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THE FALL OF BYZANTINE EMPIRE
BY FR. TIKHON AND ITS CHINESE TRANSLATION

In 2008 on the eve of Putin's transfer of power to Dmitry Medvedev a documentary film, created by Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), *The Fall of an Empire — the Lesson of Byzantium* was broadcast on the major state-controlled TV channel "Russia" and stirred much public reaction. Within a month or two it became one of the most talked-about films in Moscow. The major point of the documentary is that the Byzantine Empire collapsed not due to the Ottoman Turks' attack, but because of its internal decay; the imperial elite and populace trusted the wicked West and abandoned their traditional respect for Orthodoxy and centralized social, economic structures, this ultimately resulted in the fall of the empire. Ostensibly about historical lessons, the film actually has nothing to do with history. Neither Byzantium, nor any of Christian values were its real object. The film presents an emotionally charged, deeply agitating ideological propaganda. Viewers, to a man, caught its clear allusion to contemporary Russian politics. According to the website news from Maloe Voznesenie, Shevkunov's film has been translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek and Serbian.¹ However, on its official site only English translation and the two Orthodox countries' language versions (Greek and Serbian) are available. Apart from those, curiously enough, there is also displayed Chinese version of the film. This essay will give a general review of Russian public reaction to the film, then provide an analysis on the Chinese translation to shed light on the process of ideological manipulation through translation. The film scripts both in Russian and English are taken from the official site of the documentary.

¹ http://mvozesenie.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=559&Itemid=96 (12.11.2010).

Head of the old Sretensky Monastery in Moscow, Archimandrite Tikhon is one of the most vocal priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, taking an active part in contemporary social life. Born in 1958 in Moscow, he became the abbot at age of 37. Fr. Tikhon is the leader of the so-called Sretensky circle, a specific circle of clergy and active laity who adhere to monarchist, anti-Western and anti-globalist ideology. The Sretensky monastery's impressively rich publishing house and its popular website www.pravoslavie.ru produce massive amount of Orthodox literature. In 2012 Fr. Tikhon became the author of that year's top-selling book *Everyday Saints and Other Stories*. But first let's have a look at what his highly controversial film was about.

In the beginning of the film, with Islamic chant weaving into the freezing wind, Fr. Tikhon is transported from a snow-swept Russian church to Istanbul. In the noisy marketplace of the Middle Eastern city he begins his exposure of the West as a "genetic" (Tikhon's word) hater of both Byzantium and its spiritual heir Russia. The film shows how the Byzantine Empire, a magnificent cosmopolitan center of human civilization, was treacherously looted by the faithless western knights during the fourth crusade in 1204; and the looting is interpreted as the determining factor contributing to the future prosperity of the West.

Apart from the West (represented in the film by a cloaked figure in a sinister mask with long nose), the Jews were also dangerous enemy to Byzantium. In addition to the sack of Constantinople, modern western capitalism is built on Jewish usury. But here Fr. Tikhon's wording is more cautious, employing verbal ellipsis and visual allusion. The footage simultaneously shows the painting *The Money Lenders*, but with a much more cunning and vicious human face recreated with digital graphics.

After talking about external enemies, Shevkunov turns to the internal situation. The biggest problem of the country, he declares, is "the government's loss of control over its own finances" and the consequent "huge capital flow towards the West." The same complaint about contemporary government reforms was flooding Russian media in the late 1990s, especially during the first years of Putin era, when people experienced a harsh downturn in the economy and a subsequent sharp decline in living standards, suffering from the government's failure to fulfil social obligations. The unsuccessful economic reforms under Yeltsin leadership which followed a Western prescription for the transition to a market economy were strongly

criticized exactly for causing loss of control of the country's finances and capital flow to the West. Soon came a wave of nostalgia for the Soviet past, when everyone had a job and the country was a super-power. Anti-Western, xenophobic sentiments rose. People blamed the Western economic consultants of colluding with their Russian counterparts for rapid self-enrichment by the privatization of Russian industry, complaining that foreigners were pillaging their natural resources, particularly the energy resources. Tikhon uses the veil of "Byzantine history" to bring back Russian viewers' memory of that time, or to be more precise, to revive Putin ideologues' propaganda of that time. A more comprehensive demonstration of Putin's rhetoric on this topic can be found in another documentary *Putin Unknown* by Andrei Karaulov.²

In the film among prevailing chaos and corruption stands out the Byzantine emperor Basil-II, strong and virtual. As an exemplary ruler, he builds vertical power, establishing stabilization fund and crushing the separatism. The so-called "vertical power structure," according to what is illustrated in the film, means strong state control and victory of the emperor over the "oligarchs." Accompanied by the solemn and majestic music, the narrator spoke of how Basil-II implemented centralization of authority by suppressing oligarchs and confiscating their wealth to expand state army and launch military reform. This is a close analogy with what Putin's done with Russian oil oligarchs: took their money, sent them to prison and carried out military reform using the money raked in from the oligarchs. The narrator then claims this "seemingly old" administrative method to be efficient and suitable to the empire, because the sinister oligarchs are greedy and plotting to control the state power, so they deserve the punishment. The ode to president Putin sung by Fr. Tikhon is loud and clear.

The nationalist issue, undoubtedly, constitutes a big part of the film. Being loyal to the anti-Renaissance stand of Russian Orthodox Church, Fr. Tikhon goes even further, claiming that instead of promotion of independent and free thinking, the Renaissance was a form of Western ideological aggression against the imperial foundation of Byzantium, capable of destroying the core values of the empire. He depicts the vast Byzantine Empire as a political entity unifying different ethnic groups exclusively on the basis of shared faith, of their own accord, without any political calculation or composition.

² А. Караулов, *Неизвестный Путин*, <http://www.obretenie.info/events/russia/putin/putin2.htm> (10.11.2016).

In that ideal empire there were no ethnic conflicts, but deep love for the state. “The people felt the state to be one of their highest personal treasures.” Yet the West came and brought harmful, individualistic ideas, so the people lost faith in their rulers. Instead of sticking to its traditions, which consists, in Tikhon’s opinion, of Orthodoxy and love for the state (an almost exact duplication of Putin’s vision of future Russia united and strengthened by love to the Fatherland and traditional Orthodox faith), Byzantium tried to reform and modernise, as the West demanded, and it paid the price. And Byzantium intellectuals were naturally, following Tikhon’s train of thoughts, the first ones to be tempted by “this Western European renaissance” and betrayed their own tradition.

However, the Western help was an illusion, Roman Catholics faithlessly betrayed and abandoned the Byzantines. The picture of Judas kissing Christ strengthens this on the visual level. The fall of Byzantium is illustrated in the film by Christianity leaving the destroyed Constantinople in form of the four evangelists represented, according to Orthodox tradition, as the man, lion, ox and eagle. The message: If the Russians betray Orthodoxy, they will suffer the same fate.

Immediately after the film had been shown, Russian media plunged into reading its political parallels. The film, shown twice on state television, sharply divided the Russian society. Some criticized it violently, others protected, sparing no effort. Many pointed out that the historical comparisons in the film are strained, that facts filed selectively and outside the historical context.

The film was criticized by leading Russian Byzantinists, such as Alexey Muraviev³, Sergey Ivanov⁴, for unabashed distortion of Byzantine history; on the other hand, siding with Fr. Tikhon came forward historian Dmitry Volodihin⁵, renowned Russian writer Valentin Rasputin⁶, a famous political activist N.A. Narochnitskaya⁷.

³ А. Муравьев, *Тень Гиббона над руинами Царьграда*, <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=60332&topic=562> (10.11.2016).

⁴ С. Иванов, *Факты, основанные на событиях* // «Ежедневный журнал» 10.12.2008, <http://ej.ru/?a=note&id=7768> (10.11.2016).

⁵ Д. Володихин, *Наследие Второго Рима. Опыт краткой апологии* // Агентство политических новостей 13.02.2008, <http://www.apn.ru/opinions/article19181.htm> (10.11.2016).

⁶ В. Распутин, *О фильме «Гибель империи. Византийский урок»* // «Советская Россия», 28.02.2008, <http://www.sovross.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2607> (10.11.2016).

⁷ Н. Нарочницкая, *Споры вокруг Византии* // «Российская газета», № 26, 07.02.2008, <http://vizantia.info/docs/51.htm> (22.12.2016).

Sergei Ivanov, professor of Moscow State University, a leading Russian scholar on Byzantium, noting numerous factual gaffes in the film, says “all this lumps together a 1,000-year history of Byzantium and crudely extrapolates the result to today’s Russia.”⁸ What’s more, the scholar warns against the deepening of isolationism and traditionalism in Russia preached by the film.

Another Russian historian and critic Grigory Revzin notes that the film needs to be viewed in the context of the church tradition whose interpretation on Byzantine history has always been different from the secular knowledge about it. For the Russian Orthodox Church there’s no doubt that Byzantium’s fall was caused not by the Turks’ invasion, but by the union with the West. And the Turks were sent afterwards as God’s punishment. “But standing in the position of the Orthodox Church, it is permissible to marvel at how little about Christianity his film is. He does not mention at all about the development of the Orthodox tradition in the Byzantium, nor about the church teachers, the writers and the philosophers.” “We took from the Greeks the true faith, but what was it — he is silent about it. And the weakest part in the film is our connection with Byzantium.”⁹

It seems to be of little concern to Father Tikhon whether there exists any accepted methodology of drawing historical lessons. Tikhon’s historical consultant Pavel Kuznenko dismissed S. Ivanov’s opinion as “just one of a multitude.”¹⁰ On the movie’s official site he contends, “Sergei Ivanov sees in the film a campaign for increased isolation and traditionalism. But the film clearly and distinctly tells a different story. Conversion must be thought out. Reform — brought to an end. Relations with foreigners — mutually beneficial and equitable.”¹¹ However, the film itself doesn’t allow such inference, when the West is portrayed extremely evil and barbaric in the film, common sense will prevent you from unrealistic claim to build “mutually beneficial and equitable” relations with it. “The film,” Fr. Tikhon claims on the same site, “is absolutely not anti-Western.”¹²

⁸ С. Иванов, *Факты, основанные на событиях* // «Ежедневный журнал» 01.02.2008, <http://ej.ru/?a=note&id=7768> (10.11.2016).

⁹ Г. Ревзин, *Гибель истории. Уроки отца Тихона* // «Коммерсантъ» 31.10.2008, <http://kommersant.ru/doc/847456> (10.11.2016).

¹⁰ С. Бычков, *Византийское зеркало. Новый агитпроп или очередная страшилка?* // «Московский комсомолец» 13.12.2008, <http://www.mk.ru/culture/cinema/article/2008/02/12/55415-vizantiyskoe-zerkalo.html> (10.11.2016).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Archimandrite Tikhon: *The Main Thing Occurring in the Country Today is the Choice of its Path*. 16.10.2008, <http://vizantia.info/docs/165.htm> (10.11.2016).

On the official site of the film there's a section titled "Discussion on the Film." Skimming through, one will find all of the commentary on the film in approving terms. Those comments speak in defence of it and advocate for antagonism between Russia and "the rest of the world." Apart of Fr. Tikhon's own elaborations, former historian and nowadays active politician, N. Narochnitskaya's article stands out from the other reviews. But before one setting about reading it, the first eye-catching detail is her academic title highlighted in stark bold print: Doctor of historical sciences, Head of the Paris Institute of Democracy and Cooperation¹³, the website builders omit, consciously or unconsciously, another title of hers: member of the Committee of Counteraction of Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests which existed under the president of Russian Federation in 2009–2012. Narochnitskaya accused the "liberal critics" of nitpicking details, she contends that "some sketchiness is inevitable in this genre. Otherwise you would need to accompany each argument with volumes of documents."¹⁴ She emphasizes that Russians want a panoramic view of history and there is a pressing need of learning from history and awareness of the obstacle to Russia's "full and equal participation" in a "Eurocentric world." She maintains the opinion that Russia was and still is alienated by the West not because of the common perception in the West that Russia is the aggressor, but because of its stubborn adherence to an alien civilization, which is Byzantine Orthodoxy in this case. She vocalizes the hurt feelings caused by the West's "hostilities, indifference to other cultures, ignorance of cultural heritage within Christianity itself." She articulates the time-honored Russian Idea, asserting the rhetoric of Russian uniqueness and specialness. Russia is destined to go its own path, she argues, development patterns "based on borrowed ideological schemes" are doomed to failure, and the Byzantinism is the essence of Russian uniqueness, it's what Russia has as a counterweight to Western Renaissance and Enlightenment. She exemplifies her point with the 1917 October Revolution that was deemed as the result of

¹³ This is one of the two existing Russian non-governmental organizations abroad financed by the Russian Federation. http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%8F_%D0%90%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B0 (10.11.2016).

¹⁴ Н. Нарочницкая, *Споры вокруг Византии* // «Российская газета», № 26, 07.02.2008, <http://vizantia.info/docs/51.htm> (10.11.2016).

“blind” application of western Marxism to Russian soil, at the same time Russia’s outstanding achievement in 19 century in the overwhelmingly secular literature and arts is accredited by her and her like-minded conservatives to the Orthodoxy as purely and uniquely Russian. Just like in Tikhon’s film, Narochnitskaya in her article mentions little about positive confessional values of the Orthodoxy, the religion functions mainly as a national identity. Like Fr. Tikhon, she identifies the notion of “Orthodox” with “Russian.” The Catholicism was treated in Tikhon’s film not as a faith of Christianity with confessional difference, but as a sworn enemy in political dimension. Narochnitskaya’s view is less radical, but equally nationalistic.

Russian liberal and traditionalist camps have always fought with each other over the “cursed question” whether Russia should adopt the western development pattern or choose an original “Russian” path. The question tore Russian intelligentsia into Westernizers and Slavophiles 200 years ago and is still capable to split the Russians today. Irina Papkova in her article *Saving the Third Rome. “Fall of the Empire”, Byzantium and Putin’s Russia* noted, the Byzantinism is a modern version of the old Third Rome myth,¹⁵ which in the 19th century evolved into Slavophilism. In my opinion, the Russo-centric Byzantinist ideology preached by Fr. Tikhon that Russia is surrounded by a hostile East and West is dangerous, for it directly facilitates isolationism and xenophobia that won’t bring good to Russia. However, the moderate conservatism of the Orthodox-based ideology, the idea of Russian specialness is promoted by Putin’s propaganda and accepted by the Russian public.

A quite similar conservative nationalist thinking is being observed in Russia’s neighbour — China, where the government slogans emphasize the “special national conditions,” advocate to “firmly take the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Instead of Orthodoxy, Confucianism is now seen as the essence of Chinese civilization, dramatically inconsistent with the label of “life-destroying feudal code of ethics” attached to it 100 years ago. Today the philosopher’s birthday is marked each year, and Confucius Institutes opened by Chinese government sparkle controversies in many parts of the world.

Chinese version of the film, which in comparison with the original Russian script turned out to be quite “creative.” Paul St-Pierre viewed

¹⁵ I. Papkova, *Saving the Third Rome. “Fall of the Empire”, Byzantium and Putin’s Russia?*, <http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-xxiv/saving-the-third-rome/> (10.11.2016).

translation as a discourse in the sense that it's a linguistic event produced within a specific historical context,¹⁶ thus it's dependent upon laws and rules of the society the text is being translated to. These conditions determine not only what can be said but also the way in which it can be expressed. I find this point particularly relevant for my analysis. Translation is a form of transformation rather than reproduction. In *The Discourse on Language*, Foucault describes the production of discourse as a process of controls and selections. The second half of my paper is dedicated to illustrate the discursive nature of the Chinese translation of Fr. Tikhon's film, to examine how and for whom the "controls and selections" were made, what role they play in imposing or undermining views and values.

The English, Greek and Serbian translations have been on the official site of the documentary since 2008, the same year as the film was made, whereas the Chinese translation was put there only in 2010. It seems understandable, even in the order of things for Shevkunov to include Greek and Serbian translations, as these nations are key members of the Orthodox world, subsequently are considered allies to hold together in the battle against the evil West. But the presence of Chinese version looks puzzling, after all China stands outside of the Christendom and has little to do with it. Yet China and Russia have similar conditions in some respects. Both countries are vast in territory; both governments implement a policy of strong centralized power and believe that state power has to be strong, otherwise the state will fall apart by virtue of centrifugal forces existing in multinational state; both feel at a disadvantage being "contained" by the "Eurocentric" mainstream and thus push for a new and "equitable" world order; in both Russian and Chinese societies nationalist, or "patriotic" discourses have won the majority of population. From this perspective, the encompassing of Chinese version in the film's website isn't really irrelevant.

In the film Shevkunov himself stars as the narrator. He's not directly involved in the story he relates, but functions as an observer and commentator. His third person narration is intended to give the audience a moralistic lesson, to raise consciousness of his people. Other sources, such as citations from an emperor's decree, or a courtier's memoir, are hierarchically embedded into the "primary" text to give support to his arguments. Fr. Tikhon was careful to ap-

¹⁶ P. St-Pierre, *Translation as a Discourse of History*. // "TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Redaction" 1993, vol. 6, no. 1, , p. 61–82.

pear in the full attire of Russian Orthodox priest, therefore setting Orthodox Russians (which means all of the Russians) as his destined audience, at the same time implying certain sincerity, reliability and insightfulness of his speech as a priest's speech is expected to be. His narrative bears personal trait, as if a priest is talking to his people. In the original film Fr. Tikhon elaborating his personal thoughts and sharing with his Russian compatriots, whereas the overall tone of the narrator in Chinese translation being impersonal and rather official, solemn, as if the narrator is announcing some infallible, incontrovertible truth, and the assumed audience is the vast anonymous mass of the whole Chinese population. The narrator's assertive tone is much like the tone of an ancient Chinese historical chronicler, slow, dignified, grandeur. Thus the implied significance of an Orthodox priest-narrator isn't retained in the Chinese context, but instead, reconstructed into something else.

The difference in narrator's voice required a series of linguistic adjustments to reach the goal in the Chinese translation, including omitting informal structures, employing written vocabulary, using classical narrative patterns from historical chronicles and making more use of short sentences. When Tikhon adopts the oral structures, saying “посмотрите”, “как видите”, “неплохой орган, правда?” it sounds heavy and clumsy in the Chinese version for the impersonal tone has to be used in a personal address. So, when possible, the translator simply leaves such oral structures out. For illustration purposes I will juxtapose some parts of the original with its English and Chinese translations:

И по сей день музеи Европы ломятся от награбленных византийских сокровищ. Но будем учитывать, что уцелевшее — это лишь самая небольшая часть.

To this day, the museums of Europe are bursting with stolen Byzantine treasures. But let us take into consideration that only a small portion was actually preserved.

今天欧洲各大博物馆堆满了从拜占庭洗劫来的各种稀世珍宝。而这些流传下来的珍宝只是当时拜占庭所有珍宝中的很小一部分。(Today the museums of Europe are full of looted Byzantine treasures. And what is preserved today made up only a small portion of all of the Byzantine treasures.)

The Chinese translation omitted the phrase “let us take into consideration” which served as a reminder of the narrator's presence, his train of thoughts, as a result the Chinese text looks more like a fragment from some high school historical textbook. The rather lively

and hyperbolic word “ломиться” (burst) is replaced by a straight-faced neutral word 堆满 (full of). And the word “treasure” is translated with a four-character idiom 稀世珍宝, which is used in numerous brochures and TV shows to refer to royal collection of the Winter Palace in Beijing that was looted by British and French troops in 1860. So that to an average Chinese, this episode of Byzantine history can be easily associated with an analog from our own history.

There are other examples, where phrases bearing distinct informal spoken style were replaced in Chinese with neutral explanatory phrases, covering up the emotional layer with calm, objective narrative:

Вообще с преемниками в Византии была беда!.. Хотя уж кто-кто, а византийцы были лучшими в мире специалистами по преемникам.

Byzantium in general had quite a problem with her “successors,” although the Byzantines were the greatest specialists in the world in the area of royal succession.

拜占庭在继承皇位问题上也出现了问题 (Byzantium also had problems with selecting successors), 尽管其他国家也有这方面的经验 (although other countries had some experiences in this field), 但拜占庭人在皇位继承方面是世界上最好的专家(yet the Byzantines were the greatest specialists in the world in the area of royal succession).

Instead of the informal structure of Russian “беда с чем,” Chinese version employs the neutral structure of “have problems with sth.” The structure of “уж кто-кто” gives the sentence a spontaneous tone, in Chinese translation it was replaced with rather long explanatory phrase of “other countries had some experiences in this field” which sounds much more bookish. Below is another example:

Те полезли: «Мы тоже европейцы!» — вдруг осознали они.

These nationalities took the bait, exclaiming suddenly, “We are also Europeans!”

塞尔维亚人和保加利亚人开始攀附欧洲人 (The Serbs and Bulgarians began to follow the Europeans), 他们恍然大悟地说: “我们也是欧洲人!” (they suddenly became enlightened and said: “We are also Europeans!”).

The Russian verb “полезть” has a meaning of “start to move somewhere to attack someone,” of informal style. Chinese version replaces it with an explanatory phrase of neutral style: “follow the Europeans.”

To keep in line with the stately tone of the Chinese narrator, his overall language style is made remarkably more literary.

В 1453 году рухнула (collapsed) Византийская империя.
 In 1453, the Byzantine Empire fell.
 拜占庭帝国于公元1453年灭亡(came to an end).

While in Russian language «рухнуть» is a stylistically neutral verb which can be used both in everyday oral communication and in written language, the Chinese word 灭亡 can be met only in written sphere. The same with the example below:

В Византии была создана самая стабильная в истории человечества финансовая система, просуществовавшая практически в неизменном виде более 1000 лет.

The most stable financial system in the history of mankind was created in Byzantium, and existed in a nearly unaltered form for over 1000 years.

拜占庭建立了人类历史上最稳定的金融体系，这一体系几乎原封不动地存续 (preserved and maintained) 了一千年。

Whereas “просуществовать” belonging to a written style for general public, 存续 is a verb of high written style, extremely formal.

Инженерное искусство и архитектура Византии не имели себе равных, да и сегодня шедевры византийских мастеров, такие как купол Святой Софии, поражают совершенством технического исполнения.

Byzantine engineering and architectural arts were unrivalled. Even today, such famous works by Byzantine masters as the domes of the Hagia Sophia amaze the world with their technological perfection.

拜占庭的工程学和建筑艺术在当时无可匹敌，像索菲亚教堂穹顶这样一些出自拜占庭艺术大师的杰作，以其精湛技艺，至今令人叹为观止 (makes you lost in wonder)。

The Russian verb “поражать” was conveyed by a four-character idiom 叹为观止 which originated from ancient Chinese chronicle dating back to around 500 BC, it has a distinct highbrow flavour, the literal meaning being: praise what one sees as the ultimate perfection.

Sometimes the translator employs popular narrative patterns from Chinese historical chronicles which have strong archaic dynastical connotations:

На территории Византии в период расцвета проживала шестая часть населения земли. Империя простиралась от Гибралтара до Евфрата и Аравии. В нее входили территории современных Греции и Турции...

During its height, Byzantium was home to one sixth of the entire world population. The Empire stretched from Gibraltar to the Euphrates and Arabia. It encompassed the territories of modern Greece and Turkey...

THE FALL OF BYZANTINE EMPIRE...

在拜占庭帝国鼎盛 (height of power and splendors) 时期, 其人口占世界人口六分之一, 帝国版图西起 (territory begins in the west at...) 直布罗陀, 东至 (ends in the east at...) 幼发拉底河和阿拉伯半岛。领土包括今天希腊, 土耳其...

In this example what we see is a typical structure much used in historical chronicles to describe a dynasty's territorial extent, that "the territory begins in the west at... ends in the east at...", although there was no such a pattern in the original text. A dynasty's peak period is called 鼎盛, 鼎: an ancient cooking vessel with two loop handles and three or four legs, in chronicles was used as symbol of dynasty.

The assertive tone of Chinese narrator is sustained also by the comparatively short sentence structures. Comparing the original and its English/Chinese translations, it becomes evident that most of the long, complex Russian sentences can be neatly translated into English maintaining the same complex sentence structure, while the Chinese translation usually breaks down complex sentences into several short simple sentences. For example:

Можно себе представить, да и история говорит нам о том же, / что грубые и невежественные скандинавы, германцы, франки, англосаксы, / для которых основным способом существования был в те времена примитивный разбой, / попадая из какого-нибудь Парижа или Лондона с населением в десятки тысяч человек в миллионный мегаполис, / в город просвещенных горожан, ученых, блистательно одетой молодежи, / толпящейся у императорского университета, / только и мечтали об одном: захватить и ограбить, ограбить и захватить.

One can only imagine—indeed, history records it as such—/ how crude, ignorant Scandinavians, Germans, Franks, and Anglo-Saxons, / whose chief occupation at the time was primitive sacking and pillage, after arriving from some town like Paris or London (which had populations of some tens of thousands) to this megalopolis of millions, / a city of enlightened citizens, scholars, and elegantly dressed youths / crowding imperial universities, / dreamt of only one thing: invading and robbing, robbing and invading.

可以想象下面的情形 (One can imagine the following situation), 而历史告诉我们这种情形是真实存在的 (and history tells us that the situation really existed, 当时斯堪的纳维亚人, 日耳曼人, 法兰克人和盎格鲁撒克逊人生存的主要手段是原始性掠夺 (at that time chief occupation of Scandinavians, Germans, Franks, and Anglo-Saxons was primitive pillage). 当这些愚蠢而又无知的异域人从人口只有区区数万人的巴黎或者伦敦来到拥有百万人口的君士坦丁堡, (when these stupid and ignorant men of foreign lands arrived from Paris or London with populations of some tens of thousands to this megalopolis of millions), 看见城市居民和学者富有素养 (saw enlightened citizens, scholars), 看见年轻人衣着得体并集聚在帝国大学门口的时候 (saw youths elegantly dressed and crowding at the imperial university's gate), 心中只有一个念头: 劫掠并占有这座城市 (thought of only one thing: invading and robbing).

Short sentence makes the tone more affirmative. Besides, it more corresponds to habitual forms of Chinese expression. If the translator mechanically took the long sentence structures from the original, it would sound unnatural and too “exotic,” like the translated foreign films in our country in 1980s during Deng Xiao Ping’s reform, when communist China for the first time opened its door to foreign culture. All characters from foreign films, regardless of whether it was a tragedy or comedy, spoke the same “exotic” foreign Chinese. Now Chinese translators are more aware of the difference in linguistic pattern between Chinese and European languages. Both English and Russian are hypotactic languages, where message of a speaker can be conveyed through punctuation, conjunctions, prepositions and unlimited expansion of convergence between the sentences, like a tree with a trunk and many secondary branches; the Chinese, on the contrary, is a paratactic language which means the relationship between sentences is mainly expressed through word semantics, generally one sentence expresses one meaning. It’s a bamboo structured language.

Apart from linguistic adjustments, there were a fair amount of cultural revisions in Chinese translation. According to Russian scholar Yuri Lotman, any text is characterized not only by message, but also by assumption of a specific type of audience and shared memory between the addresser and addressee. A successful communication with anyone is possible only with the presence of a shared system of cultural codes, or shared memory (culture itself is a type of collective memory¹⁷). So the poorer the memory, the more detailed should be the message, the less ellipsis or silent hint there should be, otherwise it would cause confusion. A film made for contemporary Russian viewers as its target audience, when being translated into Chinese and perceived by Chinese audience, its message could be distorted or even completely missing due to the change of the “shared memory.” Let’s take a look at the sentences below:

...нахлынувшие в Европу византийские деньги и сокровища начал создавать тот самый знаменитый капитализм с его неумной жадной наживы, которая, по сути, является генетическим продолжением азарта военного грабежа. В результате спекуляции константинопольскими реликвиями образовались первые крупные еврейские капиталы.

...with the help of Byzantine riches pouring in, developed that famous capitalism with its inevitable lust for profits, which is essentially a sort of genetic

¹⁷ Ю. Лотман, *Текст и структура аудитории // idem, История и типология русской культуры*, Искусство, С.-Петербург 2002, с. 169–174.

continuation of the sport of military plunder. The first significant Jewish capital was a result of speculation in Byzantine relics.

欧洲人用这些来自拜占庭的金钱和珍宝开始建立资本主义制度，这一制度以其对财富的贪婪著称。资本主义制度实际上是欧洲人战争掠夺行为的延续。通过倒卖拜占庭的遗产，产生了第一批大犹太资本家 (Jewish capitalists).

In Chinese translation the “Jewish capital” was replaced by “Jewish capitalists.” In the film Tikhon’s anti-Semitic attitude leads him to imply that Jews were the creators of capitalism and all of capitalism’s ills. Chinese audience are unfamiliar with scapegoating of the Jews, they know little about the special close association between Jews and capitalism, and therefore few would understand what kind of “Jewish capital” Tikhon was talking about. In regard of film translation, when there is a time-synchronization requirement at work, a detailed historical explanation is unrealistic. So the Chinese version used “the first significant Jewish capitalists” instead of “capital,” making the logic simpler and more reasonable for the Chinese to understand, that robbed money made some people rich.

Many critics mentioned Tikhon’s usage of modern words and imagery from today’s political life to depict Byzantine realia. While his conspicuous usage of words from today’s political life was aimed to make sure that every Russian viewer would catch the moral of his film “properly”, the Chinese translator seems to be doing the opposite, erasing the overly clear allusion to contemporary Russian politics, so that Chinese audience can draw their own lessons from the Byzantine history. Phenomena such as “oligarch,” “vertical power structure” or “stabilization funds” are much discussed in post-Soviet era, therefore bear distinct brand of the times. “Oligarch” is one of the key words appearing in Russian media with high frequency, to many Russians it associates with names of “Berezovsky,” “Gusinsky,” “Khodorkovsky” and other public enemies the people ought to be got rid of. The word is linked in public opinion with implicit notions of dishonesty, dirty deals, Jewish background, and public hatred. Fr. Tikhon’s documentary is to give currency to the shared or collective narratives¹⁸ widely articulated in contemporary Russia.

The equivalent of “oligarch” in Chinese 寡头 is linked exclusively with the financial oligarchy in mature capitalist societies such as the U.S., it is a pretty modern word to Chinese audience and wouldn’t

¹⁸ S.A. Harding, ‘How Do I Apply Narrative Theory?’ *Socio-narrative theory in translation studies*, http://www.academia.edu/3535725/_How_Do_I_Apply_Narrative_Theory_Socio-narrative_theory_in_translation_studies (10.11.2016).

fit well in a feudal historical context. In Chinese version the word “oligarch” is replaced by the word “nobility”. So the power struggle in Byzantine court between the emperor and social elite lost its strongly pronounced contemporary coloration and is unaffectedly blended in ordinary discourse on European history. On hearing the word “nobility”, or “aristocracy” a Chinese film-viewer would imagine a typical European model of the power struggles between monarch and nobility. Compared with its Chinese version, the original text of the film script seems more politically explicit, while its Chinese translation more universal, less Russia-oriented.

Another example of this “muffling effort” is how the Chinese translator treated Tikhon’s description of the number of cities in Byzantium. While the digital technology of the film reproduces the glory and grandeur of Byzantine civilization, accompanied by a mighty background music, Tikhon recites the outstanding achievements of the Byzantine culture. Implying the close connection between Russia and Byzantine Empire, he gives a statistic comparison:

В Византии было около 1000 городов — почти столько же, сколько в современной России.

There were around one thousand cities in Byzantium—nearly as many as in modern Russia.

帝国境内大约有1000座城市 (There were around one thousand cities in the empire).

As we can see, the Chinese version simply skipped the latter part of the sentence while the English version remains faithful to the original. Being politically incorrect can cause serious consequences in China and any political judgment in media must maintain consistency with the official stand, so overly clear allusion to contemporary Russian political situation could be far from desirable to the pragmatic Chinese censorship.

Another term with distinctive characteristics of contemporary times used to describe Byzantine history is the “vertical power structure.” The vertical of power refers to “a set of measures taken in Russia during the presidency of Yeltsin and Putin to centralize and consolidate state power.”¹⁹ As we can see, the term is explicitly linked

¹⁹http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8_%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8_%D0%B2_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8 (10.11.2016).

with today's Russian political life. In Chinese version it is conveyed bluntly with a literal translation of its components. Since the majority of Chinese audience is unfamiliar with the term, few people would know what it is. Only through the context, with the narrator's telling going on, one could vaguely reach its meaning of a strong centralized power against rebellious and separatist aristocracy. To Tikhon's target audience — the contemporary Russians, on hearing the term they will instantly recall what they've gone through recently, or in Lotman's word, "the shared memory."²⁰ Specific code brings back a specific type of rhetorical situation, where the "vertical power" is interpreted as a war of justice waged by Putin against the separatist tendencies in Russian Federation. However vague the term could be to the Chinese audience, a war of central government against separatism is by no means unknown to them. They would quickly realize that the "vertical power structure" is something roughly equal to their own official slogan of "strengthen national unity and oppose ethnic separatism." Thus the Chinese viewers will recognize their own relevant historical similarities in the power struggle of the Byzantine court. The film translator didn't seem to make any effort to convey the underlying connotation about Russia, but in silent let its viewers to figure out their own speculation.

Orthodoxy, as it is represented in the film, was not only the eastern branch of Christian faith, but a kind of ideological basis, which united people of different nationalities and formed the Byzantine identity that distinguished inhabitants of the empire from their barbarian neighbours.

It was enough for any pagan or foreigner to accept the Orthodox Faith, and confirm it in deed, in order to become a full member of society. The only foreign elements for the Byzantines were people who were strange to Orthodox morals and to the ancient Byzantine culture and perception of the world. For example, coarse, ignorant, money-grubbing Western Europeans...

Tikhon condemns the "Western" Renaissance for it spread the "fever of nationalistic idea," unknown previously to the innocent hearts of the Byzantines. Nationalism is equaled by him to paganism, therefore, to the denial of Christian traditions. However, to average Chinese audience "the West" equals to "the Europe," Renaissance is also called by Chinese historians "the European Renaissance." Few people realize that to the Russians it is a foreign cultural-historical phe-

²⁰ Ю. Лотман, *Текст и структура аудитори...*

nomenon, too. In the Chinese version, the nationalistic idea, which Tikhon labeled as a “fever,” was translated with a more horrible word “plague”, thus made the attack against nationalism especially aggressive. Maybe to the Chinese translator the thought of “betrayal” of imperial ideal was even more outrageous than it was to Tikhon.

As the research demonstrated, in the process of translation of a text from one language society to another, the text will convey different meaning according to the dominant power discourse in this society, which disseminate and strengthen themselves in the translation. In this process some things are sayable, while other ones are not. The function of Chinese translation of Fr. Tikhon’s documentary is far from neutral and plays an overtly political role. Keeping pace with Chinese official stance, it highlights anti-separatist discourse, downplaying the anti-Semitic rhetoric, basking in the ancient glory of a mighty empire, raising alarm against unfaithful officials in the imperial court. Meanwhile, some overly clear allusions to today’s political situation in Russia, potentially unwanted for Chinese censorship, were cut out from the translation. The translation didn’t just neutrally reflect the content of original, but played an active role in creating and changing it.

Yet the Chinese translation is being loyal to the original in another sense: like the Russian text, it is concerned with what “useful” message to deliver to its own audience. It intentionally erases close allusions to contemporary Russia’s politics, making effort to ensure that Chinese audience can draw their own lessons from Byzantium’s fall. However, my search for online reviews of this film in Chinese yielded no result: it seems that the film wasn’t showed on any of Chinese TV channels, nor was it included in Chinese video websites.

Лайна Ли

*ГИБЕЛЬ ИМПЕРИИ. ВИЗАНТИЙСКИЙ УРОК О. ТИХОНА
И ЕГО КИТАЙСТКИЙ ПЕРЕВОД*

Резюме

Публицистический фильм *Гибель империи. Византийский урок* вызвал бурную общественную реакцию. Говорящий якобы об исторических уроках, фильм явно намекает на современную политическую ситуацию в России, противопоставляя Россию остальному миру. Данная статья проводит сравнительный анализ оригинального сценария фильма и его китайского перевода, чтобы выявить контекстуально характер отношений между переводом и ори-

THE FALL OF BYZANTINE EMPIRE...

гинальным текстом. Используя теорию перевода Мишеля Фуко, автор описывает перевод как процесс производства дискурса. Рассмотрев тон рассказчика и ряд лингвистических, а также культурологических изменений, внесенных переводчиком, автор статьи приходит к выводу, что китайский перевод был далек от нейтрального и играл откровенно политическую роль. Он намеренно стирает намеки на политику современной России, делая усилия, чтобы китайские зрители извлекали свои «собственные» уроки из падения Византии, или вернее, из падения Советского Союза. Перевод выдвигает на первый план точки, соответствующие китайской официальной позиции, в то время выкидывая те, которые были бы нежелательными для китайской цензуры.

Lina Ye

UPADEK IMPERIUM. LEKCJA BIZANCJUM O. TICHONA I JEGO CHIŃSKI PRZEKŁAD

Streszczenie

Publicystyczny film *Upadek imperium. Lekcja Bizancjum* wywołał burzliwą reakcję społeczną. Mówiący o określonej historycznej lekcji, film ten wyraźnie odsyła do współczesnej sytuacji Rosji, przeciwstawiając ten kraj reszcie cywilizowanego świata. W artykule została przeprowadzona porównawcza analiza oryginalnego scenariusza filmu i jego chińskiego przekładu, zmierzająca do ukazania kontekstualnego charakteru relacji między przekładem i oryginalnym tekstem. Wykorzystując teorię przekładu wypracowaną przez Michela Foucaulta, autorka opisuje przekład jako proces produkcji dyskursu. Badając nacechowanie stylistyczne wypowiedzi narratora oraz wprowadzonych przez tłumacza zmiany w zakresie zjawisk językowych i kulturowych, autorka dochodzi do wniosku, że chiński przekład jest daleki od neutralności i odgrywa wyraźną rolę polityczną. Świadomie zaciera on aluzja do współczesnej polityki Rosji, zmierzając do tego, by chińscy widzowie wyciągnęli „własne” wnioski wynikające z upadku Bizancjum, czy dokładniej: z upadku Związku Radzieckiego. Przekład wysuwa na pierwszy plan te elementy, które odpowiadają oficjalnej chińskiej ideologii państwowej, redukując te, które nie byłyby tolerowane przez chińską cenzurę.