Editorial Introduction and Source Publication

AN ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO THE LITHUANIAN TONGUE INTO WHICH LANGUAGE THE SCRIPTURES WERE AS YET NEVER TRANSLATED... (OXFORD, 1659)

There is none, I presume, of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but will account that a good service done to Religion, and an acceptable work unto the Church of God, of those who imploy their whole studies and endeavours for saving the soules of men, and for the propagating of the true worship of God in all places throughout the world: Since that it is our duty not onely to have regard of our selves, but we ought likewise, so farre as we are able, to endeavour the salvation of others also, and to be industrious in the promoting of it...

To conclude, what ever at any time, by the holy men of God, in matter of religion and God's worship, hath been prudently managed or successefully accomplished, 'tis all to be ascribed to divine providence. Nor can I believe, that it is without this secret and wise disposall of the divine Majesty, that my selfe, the meanest of those who minister to Christ or serve under Him, and no wayes comparable with others, have been inabled in these last times, when the day of the consummation of all things is at hand, (many signes whereof we have allready seen, and many more dayly discovering themselves both in heaven and in earth, so that scarce any of them remaine as yet unaccomplished, save that onely foretold by Christ *Math.* 24 of preaching the Gospell throughout the world, a testimony to all nations, and then shall the end be,) willingly to begin, constantly to persevere in, and happily to consummate, a work of vast labour, (namly) the Translation of the Bible, into the Lithuanian Tongue.

For having long ago considered that severall pious and learned men, since the yeare of Our Lord 1387 (at which time Lithuania received the Christian Faith, by means of that most religious King Jagello,) have hitherto in vain expected, that some body would have been raised up by God, to translate the Holy Scriptures into that

tongue, (which not only in those large territories but also in the neighbouring countries of Livonia, Curlandia, Russia, Prussia, and in the borders of Moscovy, it selfe is commonly used) I thought it my duty (having dedicated my selfe to the service of the Church from my youth) to furnish my selfe with such abilities, whereby I might be advanageous to it. Wherefore imploring the assistance and direction of Christ, (through whome we can do all things) that a work so acceptable and signally conducing to the edification of the Church of God, may continue no longer unattempted, or be put off till the coming of Elias, or our Saviour Christ, I have adventured upon it, and my aime is not only now by this translation (with the summe and contents of all the Historically, Dogmaticall, Prophetically bookes, of the Gospels, Epistles and Chapters,) to be helpful to those people, who have hitherto been destitute of bookes in that language for the furtherance of the practice of piety, save only the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, some few catechetical tracts, fragments of Gospels and Epistles, and a late booke in quarto, set out in the yeare 1653, (containing only seventy eight of David's Psalmes, some hymnes composed by Luther and others, the Gospells for the Lords days, with a short analysis, the History of Christs Passion and a Catechisme for the younger:) but also for their fuller knowledge of the articles of Christian religion, by faithfully translating out of the English Tongue, the Confession of Faith, the Larger and lesser Catechisme, framed by the Assembly of Divines, convened by the Authority of the Parliament of England, to whom being afterwards exhibited, they were examined and approved by them, also by the Churches of Scotland: I have a purpose shortly also by Gods assistance, to turne the Booke of Psalmes into meter, according to that melody, that is now in use in the churches of this happy island, which is easy to be learned by ordinary persons; for having skill but in | three tunes, they be able to sing all the Psalmes, whereas contrariwise in the French Psalter (otherwise very excellent,) according to which almost all the Protestant Churches in Europe, have theirs composed, it comes to passe, by reason of the difficulty of the tunes, and unskilfullness in singing, that only some of the easier Psalmes, are wont to be sung, even in the publike Assemblies...

For it is meet, that they who debarr the faithful of the free use of Scriptures that principles of Christian Faith, allowing the reading thereof to none, but Austins, Ambroses and Chrysostoms, should know that not one or two alone, but many among the orthodox professors do watch for the soules of the godly, especially seeing the papists boast so much of their number. Every builder of the new Babylon hath wherewithall to defend the apostasie of Rome,

and to maintaine servitude and tyranny of the Doctrine of the pope; the cheife bulwark and Helena of their divinity...

...his divine favour who hath stirred up my heart in the carrying on of this work will not here leave me, but raise up some religious patrons, who will judge it unfit to suffer so Christian a work to remain unpublished, considering how laudable and worthy a thing it is for pious men, out of love of the truth, and a desire of the increase of Christs Kingdome in this world, to use all endeavours that the Church and true religion may take roote and bring forth abundant fruits in forreigne nations also. And surely, if in times of the Olde Testament, the building of the materiall Temple was pleasing to God, how much more acceptable shall we think the building of his spirituall house, whose corner stone is Christ, on whome believers are built as living stones, will be to Him.¹

The brochure from which this text is taken was printed first in Oxford in 1659. A year later an extended Latin translation dedicated by the author, Samuel Bogusław Chylinski, to various Calvinist dignitaries in Lithuania, headed by the renegade Boguslovas Radvila (Bogusław Radziwiłł) was published in London.² The English text was an advertisement for Chylinski's planned publication of a Lithuanian translation of the complete text of the Bible and most pertinently a plea for money to achieve that divinely ordained task. The Account was accompanied in both English and Latin versions by a letter of recommendation written by Anglican divines from the University of Oxford.³

Samuel Bogusław Chylinski was born around 1633 at Šventėžeris in what is now the Sejny District of Poland and was then part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He was the son of a Calvinist preacher, Adrian Chylinski, who served Duke Christopher Radvila, the hetman of the Grand Duchy. He was educated at the Calvinist grammar school in Kėdainiai before moving on in 1654 to matriculate at the Franeker Academy in the Netherlands. Encouraged by the English nonconformist divine, John Dury, Chylinski left the Netherlands for

¹ Facsimile text in: *Samuelio Boguslavo Chylinskio Biblija. Senasis Testamentas*, I Tomas: *Lietuviško vertimo ir olandiško originalo faksimilės*, ed. G. Kavaliūnaite (Vilnius, 2008), pp. 7-12, description of surviving copy – *ibid.*, pp. cxxi-cxxii

² *Ratio institutae translationis Bibliorum in linguam lithuanicam...* – facsimile text – *ibid.*, pp. 17-23.

³ On Oxonian patrons of Chylinski's labours see I. Lukšaitė, 'Samuelio Boguslavo Chylinskio "Biblijos vertimo į lietuvių kalbą pagrindimas"', *Knygotyra*, 36 (2000), pp. 248-74.

England in 1657, where he earned the patronage of Oxford scholars and after 1660, the restored king, Charles II. An expected print run of 3,000 copies of the Lithuanian Bible was begun in London in 1660 but it ended without completion less than two years later. In 1662 the unbound sheets of the Bible as far as Psalm 40 were handed over to the minister of the Dutch congregation, Calandrini. The Bible disappeared from view until the nineteenth century and the only surviving copy now lies in the collection of the British Library. In 1958 the New Testament was published by Stanisław Kot, Jan Otrębski and Czesław Kudzinowski in Poznań.⁴ The surviving text of the Old Testament was published by the leading Chylinski scholar, Gina Kavaliūnaitė in Vilnius in 2008.⁵ Chylinski's Calvinist translation was the first Lithuanian Bible to be published, while a manuscript translation had been completed by the Lutheran pastor from Labiau in the Duchy of Prussia, Johannes Bretke (Jonas Bretkūnas, 1536–1602) between 1579 and 1590.⁶

In his *Account* Chylinski sets the translation of the Bible into Lithuanian into the history of the effect of the Divine Providence in human endeavour from the skill of the builders of the Tabernacle, Bezaleel and Aheliab, the wisdom which inspired Solomon to construct the Temple in Jerusalem with supplies of timber provided by Hiram of Tyre, and the freeing of the Israelites from their Babylonian captivity by King Cyrus of Persia and the subsequent reconstruction of the Temple to the work of the Apostles. He notes the conversion of Lithuania to Christianity under Jogaila (in the address to Bogusław Radvila, prime mover in the treacherous Lithuanian union with the Swedish aggressor issued at Kėdainiai in 1655, he stresses that conversion in 1387 came after the union of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Kingdom of Poland). Chylinski places the translation of the Bible into Lithuania within an apocalyptic context designed to appeal to (and perhaps ghost-written by) English Protestants: 'in these last times, when the day of the consummation of all things is at hand, (many signes whereof we have allready seen, and many more dayly discovering themselves

⁴ *Biblia litewska Chylińskiego: Nowy Testament.*

⁵ See note 1. The text survives as far as the Book of Job, chapter 5.

⁶ *Biblia tatat esti Wiŝas Schwentas Raschtas, Lietuwischkai pergulditas* – I. Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje XVI a. trečiasis dešimtmetis–XVII a. pirmas dešimtmetis* (Vilnius, 1999), pp. 376–93.

both in heaven and in earth'.⁷ Chylinski cites the misdemeanours of the Church of Rome (to which he refers unoriginally as the new Babylon)⁸ and seems to expect the Second Coming of Christ and its foreshadowing by the reappearance on earth of the Prophet Elias, as foretold in the Book of the Prophet Malachias (iv.5-6). Like many an applicant for financial support since, Chylinski seeks to portray his work as unique, or virtually so. Ignoring Bretkūnas' achievement, he does give passing reference to the 1653 Kėdainiai imprint, *Kniga nobaznistes krikščioniškios*, published by the community to which he repeats his appeals for funds in Latin in 1660.⁹ Chylinski intends not only to publish a Bible but also translated versions of the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–49), including its *Confession of Faith*, *Longer Catechism* and *Shorter Catechism* which are still used by the Presbyterian communities of Scotland, Ireland and North America. Chylinski also found the English metrical psalms to be more suited for singing by simple congregations than the more widely used French Protestant psalter. There is no evidence that Chylinski ever carried out any of this major programme of confessional translation work before his death in 1668.

In this volume of *Lithuanian Historical Studies* we include selected papers from an international conference under the title *The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Protestant Europe in the Seventeenth Century*, held in the Lithuanian Institute of History in May 2011 with the support of the Lithuanian Research Council, the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Vilnius), the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Vilnius), the Kėdainiai Regional Museum and the Martynas Mažvydas National

⁷ On millenarian themes in early modern theology and politics, see A.H. Williamson, *Apocalypse Then: Prophecy and the making of the modern world* (Praeger Series on the History of the Early Modern World) Westport, 2008; for English policy in an age of apocalyptic preoccupation, see R. Crabtree, 'The idea of a Protestant foreign policy', *Cromwell: A profile*, ed. I. Roots (London, 1973); S.C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and patriotism. Ideologies and the making of English foreign policy 1650–1688* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁸ By which he means chiefly the alleged restriction of the reading of scripture to the clergy, whom he summarises as 'Austins, Ambroses and Chrysostoms', SS. Augustine of Hippo, Ambrose and John Chrysostom being major doctors of the Catholic Faith.

⁹ Reprinted by D. Pociūtė as *Knyga nobažnytės krikščioniškos 1653. Faksimilinis leidimas* (Vilnius, 2004).

Library of Lithuania. The gathering marked the 350th anniversary of Chylinski's translation of the Bible. Here the Reader has an opportunity to discover more of the general context in which Chylinski worked: the international funding of Protestant translations of Scripture and Protestant studies in general during the seventeenth century, European Protestant propaganda campaigns, the reception of the Dutch *Statenbijbel*, one of Chylinski's major sources and models, in Hungary and the general view of Lithuania presented in English publications in the seventeenth century. Apart from Chylinskiana, this volume also contains studies of the mediaeval crusades and the views of Vilnius intellectuals regarding the concept of Lithuania as held by members of the Society of Scoundrels.