Languages of Islam and Christianity in Post-Soviet Russia: institutional discourses, community strategies and missionary rhetoric
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Chapter 8

Battle of the Books: Tatar Translations of the New Testament

This final chapter investigates three recent Tatar translations of the New Testament (NT). My focus here lies on lexical choices made by the various organizations involved in the translation process in order to accommodate Christian meanings in the Tatar language. As my analysis shows, two projects that aimed to translate the NT into literary Tatar drew on existing religious vocabulary; thus, Islamic terms were employed to signify "new", Christian concepts. The third project was conducted by the Kräshen community and therefore followed the strategies of imperial Orthodox brotherhoods, which introduced Russian loanwords into the Tatar text in order to avoid Islamic connotations. As a result, the translations reveal differing approaches to mission. The versions in literary Tatar aim to contextualize Christianity in the recipient culture and construct a Christian community that continues to identify itself as Tatar. The NT in Kräshen emphasizes the "non-Tatarness" of its target community and highlights the differences between Kräshens and Muslim Tatars; at the same time, the use of Russian terms implies closeness to the ROC discourse.

8.1 Introduction

In the 1980s, various organizations and groups that have decades, if not centuries of experience in translating Holy Scriptures received access to the Soviet religious market and began active missionary work among the country's population. The ROC – threatened by this growing influence of what it perceived as "non-traditional" Christian missions – attempted to limit the influence of foreign religious associations; the general hostility of the Moscow Patriarchate toward inter-denominational cooperation only increased in the immediate post-Soviet period, and it seriously damaged the relations between the ROC and non-Orthodox Christian denominations working in Russia.[1] At the same time, the Church could not ignore the fact that many evangelical movements had more means and manpower to conduct mission; these evangelical projects included costly translations of religious literature and the Bible into vernaculars, with the result that in the struggle for winning "new" souls, these movements were about to make the ROC look bleak. The Church endorsed legal measures to restrict the proliferation of "non-traditional" religious organizations and supported a strict limitation on foreign sponsorship.[2] However, some of the Bible translation projects received the green light from the Moscow Patriarchate to continue their activities in Russia, obviously in the expectation that quality translations from abroad might also benefit the cause of the ROC, which thereby admitted that it lacked the capacity to come up with its own translation projects.

In particular, the Patriarchate gave its blessing to translation projects by foreign evangelical religious communities, which prioritize missionary work among sizable ethnic groups. Ideally, these ethnic groups should never have been associated with Christianity before. The consent of the Patriarchate was thus given on the condition that the translations would not target the ROC's own flock; and moreover, that the ROC would not prioritize mission among non-Christians in Russia. The goal that these translation projects are said to pursue is to make the Bible available to everyone, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic and religious background.[3] This does not, however, rule out that the final product of these enterprises – the entire Bible or parts of it in

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[1] Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church*, p. 180.

[2] In July 2012, Russia's ruling party signed a bill that requires all NGOs receiving any sort of foreign funding to officially register as "foreign agents". Although the designation is not necessarily degrading in English and often simply understood as meaning lobbyists, the Russian term, *inostrannyi agent*, has the connotation of espionage or foreign infiltration; in Soviet times, it was the equivalent of 'spy'.

[3] Interview with Dr. Vitaly Voinov, director of the Institute for Bible Translation in Moscow. September 2015, Budapest, Hungary.

ethnic vernaculars – will also facilitate the efforts of Orthodox missionaries who aim to spread the word of God among Russia's non-Christian population.

Modern Bible translation practices across the world emphasize contextualization (sometimes referred to as "inculturation") of the Christian message. Contextualization is intended to enable the receptor community to understand the message of the Bible through their own culture and language, without excessive foreign influences. Unlike earlier practices, when missionaries uprooted local people from their indigenous cultures and transplanted them into an imported one, today the translation projects try to find a balance between correct transmission of the Christian message and respect toward the indigenous culture.[4] Thus, the religion that is promoted, for instance among Tatars, should be Tatar in form, but Christian in content. The translators' understanding of Tatar culture then involves "a selective rendering of national symbols and signs, with an obvious emphasis on the visual and oral culture through music, dance, and public displays", as Mathijs Pelkmans argued in the case of religious competition in Kyrgyzstan.[5] In addition, for many post-Soviet Tatars this approach is convenient, because it offers an easy transition from identities created in the Soviet period; both communists and evangelicals endorsed external manifestations of "national cultures", with a great emphasis on "dressing-styles, cuisine, handicraft, and folklore, while simultaneously advancing specific ideologies".[6]

This chapter examines three versions of the New Testament (NT) in Tatar that have been produced in the post-Soviet period. They are the outcome of projects by (1) the Moscow branch of the Institute for Bible Translation (*Institut Perevoda Biblii*, IBT), (2) the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, which produces the so-called New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (NWT) used by Jehovah's Witnesses, and finally (3) the Russian Bible Society (*Rossiiskoe Bibleiskoe Obshchestvo*, RBO). The IBT and the NWT versions have translated the NT into present-day literary Tatar, and the RBO into the language that the Kräshen community (examined in the previous chapter) promotes as its language.

The aim of this chapter is to identify major strategies of accommodating Christian concepts within an Islamic vernacular such as Tatar; in particular, I examine whether translation choices are consistent in all three versions of the NT. In cases where

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[4] See, e.g., J. Maxey, "Bible Translation as Contextualization: The Role of Orality," *Missiology* 38:2 (2010), 173-83.

[5] M. Pelkmans, "'Culture' as a tool and an obstacle: missionary encounters in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13:4 (2007), 881-99. Here p. 887; also E.J. Clay, "Orthodox Missionaries and 'Orthodox Heretics' in Russia, 1886-1917", in *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*, ed. R. Geraci and M. Khodarkovsky (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 38-69.

[6] Pelkmans, "'Culture' as a tool and an obstacle", p. 887.

translation choices differ, I attempt to answer the question of whether this variation is to be attributed to the denomination (that is, reflecting the particular interpretation of the NT as maintained by the given organization) or to the translation school (reflecting different approaches to translating the Bible that have nothing to do with theological issues).

Section 8.2 provides some background information on each of the three organizations involved in the translation work. Here I also briefly discuss some specificities of printed editions of the NT (book cover, page layouts and contents) that may also shed light on the translators' efforts to contextualize their work, that is, to adapt their translations to what they expect would appeal to their target communities. Section 8.3 embarks on a more detailed analysis of two major approaches to translation – dynamic and formal equivalence – and discusses the major challenges that arise when producing "Muslim-sensitive" Bible translations. In this section, I distinguish five broad categories of religious terms and analyse how these terms have been rendered in each Tatar edition of the NT. My main hypothesis is that the IBT and NWT versions in literary Tatar reuse the existing Islamic terminology to refer to Christian concepts and symbols. Thereby, the translators draw on the Tatar tradition of Qurʾān interpretation and Islamic theology for use in Christian communities (Section 8.4).

The RBO edition in Kräshen follows the pre-1917 approaches to familiarizing and enrooting Kräshens in Orthodox Christianity; these approaches place the message beyond contextualization, therefore Russian loanwords are used in place of Arab and Persian terminology, despite the risk of "foreignizing" the text through Russian loanwords.

In Section 8.5, I draw conclusions from the sociolinguistic analysis and examine the social context in which these translations circulate; in particular, I focus on the reception of the Tatar New Testaments in communities of evangelical Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses in Kazan.

8.2 Translation projects

8.2.1 The IBT project

The IBT was established in 1992 in Moscow as the Russian branch of the Swedish organization *Institutet för Bibelöversättning*.[7] Today it is an autonomous non-profit centre "for translating the Bible into the languages of non-Slavic peoples of Russia and of other

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[7] The Croatian scholar and writer Borislav Arapović (b. 1935) established the organization in Stockholm in 1973 and managed it until 1993.

former Soviet republics".[8] The IBT works in cooperation with the Russian Academy of Sciences and the ROC;[9] moreover, it has strong ties with the Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics and the United Bible Societies (UBS) – worldwide associations that coordinate efforts of translating the Bible into vernaculars.

The IBT officially started its project of translating the NT into Tatar in 1994. The team of translators has changed several times throughout the project; at various points, it included scholars from the Academy of Sciences, members of the Writers' Union of the Republic of Tatarstan and prominent Tatar journalists.[10]

The IBT presents itself as an organization that aims to make the Bible available in vernaculars; it sees the Scripture primarily as part of the world literary heritage, and only after that as a religious text. Thus, the IBT distances itself from any missionary movements but does not rule out the possibility that its publications will be used for proselytizing purposes.[11]

The hardcopy edition of the NT that the IBT published in 2001[12] has a green cover with ornamental press gilding; its pages are decorated with a florid frame, which makes the design and format of the book resemble traditional Tatar Qurʾān editions. Along with the NT books, the edition also contains a glossary and a list of earlier translations of the Bible into Tatar.[13] Every page has in its upper part the title of the respective book of the NT, a subtitle and the chapter and verse numbers; at the bottom of the page, the reader finds footnotes that are meant to facilitate the understanding of the text (see Figure 5).

The IBT version became the first Tatar edition of the NT published in the post-Soviet period, at a time when no other version was yet in circulation. The ROC officially endorsed the IBT project. As a result, the translation quickly spread among

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[8] IBT, "O nas", *The official website of the IBT*, 2017 <https://ibt.org.ru/ru/about > (Accessed on 2 August 2017).

[9] The *Institutet för Bibelöversättning* has a history of relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, which started as long ago as 1961 through the ecumenical movement. In the 1980s, the Swedish institute raised money and published a three-volume work of critical commentary on the Bible by Aleksandr Lopukhin (1852-1904) – the so-called "Lopukhin Bible" – and in 1988 supplied 150,000 copies free of charge to the Orthodox Patriarchate. See J. Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 14-15.

[10] See A. Akhunov, "'Bozhestvennye otkroveniia' iz riukzaka", *Vostochnyi ekspress (№ 38)*, 14 December 2002 <http://jesuschrist.ru/forum/48086> (Accessed on 18 July 2018).

[11] The interview with V.Voinov.

[12] IBT, *Injil. Novyi Zavet na tatarskom iazyke*. In 2015, the IBT also completed translations of the Old Testament and Psalms; these were published together with a revised version of the NT as *Izge Yazma* (Moscow: Institut Perevoda Biblii, 2015).

[13] IBT, *Injil*, p.551.

communities of Kräshens and non-Orthodox Christian Tatars and became a groundwork for later translations.

8.2.2 The NWT project

A strong resemblance to the IBT version can be seen in the New World Translation (NWT) in Tatar, which was designed for Tatar-speaking communities of Jehovah's Witnesses. The reading of the NT in these communities is based on the English version of the NWT, first published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1950.[14] The NWT version in Tatar was published in Germany in 2013 under the auspices of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.[15] In addition to the traditional indication of the respective NT books, the NWT edition contains a foreword, an explanation of the features of this edition, a glossary of terms, an index, and appendices with tables and maps of ancient Palestine. There is also a list of topics "for conversation based on the Scriptures", which provides links to quotes from the NT books that can be used for missionary purposes. The book follows the international Bible layout standards: the text is divided into two columns, with footnotes at the bottom of the page. The first arrival of Jehovah's Witnesses in Tsarist Russia goes back to 1891, when Charles Taze Russell, one of the founders of the movement, visited Kishinev (today Chișinău in the Republic of Moldova) during his tour across Europe. It is reported that Russell expressed his strong disappointment in the visit, as he saw "no opening or readiness for the truth in Russia".[16] In the wake of the 1905 Revolution, when the Russian state granted toleration to religious minorities, the Jehovah's Witnesses received an official registration.[17] The onset of the First World War and the subsequent 1917 October Revolution, however, made it impossible for the Jehovah's Witnesses to establish any serious presence in the country. In the Soviet Union, they again had little success gaining a foothold: by 1946, the total number of their members officially amounted to only 4,797 people.[18]

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[14] JW, "The Divine Name in the Christian Greek Scriptures", *JW.org*, 2018 <www.jw.org/en/publica-tions/bible/study-bible/appendix-a/divine-name-christian-greek-scriptures/> (Accessed on 30 January 2018).

[15] NWT, *Injil. Yanga dönya tärjemäse*. In May 2018 the NWT translation was included in Russia's Federal List of Extremist Materials.

[16] Quoted in E.B. Baran, "Contested Victims: Jehovah's Witnesses and the Russian Orthodox Church, 1990 – 2004," *Religion, State and Society* 35:3 (2007), 261-78. Here p. 262.

[17] N.S. Gordienko, *Rossiiskie Svideteli Iegovy: Istoriia i Sovremennost'* (St. Petersburg: Limbus Press, 2000), pp. 223-24.

[18] Baran, "Contested Victims", p. 263; also E.B. Baran, *Dissent on the Margins: How Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses Defied Communism and Lived to Preach about It* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

With the exception of the early 1990s, the Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia have been limited in their right to practise religion. In recent years, a veritable public campaign has been launched against them, with a ban of five communities in 2016. By the beginning of 2017, the Russian Supreme Court placed the religious movement on the Federal Register of Banned Organizations.[19]

ЛҮК БӘЯН ИТКӘН ЯХШЫ ХӘБӘР

1 [1-2] Мөхтәрәм Тәүфил!
Күпләр безнең арабызда булып үткән вакыйгалар турында язарга алындылар. Алар ул вакыйгаларны баштан ук үз күзләре белән күрүче Сүз хезмәтчеләре булган кешеләр безгә хәбәр иткәнчә яздылар. [3-4] Шулай итеп мин дә, хөрмәтле Тәүфил, башыннан ук барысын да җентекләп тикшергәннән соң, Сез үзгезгә өйрәтелгәннәрнең дөреслеген белсен өчен, Сезгә вакыйгаларның барышын эзлекле рәвештә язарга дигән фикергә килдем.

Яхъяның туачагы алдан әйтелә

[5] Яһудиядә* Һируд патша заманында Абия нәселеннән булган руханилар төркеменнән Зәкәрия атлы бер рухани яшәгән. Аның хатыны Элисабет тә руханилар нәселеннән булган. [6] Алар икесе дә, Раббының әмерләрен һәм Ул кушканнарны төгәл үтәп, Аллаһы алдында тәкъва булганнар. [7] Элисабет бала уза алмаганлыктан, аларның балалары булмаган. Алар икесе дә инде олы яшьтә булган.
[8] Үз төркеменең Аллаһы Йортында хезмәт итү вакыты килеп җиткәч, Зәкәрия Аллаһы алдында рухани хезмәтен башкарды. [9] Руханилар арасындагы гадәт буенча җирәбә салдылар, һәм Аллаһы Йортына кереп, хуш исле сумала белән төтәсләү йоласын үтәү Зәкәриягә туры килде. [10] Ул Аллаһы Йортында хуш исле сумала белән төтәсләгәндә тышкы яктагы бар халык дога кылып торды. [11] Шул вакыт Зәкәрия алдында, хуш исле сумала яна торган урынның уң ягында, Раббының фәрештәсе пәйда булды. [12] Фәрештәне күреп, Зәкәрия каушап калды һәм бик курыкты. [13] Фәрештә исә аңа:

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* [1:5] *Яһудия* — монда бөтен Фалыстын җиренә карый. 4:44, 6:17, 7:17 һәм 23:5 нче аятьләрдә дә бу сүзнең мәгънәсе хәзер күрсәтелгәнчә.
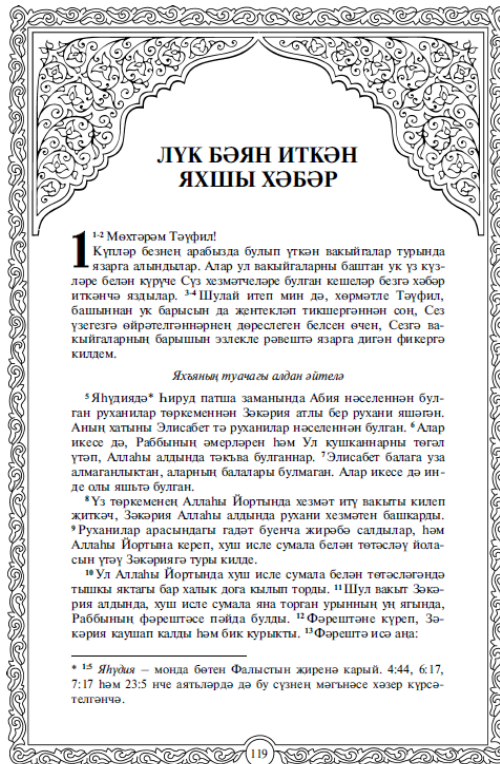
Figure 5. Page layout of the IBT version of the NT

Against the background of this persistent social and legal pressure on the Jehovah's Witnesses, it was a challenge to get in touch with members of the translation group that worked on the Tatar NWT version of the NT. The community members who kindly agreed to give me an interview were either not aware of information about the translation process or, understandably, preferred not to share this information with me; they did not disclose names of translators who participated in the process. The scarce

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[19] The Moscow Times, "Russia Calls for National Ban on Jehovah's Witnesses", *The Moscow Times*, 17 March 2017 <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russian-justice-ministry-calls-for-country-wide-ban-on-jehovahs-witnesses-57458> (Accessed on 2 August 2017).

data that were available on the Internet or that I received through interviews suggest that the NWT translation group followed similar methods in the translation process as the IBT team (see Section 8.3). Taking into account that in Tatarstan there are just a few Tatar language experts who are also knowledgeable in the Christian Holy Scriptures and who are willing to engage in translation work for Christian movements, it cannot be ruled out that some translators and/or consultants contributed to both the IBT and NWT projects.

8.2.3 The RBO translation

The third translation of the NT was accomplished under the auspices of the Russian Bible Society (RBO). The RBO is a successor of the organization with the same name, which was founded in 1813 by British evangelical organizations, back then with financial support from the emperor Alexander I. The activities of the Society were repeatedly halted by the reactionary policies of the Russian government, and after the 1917 October Revolution, it officially ceased to exist. The RBO was re-launched in 1990 through the efforts of two prominent liberal Orthodox clergymen, Alexander Men' and Sergei Averintsev (see also Section 2.3.3), with substantial funding and technical support provided by the American and the United Bible Societies.[20]

The primary goal of the RBO project was to revise and complete the translations for the community of Kräshens that Nikolai Il'minskii and his colleagues had started in the 1860s (see Chapter 7); the four Gospels and the Book of Psalms were first published in Kazan in 1891, followed by the Acts in 1907.[21] Since 1998, the re-established RBO has cooperated with the Kräshen community in Tatarstan and curated the work of the translation team. Archpriest Pavel Pavlov (b. 1957) at the Tikhvin Church in Kazan headed the team and recruited translators from parishioners and the Kräshen clergy.[22] The new Kräshen NT was finished in 2005;[23] in the Kräshen communities, it replaced the IBT translation that had been distributed there before. The Kräshen clergy refused to use the IBT NT in the literary Tatar language, arguing that the text was

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[20] A. Filippov, "Budet li sozdan 'Patriarshii perevod Biblii'?", *Expert Online*, 31 January 2014 <http://expert.ru/2014/05/18/budet-li-sozdan-patriarshij-perevod-biblii/> (Accessed on 30 January 2018); also M. Elliott and A. Deyneka, "Protestant Missionaries in the Former Soviet Union", in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New Wars for Souls*, ed. J. Witte and M. Bordeaux (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), 197-220. Here p. 217.

[21] RBO, "Perevod Biblii na kriashenskii iazyk", *RBO*, 2017 <http://rbo.spb.ru/perevod-biblii-na-kryashenskiy-yazyik> (Accessed on 2 August 2017).

[22] Ibid.

[23] *Zhanga Zakon". Novyi Zavet na kriashenskom iazyke* (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskoe Bibleiskoe Obshchestvo, 2005).

incomprehensible to many Kräshens; they had also argued that the IBT edition could not be used in religious rituals as it contained too many Islamic terms that corrupted the Christian message. [24]
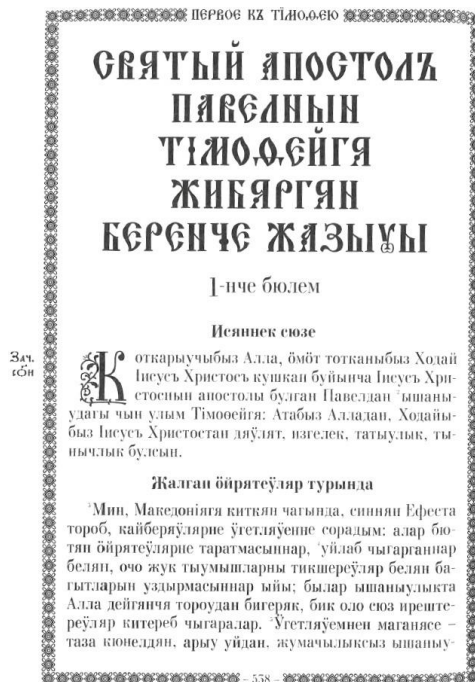

Figure 6. Page layout of the RBO version

In this chapter, I will analyse an anniversary edition of the RBO translation published in 2012 on the 190th birthday of Nikolai Il'minskii.[25] This text preserves the pre-revolutionary Kräshen orthography. Il'minskii had developed a Kräshen alphabet based on Cyrillic, with four additional letters to represent the Tatar sound system (as opposed to six additional symbols in the Tatar Cyrillic alphabet that was later ordained by the state, in 1938, and that is still in use today). Proper names in the RBO version also follow the pre-revolutionary orthography, with 'Jesus' being spelled as *Іисусъ* (instead of the contemporary standard Russian spelling *Иисус*), 'Matthew' as *Матѳей* (instead of *Матфей*), and 'Gabriel' as *Гавріилъ* (instead of *Гавриил*). By following the old spelling (including graphemes that were abandoned by the Bolsheviks), the RBO version is distinct from the other two translation projects studied in this chapter. Other prominent

[24] Ia. Amelina, "Poka zhivy traditsii i samosoznanie, kriasheny ne ischeznut", Interfax-Religiia, 27 August 2010 <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=interview&div=286> (Accessed on 22 February 2018).
[25] RBO, "Perevod Biblii na kriashenskii iazyk".

features are the larger format (A4) of the 2012 edition, and a red hard cover with the Russian cross symbol on it; the latter element immediately signals its closeness to the Orthodox Christian tradition, not to the Qurʾān. The inner pages contain a small decorative frame; each page shows the name of the Holy Scripture (in Church Slavonic), footnotes and page numbers. In the margins, there are also pericopes written in Church Slavonic (see Figure 6).

8.3 Translation strategies

In practical terms, all three translation teams worked according to the UBS organizational framework for translation projects: each team had at least one translator (a native speaker of the target language, Tatar or Kräshen), one or more translation consultants who provided guidance on theological, stylistic and linguistic aspects of the translation, and a project coordinator. From a methodological point of view, the translations differ in their translation strategies. The NT translations in literary Tatar (of the IBT and the NWT) rely on the techniques of dynamic equivalence, whereas the RBO version draws on formal equivalence. Dynamic equivalence means that the Bible is translated thought-for-thought, rather than word-for-word; it places emphasis on embedding the text in the recipient culture. In contrast, formal equivalence aims to remain as close to the form of the original text as possible. [26]

The strategies of dynamic equivalence, used in the IBT and NWT versions, thus emphasize what I defined above as "contextualization", namely enrooting the Gospels within Tatar culture. In the past decades, several Bible translation organizations have consciously attempted to design "Muslim-friendly", "Muslim-compliant" or "Muslim-sensitive" versions of the Bible, specifically for missionary work among Muslim-majority communities.[27] One of the key and most disputed features of these versions is

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[26] See E.A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964); E.A. Nida and C.R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969). For a detailed analysis and critique of both approaches, see A.O. Mojola and E. Wendland, "Scripture Translation in the Era of Translation Studies", in *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference*, ed. T. Wilt (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2003), 1-25.

[27] For Muslims of the former Soviet space who speak Russian better than their native tongue, there is also the so-called "Central Asian" Bible in Russian (Central Asian Russian Scriptures, CARS). The version resembles the standard Russian Bible, but Christian names and terms have been replaced with Turkic or Arabic equivalents: thus, even the Russian word *Bibliia* 'Bible' is rendered using the Arabic loanword *Indzhil* (Injīl 'Gospel or New Testament'), while *Isus Khristos* is referred to as *Isa* or *Isa Masikh* (ʿĪsā Masīḥ 'Jesus the Saviour'). These innovations are supposed to reduce associations with Russianness and, as Mathijs Pelkmans argues, offer new means for Christians in predominantly Muslim regions to "speak in public about religious affairs without revealing their [Christian] religious affiliation". See Pelkmans, "'Culture' as a tool and an obstacle", p. 886.

that translations seek to avoid "problematic" terminology when it comes to explaining the relationship between God and Jesus, such as "Son of God" and "God the Father". Such expressions are treated with caution, as they might antagonize Muslim readers who interpret them as confirming a biological kinship between the Supreme Being and His prophet; moreover, the concept of Trinity requires complex explanations, which can easily be attacked from the simple Muslim position that emphasizes monotheism. Attempts to replace or avoid such terminology have drawn harsh criticism from many Christian theologians, who argue that Muslim-sensitive Bible versions compromise the very content of the Holy Scriptures "for theological or missiological reasons or to be more compliant with Islamic teaching".[28]

The Tatar IBT and NWT versions translate the controversial concepts verbatim, but also provide an explanation in the Glossary. For example, the NWT gives the following definition of the expression 'Son of God':

> "The phrase predominantly refers to Jesus Messiah. It has a figurative meaning, because God Creator does not need a woman to create living things. In regard to Jesus this phrase means that God himself created him, and Jesus has some divine features and close relations with God".[29]

Another feature of dynamic equivalence is that to reach out to their target audiences more effectively, translators use available "indigenous" cultural symbols, lexical expressions and religious terminology and limit the presence of any elements that may appear "foreign". Obviously, the IBT and NWT editors classified the Russian language and symbols associated with the Orthodox Church as "foreign" elements that it would be better to avoid.

The curious result of this perspective is that Arabic terminology (and the Arab-Muslim heritage associated with the Arabic language) are perceived as "own", or at least as "familiar" to the carriers of Tatar culture to whom the text is intended to appeal; this makes Arabic-origin Tatar terminology safe to employ.[30]

In contrast to the literary Tatar versions of the NT, the RBO team follows the formal equivalence strategy, which translates the Bible word-for-word and structure-for-structure wherever possible. The RBO translation is more idiomatic and follows

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[28] R. Brown et al., "Muslim-idiom Bible Translations: Claims and Facts," *St. Francis Magazine* 5:6 (2009), 87-105. Here p. 91.

[29] JW, "Izge Yazmalar terminnarï süzlege", *The official website of the JWs*, 2017 <www.jw.org/tt/бас-малар/изге-язмалар/nwt/изге-язмалар-терминнары-сүзлеге/> (Accessed on 2 August 2017).

[30] Similar ideologies can also be found in online communication practices of Tatar youth, see F. Karimzad and G. Sibgatullina, "Replacing 'Them' with 'Us': Language Ideologies and Practices of 'Purification' on Facebook," *International Multilingual Research Journal* 12:2 (2018), 124-39.

strategies set by Orthodox missionaries in imperial Russia, who included words from their native Russian language to avoid using Tatar religious terminology "contaminated" by Islam.

What we observe is that the influence of Islamic culture on Tatar language and culture has been immense, which has resulted in a prevalence of Islamic connotations in all domains of religious vocabulary; this obviously poses a significant challenge for translators who intend to introduce the literary heritage of another, Christian faith into Tatar. The Arabic language and Islamic terminology are intrinsically intertwined, and often an Islamic term may be the most natural equivalent of a Biblical term. Yet the translators have to make choices between using the "indigenous" religious vocabulary or purposefully avoiding it, between coining new terms and collocations or borrowing from other languages with which Tatar has been in contact and which were used in Christian contexts. These different approaches to translation have resulted in a significant variation in how religious terminology is translated in the three versions of the NT in Tatar. In the following sections I distinguish five broad categories of terms to discuss this variation.

The first category comprises common references to God, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are key religious concepts of Christianity and therefore a natural gateway for tracing differences in the translations of the NT across denominations. The second category looks at Tatar religious terms that have been reused in the Christian text with no lexical changes; this approach we find only in the IBT and the NWT translations. The third category examines how translators find their way around Tatar religious terms that do indeed refer to Christian symbols and rituals, but often have pejorative connotations in the colloquial language. The translation of proper names constitutes the fourth group; and finally, the fifth category looks at the instances where translators have used Russian religious terms, which we find predominantly in the RBO version.

8.3.1 References to God, the Son and the Holy Spirit

As a rule, Bible translators working for a majority Muslim community use the word for the Supreme Being employed by the people of that community themselves. When translating 'God' into Tatar, one can choose between Arabic *Alla(h)*, Persian *Xoda(y)*, or Turkic *Tengri;* the latter is not found in any of the translations, probably

because of its connotation of paganism.[31] The first variant, *Alla(h)*, is used to translate the Greek word *theos* and refers to the Essential name of God;[32] therefore all three translations employ it (see below, Table 2, Example 1.1). However, the term is generally not employed to translate the Tetragrammaton YHWH; in addition, the English Standard Version gives another term besides 'God', namely 'Lord' (Lk 1:16). The IBT translation uses the word *Rabbï* (Arabic *rabbī*, 'my lord'), whereas the NWT version, following the Jehovah's Witnesses' emphasis on using God's actual name,[33] introduces the word *Yähvä*. The RBO version employs the term *Xoday*, which is linked to the Persian word for 'Lord' *khodā* (Example 1.1).

Ex.	ESV	IBT	NWT	RBO
1.1	And he will turn many of the children of Israel to **the Lord their God** (Lk 1:16)	Ul İsrail balalarïnïng kübesen **Rabbïga**, alarnïng üz **Allahïsïna** kire kaytarïr	İsrail balalarïnïng kübesen **Yähvägä**, alarnïng üz **Allahïsïna** kire kaytarïr	İzrail' ullarïnïn kyubesen **Xoday Allalarïna** qaytarïr.
1.2.	**Lord of heaven and earth** (Mt 11:25)	kükneng häm jirneng Xujasï	kükneng häm jirneng Xujasï	kyuknen, jirnen Xodayï
1.3	**Lord**, my servant lying paralysed (Mt 8:6)	Äfände	Äfände	Xoday
1.4	If you are **the Son of God** (Mt 4:3)	Allāhï Ulï	Allāhï Ulï	Alla Ulï
1.5	I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit**. (Mk 1:8)	İzge Rukh	izge rukh	Svatïy tïn

Table 2. References to God, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Looking at Examples 1.1-1.3 below, we observe that the RBO translation does not distinguish between the name of God (Mt 11:25) and the honorific title of Jesus (Mt 8:6); for both concepts, translators have used the word *Xoday*. The IBT and NWT versions use the Persian word *Xuja*, meaning 'lord, master', to refer to God in the context of Him being the master over the earth and heaven (Example 1.2), whereas Turkic *Äfände* is used when people address Jesus before his Resurrection (Example 1.3); historically, *äfande* is a polite and neutral way of addressing a higher-standing man in Tatar, which can also be used in non-religious settings.

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[31] See M. Laruelle, "Religious Revival, Nationalism and the 'Invention of Tradition': Political Tengrism in Central Asia and Tatarstan," *Central Asian Survey* 26:2 (2007), 203-16.

[32] K.J. Thomas, "Allah in Translations of Bible," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 523 (2001), 301-05.

[33] For the discussion on translation options for YHWH, see, e.g., N. Daams, "Translating YHWH," *Journal of Translation* 1:1 (2005), 47-55.

In all three translations the term 'Son of God' is rendered as *Alla(hï) Ulï* (Example 1.4, *Ulï* meaning 'son'). That is, all three translations preserved the metaphor 'Son of God', despite the discussion on whether in Muslim-sensitive translations the commonly used kinship terms should be avoided. 'Holy Spirit' is rendered into Kräshen as *Svatïy Tïn*; in this compound *svatïy* is derived from Russian *sviatoi* meaning 'holy'; the second term, Turkic *tïn*, in present-day literary Tatar has the primary meaning of 'air' and 'breath'. The other two versions translate 'Holy Spirit' as *Izge Rux*, where the first word is of Turkic stock and the second is derived from Arabic *rūḥ* 'spirit' (Example 1.5).

What these examples demonstrate is that the institutional position of each translation group influences their choice of the lexicon. The NWT version has been clearly designed in accordance with the theological and doctrinal teachings adopted in the Jehovah's Witnesses denomination, which can be found in the translation of certain verses and specific vocabulary. In the examples shown in Table 2, the NWT resembles the IBT version, which claims to be "denomination-neutral"; the only exception is the word *Yähvägä*.

The RBO follows the translation of the Russian Synodal Bible, where in all cases Lord is translated by one word, *Gospod'*; also in addressing Jesus before his Resurrection.

8.3.2 Use of Arabic and Persian terms

This category focuses primarily on the IBT and NWT versions and zooms in on concepts from Arabic and Persian that have a firm place in Tatar Islamic literature and are transferred to the Christian context without any change. Obviously, the translators believe that these terms do not need to be eliminated, changed or "purified" of their original Islamic meanings, and that they can be directly employed for signifying Christian concepts. The Islamic context offers, on the one hand, opportunities for a NT translator, because the Qurʾān, unlike the scriptures of other world religions, includes extensive material related to the Bible, which is presumed to facilitate understanding of the Christian Scripture by Muslims.

On the other hand, the relationship between the Qurʾān and the NT is a challenge, because of the Muslim stance on the Gospels and Jesus. In Islam, the Gospels (*Injīl*) are seen as a revelation sent down by God to Jesus, confirming the Torah and other previous scriptures and anticipating the Qurʾān. This revelation, Muslims believe, was later corrupted or lost beyond recovery. The Qurʾān also mentions that the People of the Book interfered with their scriptures (e.g., Q 2:75; 2:140; 5:15; 5:41), and although Christians are not specifically named, they are implicated circumstantially as

perpetrators.[34] Jesus (ʿĪsā) is mentioned in 15 *sūras* in the Qurʾān as the envoy (*rasūl*) and one of the prophets (*nabī*) sent by God to fulfil a mission. Like all other prophets, the Qurʾān describes Jesus as an ordinary man and opposes the divinity of Jesus. The crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus are also rejected by most Muslims, although they believe in Jesus' special role, namely in the second coming of Christ at the end of time: on the day of the universal Resurrection, Jesus will be a witness against the Christians.[35]

Yet it should be kept in mind that there are several possible ways to read the Qurʾān and the Bible. This brings up the same issue that was already discussed in Chapter 3 on the translation strategies of Mufti Gainutdin; that is, translators do not elaborate on the extent to which religious concepts mentioned in the NT and the Qurʾān are similar to or different from each other. Instead, they simply draw on the target audience's knowledge about these concepts. In the case of the NT translations into Tatar, this knowledge is assumed to be sufficient to understand the Christian message, as most of the Islamic terms used in the IBT and NWT versions do not have explanatory notes.

For instance, consider the expression in 1 Cor 14:25: 'to fall on one's face [to worship God]'. The IBT and NWT versions translate it using the word *sajda* (related to Arabic *sujūd* 'prostration') (Table 3, Example 2.1; cf. Sysoev's translation strategies as discussed in Section 6.4.1). The Arabic word means 'reclining with the face on the ground in humble adoration'; in Tatar it primarily refers to Muslim worship practices in daily prayers.[36] The RBO version gives a detailed description of an act: *tyubyan jigilib* 'having fallen low', *Allaga bashirib* 'to hit one's head [to show devotion] to God'; this extensive description makes it possible to avoid the Arabic term, but comes at a considerable price.

Another example is the verb 'to pray', which in the IBT version has been translated by the compounds *doga* [*kilu*] and *giybadät* [*kilu*]. These compounds consist of the Turkic/Tatar *kilmak* or *kilu*, 'to do' or 'to make', plus a noun for 'prayer', which is rendered as either *doga* (Arabic *duʿā*) or *giybadät* (Arabic *ʿibāda*). *Doga* in Tatar generally refers to a private prayer (or invocation) and is not used for one of the prescribed daily prayers in Islam; *ʿibāda* stands for any act of worship in a broader sense, and has a

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[34] Thomas, "Gospel, Muslim conception of".

[35] G.C. Anawati, "ʿĪsā", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P.J. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2018) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/573-3912_islam_COM_0378> (Accessed on 26 July 2018).

[36] R. Tottoli, "Bowing and Prostration", in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe (Washington, DC: Brill, 2018) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/875-3922_q3_EQSIM_00060> (Accessed on 5 April 2018).

connotation of obedience (with the Arabic root *ʿb d* also forming items, such as 'servant, slave'). An alternation between *doga* and *gïybadät* appears only in the IBT version; in the NWT translation, we encounter only the word *doga*. The Kräshen translation again gives a more "neutral" variant – Turkic *teläk* meaning 'devotion, wish' (Examples 2.2-3) – which is obviously a translation from *doga*, not *gïybadät*.

The Greek participle *eulogemenos* 'blessed' in the IBT version is translated as *möbaräk* (Arabic *mubārak*), meaning 'blessed, congratulated' (Example 2.4). The same verse, Jn 12:13, in the NWT contains the word *fatixalï*. The Arabic word *fātiḥa* in Islam is associated with the first surah of the Qurʾān, *al-Fātiḥa*, which is considered to be the most important *sūra* both liturgically (it is recited many times a day during regular prayers) and doctrinally (intention of invoking the blessing of Allāh).[37] In Tatar, *fatixa* has the meaning of 'blessing, benediction', which is probably derived from the fact that the recitation of *al-Fātiḥa* is perceived as a blessing; *-lï* in *fatixalï* is a derivational Turkic suffix, which usually implies that the object to which it is added possesses or is characterized by the semantic quality of the stem, i.e. 'a person with a blessing'. The RBO avoids using any Arabic terms, instead introducing a Turkic word *dannaulï*, meaning 'praised, praiseworthy'. The root of the word comes from the verb *dannau* – 'to glorify, make famous' – which is used primarily in secular contexts. Thus, when using Turkic terms, the RBO version introduces a shift of semantics from a secular context to that of religion.

The word *uraza* in Tatar (see Example 2.5), derived from Persian *rūza*, primarily refers to the ritual fasting: abstaining from food, drink, smoking and sexual activity during the month of *Ramaḍān*. And although the rules of the Islamic ritual fasting can be traced back to Judaism and Christianity,[38] fasting practices in all three religions are different; by opting for the word *uraza*, the translation teams do not communicate these differences.

Religious circumcision (Arabic *khitān*) is not mentioned anywhere in the Qurʾān, but Islamic theologians consider it to be a recommended practice (*sunna*). The Arabic word *sunna* entered the Tatar language in the form of *sönnät*; the expression *sönnätkä utïrtu* in Tatar means to 'put on, plant on *sunna*' and refers to religious circumcision of Muslim men. The variant *sönnätle bulu* in the translation of Rom 2:25 (Example 2.6) thus

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[37] I. Zilio-Grandi, "al-Fātiḥa", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. K. Fleet et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2016) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/573-3912_ei3_COM_27038> (Accessed on 19 June 2018).

[38] K. Wagtendonk, "Fasting", in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe (Washington, DC: Brill, 2018) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00062> (Accessed on 5 April 2018).

means 'to follow/to be in the custom'. In the Kräshen NT we find the variant Turkic *kiseleü* 'to be cut'.

Ex.	ESV	IBT	NWT	RBO
2.1	**falling on his face**, he will **worship God** (1 Cor 14:25)	säjdä kïlïp Allahïga tabïnïr	ul yöztübän kaplanïr häm Allahïga säjdä kïlïr	tyubyan jïgïlïb, Allaga bashïrïb
2.2.	**pray** for those who persecute you (Mt 5:44)	doga kïlïgïz	doga kïlïp yäshägez	telyak itegez
2.3.	**as he was praying**, the appearance of his face was altered (Lk 9:29)	gïybadät kïlgan vakïtta	doga kïlgan vakïtta	telyak itkyan chagïnda
2.4	**Blessed** is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! (Jn 12:13)	möbaräk	fatixalï	dannaulï
2.5	**when you fast** (Mt 6:16)	uraza totkanda	uraza totkanda	uraza totkan chagïnda
2.6	**Circumcision** indeed is of value (Rom 2:25)	sönnätle bulu	sönnätle bulu	kiseleü
2.7	You **hypocrite**, first take the log out of your own eye (Mt 7:5)	monafik"	monafik"	kyuz aldïnda gna kïlïnïuchï
2.8	When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together (**Mt 1:18)	nikaxlashkanchï	kavïshkanchï	kushïlmagan köyö
2.9	And when they had sung a **hymn** (Mt 26:30)	mädxiyä	mädxiyä	iman jïrlau

Table 3. Use of Arabic and Persian Islamic terms

The word 'hypocrite' (Example 2.7), which was translated as *monafik"* (Arabic *munāfiq*) in the IBT and NWT versions, refers to those who feign to be what they are not; yet the Arabic term as used in the Qurʾān carries additional meanings, namely "half-hearted believers who outwardly profess Islam while their hearts harbour doubt or even unbelief". [39] The RBO translates the word 'hypocrite' as *kyüz aldïnda gna kïlïnïuchï*, literally 'somebody who pretends before eyes'.

In Example 2.8, the IBT team translated the expression "before they [Mary and Joseph] came together" (Mt 1:18) as "before they conducted [the ceremony] of *nikax*". The Arabic *nikāḥ* is a term for a common form of Islamic marriage. This term may have been used to avoid other literary Tatar variants, such as *öylänü* or *kiyäügä chïgu* 'to marry', which are gender-specific. The other two translations use non-religious terminology, such as *kavïshkanchï* 'before (re)union' (NWT) and *kushïlmagan köyö* 'prior

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[39] C.P. Adang, "Hypocrites and Hypocrisy", in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe (2018) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00089> (Accessed on 5 April 2018).

to junction' (RBO). We could argue that when de-Islamizing or de-Ottomanizing phrases, the RBO continues Il'minskii's strategy and falls back on the vernacular of pre- or early Islamic Turkic literatures.[40]

Finally, as shown in Example 2.9, 'sung a hymn' (Mt 26:30) was translated into standard Tatar as 'sung *mädkhiyä*', the second word being derived from Arabic *madḥiyya*. The Arabic term refers to the genre of panegyric poetry in Islamic literature, which praises the Prophet Muhammad as well as saints, teachers and deceased persons of high standing.[41] The RBO gives the variant 'to sing *iman*', from Arabic *īmān* meaning 'good faith, sincerity'.

The category of terms discussed in this section posed the biggest challenge for the translators, since they continue to circulate in parallel Islamic and Christian religious domains but with different meanings in each. The translators argue that they used Arabic and Persian vocabulary consciously, because in their opinion the meanings in Islamic and Christian contexts often overlap with the meanings of terms used in the NT; in those cases where the translators realized that terms differ significantly in Islamic and Christian texts, they provided footnotes to help the reader understand the terms.[42]

8.3.3 Replacements for Christian terms

Some Christian terms that have already been circulating in Tatar carry pejorative connotations, which the translation teams obviously intended to avoid. This is the case, for instance, with the word *chukïnu* (cf. Table 4, Example 3.1). The term itself refers to either non-Islamic practices of worship or, particularly, to a Christian act of receiving baptism or crossing oneself. The etymological roots of *chukïnu* are not entirely clear but scholars generally tend to agree that the word entered Tatar via languages of peoples that once lived in the direct vicinity of the Muslim Tatars and professed paganism or Christianity.[43] In colloquial Tatar, the term has an additional negative connotation,

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[40] Paradoxically, Il'minskii's strategies were in line with secular and Muslim nationalist trends of "de-Ottomanizing" or vernacularizing the written Tatar language, which promoted simplicity (*asanlïk*) and purity (*paklïk*) of the language. As Johann Strauss argues, "language modernization for Tatars meant […] not so much the adaptation of already existing well-established literary standards […], but the emancipation from writing standards which had come from the outside". Strauss, "Language modernization", p. 566.

[41] G. Wickens et al., "Madīḥ", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P.J. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2018) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/573-3912_islam_COM_0601> (Accessed on 19 June 2018).

[42] Interview with a member of the IBT translation team, who prefers to remain anonymous. 13 May 2015, Moscow, Russia.

[43] R. Äxmät'yanov, *Tatar teleneng kïskacha tarixi-etimologik süzlege* (Kazan: Tatarstan kitap näshriyäte, 2001), p. 237, 239; also A.V. Dybo, *Semanticheskaia rekonstruktsiia v altaiskoi etimologii. Somaticheskie terminy (plechevoi poias)* (Moscow: Shkola "Iazyki Russkoi kul'tury", 1996), p. 142.

namely 'to go mad', 'to lose reason' and 'to die'. The origin of these semantic fields probably goes back to the periods when Tatars were subject to forceful baptism policies of the Russian authorities. Therefore, as a replacement for the term *chukïnu*, all three NT translations introduce the word *chumdïru*, which literally means 'to dip [into water]'.

The standard term that the IBT and RBO teams use to render 'cross' is Persian *k(x)ach* (Example 3.2). Thereby, the translators avoid the problem of using the 'indigenous' Turkic word *täre*; in standard Tatar the word *täre* means 'a Christian cross or an icon', but in the spoken language it is also used as a swear word. For 'cross', the NWT uses the expression *jäfalanu baganasï* 'torture stake', which is a usual translation variant for the New World editions. The Jehovah's Witnesses argue that the original Greek term *stauros* means 'an upright stake or pole' and add that "there is no evidence that the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures used it to designate a stake with a crossbeam".[44]

Ex.	ESV	IBT	NWT	RBO
3.1	Was the **baptism** of John from heaven or from man? (Mk 11:30)	suga chumdïru	suga chumdïrïrga väkalät	chumïldïrïu
3.2	save yourself and come down from the **cross**! (Mk 15:30)	xach	jäfalanu baganasï	kach
3.3	yet if one suffers as a **Christian** (1 Pet 4:16)	masixchï	masixchï	Xristos" isemen jörtöüche

Table 4. Innovations that replace Christian terms

Even the very term 'Christian' is expressed in literary Tatar Bible translations by a less common word that is free of negative symbols, namely *masixchï*, i.e. 'a believer in or follower of *masīḥ*' 'Messiah' (Example 3.3, see also the section on proper names). The Kräshen NT coins a new compound *Xristos" isemen jörtöüche* '[someone] who carries the name of Christ'.

As observed by Kenneth J. Thomas, who wrote on the application of Arabic terminology in Biblical translations, it might be best to avoid all Arabic words in the translation of the NT, and use non-Arabic words instead; but in cases such as Tatar, "Arabic terms are the words which are commonly used for particular concepts (for example the word for extemporaneous, spontaneous prayer, *duʿā*)".[45] And therefore, according to the accepted translation principles, to express these in some other way would be cumbersome and unnatural.[46]

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[44] JW, "Izge Yazmalar terminnarï süzlege".

[45] K.J. Thomas, "The Use of Arabic Terminology in Biblical Translation," *The Bible Translator* 40:1 (1989), 101-08. Here p. 104.

[46] Ibid.

8.3.4 Translation of proper names

Proper names of Biblical characters that are also mentioned in the Qurʾān, and therefore familiar to a Muslim Tatar reader, are rendered in conformity with the Islamic tradition: for instance, the IBT and NWT translate 'Jesus Christ' as *Gäysä Mäsix* (Arabic *ʿĪsā masīḥ*), i.e., 'Jesus the Messiah' (Table 5, Example 4.1), and 'John the Baptist' is rendered as *chumdïruchï Yax"ya* 'dipping Arabic *Yaḥyā*' (Example 4.2). The RBO version uses transliterations of Russian words in pre-1917 spelling: 'Mary Magdalene', for instance, is rendered as *Maria Magdalina* (Example 4.3), and 'Jesus Christ' as *Iisus" Khristos* (Example 4.1).

Ex.	ESV	IBT	NWT	RBO
4.1	**Jesus Christ**	Gäysä Mäsix	Gäysä Mäsix	Iisus'' Xristos
4.2	**John the Baptist**	Chumdïruchï Yax"ya	Chumdïruchï Yax"ya	Chumïldïrïuchï Ioann"
4.3	**Mary Magdalene**	Magdalalï Mär'yam	Magdalalï Mär'yam	Maria Magdalina
4.4	**Babylon**	Babïl	Babïl	Vavilon
4.5	**The New Testament**	Injil	Injil	Janga Zakon"

Table 5. Translations of proper names

The IBT and NWT translation teams adjusted other proper names, including toponyms, to the sound system of the recipient language: for instance, 'Babylon' in literary Tatar is *Babïl*, whereas in Kräshen it is *Vavilon* (Example 4.4), which is also a transliteration of the Russian form.

To refer to the term 'New Testament' itself (Example 4.5), the IBT and NWT use an Arabic loanword *Injil* (Arabic *Injīl*), which refers to the Muslim idea of the Gospel.[47] The RBO uses *Janga Zakon"* 'The New Law', where the second word *Zakon"* is derived from Russian in pre-1917 spelling.

8.3.5 Use of Slavic religious terms

The final category consists of religious terms that have been derived from Russian Orthodox Christian terminology. Church Slavonic elements are visible only in the RBO version of the NT, whereas the IBT and the NWT aspired to keep the language "clean" from any Slavic borrowings. It is difficult to establish major topics in the discussion of which loanwords of Slavic origin are prevalent in the Kräshen NT. One may safely state, however, that such words are often used to denote terms that are exclusively related to Christianity, such as *svyashchenniklyar* (plural form derived from

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[47] Thomas, "Gospel, Muslim conception of".

Russian *sviashchennik* 'priest') and *arxierey* (also from Russian 'bishop'). The RBO also gives examples of general religious vocabulary with Russian origin (*svyatïy* 'holy', *prestol* '[God's] throne', *subbota* 'Saturday') and common non-religious concepts (*saldatlar*, plural from Russian *soldat* 'soldiers').

For contexts that are not specific to Christianity, the following two examples can be considered (see Table 6). In the RBO version, the word 'temple' as it occurs in Mt 23:16 is rendered as *chirkaü*, derived from the Russian *tserkov'* 'church' (Example 5.1); in contradistinction, the IBT coins a new term *Allāhï Yortï* 'the house of Allāh', and the NWT refers to the same concept by using the word *Gïybadätkhanä* meaning 'Muslim or non-Muslim place of worship'. The latter term goes back to a compound used in the Persian language.

Throughout the NT text, the concept of 'angel' in all three translations is conveyed by Persian *färeshtä*. Yet 'archangel' in Kräshen is a loanword from Russian, *arkhangel"*; the IBT uses a compound *jitäkche färeshtä* 'leading angel', and in the NWT we read *bash färeshtä* 'heading angel' (Example 5.2).

It is clear that the RBO translation uses Russian and dialect vocabulary to a greater extent than the other two translations, where we find no loanwords from Church Slavonic at all. Yet it would be an overstatement to argue that the Kräshen liturgical language is free of any Islamic influence, which is a frequent argument advanced by Kräshen nationalists (see Section 7.3.3). There are actually several loanwords from both Arabic (e.g., *Allāh*, and also *tyäbyä* from *tawba* 'repentance' and *sauab* from *sawāb* 'merit') and Persian (e.g., *pyäreshtyä, uraza*), which indicate previous contacts with Islamic culture.

Ex.	ESV	IBT	NWT	RBO
5.1	'If anyone swears by the **temple** (Mt 23:16)	Allāhï Yortï	Gïybadätkhanä	chirkyaü
5.2	with the voice of an **archangel** (1 Thes 4:16)	jitäkche färeshtä	bash färeshtä	arkhangel"

Table 6. Slavic borrowings

8.4 Non-Orthodox Tatar Christian communities

The NT editions in literary Tatar are mostly used in non-Orthodox Christian communities in Tatarstan. These communities emerged in the late 1980s-90s, when evangelical missions began their work in the republic, yet there are no statistical data on how many Tatars since then have converted to Christianity. For this research, I participated in regular meetings of two Christian groups, which were usually attended by 10-15 active members of the community. One should bear in mind that these

meetings were held in Kazan, the capital of the republic, which offers relatively more freedom for expressions of "non-traditional" faiths than rural areas of Tatarstan.

A leader of such a community is usually either a foreign missionary who has already spent several years in the republic and is able to speak both Tatar and Russian fluently; or an ethnic Tatar who has received special training, often outside of Tatarstan.[48] Where levels of religious tolerance toward "non-traditional" religions are relatively low, members of evangelical Christian communities prefer to keep their religious affiliation clandestine, being afraid of attacks from both Muslims and Orthodox Christians;[49] usually only close family members are aware of conversion cases. In the Tatar-speaking community of the Jehovah's Witnesses, however, active engagement with mission is a believer's duty, therefore after each of my meetings with them a number of members went to preach on the streets and engage in door-to-door ministry.

Non-Orthodox Christian Churches in Tatarstan attract followers by emphasizing the accessibility of God's message. Instead of the Arabic language, in which the majority of Muslim Tatars have little proficiency, these Churches offer regular readings of the Scriptures in Tatar, arguing that the divine revelation is universal and accessible equally for everybody. The very fact that the essential tenets of the Bible could transcend linguistic barriers and cross-cultural differences is used as an argument to prove that the Bible contains the "real" truth, as opposed to the Qurʾān, which, as Muslim theologians argue, must be recited only in Arabic.

In order to strengthen the contextualization of the Christian message, the missionaries often employ local Tatar symbols, genres and media, such as songs, proverbs, rituals and arts. For instance, an inherent part of each meeting is singing songs, where Christian lyrics are set to traditional Tatar music.[50] This approach helps to disconnect ideas about Christianity from Russian culture, which many Tatars perceive as a threat to ethnic self-identification. The flip side of this practice is that by displaying their Tatarness so emphatically, the communities exclude people of other ethnic backgrounds, who are therefore less attracted to the services.

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[48] Community members reported that there were several Tatars who travelled to the US to follow their training.

[49] See G. Fagan and O. Sibireva, "Violence Toward 'Nontraditional' Faiths in Russia", in *Religion and Violence in Russia: Context, Manifestations, and Policy*, ed. O. Oliker (Lanham, MD: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018), 67-116.

[50] See recordings by Wycliffe Global Alliance for Tatar evangelical communities at <https://soundcloud.com/wycliffealliance/the-love-of-god> (Accessed on 19 June 2018).

At the same time, evangelical Christianity also offers free space for those who disagree with Russia's traditional institutionalized religions; in the case of Tatarstan, it challenges the monopoly of Muslim and Orthodox Christian elites, however without putting believers into direct political opposition to the state and the official confessional bureaucracies. By inviting an open discussion of the Scriptures and giving the lead to locally trained cadres, the evangelical Churches claim to be indigenous establishments with no power hierarchy. As anthropologist Oscar Salemink elegantly put it (in the context of his research on Protestants in South Asia), although each evangelical group is "a modernist movement with often well-oiled transnational support from the US, it is ultimately also a local affair".[51]

8.5 Conclusion

Studying lexical choices for translating religious terminology can tell us whether a translation is denomination-specific, and what approach translators take to contextualize or "foreignize" the Christian message in the recipient culture.

Both the IBT and NWT versions followed the strategy of dynamic equivalence, which implies a conscious contextualization of the Scriptures and their enrooting in the pre-existing culture of the assumed recipients. As a result, many Christian terms are rendered in existing Tatar religious vocabulary, even though the latter is inherently linked to Islam. Thus, the language used by Christian Tatars does not highlight differences between Christianity and Islam, but, to the contrary, plays them down. The two versions for which this strategy is dominant (IBT and NWT) greatly resemble each other in lexicon and syntactic structures, with only a few exceptions (as in the case of NWT 'Jehovah', where the other texts only use 'Lord' and 'God'). By and large, these Tatar translations of the NT have contributed to the development of literary Tatar as a religious language not only in terms of adding new loanwords or compounds but also by expanding the semantic fields of existing religious terminology.

These translations are an important basis for the establishment and proliferation of what are pejoratively called "non-traditional" Christian communities in Tatarstan. Through their emphasis on Tatar culture and language, these communities deconstruct the linkage between Islam and "Tatarness". Members of such communities maintain a strong ethnic identity but Tatar traditional symbols and customs receive new Christian understandings for them.

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[51] O. Salemink, "Is Protestant Conversion a Form of Protest? Urban and Upland Protestants in Southeast Asia", in *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict*, ed. J. Bautista and F. Lim (London: Routledge, 2009), 36-58. Here p. 41.

In this comparison, the RBO version stands out at many levels. The text is written in Kräshen and follows the pre-1917 orthography, which makes it exclusive for Kräshen community members who are familiar with the language. At the lexical level, there is an abundance of dialect vocabulary and of Russian loanwords, which are used to replace Tatar religious terms that, in the opinion of the translators, have Islamic connotations. The RBO and the translation team aspired to continue the projects started by Il'minskii, without changing his approach to translation.

Close co-existence of Christians and Muslims makes language in itself an identifying factor and it serves as a distinguishing marker of each religious community. The use of Arabic and Persian religious terminology is identified as exclusively Islamic by both Christian and Muslim communities. Moreover, the use of Arabic terminology in recent translations of the NT in Tatar marks the emergence of new, non-Orthodox Christian Churches, which have arrived in Russia primarily in the post-Soviet period. They distinguish themselves from the ROC by taking a different approach to translation (dynamic versus formal equivalence); the presence of Arabic and Persian religious vocabulary in Christian religious settings makes it an identity marker for communities to distinguish in- and out-group members.