or interrupts reading rhythm, readers often ignore them. Discussions or surveys have rarely been conducted on the notes in the two Chinese versions.

3. Research questions

The aim of this article is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the general characteristics of the notes in the two Chinese Bible translations?

²For instance, in Latin renderings when a form of *dominus* appears for God’s name, it is graphically printed in red ink and capital letters. See Yarchin 2019.

2. What are the types and functions of the notes in both versions?
3. What can we infer from the notes about the translators' ideology?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research sample

In this article, the recently published CUV2009 and SBV2012 editions³ will be investigated in terms of their application of notes and footnotes. The corpora of translational notes under study are from the New Testament. As the New Testament comes from a distant land, many allusions, facts, and theological teachings are new to Chinese readers. Therefore, the New Testament of both versions contains different kinds of notes, providing historical, cultural, and linguistic information.

4.2 Classification of the corpus

According to Peter Newmark, there are three types of notes that a translator may wish to add to a translation: “cultural (accounting for difference between SL and TL culture), technical (relating to the topic) or linguistic (explaining wayward use of words), and [the choice] is dependent on the requirement of his . . . readership” (Newmark 1988, 91).

In terms of the cultural and ideological implications of the notes in the New Testament, the first type (A—cultural) pertains more to the source text and can be divided into two subclasses: (A₁) notes explaining source words and (A₂) notes explaining customs, rituals, people, and the dates of events. The second type (B—technical), concerning the source text as well, can be classified into two subclasses: (B₁) exegetical notes and (B₂) text-critical notes. The third type (C—linguistic) relates more to the relationship between original and receptor cultures and can be further categorized into three subclasses: (C₁) explanatory notes on Greek expressions, (C₂) notes of alternative renderings, and (C₃) intertextual notes. Examples of the note types in CUV2009 and SBV2012 are provided in Table 1.

³ The first edition of CUV, published in 1919, is unavailable to most readers today. Among Chinese Protestants, it was replaced by a revision with simplified Chinese characters. The version used in this study (CUV2009) was published in 2009 in Mainland China. Major changes in CUV2009 are the use of simplified Chinese characters, a modern punctuation system, and modern geographic terms, but it retains all the interlinear notes, wording, and style of CUV1919 and is more accessible for today's readers. The Catholic Bible in modern Chinese was published in 1968 by the Studium Biblicum headed by Gabriele Allegra. It is known as the Bethlehem Bible, Scotus Bible, or *Sigao Shengjing*. The edition used in this study was published in 2012 in simplified Chinese. Here we refer to it as SBV2012. These versions are authoritative in Protestant and Catholic churches, respectively, in Mainland China.

Table I. Notes in the New Testament in CUV2009 and SBV2012.⁴

Type	Characteristic	Examples in CUV2009	Examples in SBV2012
A ₁	Explanations of source words	“拉比”就是“夫子” “Rabi” is “Fuzi” (teacher). (Matt 23.7)	“辣彼”即师傅 “Rabi” is “teacher.” (Matt 23.7)
A ₂	Explanations of differences between SL and TL culture	— “弥拿”约银十两 1 <i>mina</i> is about 10 <i>liangs</i> of silver. (Luke 19.13)	六十斯塔狄约十一公里 60 <i>stadia</i> are about 11 kilometres. (Luke 24.13)
B ₁	Exegetical notes	No notes.	保禄的行动是不断由圣神指导 Paul’s actions are constantly guided by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 20.22)
B ₂	Text-critical notes	有古卷只有55节首 句、56节末句 Some ancient scrolls only have the first half of Verse 55 and the second half of Verse 56. (Luke 9.55-56)	拉丁通行本作：“耶稣转过来 斥责他们说：你们不知道你们 有的是什么精神，人子不是来 毁灭人，而是来拯救人。” The Vulgate reads: “Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said, ‘You don’t know what kind of spirit you are of. The son of man does not come to destroy men, but to save them.’” (Luke 9.55-56)
C ₁	Explanations of Greek expressions	“爱我胜过爱”原文 作“恨” “To love me more than to love . . .”: The original means “hate.” (Luke 14.26)	“恼恨”即置诸次要地位 之意 “Dislike” connotes demotion. (Luke 14.26)
C ₂	Alternatives to the translated words	或作“使身量多加一 肘呢” Or translated as “can add to his stature one cubit.” (Luke 12.25)	此句亦可译作“使自己的身量 增加一肘呢” This sentence can also be translated as “can add to his own stature one cubit.” (Matt 6.27)
C ₃	Intertextual notes	“约翰”在马太福音 16章17节称“约拿” Matt 16.17 reads “Jonah” for “John.” (John 1.42)	No notes

⁴ The English translations of the notes in this article are produced by the author based on NIV.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 General characteristics

As shown in Table 2, there are 305 notes in CUV2009 and 1080 in SBV2012.⁵ Table 2 and Table 3 also show some interesting findings regarding the employment of notes in the two versions.

First, the most frequently used types of notes are alternative renderings (C_2) in CUV2009 and exegetical issues (B_1) in SBV2012. Close behind them in frequency are explanatory notes on Greek expressions (C_1) in CUV2009 and notes explaining customs, rituals, people, and the dates of events (A_2) in SBV2012.

Second, exegetical notes (B_1) are not used in CUV2009. As far as this type is concerned, CUV2009 stands in sharp contrast to SBV2012. Conversely, intertextual notes (C_3) are not used in SBV2012. Only marginally more frequent than types not used are intertextual notes (C_3) in CUV2009,⁶ notes on Greek expressions (C_1), and notes of alternative translations (C_2) in SBV2012.

Third, regarding Table 3, the books with the most notes are the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation in both of these versions. Next comes Hebrews, which also contains a large number of notes. But there are very few notes in 1 Thessalonians and 3 John of CUV2009 and in 2 John of SBV2012.⁷

5.2 Functions of the notes

Just as the exegetical notes interpret theological teachings, the other types of notes in both versions are also of great service to Chinese readers who are new to the Bible. To demonstrate the functions of the notes, examples are taken mainly from the Gospels, where representative notes occur. The exegetical notes in SBV2012 have a theological purpose and thus will not be examined.

Table 2. Distribution of types of notes.

	A_1	A_2	B_1	B_2	C_1	C_2	C_3	Total numbers
CUV2009	12 (3.93%)	6 (1.97%)	0 (0.00%)	69 (22.62%)	85 (27.87%)	128 (41.97%)	5 (1.64%)	305 (100%)
SBV2012	25 (2.31%)	40 (3.70%)	994 (92.04%)	11 (1.02%)	5 (0.46%)	5 (0.46%)	0 (0.00%)	1080 (100%)

⁵ The counting does not include cross-references in the two versions (287 in CUV2009 and 239 in SBV2012).

⁶ Intertextual notes in CUV2009 occur at Mark 13.26; John 1.42; 21.15; Acts 8.27; and Eph 3.1.

⁷ Second John of SBV2012 has one cross-reference.

Table 3. Comparison of types of notes by book.

Biblical Books		A ₁	A ₂	B ₁	B ₂	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	Total numbers
Matthew	CUV2009	5	1	0	13	9	10	0	38
	SBV2012	10	6	130	0	1	0	0	147
Mark	CUV2009	3	0	0	9	3	3	1	19
	SBV2012	3	7	37	3	0	1	0	51
Luke	CUV2009	0	2	0	16	5	15	0	38
	SBV2012	4	3	96	3	1	0	0	107
John	CUV2009	0	1	0	3	10	12	2	28
	SBV2012	0	6	88	0	0	2	0	96
Acts	CUV2009	1	0	0	9	6	21	1	38
	SBV2012	2	14	192	3	2	0	0	213
Romans	CUV2009	0	0	0	2	3	10	0	15
	SBV2012	0	1	44	0	0	0	0	45
1 Corinthians	CUV2009	0	0	0	2	5	4	0	11
	SBV2012	0	1	41	0	0	0	0	42
2 Corinthians	CUV2009	1	0	0	0	5	3	0	9
	SBV2012	1	0	35	0	0	0	0	36
Galatians	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4
	SBV2012	1	0	24	1	0	0	0	26
Ephesians	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	4	4	1	10
	SBV2012	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	17
Philippians	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
	SBV2012	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	14
Colossians	CUV2009	0	0	0	2	3	3	0	8
	SBV2012	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
1 Thessalonians	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	SBV2012	0	0	11	0	1	0	0	12
2 Thessalonians	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
	SBV2012	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
1 Timothy	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
	SBV2012	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	24
2 Timothy	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
	SBV2012	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	18
Titus	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
	SBV2012	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	10

Table 3. (Continued)

Biblical Books		A ₁	A ₂	B ₁	B ₂	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	Total numbers
Philemon	CUV2009	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
	SBV2012	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Hebrews	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	10	9	0	20
	SBV2012	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	44
James	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	SBV2012	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	25
1 Peter	CUV2009	0	0	0	2	4	5	0	11
	SBV2012	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	20
2 Peter	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
	SBV2012	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	11
1 John	CUV2009	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	6
	SBV2012	0	1	23	1	0	1	0	26
2 John	CUV2009	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
	SBV2012	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
3 John	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	SBV2012	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Jude	CUV2009	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
	SBV2012	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Revelation	CUV2009	1	2	0	2	8	5	0	18
	SBV2012	4	1	56	0	1	0	0	62

(1) *To denote cultural difference.* In this study, cultural notes of type A₁ and A₂, accounting for 6.01% of the total notes in the New Testament of SBV2012 and 5.90% of those in CUV2009, provide information about Mediterranean cultures in the first century. Matthew 10.25 (type A₁) in both versions is an example (Table 4). The note in CUV2009 explains that “Beelzebul” is the name of the devils’ king, and SBV2012 tells readers that “Beelzebul” was originally the name of the Philistines’ god and later became that of the devils’ king. Both notes provide the meaning of Beelzebul, indicating that the word is from another culture.

Luke 24.13 in SBV2012 provides an example of type A₂ (Table 4). Here, to translate the Greek word σταδίους, SBV2012 uses the expression “斯塔狄” (stadia), which is between quotation marks to indicate that it is a transliteration. SBV2012 then explains this unfamiliar noun with a footnote. The note implies that the verse contains elements of a foreign culture and the translators present cross-cultural information for readers.

Table 4. Cultural notes (A_2) in Matt 10.25 and Luke 24.13.

Matt 10.25	CUV2009	SBV2012
Text	人既骂家主是别西卜，何况他的家人呢？ If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household!	若人们称家主为“贝耳则步”，对他的家人更该怎样呢？ If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call those of his household!
Note	“别西卜”是鬼王的名 Beelzebub is the name of the devils' king.	“贝耳则步”本为培肋舍特人神祇的名字，后转为魔王的称呼 Beelzebub was originally the name of the Philistines' god and later became that of the devils' king.
Luke 24.13		
Text	离耶路撒冷约有二十五里 about twenty-five <i>li</i> from Jerusalem	离耶路撒冷约六十“斯塔狄” about sixty <i>stadia</i> from Jerusalem
Note	No note	六十斯塔狄约十一公里 sixty <i>stadia</i> is about eleven kilometres

However, notes of type A_2 seldom occur in CUV2009, only six in total.⁸ That is partly because CUV2009 employs a domesticating method to interpret the ancient culture within the translation itself,⁹ with the exception of the six notes mentioned. In contrast, SBV2012 utilizes transliteration or other forms of foreignization to demonstrate respect for the ancient culture, and provides explanations in forty notes of this type.

(2) *To enrich the text.* It seems that notes of type C_2 are particularly significant in CUV2009, accounting for 41.97% of all notes, but in SBV2012, only five such notes are offered (0.46%). One important reason to use linguistic notes is to offer alternative translations of Greek expressions. This type of note is often used when the Greek has the potential for multiple meanings. A typical case is Luke 12.25 (Table 5), in which Jesus encourages his disciples to have faith in God. As the meaning of the Greek word ἡλικία in this verse is ambiguous, meaning either “stature” or “lifespan,” and πῆχυς is a unit of measure, the verse could be interpreted as “to add a cubit to his stature” or “. . . to his lifespan.” Leaving aside the question

⁸ These notes can be seen at Matt 17.24; Luke 16.6; 19.13; John 21.8; Rev 1.8; 16.21.

⁹ See Luke 15.8 in CUV2009 for the translation of a currency unit and Acts 27.28 for that of a measurement unit.

Table 5. Notes in Luke 12.25.

Luke 12.25	CUV2009	SBV2012
Text	使寿数多加一刻 add a quarter-hour to his lifespan	使自己的寿数增加一肘 add a cubit to his own lifespan
Note	或作“使身量多加一肘呢” Or translated as “can add to his stature one cubit.”	No note

of the choice of “quarter-hour,” CUV2009 tackles this translational issue by placing one interpretation, possibly according to the text of Westcott and Hort (1881), in the main text, and the other interpretation in a note. SBV2012 translates “lifespan,” as in CUV2009, yet without any linguistic note on an alternative translation.¹⁰ However, for some readers, notes of type C₂ in CUV2009 make it possible to understand the richness of the meaning of the verse.

(3) *To make adjustments from the source text for clarity.* Explanatory notes on the Greek wording (C₁), 85 in CUV2009 and 5 in SBV2012, often occur when the Greek expression is difficult to grasp. An example is Luke 14.26 in both versions (Table 6). Here, Jesus lists some requirements to be met as a Christian, indicating that Christians may face some challenges in life. The Greek word μισῆι means “to hate” or “to detest” someone. Both KJV and RV use the English word “hate.” However, the meaning of this literal translation seems to run counter to social ethics and the Christian teaching of “love your enemies” (Matt 5.44). Hence, CUV2009 avoids the literal meaning of μισῆι and offers a tactful translation, and SBV2012 is also more moderate in using “dislike” compared with “hate.” Both versions use notes to indicate the changes. Other typical examples can be found in Mark 13.8 of CUV2009 and Rev 2.27 of both versions.

In addition, some terms require more background knowledge of the ancient culture than many Chinese readers have. The Aramaic *māmōnā* “riches” (μαμωνᾶ in Greek) in Matt 6.24 is an example (Table 6). In CUV2009, the word is transliterated, and for the purpose of clarifying this novel term to Chinese readers, CUV2009 adds a note, providing a reference for its readers. This note, of course, also demonstrates that Matt 6.24 contains elements of a foreign culture.

(4) *To mark text-critical issues.* As this section concerns itself with the question of ancient scrolls and the source text, we must first clarify the base text that CUV, RV, KJV, and SBV used. The RV and KJV versions

¹⁰ This is perhaps because SBV2012 has an earlier note for the same expression in Matt 6.27.

Table 6. Explanatory notes on Greek expressions in Luke 14.26 and Matt 6.24.

Luke 14.26	CUV2009	SBV2012
Text	人到我这里来, 若不爱我胜过爱自己的父母... 就不能作我的门徒 If anyone comes to me yet does not love me more than his father and mother... he cannot be my disciple.	如果谁来就我, 而不恼恨自己的父亲、母亲... 不能做我的门徒 If anyone comes to me yet does not dislike his father and mother... he cannot be my disciple.
Note	“爱我胜过爱”原文作“恨” “To love me more than to love...”: the original text means “hate.”	“恼恨”即置诸次要地位之意 “Dislike” here connotes demotion.
Matt 6.24		
Text	你们不能又事奉神, 又事奉玛门 You cannot serve God and mammon together.	
Note	“玛门”是“财利”的意思 Mammon means riches.	

are mentioned because the Shanghai Missionary Society in 1890 specified that RV “should be made the basis of translations into Chinese... simply because it is a far closer approximation to the original text than is the Textus Receptus” (H. 1890, 368). At the same time, “it must be borne in mind that the Greek, not the English, is to be reproduced” (370). This issue was again discussed in 1891, in a letter which argues “that the text that underlies the Revised English Versions of the Old and New Testaments be made the basis, with the privilege of any deviations in accordance with the Authorized Version” (Moule 1891, 6).

The base text that RV used was Westcott and Hort (1881), whereas KJV used the Textus Receptus. Thus, CUV used Westcott and Hort (1881) as its source text. However, as the BFBS gave priority to the Textus Receptus, the CUV translators could also follow the Textus Receptus (Mak 2010, 183). As far as SBV2012 is concerned, it took the *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine* edited by Augustinus Merk (1992 and earlier editions) as source text. But Gabriele Allegra, who carried out the first translation of the Chinese Catholic Bible, also took the Vulgate as “a possible option” and “this would have been possible only if the Hebrew or Greek texts were wanting” (de Gruttola 2018, 22), thus using the Vulgate as a supplement to the *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*.¹¹

¹¹ The Latin of Merk’s edition is Old Latin, although some Vulgate manuscripts were included in the critical apparatus (Elliott 1984, 243).

Table 7. Text-critical notes in Luke 9.55-56

Luke 9.55-56	CUV2009	SBV2012
Note	有古卷只有55节首句、56节末句。 Some ancient scrolls only have the first half of verse 55 and the second half of verse 56.	拉丁通行本作：“耶稣转过来斥责他们说：你们不知道你们有的是什么精神，人子不是来毁灭人，而是来拯救人。” The Vulgate reads: “Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said, ‘You don’t know what manner of spirit you are of. The son of man does not come to destroy men, but to save them.’”

Luke 9.55-56 (Table 7) varies in different Bible versions. KJV, following the Textus Receptus, reads, “but he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.” This corresponds to CUV2009. We can call this the long version. In UBS5, Luke 9.55-56 reads, *στροφείς δὲ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς ἑτέραν κώμην*. RV, following Westcott and Hort (1881), likewise reads, “but he turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village.” SBV2012 follows this text, omitting the second half of 9.55 and the first half of 9.56. We can call this the short version.

The translators of both versions added notes here. CUV selects the long version and mentions the omission “in some ancient scrolls” with an inter-linear note. That is undoubtedly because, although CUV generally follows Westcott and Hort, which has the short version of Luke 9.55-56, it also refers to the Textus Receptus and KJV. The Textus Receptus was supported by the BFBS when CUV was first translated, while KJV was *the Bible* for most English readers (Mak 2010, 182). In contrast, SBV2012 adopts the short version, but adds a footnote referring to the Vulgate, which also contains the long version of this verse in its major editions.¹² This is partly because “another key element was loyalty to the Catholic doctrine, with the commentaries necessarily delineating the voice of the Church” (de Gruttola 2018, 24). So, it seems that both versions took the text-critical issue into account.

(5) *To help readers understand the text.* This is exemplified by CUV2009’s five intertextual notes (C₃) in Mark 13.26; John 1.42; 21.15; Acts 8.27; and Eph 3.1. Intertextual notes point to connections among different biblical

¹² As far as the *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine* is concerned, neither Eberhard Nestle’s 1923 edition nor Merk’s 1992 edition (a total of 11 editions were published from 1933 to 1992; only the 1992 edition was accessible to me) adopted the short version of Luke 9.55-56 for the Latin. However, Jerome’s Vulgate does adopt the short version.

Table 8. Intertextual notes in Mark 13.26 and John 1.42.

Mark CUV2009
13.26

Text 他们要看见人子有大能力、大荣耀，驾云降临
They will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Note (他们指) 马太24章30节作 “地上的万族”
“all the tribes of the earth” in Matt 24.30.

John
1.42

Text 你是约翰的儿子西门
You are Simon the son of John.

Note “约翰” 在马太福音16章17节称 “约拿”
Matt 16.17 reads “Jonah” for “John.”

books, helping readers understand one text in the light of related texts. For instance, the note in Mark 13.26 indicates that “they” in this verse refers to “all the tribes of the earth” in Matt 24.30, and the note in John 1.42 shows the connection between the “John” of John 1.42 and “Jonah” of Matt 16.17 (Table 8).

5.3 Ideological implications

Clearly, notes in Bible translations are not insignificant elements, and their contents often betray ideological tendencies.

First of all, why does CUV2009 not use exegetical notes as SBV2012 does? It is perhaps because the CUV translation project was patronized by three Bible Societies¹³ that followed the principle of “without note or comment.” These Bible Societies were very cautious with notes and comments made by translators from different denominational backgrounds. If explanatory notes reflected any theological or doctrinal bias, such notes were rejected, for the sake of interdenominational unity (Mak 2017, 148). In addition, if notes that showed denominational bias were included, readers would probably tend to accept them uncritically. That means, if the Bible they read is not translated according to the “without note or comment” principle, then they are deprived of their right to interpret the Bible for themselves. But this principle was also criticized for hindering Bible dissemination in China, because it left so many foreign concepts unexplained; hence, the BFBS allowed short notes on geographical, ethnic, and philological expressions (Mak 2017, 147).

¹³ They were the BFBS, the American Bible Society (ABS), and the National Bible Society of Scotland (NBSS).

The prevalence of detailed exegetical notes in SBV2012 shows the will of Allegra and his team to follow the Catholic tradition and to provide readers with a better understanding of the biblical text. As Allegra puts it,

It was also our intention, in writing the commentaries, to follow the principles laid down by Pius XII in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, in which the Pope requires that the interpreter give the literal meaning of the Word of God . . . under the guidance of the Church's magisterium. . . . We used the best modern commentaries, Catholic and non-Catholic, in order to understand the meaning of the sacred text and to propose it in clear, concise language. (quoted in de Gruttola 2015, 14)

Although translators of both versions followed different principles in writing notes, both versions sincerely aimed at providing the most suitable help for their readers to help them interpret the Scriptures.

Second, the cultural notes of type A_2 reveal translators' attitudes toward cultural differences. Although both CUV and SBV2012 employed translation teams with similar qualities (all translators were foreign missionaries with a good knowledge of Chinese language and culture, and their collaborators were Chinese disciples or friars), the frequency of A_2 in the two versions displays the translators' different attitudes toward cultural mismatches. SBV2012 provides more cultural background, "detailed notes on words, names or events specifically belonging to the Judeo-Christian terminology" (de Gruttola 2018, 31–32). This terminology includes systems of measurement (e.g., 斯塔狄 "stadia" in Luke 24.13 and John 6.19) and currency (e.g., 米纳 "mina" in Luke 19.13). This approach recognizes that the text represents an exotic background from a distant land for Chinese readers.

The CUV translators seem to have had an inconsistent approach towards cultural differences. On the one hand, the CUV Bible offers six A_2 notes in places where the CUV translators were attempting to retain the foreignness of the expressions and at the same time provide readers with their cultural context. But the domesticating translation of, for example, the currency unit in Luke 15.8 and the measurement unit in Acts 27.28, on the other hand, removes cultural peculiarity in the New Testament, leaving readers with gaps in their perception of the Judeo-Christian world through the translation.

Third, translators' expectations with respect to their target readers are also revealed in the linguistic notes. CUV2009 has far more C_2 notes than SBV2012. In verses where C_2 notes occur, CUV2009 uses a translation that favours one choice and employs notes to indicate another possible translation. This approach "serve[s] to help the reader access the richness of the original, and through this, engage in the practice of dialoguing with the text" (Ni 2017, xii). Thus, CUV readers are expected to be relatively literate, devotional, and reflective Christians who have a good

understanding of the Bible which enables them to evaluate translators' notes. This assessment of the target readers, possibly due to the long translation history of the Protestant Bible, does, at the same time, make the CUV somewhat difficult for catechumens or non-believers to understand. SBV2012 seems to have a different target audience: "The single volume Bible published and circulated in 1968 was meant to reach every Chinese, even the non-Christians" (de Gruttola 2018, 31). Hence, there is limited room for "multiple choice" interpretations, and minimal vagueness, if any, left in the translation text for the readers. The translators of SBV2012 have sought to create a version in unambiguous language for their intended audience (de Gruttola 2015, 14).

In addition, according to *Skopostheorie* and the distribution of notes shown in Table 2, CUV2009 seems to be more a product of a target-culture oriented translation process, whereas SBV2012 is a source-culture oriented translation. Compared with SBV2012, CUV2009 employs more linguistic notes relating to the source text and dealing with terms and variants, which appeals more to Chinese literati. In the context of Bible translation in China, this depends to a large degree upon the CUV2009 readers' biblical and theological knowledge. Readers of translations that are target-culture oriented "are not supposed to be aware they are reading a translation" (Nord 2001, 52). On the other hand, exegetical notes in SBV2012, demonstrating the Catholic commentary tradition, which is different from the "without note or comment" principle followed by CUV2009, leave little leeway for readers to construe the meaning of the sacred text for themselves. Together with other paratextual elements, the exegetical notes make SBV2012 more like a very basic study Bible for beginners. This is confirmed in its preface:

We tried to minimize the introductions and notes in each biblical book. For those who wish to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Bible, we still recommend that they refer to the notes in the biblical books previously published by the Studium Biblicum. For those who have too much work and therefore do not have enough time, we consider the introductions, notes and various appendices and diagrams are sufficient for them to understand the main theme of the Bible.¹⁴

6. Conclusion

This article has examined the notes in the Protestant CUV2009 Bible and the Catholic SBV2012 Bible. The findings are summarized as follows:

¹⁴ The original Chinese text reads, 我们尽量缩埋了每卷的引言和注释。对于那些欲求圣经高深知识的读者, 我们仍建议, 请他们参考本学会以前出版的《圣经》各卷注释。对于那些工作繁重与事务缠身, 而没有充分时间的读者, 我们认为本书的引言、注释以及各种附录和图表, 已够他们了解《圣经》的主旨 (SBV2012, vi).

1. Notes in the New Testament of CUV2009 are far fewer than those of SBV2012; the most frequently used type of notes are the linguistic notes in CUV2009 and exegetical notes in SBV2012. This is perhaps because CUV translators followed the “without note or comment” principle to rule out doctrinally biased comments and thus gave more explanations of linguistic expressions rather than other types of notes, whereas SBV followed the Catholic tradition, giving more room to exegetical comments.
2. The notes provide Chinese Bible translations with more comprehensible information and help readers understand biblical cultures and translational variations.
3. Although both CUV2009 and SBV2012 aim to reach every Chinese person, the linguistic notes in CUV show that the CUV translators more likely included the Chinese literati among their intended audience. The large number of linguistic notes in CUV2009 helps readers to access the textual richness of the translation, but also assumes that readers have a good knowledge of the Bible.

These findings suggest that frequency of notes should depend on the source text and intended readers, and that the two versions offer different translation approaches. Although I have explored the issue of notes in depth, the findings are preliminary. Future research may focus on other paratextual elements in Chinese Bible versions.¹⁵

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Abbreviations

CUV	Chinese Union Version (1919, 2009)
GNB	Good News Bible (1976, 1994)
KJV	King James Version (1611)
NIV	New International Version (1978)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)
RV	Revised Version (1885)
SBV	<i>Sigao Shengjing</i> Chinese Bible (1968, 2012)
SL	Source language
TL	Target language
UBS5	UBS <i>Greek New Testament</i> , 5th ed. (2014)