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TRANSLATION OF ANCIENT GREEK AND LATIN POETRY: A PRACTICAL ANALYSIS

Translation is the connection of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. All poetical translations from the ancient classical languages are difiicult because the 'tools of the translation' for reading such texts usually are bound up with the using of a dictionary, knowledge the inflection and syntax, creating a set of commentaries and cetera. Actually, this is necessary for being able to read the language because the Geeek and Latin sentence are constructed upon a plan entirely different from that of the sentence in modern languages.

In this article we will focus on thematically-linked reading of the poetry of Greek and Latin authors from different periods in order to have encountered the classical world through the translations techniques and to gain knowledge how poetry was read, interpreted, and perceived in the antiquity. In that line, we aspire to attain a deeper understanding about the languages in which these works were composed and contribute to a discourse of poetics.

Keywords: language, antiquity, poetry, translation, meaning.

1. Introduction

Needless to say, no single one of us can know all the languages of the world, not even the major languages, and if believe - though not all cultures have believed it - that the people who speak other languages have things to say or ways of saying them that we don't know, them translation is an evident necessity.
(Eliot Weinberger)

Ancient Greek and Roman culture very early have developed remarkable poetic-aesthetic taste. At the public festivities in the Greek poleis, Homer's epics were recited, choral songs were performed, and competitions for lyric poets were organized. Poetry is regarded as a genre of literary text, and genre as a socially defined cluster of communication acts. Poetry's characteristics are sound-based, such as line-length and 'metatextual' simbolism, whose main role is to define genre, such as framing signals announcing the genre or a special tone of voice when speaking or graphic layout when writing. The main task of poetry translators is to translate. Translators and their theories of translation deserve to be treated and discussed as a complex and sophisticated phenomenon (McElduff, 2013). The translators claim that first examine the 'cognitive habitus' (a cluster of socially defined information-processing practices), and then the other factors. Poetry translation is typically overt. Target readers know they are reading a translator's interpretation of a source-language poem. Poems presente bilingually, in both source and target versions: if printed, the purpose may be to recognize that the source and target text give different reading experiences. Poetry translation offers up a translator's dream—a captivating playground of language and poetics (Uzzi & Thomson, 2015). Hence translators may be less free than original poets to ignore their readers' requirements and knowledge, and readers may read translated poems more reprovingly than non-translated poems. Translating poems is potentially the most challenging access for the translator in the process of translation. It demands two translator's expertises: expert poetry-reading ability in the source language and expert poetry-writing ability in the receptor language. Reading a source poem can involve recognizing and interpreting a highly composite set of meanings and poetic characteristics. When translating it is important to stay true to a source poem's style because style markes the source writer's attitude towards the content. Also, crucial is to find out the prenatal phase of the works, carefully read what the poets write and what they send out as a message. At the same time, the translator should

return to the phase when the works were non-existent and to occupy with the author and with his inclinations, thoughts, affinities, and ultimately with his state of mind.

The modern poets are generally conscious of their classical predecessors, and built upon what the poets of antiquity had achieved.The Greeks and Romans created great poetry and prose. We know more about them than any other ancient civilization because they left behind a vast amount of literary and historical works. In this line, the translators and their theories of translation merit to be treated and discussed as a complex and sophisticated phenomenon in the field of literacy. But, in recent times, translators feeling themselves undervalued, have tended to take refuge in silence (Weissbort, 2016). All the ancient routes that have witnessed encounters and exchanges in all the dialects of the "umbrella language" show that the translation of poetry is more than grammar, it is a listening. So, according to Gansel (2017, p. 17) "it is with the transhumance routes of translation, the slow and patient crossing of countries, all borders eradicated, the movement of huge floks of words through all the vernaculars of the umbrella language of poetry".

2. Metrical Pattern and Translation

In the earliest ancient period there is no song without music, neither music without a song. Antique poetry has used a different scheme known as quantitative meter, where patterns were based on syllable weight rather than stress. When we speak of the meter of a poem, we are referring to its overall rhythm, or, more specifically, the syllables and words used to create that rhythm. The metrical "feet" in the classical languages were based on the length of time taken to pronounce each syllable, which were categorized according to their weight as either "long" syllables or "short" syllables. These are also called "heavy" and "light" syllables, respectively, to distinguish from long and short vowels. The foot is often compared to a musical measure and the long and short syllables to whole notes and half notes.

As language developed, oral storytellers traveled from place to place in order to recite new legends and tales. Most likely, the type of the metar in the verse began as a series of conscious pauses by oral storytellers during their recitations. Why the pauses? The narrator had to catch his breath and summon the next part of the tale. Since then, people have depicted their inner and outer worlds, legends and civilizations – through hundreds or thousands of poetic forms. Poets may have created, modified, or used poetic forms, but centuries later

these same forms provide a snapshot of the civilizations from which they emerged. While poetry is a written literary form, it derives from an oral speaking and singing tradition. Thus, most poetry is written to be read orally. A poem's movement and core building block comes from the rhythmic measure of its line, or meter. Measured in stressed and unstressed syllables, the meter is very similar to musical time signatures. A reader can deduce pace, emotion, and the spirit of a poem from its meter. Therefore, some translators (Shrayer, 2015) claim that translation of poetry is a high and difficult art and that almost poetry is impossible to translate.

2.1. Examples

A poetic line is written in metrical feet – a unit between oral pauses. It is important to know and understand two sets of measures when analyzing and interpreting poetry: the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables in a metrical foot, called iambs; and the number of metrical feet per line, which are noted in Ancient Greek terms. For instance, the most common meter of classic poetic forms, iambic pentameter, constitutes five metrical feet per line, with each metrical foot combining an unstressed and stressed syllable: The elegy began as an ancient Greek literary genre with specific metrical form. The sad poem that mourns dead hero has the lines length of five feet (– U U – U U – – U U – U U – U U –). In order to understand iambic pentameter, we must first understand what an iamb is. Simply, put an iamb (or iambus) is a unit of stressed and unstressed syllables that are used in a line of poetry. Sometimes called an iambic foot, this unit can be a single word of two syllables or two words of one syllable each. Iambic pentameter refers to the number of total syllables in a line of poetry—in this case, 10, composed of five pairs of alternating unstresssed and stressed syllables.

<u>Elegy - pentameter – example</u>

Hic licet occultos proferre impune dolores,

Si modo sola queant saxa tenere fidem.

(Here, without reproof, I can to wear down the secret pain,

only the stone alone will know the words to keep my words.)

(Propertius, 1.18)

Through the lens of elegy, Propertius defens the individual experience and the passions as an embatled individual, captive of love and struggling against the pressures of the world around him, on the one hand, and writes about Roman topics and concerns, for instance about the ideology of Roman marriage and other public subjects, on the other hand (Deutsch, 1995).

Epos is a lengthy narrative poem, ordinarily involving a time beyond living memory in which occurred the extraordinary doings of the extraordinary men and women. In the epic poem usually are glorified heroic deeds and events that are significant to the culture of the poet. Many ancient writers used epic poetry to tell tales of intense adventures and heroic feats. The lines of the epos have the length of six feet (– U U | – U U | – U U | – U U | – U U | – U). The most important classical metre is the dactylic hexameter, the metre of Homer and Virgil. This form uses verses of six feet. The word dactyl comes from the Greek word daktylos meaning finger, since there is one long part followed by two short stretches. The first four feet are dactyls, but can be spondees. The fifth foot is almost always a dactyl. The sixth foot is either a spondee or a trochee. The initial syllable of either foot is called the ictus, the basic "beat" of the verse. There is usually a caesura after the ictus of the third foot. The epic's poetic meter, the dactylic hexameter, is ideally suited to the Greek language, allowing expressions of rage, indignation, bravado, remorse, and grief to ebb and flow in natural cadence. In this context, the opening lines of the Iliad are typical lines of dactylic hexameter:

<u>Epos - dactylic hexameter</u>

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος

οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί᾽ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε᾽ ἔθηκε,

πολλὰς δ᾽ ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν

ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν

οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ᾽ ἐτελείετο βουλή,

ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε

Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

(*The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus' son, Achilles,*

that destructive wrath which brought countless

woes upon the Achaeans, and sent forth to Hades

many valiant souls of heroes, and made them

themselves spoil for dogs and every bird; thus the

plan of Zeus came to fulfillment, from the time

when first they parted in strife Atreus' son,

king of men, and brilliant Achilles.)

(Homer, Iliad, 1.1)

A poem is a single experience or observation, distilled to a fine spirit by the poet's life experience and refined by his or her intellect and choice of words. Every poem conveys an experience or observation of some kind. Quantitative meter is extremely difficult to use for most foreign speakers. When the verse should to be translated, the metrics should be taken into account also:

- the words of the verse should have the same number of syllables

- the emphasis should fall on the specified breaks in the meter

The translation steers a judicious course between literal accuracy and fidelity to this linguistically very demanding poet's spirit and intention. Ornamental epithets in ancient poetry are often epithets taken from folk poetry. Often, the literal translations of these epithets seem strange and unusual to the readership among other nations.

Βοῶπις Hera - Cow-Eyed Hera

Εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοῖ - Achaeans with beautiful gaiters

Also, descriptive translation is usualy with more words than the original. In this case the metric can not be preserved. Commentaries offer a more varied and multiple subject, especially when they include translations (Harison, 2012). In this context, the translator must be familiar with the terminology, be in consultation with field experts, or use one of the translation procedures in case of non-existence of equivalence: transcription, phonetic adaptation or creation of neologism. For the translation of poems, several scientists have stated that the translation should have the same artistic influence as the original, even at the cost of achieving it with artistic instruments different than those of the original.

3. Conclusion

The question of the translatability and untranslatability of the texts is especially evident in the translation of poetry. This type of literature is specific in many ways. Also, there are many dilemmas regarding the translation. For example, should the translation be read as a contemporary to the author or should the translation be read as contemporary to the translator, or can the verses be translated with prose or the verses should be translated with verses? I is clear that the metric structure of the verse depends on the accentual structure of the language, and different languages have different accenting systems.The rhythm also is significant tool for poetry, because in the language of poetry there are twice more breaks, than in the language of prose. At the same time, the metric is recognised in the length of the verse, ie. indicates the number of syllables in one verse. In the verse there are also common breaks called censorship. We find them in longer verses.Finaly, the music accent is also crucial for translation of the poetry because it happens that does not coincide with the usual emphasis on the words.

The ancient Greeks poetry was sometime a vehicle for philosophy. Roman writers were schooled in the Greek language and in Greek thought, and philosophy came to them along with the models for their literary genres and sense of style (Garani & Konstan, 2014). In the tradition of translation and versioning stretches all the way back to antiquity so does that of a poet/translator's selff-commentary on their work. Nevertheless, the classical translator's voice is still more often heard as a small part of a more general discussion (Balmer, 2013). Poetry translation is popularly seen as 'creative'. This stresses the possibility of recreating. Finding rhyme-words is difficult, especially when the receptor language has less flexible word order and/or a greater variety of word-endings than the source. Seeking rhyme leads to unacceptable semantic shifts—such as having 'to add images that destroy the poem's integrity. However, archaisms usually are hackneyed for modern readers, because of that translating poetry is relatively painstaking work. Translations tend to take shape via a succession 'versions': typically, the first is semantically literal, with later versions bringing in issues of sound and general poetic effectiveness. Translators spend most time tackling problems of lexis: words and fixed expressions. Less translating time is typically spent on sound (rhyme, rhythm, assonance, etc.) All poetical translations from the ancient classical languages are difficult because the 'tools of the translation' for reading such texts usually are bound up with the using of a dictionary, knowledge the inflection and syntax, creating a set of commentaries and cetera. In that line,the translation is closely connected with stylistics

because stylistics aims to explain how a text means rather than just what it means, and knowing how texts mean is essential for translation. Stylistics explains the fine detail of a text such as why certain structures are ambiguous or how a metaphor works, and is used to describe both literary and non-literary texts. Properly experiencing or interpreting the first line of any poem is vital to the reading or spoken-word experience. If you can't feel the poem or see where it is heading, it becomes very difficult to understand.

Finally, interviews and post-translation reports show differences between translators in terms of overall strategic orientation (e.g. preferring to prioritize sound at the expense of semantic equivalence, or vice versa). And different translators' final versions of the same source poem can differ radically—especially, perhaps, if the source poem sets high formal challenges in terms of sound structure, word-play, etc. In this context, the best ancient poetry can lose nearly all its quality in translation. Because of that, we encourage the translators of antique poetry to use the rule "poetica licentia" and to look after more about the socio-political context of the translations.

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