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PANTELEIMON KULISH'S EPISTOLARY DISCOURSE AS A REFLECTION OF THE CULTURAL MISSION AND NATION-BUILDING POTENTIAL OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

The purpose of the work is to study the long-term translation into Ukrainian of the Bible by P. Kulish based on the material of epistolary sources. **The research methodology** is based on general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, which involved historical, systematic, typological and aesthetic methods, as well as methods of archival and source science heuristics, source science criticism of sources, their textual analysis and information reconstruction. **The scientific novelty** of the study. For the first time, two correspondences to the representative of the clergy Zakhary Kysilevich, which provide information about the translation into Ukrainian of the Bible by P. Kulish. This is an addition to the large array of already published correspondences, which in turn contribute to the multiplication of the writer's epistolary works. **Conclusions.** Kulish's letters proved the titanic intellectual capacity of the artist, which is worth only the translation activity – the translation of the works of European poets and writers, and most importantly – the translation of the Bible into the Ukrainian language. In general, the presented epistolary documents made it possible to reveal unknown and little-known facts of the translator's activity, and also supplemented the writer's biography, which is a valuable source for his own prosopographic portrait, focusing on the addressee's nation-building views and ideas. The considered epistles of P. Kulish recorded information for his addressees, which made it possible to follow the artist's long-term translation activity, in particular, to identify and analyse the peculiarities of the translation of the biblical text into Ukrainian.

Keywords: P. Kulish, Bible, translation studies, epistolary sources, Ukrainian culture, information resource.

Тимофєєва Катерина Олександрівна, доктор філософії, завідувач кафедри соціальної комунікації та аудіовізуального мистецтва Київського міжнародного університету; Гвоздецька Марія Андріївна, кандидат наук із соціальних комунікацій, старший викладач кафедри інформаційної діяльності та зв'язків з громадськістю Київського національного університету культури і мистецтв

Епістолярний дискурс Пантелеймона Куліша як відображення культурної місії та націєтворчого потенціалу перекладу Біблії

Мета роботи полягає у дослідженні епістолярної спадщини Пантелеймона Куліша, яка є важливим джерелом для розуміння його світоглядних позицій, культурницької діяльності та націєтворчих ідей. Листи письменника становлять не лише приватну комунікацію, а й особливий дискурсивний простір, у якому формуються та артикулюються концепції національної ідентичності, мови та культури. Особливе місце в цьому контексті займає переклад Біблії українською мовою, що постає як один із ключових аспектів (що базується на перекладознавчій діяльності) формування української культури зокрема та загалом в європейському середовищі. **Методологія дослідження** базується на загальнонаукових методах аналізу та синтезу, де були залучені культурологічний, історичний, системний, типологічний та естетичний, а також методи архівної та джерелознавчої евристики, джерелознавчої критики джерел, їх текстурального аналізу та реконструкції інформації. **Наукова новизна** дослідження. Переклад Біблії П.Кулішем, на матеріалі архівних джерел, вказує на культуротворчу місію письменника, що виходить далеко за межі суто філологічної чи релігійної діяльності і

постає як цілеспрямований акт національного самоствердження. У кореспонденціях П. Куліша виразно простежується його прагнення утвердити українську мову як повноцінний інструмент передавання сакральних текстів, які на підсвідомому рівні, за традицією, вважалися авторитетними джерелами. **Висновки.** Переклад Біблії виступає інструментом для формування національної свідомості, адже залучення широкого кола читачів до тексту Святого Письма на рідній мові сприяло глибшому розумінню духовної єдності та культурної самобутності українського народу. У цьому розумінні перекладацька діяльність П. Куліша є невід'ємним складником широкого процесу націєтворення, в якому мова виступає не лише засобом комунікації, а й носієм історичної пам'яті. Таким чином, аналіз архівних джерел дозволяє інтерпретувати переклад Біблії П. Кулішем як складний культуротворчий феномен, що формує та утверджує націєтворчі погляди та ідеї для українського народу.

Ключові слова: П. Куліш, епістолярій, архівні документи, Біблія, перекладознавство, українська культура, інформаційний ресурс.

The relevance of the research topic. The subject of the Bible is timeless, as is the subject of translating this sacred book, which raises numerous questions of both a religious and textual nature. But above all, the translation of the Bible into Ukrainian is proof that the Ukrainian language is unique and will endure through the ages, for as contemporary biblical scholars attest: "A people who have the Bible in their native language cannot be destroyed; the language into which the Bible is translated is immortal" [7]. The issue of translating the Bible into Ukrainian – and thus the issue of the Ukrainian language – has always been relevant since Ukraine's declaration of independence, and it became particularly acute in 2014 (the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war). In 2022, following the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of the sovereign and independent state of Ukraine, the language issue became decisive for the survival of the nation and the state. The year 2023 proved to be significant for the topic of Bible translation, as it marked the 120th anniversary of the complete publication of the Bible in Ukrainian, translated by Panteleimon Kulish, Ivan Puliui, and Ivan Nechui-Levytskyi. It is this translation of the Bible that has long been studied in academic circles using an interdisciplinary approach. The issues outlined above have been explored by more than one generation of scholars, including experts on Kulish.

Today, the topic of the Bible and its translation by P. Kulish takes on new significance in the postwar era of our country, as this sacred book serves as a source of inspiration for the Ukrainian people, who have been suffering from the violence and bloodshed of Russian invaders for the third consecutive year. The Ukrainian people have the opportunity to read the Bible in the Ukrainian language, enriching themselves spiritually and their cultural heritage, thanks to the tireless work of Panteleimon Kulish, an intellectual and artist who contributed to the development of Ukrainian culture.

Analysis of Research and Publications. The relevance of this topic is evidenced by a number of scholarly works on P. Kulish's translation of the Bible into Ukrainian. It is worth noting that most articles on this subject focus on philological and historical aspects. As for the linguistic aspect and linguistic-stylistic features, these were studied by T. Moroz [18–19], V. Krasiuk and S. Shcherbina [10], O. Dzer [6], L. Shevchenko [32], O. Lauta and S. Zahrebelna [11], O. Teterina [28], T. Holi-Oglou, A. Prokopets [4], and others. The historical context of this issue has been studied by V. Sarbei [24], O. Rokitskyi, N. Rokitska [23], M. Tymoshik [30–31], S. Kagamlik [9], and others.

Let us focus on studies in translation studies; in particular, V. Krasiuk and S. Shcherbina [10] assert that "Panteleimon Kulish ranks among the outstanding translators of world literature" [10, 93], "P. Kulish strengthens the Ukrainian translation process" [10, 93]. O. Lauta and S. Zahrebelna share this view: "P. Kulish was one of the first Ukrainian writers to see in translation a broad opportunity for the refinement of the Ukrainian literary language" [11, 41], adding that "Translation is just one manifestation of Kulish's dedication; the path to a comprehensive understanding of it lies in grasping his philosophy" [11, 41]. As the authors further note: Panteleimon Kulish was one of the few who clearly understood the immaturity of the need for Ukrainian translations, repeatedly raising this issue in his critical works, letters, and prefaces [11, 41].

T. Holi-Ohl and A. Prokopets share this view, noting that "P. Kulish's work as a translator marked the definitive establishment of Ukrainian translation, as well as a new phase in Ukrainian original literature, which attained the status of European literature" [4, 105–106].

The purpose of this article is to examine the long-term process, characteristics, and subtleties of P. Kulish's translation of the Bible into Ukrainian based on epistolary sources.

Presentation of the main material. By the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Ukrainian language had already established itself as the language of literature and science. This was facilitated by the works of outstanding poets, prose writers, playwrights, and humanities scholars such as Taras Shevchenko, Hryhorii Skovoroda, Ivan Kotliarevskiy, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko, and Yevhen Hrebinka. As the authors of "A Brief History of Bible Translations into the Ukrainian Language," M. Zhukaliuk and D. Stepovyk, assert, there is reason to believe that Shevchenko planned, either on his own or together with his friend Panteleimon Kulish, to translate the Bible into the Ukrainian literary language that had already taken shape by that time [7, 25]. Shevchenko's ten-year exile and his early death prevented the poet from realising that plan [7, 25]. This is confirmed by the free adaptations of ten of the Psalms of David found in the literary legacy of the author of "Kobzar" [7, 25].

Panteleimon Kulish succeeded in fulfilling the long-held dream of Ukrainians to have their own complete translation and publication of the Bible. The translation of the Bible into Ukrainian was a significant event in the history of Ukrainian culture. P. Kulish considered the translation of the Bible to be his life's work; he devoted more than thirty years to it, fulfilling the long-held dream of Ukrainians to have their own complete translation and edition of the Bible. The interpretation of the Bible in the Ukrainian language was a significant event in the history of our culture.

The idea to translate the Holy Scriptures first occurred to P. Kulish in the 1860s, while he was serving in the civil service in Warsaw. However, there is another account – the Bible translation was supposed to be a joint project with Taras Shevchenko [2, 5]. Kulish published his first translations – the Book of Job and the Psalter – in the literary journal *Pravda*. While in Venice, P. Kulish worked directly with the texts of the Holy Scriptures. Having embarked on such a serious undertaking, P. Kulish did not consult with the London Bible Society, which was already coordinating national translations of the Bible at that time. P. Kulish based his interpretation not on the original Ancient Greek text, but primarily on Church Slavonic and other non-original texts. The manuscript of the translation was submitted for review to the Serbian scholar – biblical scholar and linguist Fran Miklosich – who wrote a negative review and advised that future translations be carried out exclusively from the original language [7, 29].

To carry out his new project, P. Kulish moved to Vienna, which was at that time a major

center of European science and culture. In the local libraries and archives, he could find the necessary information in biblical studies, history, archaeology, linguistics, and translation theory. Now P. Kulish began translating the very first books of the Bible from ancient Hebrew. In a letter to O. Barvinskyi dated June 18, 1869, P. Kulish reflected philosophically, or even expressed his opinion with a slightly angry tone; perhaps this was due to a hopeless situation, or fatigue had set in from the painstaking work of translating the Bible and preparing it for print: "The General Agent of the London Bible Society will arrive in Lviv at the beginning of July. Then negotiations with him will begin. But it will take quite some time for the Society's experts to review the translation. And where are they? Who are they? By what standards will they judge? If this matter does not go smoothly, we will begin printing it ourselves, continuing on and on, until the end" [1, 156]. In 1869, a fully prepared version of the Pentateuch, "The Holy Scriptures, or the Entire Bible of the Old and New Testaments Translated into the Rusyn-Ukrainian Language. Part I. The Five Books of Moses." It was published in Lviv at the expense of the local Ukrainian newspaper "Pravda" [7, 29]. Today, the Mykhailo Kotsyubynsky Chernihiv Literary and Memorial Museum-Reserve (hereinafter – CLMMR) houses the aforementioned biblical materials, which, along with the correspondence of P. Kulish and O. Kulish, were transferred from the V. Tarnovsky Chernihiv Historical Museum.

P. Kulish devoted all his time to translating the Bible, which became his primary task; the writer and translator saw the meaning of his life in this process. In 1869, a 24-year-old Ukrainian from Galicia, I. Puliui, was enlisted to help translate the Bible. He had graduated from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Vienna, where he had studied Ancient Greek, Ancient Hebrew, and Latin. He had experience translating religious texts, having rendered the "Prayer Book" into Ukrainian [7, 29]. One cannot fail to note the foresight of P. Kulish, who, upon meeting I. Puliui, immediately assigned him a special role in his project for the benefit of the Ukrainian people.

In a letter to O. Barvinskyi dated March 27, 1870, expressing gratitude for the reader's book he had received – which had been compiled based on advice from P. Kulish – the sender wrote: "Thank you, my friend Alexander, for the 'Reader's Book.'" After reading your dear letter, I didn't even want to look at the reader, especially since I have no time: in three days the printing of the Gospel according to St. Matthew will be finished, and then the other evangelists will be

printed as separate booklets, then the entire New and Old Testaments – so there is a great deal of work” [1, 160]. This letter makes it possible to scientifically reconstruct the following historical event, as it preceded the process in which the Gospel of Matthew was first printed in the Ukrainian language in Vienna in 1871. Amid the genocide of the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire, P. Kulish published his early translations of individual biblical books anonymously, without indicating his name as the translator. That same year, 1871, the “Psalter” was published in Ukrainian in Lviv. The newly elected Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, Josyf Sembratovych, officially supported the translation of the Bible into Ukrainian – P. Kulish and I. Puliui seemed to have been given a new lease on life: subsequent parts of the New Testament were printed with the translators’ names listed. P. Kulish was convinced: a people who have the Bible in their native language cannot be destroyed; the language into which the Bible is translated is immortal.

During the four years (1869–1872) they spent in Vienna, P. Kulish and I. Puliui translated the New Testament from ancient Greek. In 1871, their joint work was published – the four Gospels as separate booklets: according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John (at Sommer’s printing house in Vienna) [17, 224]. At the same time, P. Kulish reproduced the books of the Old Testament. After completing the translation, P. Kulish decided to return to the Chernihiv region, to his farmstead in Motronivka. He brought with him a precious treasure – the Bible translation – planning to edit it in this quiet corner, preparing it for publication under the auspices of the London Bible Society. However, rural life and the large farm took up all his free time. The literary editing of the translation was postponed year after year, and with it, the publication of the Old Testament manuscript was pushed into the future. Nevertheless, P. Kulish never lost his inspiration or his desire to undertake a second translation of the Old Testament. He devoted the last 12 years of his life to this endeavor. The translator himself admits this in one of his letters to Hanna Barvinok: “I am devoting the remainder of my life to hard, thankless labor, yet dear to my soul and promising fruits in a future I will not live to see” [21, 218]. Overcoming various life difficulties and illnesses, “...it was very cold, so he translated the Bible while wearing gloves...” [14, sheet 1], P. Kulish translated most of the Old Testament for the second time. In a letter from 1893 to M. Shakhovsky, P. Kulish wrote about himself and his wife: “At present, the Bible, which I am

translating into the most original of all Slavic languages, brings harmony to our souls” [7, 279]. And yet, seven of the Bible’s thirty-nine books remained untranslated. In a telegram to N. Kobrynska, written on a postcard, the exact date is quite difficult to determine, as the postmarks range from September 18 to March 3 and October 24, 1895. P. Kulish clearly outlined his plans: “The Bible absorbs all my time. I don’t know when I’ll be able to take on another project, even though it’s on my mind” [16, sheet 2].

When translating the Bible into Ukrainian, P. Kulish drew on the French translations by Reiss and Vern and the German translations by Kauch. This is confirmed by P. Kulish’s archival documents, particularly telegrams, which the writer was very fond of using toward the end of his life so as not to waste time writing lengthy letters adhering to all the conventions and clichés of correspondence. As O. Kulish recalls in a letter to I. Shrag, in the final years of his life – and especially after the fire – while translating the Bible for the second time, P. Kulish preferred to communicate via telegram: brief and to the point, saving time for the Bible translation. Let us quote a passage from the letter: “One must write telegrams, as my wife did, so as not to burden the postal workers with unnecessary work” [12, sheet 2].

Here, for the first time, is a copy of a telegram sent by P. Kulish on June 20, 1895, from the village of Hannina Pustyn to Zakhar Kysilevych. At the Manuscript Institute of the V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the IM VNLU), we find telegrams and letters from P. Kulish to Zakhar Kysilevych. Kulish’s correspondent was a representative of the clergy, the rector and parish priest of the Kosharsko-Mykhailo-Anivsky parish, under whose jurisdiction fell the Church of the Resurrection in the village of Koshary and the Church of the Holy Trinity in the village of Mykhailo-Anivtsi, Konotop, Konotop County, as we learn from the list of parishes of the Chernihiv Diocese for 1876. The main topic of communication between the aforementioned correspondents is the translation of the Bible and everything related to this issue.

The writer informs his reader about the intricacies of translating the Bible; in particular, the works of such renowned European biblical scholars as Reiss, Edward-Wilhelm, and Kautz, Emil Friedrich served as models for P. Kulish, against which he checked his translation. The author refers to the six books of the Bible translated by P. Kulish as a “biblical Homeric epic,” comparing them to a vast body of material. P. Kulish seeks support and cooperation from the

recipient, as evidenced by the text of the telegram: "I am sending you a printed excerpt from the Government Gazette, with gratitude for your pastoral favor and blessing. It reached me on the day of my triumph over certain difficulties in my work. The first six books of the Bible, translated by me with the assistance of the blessed Holy Synod's translation committee, with support in ecclesiastical matters, etc. – finally studied by me following in the footsteps of the century-long laborer Reuss and his worthy successors in archaeological and linguistic research, a professor of theology in Halle, Leipzig, Bonn, Breslau, Basel, Bern, Zurich, and Geneva, under the moral responsibility of Kautzsch. These six books, comprising the biblical Homeric cycle (if I may use this expression, the eyes and hopes of later poetic enthusiasts, I hope, will be fulfilled, to the best of my ability, through the translation and study of further parts of the Bible, and I will only send them to press when I can say to myself sincerely: quid polui, feci. Pan'ko Khutorskyi.

In 1895, P. Kulish informed the British and Foreign Bible Society that he had prepared a new translation of the Old and New Testaments. After his death, the manuscript was acquired by the Chernihiv Regional Museum. Later, the manuscript was purchased by publishers for printing.

The renowned Ukrainian writer I. Nechui-Levytskyi – a theologian and graduate of the Kyiv Theological Academy – joined P. Kulish in this noble endeavor [8, 85]. I. Pulyui also did not stand idly by. They put aside all their daily affairs to complete P. Kulish's noble work, as I. Pulyui admits in a letter to Hanna Barvinok: "The editorial work is progressing slowly, though I devote all my free time – day and night, often until late at night – to this task. I have to read the manuscript, line by line, and compare it with two or three translations, and then correct and retranslate it" [8, 76]. Over the course of three years (1898–1901), I. Nechui-Levytskyi translated the First and Second Books of Chronicles, the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel, while I. Pulyui translated the Book of Psalms [7, 47]. By that time (1897), the New Testament had already been published in a single volume in Ukrainian in Vienna. The next step was to add the 39 books of the Old Testament and publish the complete Bible. O. Sliusarchuk oversaw the printing of the book; he also edited and proofread individual sections of the translation (O. Sliusarchuk (1838–1912) – a Ukrainian Catholic priest and a Galician church and community leader).

Soon came the "happy birthday" of Kulish's Bible, as it was immediately dubbed. With the

consent and support of the London Bible Society, the first Bible was published in 1903 at Adolf Holtzhausen's printing house in Vienna [7, 48]. The hardcover bore the inscription: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Translated by P. O. Kulish, I. S. Nechui-Levytskyi, and I. Pulyui. Vienna, 1903" [29, 123].

Y. Naklik believes that this edition of the Bible does not fully meet the requirements and objectives that P. Kulish had set for himself. The translator sought, first and foremost, to use the Bible to convey "the science of the native language" and "literacy," and only then "religion." However, with the intervention of I. Nechui-Levytskyi, I. Pulyui, and O. Sliusarchuk, the Bible lost its original concept. Taking into account the requirements of the Bible Society, the changes made affected P. Kulish's scholarly and artistic translation, transforming it into a more ecclesiastically canonical one [29, 284]. Researcher H. Stepanets tends to believe that O. Sliusarchuk, while proofreading the Ukrainian-language Bible (1903), significantly "adjusted" the language of P. Kulish and I. Nechui-Levytskyi in a Galician direction [17, 165]. In other words, Ukrainian scholars hold the view that the collective work on the Ukrainian-language translation of the Bible cannot meet the objectives and criteria that P. Kulish had set out to achieve. Yet despite all the circumstances, thanks to P. Kulish, Ukrainian culture has its own translation of the Bible.

P. Kulish undertook this translation not only for purely religious reasons, but also out of his conviction that world culture is the highest good in the world and that the Ukrainian people must have access to this universal culture. P. Kulish's translation of the Bible caused quite a stir among academic circles in Ukrainian society: some offered praise (Ivan Ohienko), while others subjected it to scathing criticism (I. Franko). For example, we have I. Franko's critical and subjective remarks in the scholarly study "Poem on the Creation of the World": "But I must note here with regret that Kulish's translation of the Holy Scriptures does not at all live up to the hopes placed in it by the late Kulish himself and by the general Ukrainian public" [31, 275]. The author of the article notes: "... Kulish not only had no knowledge whatsoever of Hebrew, in which there are ancient and important translations of those books, but he also had no proper command of either German or French, in which there are new scholarly translations and works on these books" [31, 275]. Contemporary researcher I. Devdiuk asserts that "while in exile in Tula, Kulish actively studied foreign languages: Italian, English,

German, and Spanish. By that time, he already had a good command of French. His success can be judged by the fact that in December 1848, the writer was reading the works of W. Scott in the original. In a letter to O. Bodianskyi, he wrote: "When I went abroad, I understood perhaps a hundredth of the words in a book, but now I read books freely, occasionally consulting a dictionary" [5, 11].

Yet despite all its shortcomings, P. Kulish's translation remains "a landmark not only in biblical studies, but also in Ukrainian literature and the Ukrainian language – the language as it was in the 19th century" [30, 24].

Conclusions. P. Kulish did not live to see the publication of the Bible in Ukrainian, but his intentions and his work were not in vain: we now have three complete Bibles – those by P. Kulish, I. Ohiienko, and I. Khomenko. The publication of the first complete Bible in Ukrainian is a significant historical event in the spiritual life of Ukraine, a true feat in the realm of the spiritual revival of the Ukrainian nation. Kulish was destined to be the first to translate the Bible into Ukrainian, and he began this sacred work during those brutal times when the Ukrainian language was banned (the infamous Valuyev and Ems Circulars), and now our historical cultural heritage is once again suffering from the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation. Fate decreed that he would be the first, and pioneers always have the hardest time blazing the trail.

The archival material presented here, which is held in libraries, archives, and research institutions (the Department of Manuscript Collections and Textual Studies at the T. H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Manuscript Institute of the V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, and the M. Kotsiubynskyi Literary and Memorial Museum-Reserve in Chernihiv) possesses significant informational value and provides insights that help trace the long-standing history of translation, particularly P. Kulish's translation of the Bible into Ukrainian. The presented corpus of the writer's correspondence made it possible to identify and analyse the peculiarities of the translation of the biblical text into Ukrainian, highlighting P. Kulish's indisputable contribution to the development of the Ukrainian language and enriching Ukrainian culture through the translation of biblical texts. The published epistolary documents recorded biographical information about the artist, serving as a valuable supplement to his own prosopographic portrait, highlighting the nation-building views and ideas of the writer, literary

scholar, linguist, critic, translator, educator, ethnographer, publisher, philosopher, and artist Panteleimon Kulish.

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