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EDMUND CAMPION'S *RATIONES DECEM*:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POLISH AND
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

The main object of this study is a sixteenth century printed work first published in 1581 by the English Jesuit, Edmund Campion. I would like to begin by giving you a brief history of the text, *Rationes Decem*, this in turn shall be followed by a summary of the translated editions of this text, namely Piotr Skarga's and Kaspar Wilkowski's translations both of which were published in Vilnius in the year 1584, three years after the first edition was published. I should also like to briefly describe the English translation of 1632. In conducting the analysis of these texts, I have made use of two translation theories. One of these theoretical frameworks is based on the one developed by Polish writer and translator, Edward Balcerzan in 1968, a descriptive theory that enumerates four techniques, reduction, inversion substitution and elaboration (Balcerzan, 1998). The other theory called polysystem theory was first developed by the Jewish cultural historian, Itamar Even-Zohar and allows for the interpretation of a text in its social, historical, and literary context (Zohar, 1990). One aspect of this theory proved particularly useful in this analysis, namely that it allows one to take into consideration the translator and how his intention and other socio-cultural factors that affect him, in turn, influenced the translated text. To demonstrate, how I have applied these theories, I shall provide a sample of the comparative analysis in the later using the four texts.

Following the reinforcement of the Act of Uniformity of 1580 and 1581, Catholics found themselves deprived of the freedom of worship and without any pastoral guidance. In order to address this need, some Catholic priests came to England after having completed their theological

studies abroad in Louvain. Under the real and looming threat of arrest and eventual execution, these priests nonetheless devoted themselves to the enormous tasks of attending to the Catholic faithful throughout the country who refused to acknowledge the Established Protestant Church. It was a tall task to fulfill especially when one considers the number priests available. In fact, Edmund Campion was one of the first to arrive in the British Isles precisely to take part in the English Mission. Upon arriving in the British Isles for the English Mission, Campion wrote a letter to the Council of Advisers and Senate of the English Realm, otherwise known as the *Challenge* or the *Brag*. Here Campion not openly confessed himself as a Jesuit but also challenged the theologians of the country to a public dispute. We know from a letter that Campion wrote to the Jesuit General Everard Mercury that he made sure that this letter reached the Queen and that he himself carried a copy so that in case of arrest he would be easily identified as the author of the letter. In this same letter Campion likewise wrote that while the challenge was widely commented by pastors in different Churches, no one openly accepted the challenge (Campion, *Ten Reasons*, 2004).

The head of the first so-called English Mission was Robert Persons, who was also perhaps the one who first gave the idea of writing the *Rationes Decem* itself, most probably after having realized how powerful the *Challenge* as a text had been having apparently converted many to the Faith. Persons was likewise aware of another thing, that a kind of defense had to be written particularly addressed to the academic communities of Oxford and Cambridge and since Campion, whose rhetorical skills were still well remembered in Oxford, where he had studied and briefly worked as lecturer prior to his conversion. Campion then set to write the text, while Persons sought to organize his “magic press” in Lady Stonor’s house, some twenty miles from London (Campion, 2004).

Campion begins writing the *Rationes Decem, quibus fretus, certamen adversariis obtulit in cause fidei, Edmundus Campianus, et Societate Nominis Iesu Prebyster: Allegatei Ad clarissimos viros, nostrates Academicos* [Ten Reasons in which Edmund Campion of the Society of Jesus, priest, insisted in his Challenge, to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge]

most probably some time in late autumn of 1580. In this less than 10,000 word text, Campion, by an exact exegesis of the texts not only of the Bible, Early Fathers of the Church, the early Church Councils but also of the most prominent Protestant theologians such as Zwingli, Calvin, Luther, and Beza, argues against Protestant Theology. By March 1581 the draft was ready to be proofread and by June, it was ready to be distributed. The next step was to insure the wide distribution of the text among representatives of the Academe, and so the event that was chosen was the Commencement Act in the Church of St. Mary in Oxford, when the suplicants of degrees defend their thesis hence it was an event, which insured the presence of most of the academics of the university. William Hartley, himself a former fellow of Campion at St. John's College in Oxford, undertook the task of distributing the text, perhaps as he was most familiar with the proceedings of this event. The Jesuit Robert Persons, the head of the English Mission at that time, best describes the reception of the text (Reynolds, 1980, p. 102-103).

By most ingenious means – at one time mixing with such as he knew, at another with strangers, he was enabled to distribute more than four hundred copies, giving them partly to those who knew of the work or to those who were led by curiosity to see what it was, partly leaving copies in the Church of St. Mary. Great was the consternation of the university when the copies were found. There was at first a most unusual silence, and so furtively intent were many in perusing the book that never perhaps was discourse listened to with greater apathy than on this occasion. The professors and fellows who knew not as at what had occurred, wondered at the unusual silence. When the meeting came to a close and the when affair was noised abroad, men's minds were swayed according as devotion or hatred moved them.

It is worth adding that the “*Rationes Decem*” was Campion's last text as a freeman, for a week after its printing he was arrested and detained for six months until he was finally tortured, put on public trial, and executed. The text, however, was destined to withstand all forms of criticisms and repression through time (Campion, *Ten Reasons*, 2004).

It likewise naturally provoked disputes from the leading theologians of the time. Within the years 1581–1584, William Clarke, Meredith

Hanmer, William Fulke, Lawrence Humphrey, William Whitaker, John Field, Alexander Nowell, and William Day published replies. It is likewise worth adding that in seventeenth century Poland in 1610 and 1615, the Polish Arian, Thomas Pisecius, would also publish his reply (Pisecki a Martowice, 1610). The *Rationes Decem* itself, as Pollen notes would see up to 47 later editions including editions printed in Vilnius in 1594 and in Kraków in 1605, plus four translations into English, published the same year, 1584, and in the same place in Vilnius. Moreover, numerous editions of the *Rationes* can be found in various libraries in the country.

So far I have established that editions of the *Rationes Decem* can be found in the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdansk, in the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, in the University of Wrocław Library and the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław, in the Krasinski Palace Library and the University of Warsaw Library in Warsaw. While in Kraków alone I have found editions of the *Rationes Decem* in the Jagiellonian Library, Czartoryski Library, and in the libraries of the Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans. While the very first edition of 1581 can be found in the Braniewo Collection of the University of Uppsala, a collection that once belonged to the Braniewo Jesuit College until the collection of the college library was sacked by the Swedes in the late eighteenth century.

The statement that E. Reynolds writes in his book *Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580–81*, in which he argues “Since *Rationes Decem* was written in Latin as were the replies and counter replies, its impact was limited,” can now be corrected as I have established that many editions of the *Rationes* have been reprinted in Latin up through the early eighteenth in many parts of Europe – Mainz, Paris, Rouen, Rome, Vienna, Cologne, Ingolstadt, Antwerp, Prague, Vilnius, and Kraków. Moreover, so far I have also found later translations into modern languages such as German, French, Italian, and Polish in addition to the 1631 English translation. I also found an early seventeenth century response by Polish Arian theologian Thomas Pisecki printed in 1610 and 1615 (Pisecki a Martowice, 1610). What is striking is that many of the later Latin editions and German, French, and Polish translations

can be found in various libraries in Poland as well. This surely attests to the fact that, contrary to what Reynolds has written, there was indeed a very keen interest in the *Rationes*.

The two Polish translations of 1584 had been thoroughly transcribed by Magdalena Smulewska in her MA thesis, where she likewise provides a history of these two editions (Smulewska, 2005). Piotr Skarga's translation is connected with another equally impressive story of yet another English Jesuit, James Bosgrave. We find references to the *Rationes* in the correspondences between the Papal Nuncio Calligheri, the Polish King Stephan Bathory, and the Wojewode of Vilnius and Nieswieza, Mikolaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł. As Urszula Szumska narrates, Calligheri writes to Bathory requesting him to intervene for James Bosgrave, a mathematics professor of the Academy of Vilnius who was also imprisoned with Edmund Campion. After three years of imprisonment, freedom is eventually granted to Bosgrave and in gratitude the Papal Nuncio grants Bathory the *Rationes Decem* as a token of gratitude. Bathory in various correspondences with the prominent noblemen of the time – who were Calvinists – recommends that the *Rationes* be read. Bathory likewise has the book sent to a convert to Catholicism, Mikolaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, who in turn on behalf of the king asked Piotr Skarga, then rector of the Academy of Vilnius to translate the book into Polish (Szumska, 1938, p. 91).

Skarga's translation of the *Rationes Decem*, as he mentions in the title page includes two letters and a short account of Campion's martyrdom "for a better understanding of the text (Campion, *Dziesięć Wywodow*, 1584, ii)." The edition begins with a preface written by Skarga in which he addresses the reader saying that in this book, the reader shall be acquainted with the weaknesses of the adversaries of the Church who though far greater in number "could not gather themselves to accept the intellectual challenge to a dispute made by a single man." This is followed by Campion's *Challenge*. Campion's letter to the Jesuit Father General in Rome, Everard Mercury, in turn precedes this. Next comes what seems to be the standard texts printed in the various editions of the *Rationes* that I have inspected that is the letter to the academic community and the *Rationes Decem* proper. A detailed account

of Campion's arrest, torture, trial, and martyrdom is likewise included in the end. Finally, Skarga closes this edition with a brief afterword, in which he invokes the reader to pray for the Catholics of England and of Poland lest they suffer a similar fate. I must add that of all of the *Rationes* editions that I have inspected, this particular edition, as of the moment, has been the most complete one. Skarga by publishing the three letters and the martyrdom of Campion along with the text of the *Rationes* provides the reader with the necessary texts for the full appreciation of the context of the text.

Another edition, equally interesting and unique is another Polish translation by Kaspar Wilkowski published likewise in Vilnius in 1584. Kaspar Wilkowski was the court physician of Mikolaj Radziwiłł. Though nothing is yet known of his early life and education, we do know that he studied medicine in Germany and Italy. He was raised as an Arian, that is a member of a Calvinist *Ecclesia Minor* also known as Polish Brethren. In 1583 Wilkowski converted to Catholicism and then moved from Lublin to Vilnius to become the court physician and proprietor of the Catholic printing press in Vilnius. Wilkowski opens his edition by dedicating it to the Polish Queen, Anna Jagiellonczyk, commending her virtues and contrasting her to Elizabeth I, whom he calls a "murderer" by accusing her of yielding to the false counsels of her advisers and implicating her of the murder of one of the country's most learned men. This dedicatory preface is immediately followed by the *Rationes*. The *Rationes* is in turn followed by a short explanation of the context of the text. It provides a brief summary of the letters that Campion writes to the Council and to the professors of Oxford and Cambridge. Then follows a short reply to an "antidotum," that is an anonymous text, which addresses an earlier text printed by Wilkowski in which he explains the reasons for his conversion from Arianism. Striking similarities appear in both Skarga's and Wilkowski's texts. They both stress Campion's excellent scholarship and fine rhetoric. Both authors obviously had at their disposal Campion's letters and an account of the martyrdom. While Skarga translates Campion's two letters, the letter to the Privy Council and the letter to the Father Jesuit General Everard Mercury, Wilkowski provides a summary of both letters in the Campion's biography at the

end of the edition. They both mention Whitaker's and Drury's texts and so were aware of the polemical debate surrounding the text. Finally they both express the gross injustice of not only of depriving an academic the right to an open intellectual dispute, but of suppressing his scholarship by crude force.

The English translation of 1632 was obviously translated by a priest as he says in his translator's epistle to the reader, "having ever allotted certain howers from the dailie exercising of my function of Priesthood (1632, p. 14)", as most probably published in London. It was in all probability an edition translated for the Jesuits' as he says, "since you are all members of that Societie, in which he dyed. (Campion, *Ten Reasons*, 1632, aii)." This is followed by the translator's epistle to the reader, in which Campion's "exquisite Latin" is often praised (Campion, *Ten Reasons*, 1632, 15), the letter to the Academics of Oxford and Cambridge and finally the text of the *Rationes Decem*.

The word count itself can clearly summarize the differences in the texts. While the original text written in Latin, has a word count of only 8470, Piotr Skarga's translation counts 9881 words, Kaspar Wilkowski 14377 while the English translation of 1631 has about 10545 words. It is most probable that the reason for this large difference in the number of words result from the need to use substitution or even elaboration as translation techniques (Smulewska, 2005, xxvi). With respect to the text of the *Rationes Decem* itself techniques such as inversion or reduction seem hardly used especially since all the editions maintain the same order of chapters except for the usual addition of the translator's preface of the ten reasons printed in the same order and the short conclusions. All editions except Wilkowski's translation, print the letter to the Academicians at the beginning of the text while Wilkowski merely paraphrases this letter in the chapter of the edition devoted to the short biography of Campion.

Examples of substitution can be seen for instance in the example below:

The First Reason: The Sacred Scriptures

Source Text (ST):

Quid Luther ut Epistolam Iacobi "contentiosam, timidam, aridum,

stramineam,” flagitiosus apostate nommaret, et “indignam spiritu censeret apostolico?” Desperatio. (18 words)

Skarga’s Target Text (STT):

Co przywiodło Lutra, iż sam będąc zbrodniem i apostata List św. Jakuba nazwał swarliwym, nadętym, suchym, słomianym i ducha apostołskiego niegodnym? Rozpacz. (22 words)

Wilkowski’s Target Text:

Tych zasię czasów, z której przyczyny Luter list Jakuba świętego swarliwym, nadętym, suchym, słomianym nazwał i nieprzystojnym być duchowi apostołskiemu sądził? Z desperacyjej. (23 words)

English Target Text:

What induced Luther (that flagitious Apostata) to alleviate the worth of the Epistle of St. James, by stiling it *Contentious, swelling, dry flawy, and unworthy the spirit of an Apostle?* Desperation. (31 words)

We can see on the basis of this example the extent of the substitution and at some other areas transformation undergone in the translations. The original text of 18 words is rendered in 22 words in Skarga’s translation, 23 in Wilkowski’s and up to 31 in the English translation. Moreover, we likewise see some changes in the cases. While in the original text, the adjectives describing “Epistolam Jacobi” are composed right next to the object and are maintained in the same Accusative Case, both the Polish translations change it into the Instrumental Case, as the verb “nazwać [to name]” requires the object in such a case. The English translation introduces the adjectives in the predicative nominative, “by stiling it *Contentious, swelling, dry flawy, and unworthy the spirit of an Apostle?*” Another significant difference in the translations is the change of word order, while in the original we have “Quid Luther ut Epistolam ... nomaret” becomes “Co przywiodło Lutra [What made Luther]” in Skarga’s translation, “Tych zasię czasów, z której przyczyny Luter” [In those early times, for what reason Luther] in Wilkowski’s translation to the English “What induced Luther to alleviate ...” In Wilkowski’s translation, we see how elaboration is employed by the use of an additional adverbial phrase “tych zasię czasów.” While when

comparing the English translation to the Latin original. In the English we have the Accusative with the infinitival verb form "What induced Luther to alleviate" substitutes the original and change of sentence structure "What induced Luther to alleviate" from the sentence, "Quid Lutheram ut Epistolam nomarret."

A close study of the texts likewise provides us with information as to the probable context and readership for which these editions were published. As I have already mentioned, the English translation of 1632, as can be clearly deduced from the translator's preface, was addressed to the English-speaking Jesuits, however, the translator's letter to the reader, does allow us to speculate that the edition was meant for any English speaker both Protestant or Catholic, "to turne my self to thee good Reader) if thou be Catholike, I could with thee to peruse this Treatie for thy greater corroboration ... if a Protestant (as, o, too many thousands in our poore Country are) then for thy instruction and Conversion (Campion, *Ten Reasons*, 1632, 29)." Skarga's edition was most probably meant for a very wider Polish readership as it includes a detailed account of Campion's life and publishes the letters. It can also be presumed that his readers, such as clergymen or noblemen, knew enough Latin to be able to tolerate the Latinized grammatical structure transferred onto the Polish translation of the Polish. Wilkowski's edition dedicated to the Polish Queen is a definitely popularized edition as it includes a more expounded and descriptive translation. As recent Polish philologists have recently observed, editions usually dedicated to a female patron were in all probability meant for female readers, and as they were not that familiar with Latin, hence were translated in more popularized Polish (Maszarykowa-Psun, 2006, 70-72). This could also explain why, contrary to the other editions, there is a commentary or an explanation at the end of each chapter. The fact that at the end of the book, the author includes a short "Antidotum" explaining the reason for the translator's conversion, suggests that this edition was meant either as an "apologetical work," most probably to complement the translator's other known printed work "Nawrocenie" printed in 1583. Finally, Skarga's edition proves in one respect to be catered to the reader with no background at all on Campion. It was most probably meant

for a very wider Polish readership as it includes a detailed account of Campion's life and publishes the letters. It can also be presumed that his readers, probably clergymen or noblemen, knew enough Latin to be able to tolerate the Latinized grammatical structure transferred onto the Polish translation. This edition, as I have so far established, seems to be first one to include Campion's two letters, the letter to the Father Superior, Everard Mercury, and the Challenge to the Privy Council that until then had only existed in manuscript form. This translation of all under study proved to be the closest to the original text in terms of language and style.

This paper aimed to provide a comparative analysis of the Polish and English translations of Edmund Campion's *Rationes Decem*. I provided the historical background of the source text, *Rationes Decem* and likewise of the translated editions. Finally, on the basis of Edward Balcerzan's system of translation techniques and Itamar Even Zohar's polysystem theory, I provided samples of the comparative analyses of the texts. As there are other translations of Campion's texts in other modern languages such as two sixteenth century German translations, an eighteenth century French and nineteenth century Italian, further comparative translation studies should consider these other translations, as they shall definitely throw light on the readership of Campion's text in Europe.