

CULTURE AND TRANSLATION IN THE BULGARIAN VERSION OF WALTER SCOTT'S *ROB ROY*

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This paper aims to provide an introduction to the reception of Walter Scott's historical novel *Rob Roy* in Bulgaria. It does so by focusing on both language and culture with the purpose of showing that translation is a complex process of conveying meaning – in this case, the focus of attention is the translation from English into Bulgarian. This happens through the discussion and comparison of selected examples from the original text and the Bulgarian translation of the novel. The main purpose of this research is to explore and present the similarities and differences between two different cultures and to show the way they interact with each other.

Key words: Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, historical novel, culture, translation

Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* is a historical novel which is set in the Scottish Highlands during the early 18th century. It takes the reader on a fascinating journey which is full of adventure, romance and political unrest. The novel is set against the backdrop of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 which sought to reinstate the Stuart dynasty under James Edward Stuart, who was the son of the overthrown James II of England. Despite that, it seems like the novel is more concerned with the economic and political conditions which led to that Rebellion (Hewitt 2008: 474-475). The story is represented through Frank Osbaldistone's narration. Frank, who is a young budding poet, has a fallout with his father, William, because of his refusal to join the family business. Frank is sent to stay with his Jacobite uncle (Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone) and his position in the family business is given to his cunning cousin Rashleigh. While living in Osbaldistone Hall, Frank falls in love with his uncle's niece Diana Vernon. Diana is supposed to marry one of her uncle's six sons so she refuses to listen to Frank's pleas. Meanwhile, Rashleigh causes tremendous damage to the business of Osbaldistone and

Tresham. Diana then decides to help Frank restore his father's honour. In order to do that, Frank goes to Scotland where he meets the infamous outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor and asks for his intervention. The mission is successful and Frank returns back home to England. In the meantime, the Rebellion breaks out. His uncle and Rashleigh die. The novel ends with Frank inheriting Osbaldistone Hall and the realization of his dream to marry his beloved Diana. I would also like to add that the character of Rob Roy in the novel and the historical figure of Rob Roy are quite different. As David Stevenson points out "[t]here are two Rob Roys. One lived and breathed. The other is a good story, a lively tale set in the past. Both may be accepted as 'valid', but they serve different needs and interests" (Stevenson 2004: 205). Scott presents the reader with a creative interpretation of MacGregor's life, by incorporating historical elements while also adding artistic flair to it. His novel undoubtedly contributed to the increased popularity of Rob Roy as a captivating figure in folk tales.

Currently, there is only one Bulgarian translation of the text, by Teodora Atanasova. For the purpose of this paper, I am going to examine and compare the 1962 edition and the 2016 edition of the Bulgarian translation to the original text. This is due to the fact that in the 1962 edition, the translation is entirely done by Teodora Atanasova, while in the 2016 edition, it is pointed out that all verses were translated by Ognyana Ivanova. The paper will predominantly focus on comparing the original text to the 1962 edition of the translation with an additional example discussing the two different translations of verses, namely Atanasova's translation from 1962 and Ivanova's translation from 2016.

Translation is often said to be a transposition of not only a specific language but also of culture. According to Bassnett and Lefevere, the study of translation can be considered as the study of cultural interaction. They see translation as a tool which can be used for rewriting or manipulation (manipulative textual processes) (Bassnett and Lefevere 2001: x). The main task of the translator is then to focus less on copying the original text and focus more on recreating the source text in order to achieve successful transmission and construction of cultures thus enabling those different cultures to interact. A good example of this is present in Chapter Two of *Rob Roy*. In the original text we have this – "A cloud of flame is something new – Good-morrow, my masters all, and a merry Christmas to you! – Why, the bellman writes better lines" (Scott 2012: 120). The Bulgarian translation is as it follows „– Облак от пламък е нещо ново! „Добро утро, господа, и весела Коледа на всички ви“ – ама нà, коледарите съчиняват по-хубави песни от тебе“ (Scott 1962: 45). Here, the lines appear in the context of

Francis being criticised by his father who has a very strong opinion about his attempts in writing verses. Here, what I would like to draw the reader's attention to is the way the word *bellman* is translated into Bulgarian. A bellman is "a man (such as a town crier) who rings a bell" (Merriam-Webster). In the 18th century they would be making public announcements in the streets. When the English-language reader encounters the word *bellman*, what they probably visualise is a person announcing something and ringing a bell in order to catch the attention of the people. Bellmen served as spokesmen for the King and were protected by law. They wore special uniforms which were very similar to the attire of the mayor and the colours of their uniforms were representative of where the bellman was from. They would start by calling "Oyez, oyez, oyez!" and end with "God save the King!" or "God save the Queen!" (cf Historic UK). Bellmen were of great importance back then because they delivered all the important news to the people, many of whom were not able to read. The Bulgarian translation of "bellman" is „коледари“, which is quite different from what a bellman does. When the Bulgarian-language reader sees the word „коледари“, what comes to mind is a group of men who gather together on the evening before Christmas, sing specific songs and visit every single house in the place where they live. They usually wear festive clothing which is typical for the occasion and according to old belief they have the power to drive away goblins, vampires and other evil creatures through their songs (cf Regional Historical Museum Burgas). Atanasova could have used „глашатай“, which is used for a person who would travel around settlements and inform residents of various events, but she did not. This could be due to the fact that the action is taking place around Christmas time and „коледуване“ is a traditional Bulgarian custom which all Bulgarians are familiar with. It is clear that the two pictures are not identical. The original text talks about an important figure in the lives of many back then, one that people relied on for the latest information. The translation describes a figure of great importance, as well. The difference is that the main duty of „коледари“ is not to keep people up-to-date with the latest news but to keep the evil spirits away and to bring joy to the people they visit, and thus preserve a long-lasting tradition. A possible advantage to this divergent imagery is that the message is intentionally adapted and in alignment with the cultural context. In this way language barriers are removed and a positive multilingual experience is generated.

Again in Chapter Two, Francis's father tells him this – "That is to say, you wish to lean on my arm, and yet to walk your own way? That can hardly be, Frank; – however, I suppose you mean to obey my directions, so far as they do not cross your own humour?" (Scott 2012: 127). The Bulgarian

translation is „– С други думи, ти искаш хем да се облягаш на ръката ми, хем да вървиш по собствения си път. Това няма да го бъде, Франк. Все пак предполагам, че възнамеряваш да се подчиниш на нарежданията ми, доколкото не противоречат на собствените ти желания” (Scott 1962: 52). To lean on someone’s arm insinuates dependency on someone, financial or moral. What Francis’s father is trying to tell him is that he can’t have both worlds – receiving financial and moral support from him and being independent, going his own way, at the same time. The Bulgarian translation „да се облягаш на ръката ми” manages to convey the original message as „облягам се на някого/нещо” which means that you are hoping for or relying on someone for help or support. Later on, the word “humour” is translated as „желания” which is an appropriate choice taking into consideration that the word also means “to agree to someone’s wishes in order to help improve that person’s mood or to avoid upsetting him or her” (Cambridge).

In his book, *The Art of Translation*, Jiří Levý makes an important point about the essence of translation and about the significant role of the translator in this process, by saying that:

A translated work is a composite, hybrid configuration. It is not a monolithic work but an interpermeation, a conglomerate of two structures. On the one hand there is the semantic content and the formal characteristics of the source; on the other hand there is the entire system of artistic features specific to the target language, contributed by the translator. (Levý 2011: 67)

With the artistic features in mind, I would like to draw the reader’s attention to several examples of verses translated into Bulgarian:

Original text	Atanasova’s translation	Ivanova’s translation
O for the voice of that wild horn, On Fontarabian echoes borne, The dying hero’s call, That told imperial Charlemagne, How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain Had wrought his champion’s fall. (Scott 2012: 119)	Копнея за звука на оня дивен рог, подет от ехото на Фонтарабия. Тоя зов на герой загиващ на Карла Велики донесе вестта, че синове поганци на мургава Испания защитника му покосиха. (Scott 1962: 44)	И сякаш чувам дивен рог да свири, подет от ехото на Фонтарабия – тъй нявга Карл Велики е дочул рога, вестта донесъл как в Испания сразили храбрия Ролан поганци. (Scott 2016: 24)

This verse is connected to The Battle of Roncevaux (778) between the Franks, who were Christian, and the Basques, who were Pagan. Charlemagne suffered a terrible defeat as the Basques won. Among those who died was Roland, who was a Frankish commander and who became a legend after his death (Rodriguez 2018). We can see that in Atanasova's translation "swarthy Spain" is translated as „мургава Испания”, which successfully conveys the emotions presented in the original, where it is obvious that Charlemagne and his hero are favoured and not the "Paynim sons". Ivanova, on the other hand translates it as just „Испания”. It could be due to the fact that she was trying to avoid the use of words that could be considered offensive today. Another difference is present in the way the word "champion" is translated. Atanasova translates it as „защитник” which is a good choice considering the fact that Roland was indeed fighting for and protecting the Franks. Ivanova goes out of her way to tell us who this champion actually is and even adds the adjective „храбър”. This addition of hers could be due to the fact that not everyone knows who this hero is and this might be a new learning opportunity for the reader. This is a good example of what Levý calls "artistic features" and how in this way the translator is able to leave their "contribution". Last but not least, I have noticed that both Bulgarian versions have the word "Paynim" translated as „поганец”. Both of these words are obsolete and both of them represent a non-Christian person, especially a Muslim. The Bulgarian word has its origin from the old Bulgarian word „поганинъ”, which means "barbarian" or "heathen" (Cyrillomethodiana). The English word has its origin from the Anglo-French "paenisme", which means "heathen" (Anglo-Norman Dictionary). The Bulgarian versions could have used a modern word like „друговерец” or „езичник”, but instead of doing so, they adhered to the original in order to convey the message and the mood as adequately as possible.

Two more examples of Levý's "artistic features" can be found in the beginning of Chapter II. The first one I would like to discuss is contained in the following lines:

Original text	Atanasova's translation
“–Brandies–Barils and barricants, also tonneaux.–At Nantz 29–Velles to the barique at Cognac and Rochelle 27–At Bourdeaux 32– (...)” (Scott 2012: 117)	– „Ракии – в бурета, бъчонки и бъчви (darils (sic), barricants и tonneaux). В Нант – 29, velles в бъчонки, в Коняк и Рошел – 27. В Бордо – 32...” (Scott 1962: 41)

This section of the verse shows the notes Frank had taken in his notebook while studying in Bordeaux, which explains the variety of French words included in it. First, I would like to discuss the way “brandies” is translated into Bulgarian. Atanasova translated it as “ракии”. Brandy originates from France and was the preferred drink of the urban middle class Frenchman during the 18th century. In Scotland, brandy was imported usually from France. It was primarily consumed by the middle class and on some occasions, by the gentlefolk (cf Whisky Magazine). Rakia, often referred to as the “fiery water of the Balkans”, is considered Bulgaria's national drink and is often said to be an important part of Bulgaria's national identity. Rakia appeared in the Balkans in the Middle Ages and it is believed that it was due to the Ottoman influence back then (cf Coldsea). Both are strong alcoholic drinks but they are not the same. Brandy is “an alcoholic beverage distilled from wine or fermented fruit juice” and requires single distillation (Merriam-Webster). It could also be made using other fruit juices. Rakia, on the other hand, could be prepared from any variety of fruit, quite often from plums and it is double-distilled. The drink provides local colour. You do not find rakia in 18th–19th-century Scotland or England. Thus, the Bulgarian reader is given the impression that a Balkan drink was part of British culture. Here, we have a clear case of domestication. Brandy was especially important in the past for its medicinal properties and its calming effect (cf Binwise). Today, it is still famous and enjoyed by many. Rakia also has medicinal properties. Many Bulgarians use it when dealing with respiratory diseases like cough and sore throat. Plum rakia, for example, is often self-administered in case of a stomach ache. In terms of gastronomy, both brandy and rakia are often paired with foods like dried fruits, such as apricots, figs and dates, and different types of strong cheese such as camembert. Last but not least, they can be combined with different types of meat, such as salami, sausage and prosciutto. Both brandy and rakia are consumed as part of the so-called “social drinking” culture which is an inevitable part of many people's daily routines and habits. Next, I would like to discuss the way “barils”, “barricants” and “tonneaux” are translated into Bulgarian. Atanasova translated them as “бурета”, “бъчонки” and “бъчви”. In terms of capacity, tonneaux is the biggest and barrique is the smallest. The tonneaux is traditionally made of wood, such as oak, and is intended for storing wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages. It has two openings and is typical for West France, specially the Bordeaux area. Its capacity could range from 560-1005 litres. The baril or barrel, comes next in terms of size with a capacity of about 228 litres. The smallest one is the barricant or barrique, which is a small wooden barrel with an approximate capacity of

225 litres and is primarily used for maturing wines (cf Fattoria di Montemaggio). Atanasova's choice to use "бурета", "бъчонки" and "бъчви" as the Bulgarian translation makes sense because in terms of size they follow the same order, going from "бъчва" as the biggest one to "бъчонка" as the smallest one in size (cf Tsvetkov 2006: 209). They are all made out of wood and used for storing and maturing wine. Wine is important for both French and Bulgarian. Wine is important for several reasons. One of them is connected to trade and export. It is also part of an old tradition of wine-making and drinking which is a source of great pride for both French and Bulgarian. Wine is considered France's "totem-drink" which makes it even more special. While the Bulgarian "totem-drink" is rakia, wine is a close second. Taking all of that into consideration, it is safe to say that Atanasova's choice was a good one and that she managed to successfully implement what Levý calls "artistic features".

The second example that I would like to discuss can be found here:

Original text	Atanasova's translation
"Linens–Isingham–Gentish–Stock-fish–Titling–Cropling– Lub-fish. You should have noted that they are all, nevertheless to be entered as titlings.– How many inches long is a titling?" Owen, seeing me at fault, hazarded a whisper, of which I fortunately caught the import. "Eighteen inches, sir."– "And a lub-fish is twenty-four–very right (...)" (Scott 2012: 117)	– Платна: изингамски и гантски. – Сушена треска: титлинг, кроплинг, лъбфиш. "Трябваше да отбележиш, че те понякога минават всички като титлинги. Колко цола средно е един титлинг?" Виждайки ме натясно, Оуън се осмели да ми подсказе и аз се възползувах от помощта му. – Осемнадесет цола. – А един лъбфиш е 24 цола. Така. (Scott 1962: 41)

This is the continuation of the notes included in Frank's notebook. What I would like to discuss from this section are the way different types of fish are translated into Bulgarian and also how the word "inches" is translated. Starting with the different fish species, what I have noticed is that Atanasova begins by defining the category of "stock-fish" which is translated as "сушена треска". What comes next are the different types of stockfish, namely "титлинг", "кроплинг" and "лъбфиш". A stockfish is "cod or

similar fish that is dried without salt” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary). There are other types of stockfish, such as pollock, haddock or ling but cod is the most common one (cf Cargo Handbook). This makes Atanasova’s choice to translate it as “сушена треска” appropriate but also interesting. Interesting in the sense that the type of fish listed after that are not all a variety of cod but an inferior kind of stockfish. I am inclined to believe that her choice is based on her knowledge and awareness of the fact that most Bulgarians are not familiar with them and not so knowledgeable when it comes to the different types of stockfish unless it is their occupation or field of interest. This could also prove helpful in understanding why she decided to translate the different types of stockfish the way she did. In Bulgarian there is no such fish as “титлинг”, “кроплинг” or “лъбфиш”. In fact, “titling”, “cropling” and “lubfish” are all obsolete forms. Titling comes from old Scottish and it means “small stockfish” (Dictionaries of the Scots Language). Cropling comes from Middle Dutch and Middle Low German and it means “an inferior kind of stockfish” (Middle English Dictionary). Same goes for lubfish which is also “a kind of stockfish” (Dictionaries of the Scots Language) and also obsolete. What is important to be mentioned here is that the sea is of great importance for the Scottish and they are inextricably connected to it. This could possibly be due to the fact that it provides them with food, energy and job opportunities. It is also important from a mythological point of view. There are numerous myths surrounding sea monsters and the so-called Selkies who are “mermaid-esque figures, beautiful women of the sea that wear seal skins” (Scottish Maritime Museum). For the Bulgarians the sea is not of such great importance as it is for the Scottish people. Most Bulgarians are not that knowledgeable about the sea and the different types of fish. This makes me believe that Atanasova had used this exact strategy on purpose. When translating she must have considered the different options she had. She could have decided to replace the unknown with the familiar which would have been a good choice. A possible issue here is the fact that there is no exact equivalent for these specific types of stockfish in Bulgarian. With most of them being obsolete, it would have made it even more difficult to translate. Another option would have been to preserve the foreignness to a certain degree and present the reader with the opportunity to explore and learn something new. And foreignization is the strategy I believe she decided to use. The other thing I would like to discuss is her choice regarding the translation of the word “inches” into Bulgarian. It is translated as “цол”. The word “цол” comes from the german “zoll” which has several meanings, one of them being an “inch” (Cambridge). A “цол” is a unit of measurement used to measure

lengths and distances. It is specifically used to denote pipe diameters and is equal to 2,6 cm or 26 mm (cf *Rechnik na savremenniya balgarski knizhoven ezik*). It is in accordance with the metric system and the English unit of measurement “inch” which is equal to 25.4 mm (cf *Britannica*). The inch is also used for measuring lengths and distances. In this case, the measurements that are described are connected to the size of the different types of fish and more specifically to the lengths of their bodies. When a Bulgarian person hears the word “цол”, the first thing that comes to mind is probably the diameter of pipes rather than the length of fish. When trying to imagine how big a fish is, the Bulgarian person, especially those who enjoy fishing, would first think of the length and the weight of the fish. From today’s perspective one could easily translate the word “inch” as “инч” because in a globalised world foreign units of measurement are easy to look up and have flooded Bulgarian discourse. Back in the 60s, the situation was much different. Bulgarians predominantly studied Russian and French as a foreign language. Perhaps Atanasova had decided to replace the unknown with the familiar and thus translated “inch” as “цол” because it would be a lot easier for the average Bulgarian reader to understand what she meant. And yet people would hardly imagine this to be the length of the fish and would rather imagine it as diameter.

The main purpose of this study was to explore and present to the reader a visual comparison between the original text and the 1962 Bulgarian translation of the novel *Rob Roy*. It does so by specifically emphasising language and culture and how two different cultures can interact. Relevant theoretical frameworks, such as Bassnett and Lefevere’s theory, which presents translation as a study of cultural interaction, provided support for each of the examples that were given. Also of substantial importance is Jiří Levý’s theory, which talks about the significant role of the translator and their contribution in the form of what he calls “artistic features.” The Bulgarian translation of *Rob Roy* is an excellent example of how important both skills and knowledge are when it comes to successfully merging different cultures and allowing them to interact with each other. Language and culture are inextricably connected, and by further exploring them, one can be presented with the opportunity to expand their language horizon and to be able to appreciate the beauty of different cultures and tongues.

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