

Language across Languages

Language across Languages:

New Perspectives on Translation

Edited by

Emanuele Miola and Paolo Ramat

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INTRODUCTION

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1. Bringing Language across Languages: New challenges for translators and translation studies

This volume collects most of the papers presented at a workshop on 'Translation' held in Pavia on October 3-4, 2013 and organized by the LETiSS (on which see below). The challenging theme yielded valuable contributions pointing up multiple aspects of this basic linguistic activity. Understandably, the two half-days of the international workshop were insufficient to provide an exhaustive overview of the issues connected with 'translation'. However, the editors are confident that this collection of papers will be of interest and of use to all those focussing on one or more aspects of the topic.

For many cultures of the past, but also for contemporary *Weltanschauungen*, history is characterized by cyclicity. The same is true of language. From the internal-linguistic and typological perspective, scholars have identified many different kinds of cycle, notably the negation cycle, or negation spiral (Jespersen 1917, Bernini and Ramat 1996), the synthesis-analysis cycle (Schlegel 1818, Schwegler 1990, cp. Ledgeway 2012: 10-29), and the cycle of verbal functional load in the Germanic languages (see De Angelis and Di Giovine 2002, Ramat 1988: 191).

Cycles or spiral movements may be viewed as characteristic not only of language but also of language studies. A kind of cyclicity is also to be observed in the sub-branches of linguistics—and, to come closer to our own specific interest in the present context, in sociolinguistics, that is to say, the linguistic approach to the very lives of people as speakers of one or more languages. For sure, we are currently experiencing dwindling times and, with regard to language use, a period of rapid change. Up to the

mid-20th century, active knowledge of one language was predominant—at least in Western countries and multilingualism was even viewed as a sort of disease (see Weinreich 1953). When so-called globalization set out to conquer the world during the 1990s and early 21st century, the emergence of (American) English was thought to be the only possible outcome in the new economic and social panorama (see for example Crystal 2003). And indeed, English—at least in the Western world—is today the ‘lingua franca’ of politics, business, science, etc.

Nonetheless, the change resembles a cycle, or, again, a spiral, insofar as multilingualism appears to be acquiring a new and more positive profile in line with the rise of new superpowers, such as Brasil, China, or Russia, and, consequently, with the strengthening of a positive attitude towards glocalization (i.e. globalization with localization, whereby global content is adapted to a specific, local culture) and so-called language ecology (see the earlier work of Haugen 1972; see also the papers in Valentini, Molinelli, Cuzzolin and Bernini 2003). The possible coming to the fore of regional ‘linguae francae’ (such as Chinese or German: see Janssens, Mamadouh and Marác 2011) and the maintenance of a fruitful bi- or multilingualism seems to be what both linguists and laypeople should be aiming for. This is, for instance, the opinion of De Mauro (2014), who points out that in Europe there are already 103 national languages, all potentially used for political and high-domain communication. This situation could facilitate the borrowing of constructions and words from English, as well as the contribution of them to the supranational lingua franca.

However, even if a ‘lingua franca’ such as English is required, there is and always will be a need for experienced, professional translators into and from English, in the interest of avoiding misunderstandings, grasping the ‘nuances’ of both the source and target languages, and capturing the very spirit (‘Geist’) of both the original and the translated text, be it literary, political, or scientific in nature.

In this regard, specifically concerning European linguistic integration Jacqueline Visconti (2013), based on the studies of international institutions such as the Study Group on a European Civil Code (<http://www.sgecc.net>), has recently tackled the question of how a term used in a European Union (con)text relates to the corresponding terminology in a national (con)text. Adopting a ‘*vergleichende* [comparative] *Textlinguistik*’ approach in the multilingual EU context, she concentrates on the logico-semantic level of legal texts, with a special focus on connectives, such as *notwithstanding* or *subject to*, that play a crucial role in the interpretation of a text. She notes a huge lack of consistency in the translations of such

connectives and concludes that the European Court of Justice needs to resolve linguistic uncertainties in order to ensure the uniform interpretation that the law requires: the court must disambiguate and choose one interpretation, given that very different legal consequences would result if the ambiguity were not clarified (see Stephany, this volume, and Ramat, this volume, for other examples on this topic).

On the other hand, large-scale comparisons of entire books—e.g. *Le petit prince*, or, for historical linguists, the Bible—are nowadays very popular among linguists thanks to computerized data banks. The results of such cross-linguistic—or, more accurately, cross-textual—comparisons go much further than ‘contrastive grammar’, traditionally the first step in contrastive linguistics, no longer being limited to lexical structures.

The globalization of the mass media has speeded up the diffusion of English songs, books, TV programmes, movies and the like. Nevertheless, not everybody—even in developed countries—can read, or properly understand, English. By no means should these people be excluded from knowledge and fruition of the global information made available by the mass media. On the contrary, they should be enabled to enjoy knowledge and fruition of—among others—artistic contents in their own native languages. New practices of translation such as instant subtitling have already come into being with a view to making such contents accessible in local areas. Instant subtitling consists of subtitles released by professionals in order to make TV series and TV shows available to a broader fan base as soon as possible after initial release, via pay-per-view.

Take for example Italy. In a nation with a strong tradition of dubbing and dubbing actors, Italian television networks such as Sky-TV have only introduced this practice relatively recently, and only because instant subtitling (fan-subtitling) was becoming widespread on the Internet. Notably, these Internet translations were an outstanding example of the so-called collaborative web: they were made available on the web *free of cost, by non-professional fans*, on a daily basis, and only a few days after the actual broadcasting of the shows in the US. On the one hand, sharing episodes of a series on-line without the copyright owner’s permission is not legal, but releasing and sharing a file with subtitles, provided that the language is different from the original one, might be legal. Thus, in order to ‘win the race’ against their on-line competitors, professional instant subtitles must be better than fan subtitles, and above all professional subtitlers must be faster than fan subtitlers, in order to make fan-sub addicts shift to pay-per-view (see Massidda 2013).

New translation practices, such as the ‘instant translation’ of movies and Internet texts make translations unavoidable: it is evident that there

will always be the need for translators from “global” English into other languages, at least national ones. In such a globalized world as ours, it is indeed striking that, although Arabic is a very popular and widely spoken language, there is still a “low volume of translations into Arabic, which had been identified as an obstacle to the dissemination of outside knowledge into the Arab world” (Ronen et al. 2014). Bearing this in mind, and to sum up, the challenge of “saying almost the same thing” (Eco 2003) is thus continuously renewed and taken up again and again.

2. A brief survey of the volume

Many of these topics are touched on and assessed in the present volume, which revolves around two different, though interconnected, thematic nuclei.

The first nucleus refers primarily to linguistic theory with a special focus on languages that are distant from contemporary Western culture in terms of both time and space. Emanuele Banfi’s article compares translation practices adopted in Ancient Rome in transferring Ancient Greek into Latin, with those of the Chinese world when it came, and comes, to translating Western concepts into Chinese. Alessio Muro also deals with so-called ‘exotic languages’ in an insightful typological study of grammatical anamorphism and grammatical differences in selected North American language varieties. He points up the grammaticalization of categories/functions such as ‘visibility’, which are completely absent from European languages.

Giulia Petitta tackles translation practices applied to a less usual linguistic code: she is interested in a special kind of ‘intersemiotic translation’, namely in simultaneous interpretation from non-signed to signed languages and vice versa.

Other authors decided to focus on theories of translation *per se*. Michele Prandi addresses the issue of metaphorical language by introducing and discussing the different kinds of consistent and conflictual metaphors, and their implications for translators and translation theory. By ‘consistent metaphors’ Prandi means metaphors that are well integrated into our ways of speaking and thinking, such as *scientific revolution*. In contrast, the label ‘conflictual metaphor’ (e.g. *Winter pours its grief in snow*) refers to expressions that strike us as unusual.

Much in this vein, Debora Biancheri has contributed a paper on translation strategies and the ‘constructed reader’, an expression that refers to publishers’ and translators’ expectations regarding the readership profile. She exemplifies the much-debated question of poetic translations

with some Italian versions of the contemporary Irish poet Derek Mahon. Between the two poles of the ‘bella infedele’ (the beautiful but unfaithful) and the ‘brutta fedele’ (the faithful but ugly, *scil.* translation) she proposes a ‘third space’, a middle ground for the decodification of what may sound unfamiliar to the target audience.

Ursula Stephany provides a clear example of recent advances in contrastive linguistics. Her paper is not limited to a comparison of lexical structures but extends to a global analysis of grammatical categories and their use. Stephany conducts an in-depth analysis of mood and modal verbs and convincingly points out that from a morphosyntactic point of view, even when translating within a shared cultural frame such as the European Union, special attention must be paid to the use and behaviour of grammatical categories viewed as a coherent set and not as the output of isolated items.

In her contribution, Maria Pavesi emphasizes a pragmatic issue, namely the difficulty of translating conversations and other transitory language expressions, the speech acts that represent our everyday interactional linguistic behaviour: specifically, the phatic and conative aspects of communication are at risk of getting lost in translation. Pavesi, who has extensive experience in the field of dubbing for cinema and has created, together with her colleague Maria Freddi, the *Corpus of Film Dialogue*, a bilingual unidirectional parallel corpus of film transcriptions, focuses here on a particular morphological category, namely demonstrative pronoun—a universal feature of language whose pragmatic salience is self-evident. Her analysis enables us to identify key functional differences between source and target languages.

Finally, Paolo Ramat’s article re-visits and summarizes all of the above-mentioned viewpoints on translation, while exploring the different words for ‘translator’ used in a range of (ancient and modern) languages, and reflecting different cultures.

3. Envoi

History and life—we have said—are made up of cycles, and the present volume ends the cycle of the LETiSS (Lingue d’Europa: Tipologia, Storia, Sociolinguistica—Languages of Europe: Typology, History and Sociolinguistics, a research centre at the Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori, IUSS, in Pavia) which in its half-decade of life was devoted to the study of the typology, history and sociolinguistics of the languages of Europe. Unfortunately, LETiSS was compelled to close down for economic reasons, and consequently to end its own life cycle.

The present book also completes a notional trilogy investigating the problems of language decay and the outcomes of language contact (Miola and Ramat 2011), the new challenges posed to linguists by computer-mediated communication (Miola 2012), and finally the multifaceted topic of translation. As may be guessed from the titles of the three volumes, LETiSS' attention was always directed towards the sociocultural aspects of language and the impact that these aspects have on general theories of language—via an inductive and reality-bound process.

LETiSS must now pass the baton to other scholars and researchers, in the hopes that linguistic research may continue to act as a bridge among different cultures, different worlds and different *Weltanschauungen*, towards a better understanding of ourselves as human beings.

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PART I:

**LANGUAGE ACROSS SPACE,
TIME AND CULTURE**

WHEN ROME MET GREECE AND WHEN CANTON, BEIJING AND SHANGHAI MET WESTERN CULTURES: TRANSLATIONS AND... LOST IN TRANSLATION

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In this paper, I examine two particular cultural and linguistic situations that are distant from each other in terms of time and space but share, so to speak, similar issues regarding how to translate foreign language texts. Specifically, after reviewing the scant attention paid by the Greek world to peoples speaking other languages (§ 1), I first focus on the problems faced by representatives of Roman and Latin culture when Rome encountered Greek culture and language between the 3rd and 1st centuries B.C. (§§ 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4). Second, I outline what occurred, in a broadly similar fashion, in the Chinese world when, in the mid-19th century, Chinese intellectuals of the late Qing dynasty encountered Western cultures and began translating mainly English (and French) books into Chinese (§§ 2, 2.1, 2.2).

1. Greek and Roman worlds and foreign languages

Before considering the attitude of the Roman world towards the Greek culture and language, it is of interest to focus on the scant attention paid by the Ancient Greeks to peoples speaking other languages. The Greeks viewed these peoples as mere βάρβαροι “barbarians”, and they neither had any linguistic politics, so to speak, nor felt the need to translate foreign texts into Greek. Indeed, they saw themselves and their own culture and language as “superior” and therefore as not requiring any “apport” from the outside (Horrocks 2010²: 67). Furthermore, prior to the 5th century B.C., there is scant evidence of contact between the Greek world and other languages. Only two passages in the *Iliad* mention linguistic diversity among the Trojans’ allies:

- (1) Homer
- Il.*
2. 803-805

Ἔκτορ, σοὶ δὲ μάλιστα' ἐπιτέλλομαι, ὧδε δὲ ῥέξαι.
 Πολλοὶ γὰρ κατὰ ἄστρῳ μέγα Πριάμου ἐπίκουροι,
ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα πολυσπερέων ἀνθρώπων.

“Hector, to thee beyond all others do I give command, and thou even according to my word. Inasmuch as there are allies full many throughout the great city of Priam, and **tongue differs from tongue among men** that are scattered abroad” (Murray 1988¹⁰: 1, 111).

- (2) Homer
- Il.*
4. 436-438

ὣς Τρώων ἀλαλητὸς ἀνὰ στρατὸν εὐρὺν ὀρώρει
 οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἦεν ὁμὸς θρόος οὐδ' ἴα γῆρυς,
ἀλλὰ γλῶσσ' ἐμέμικτο, πολύκλητοι δ' ἔσαν ἄνδρες.

“Even so arose the clamour of the Trojans throughout the wide host; for they had no all like speech or one language, but **their tongues were mingled**, and they were a folk summoned from many lands” (Murray 1988¹⁰: 1, 185).

Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) was the first Greek author to manifest an interest in foreign languages and bilingualism. By his account, the Pharaoh Psammetichus instructed Ionians and Carians to teach Greek to young Egyptians who intended to become interpreters in Egypt. One of these read and translated for Herodotus in person a hieroglyphic inscription engraved on the walls of Cheop's pyramid:

- (3) Herod., 2.125.6

σεσήμανται δὲ διὰ γραμμάτων ἐν τῇ πυραμίδι ὅσα ἔς τε συρμαῖην καὶ κρόμμυα καὶ σκόροδα ἀνασιμῶθη τοῖσι ἐργαζομένοισι. Καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνήσθαι **τὰ ὁ ἑρμηνεὺς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη**, ἑξακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελέσθαι.

“There are writings on the pyramid in Egyptian characters showing how much was spent on purges and onions and garlic for the workmen; and so far as I well remember, **the interpreter when he read me the writing** said that sixteen hundred talents of silver had been paid.” (Godley 1981⁹: 1, 429).

Herodotus also alludes to contacts among various other languages, such as Lydian and Persian:

- (4) Herod., 1.86.4-6

Καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἀκούσαντα **κελεύσαι τοὺς ἑρμηνέας ἐπειρέσθαι** τὸν Κροῖσον τίνα τοῦτον ἐπικαλέοιτο, καὶ τοὺς προσελθόντας ἐπειρωτᾶν ...

“Cyrus heard it, and **bade his interpreters ask** Croesus who was this on whom he called; they came near and asked him ...” (Godley 1981⁹: 1, 111).

or Greek and Persian:

- (5) Herod., 3.38.4

Δαρεῖος δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα καλέσας Ἰνδῶν τοὺς καλεομένους Καλλατίας, οἱ τοὺς γονέας κατεσθίουσι, εἶρετο, παρευόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων **καὶ δι’ ἑρμηνέος μανθανόντων τὰ λεγόμενα...**

“Then Darius summoned those Indians who are called Callatiae, who eat their parents, and asked them, the Greeks being present and understanding **by interpretation what was said...**” (Godley 1981⁹: 2, 51).

In his work we also find bilingual people, for example the Scythian king Scyles, born from a woman of Istria. His mother, who was presumably Ionian, taught him the Greek language and letters:

- (6) Herod., 4.78.1

Αριαπιθεῖ γὰρ τῷ Σκυθέων βασιλεῖ γίνεται Σκύλης ἐξ Ἰστρυμνῆς δὲ γυναικὸς οὗτος γίνεται καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἐγχωρῆς. Τὸν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῆ **γλῶσσάν τε Ἑλλάδα καὶ γράμματα ἐδίδαξε ...**

“Scyles was one of the sons born to Ariapithes, king of Scythia; but his mother was of Istria, and not nativeborn; and **she taught him to speak and read Greek ...**” (Godley 1981⁹: 2, 277).

Thucydides (460-404 B.C.) also provides evidence of the fact that the Persian language was known in Athens, via a reference to Artaphernes, who was sent to Sparta by the Great King and led to Athens as a prisoner in 424 B.C. The Athenians read the letters carried by Artaphernes after translating them from the Assyrian:

- (7) Thucid., 4.50.2.

Καὶ αὐτοῦ κοιμισθέντος οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι τὰς μὲν ἐπιστολάς μεταγραψάμενοι **ἐκ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων γραμμάτων ἀνέγνωσαν** ...

“He was conveyed to Athens, and the Athenians caused his letters to be transcribed **from the Assyrian characters and read them...**”
(Smith 1988⁷: 2, 297).

Xenophon’s (430?-355 B.C.) *Anabasis* contains a number of references to bilingualism on the part of interpreters, especially between Persian and Greek:

- (8) Xenoph.
- Anab.*
- 2.3.17

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπήντησαν αὐτοῖς οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων στρατηγοί, ἔλεγε πρῶτος Τισσαφέρνης **δι’ ἑρμηνέως** τοιάδε ...

“When the Greek generals met them, Tissaphernes, **through an interpreter**, began the speaking with the following words...”
(Brownson 1992⁷: 129).

In the *Lives* of Plutarch (46?-125? A.D.), among other attestations of bilingualism (Greek and Persian: *Themistocles*, 28.1; Greek and Latin: *Sulla*, 27.2 and *Cato Maior*, 12.5), we find a highly interesting mention of Queen Cleopatra’s multilinguistic abilities:

- (9) Plut.,
- Antonius*
- 27.4

ἡδονὴ δὲ καὶ φθεγγομένης ἐπὶ τῷ ἤχῳ. Καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν, ὥσπερ ὄργανόν τι πολύχορδον, εὐπετῶς τρέπουσα **καθ’ ἣν βούλοιο διάλεκτον** ὀλίγοις παντάπασι **δι’ ἑρμηνέως** ἐνετύγχανε βαρβάρους, τοῖς δὲ πλείστοις αὐτὴ δι’ αὐτῆς ἀπεδίδου τὰς ἀποκρίσεις, οἷον Αἰθίοψι, Τρωγλοδύταις, Ἑβραίοις, Ἄραβι, Σύροις καὶ ἄλλων ἐκμαθεῖν γλώττας, τῶν πρὸ αὐτῆς βασιλέων οὐδὲ τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν ἀνασχομένων παραλαβεῖν διάλεκτον, ἐνίων δὲ καὶ τὸ μακεδονίζειν ἐκλιπόντων.

“There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, **she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased**, so that in her interviews with barbarians she very seldom had need of an interpreter, but made her replies to most of them herself and unassisted, whether they were Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. Nay, it is said that she knew the speech of many other

peoples also, although the kings of Egypt before her had not even made an effort to learn the native language, and some actually gave up their Macedonian dialect” (Perrin 1988⁵: 197).

1.1. When Rome met Greece

Latin literature—as is well known—was a late phenomenon. Five centuries passed from the mythical foundation of Rome (8th century B.C.) until the need was felt to establish an artistic literature in Latin to compete with the Greek models. Nonetheless, in every period of Roman culture Greek literature must be viewed as a dominant influence on Roman writers: the mark of Hellenic thought and myth was ever-present in the Roman mind, and in many ways it is possible to speak of a “Greco-Roman tradition” in literature and the arts, given that the Romans fused everything they did with what the Greeks had done centuries before (Conte 1994).

In the 2nd century B.C., we find a famous representative of traditional Roman culture, Cato Censor (234-139 B.C.), still protesting against the influx of – in his view – “debilitating” Greek, yet the presence in Rome of hundreds of Greek schoolmasters hired to teach the youth Greek, the language of high culture, made Greek a familiar part of Roman education: by the 1st century B.C., no educated person could afford to lack a good knowledge of Greek. Thus, Caesar and Cicero were among the flood of aspirants to a superior education who rushed to Athens to become educated and cultured... and Caesar, when stabbed to death in 44 B.C., did not utter the famous sentence “tu quoque Brute, fili mi” in Latin, but gasped out in informal Greek “Καὶ σὺ εἶ ἐκείνων, ὦ παῖ; (You are one of them, man?)”. By the middle of the 1st century B.C., Roman society had become bi-cultural and was to remain bi-cultural/multicultural later on, due to the vast extent of immigration from Greece and the Near East that took place under the Empire: in Rome, bi-culturalism and multiculturalism were never to be lost (Kaimio 1979; Adams 2002).

Roman literature was made, not born. It was the first “derived” literature and its authors consciously viewed themselves as “indebted” to the tradition of another people, whom they acknowledged to be culturally superior. In thus differentiating itself from earlier traditions (von Albrecht 1997: 12), Roman literature found its own identity and specific self-awareness. In this regard, it paved the way for later European literature and became its model. In Rome, literary dependence (*imitatio*) did not have a bad reputation: artistic borrowing and transfer into a new context was not considered theft but a loan intended to be easily recognized as such. Creation of a new literary work was based on a sort of “competition” with a model, and the more significant the model, the greater the challenge

and, in the case of success, the greater the emulation's gain in artistic capability. A writer was expected to refer to a series of ancestors and, if needs be, to invent them. The principle and practice of *imitatio* produced an intellectual relationship binding author to author and period to period (Seele 1995).

1.2. Livius Andronicus and his translation of Homer's *Odyssey*

It is possible to precisely date the beginning of Roman literature. According to Cicero (*Brutus*, 72), in 240 B.C. during the Roman games celebrating Rome's victory over Carthage, Livius Andronicus, a Greek poet from Tarentum, produced the first Latin drama. The same century had seen a series of key historical events: in 282 B.C. the former, highly cultured, Etruria had been vanquished; in 272 B.C. the city of Tarentum, an ancient Greek colony famous for its rich theatrical life, had been conquered; in 242 B.C., the First Punic War had been won.

In that historical moment, Rome was the most powerful centre in the Western Mediterranean area: the *Urbs* possessed, for the first time in its history, both a unified territory and a new identity. For the first time ever, the whole peninsula took the name of its southern region: *Italia*, Italy. Rome's growing power as a political centre was so strong that not only the Romans' Italic kinsfolk, but also Greeks, began to write in Latin. One of the last mentioned was precisely Livius Andronicus.

Titus Livius' *ab Urbe condita libri* (7.2.8) tells us something of Livius Andronicus' life. While Andronicus likely came to Rome as a prisoner of war, he possessed stage experience as actor. He was employed as a tutor by the influential Livii family, and we know that the Livii granted him his freedom. Livius Andronicus was the first author to write Latin drama: he transposed Greek structures into a society characterized by the mingling of Italic, Etruscan, and Hellenistic stage practices. He gave Latin titles to his comedies, which were based on Hellenistic models; his tragedies may have followed classical Greek dramatists.

As regards epic poetry, Livius took Homer's *Odyssey* as his model. The reason for this choice was twofold: first, the Homeric poem was considered part of early Italian history (some episodes of the *Odyssey* took place in Italy and Sicily); second, given the tradition of Hellenistic schools in which Homer was the key author of reference, Livius made Homer's great poem accessible to the Latin public for both literary and broader cultural reasons.

Homer was viewed as a wise man, a teacher and an educator: his works were the Bible. While a young Greek grew up with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, after Livius Andronicus a young Roman grew up with Livius'

translation of the Homeric *Odyssey*, with Ennius and possibly with Virgil. It is evident that the Hellenized Roman élite of Livius' time were likely to have read Homer in the original – given that Greek was the language of cultured Romans – but we know that Livius' *Odusia* was successful as a school text and we also know from Horace that by the first century Roman schoolboys had trouble with Andronicus's complex and archaic language:

(10) Horatius Flaccus, *Ep.* II, 1. 69-71

Non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi
esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo
Orbilium dictare...

“I am not crying down the poems of Livius / I would not doom to destruction verses which I remember ‘Orbilium of the rod’ dictated to me as a boy...” [Fairclough 1991¹³: 403].

The enterprise of translating Homer's *Odyssey* into Latin was of major historical importance: in order to translate the Homeric hexameter, Livius adopted an Italic meter, the Saturnian and, because he did not have an epic tradition behind him, he attempted to confer solemnity upon his literary language by using – as Horace clearly recognized two centuries later – deliberately archaizing language: according to Horace the language chosen by Livius was “archaizing” right from in his own era. However, there is another factor that must be taken into account when analysing the translation technique adopted by Livius: for him, translating meant both preserving what could be assimilated and altering what appeared to be untranslatable, either because of the “poverty” of the linguistic instrument or because of differences in culture and mentality between the Greek and Roman worlds. Furthermore, Livius never indulged in arbitrary alterations of the original Homeric text, but was constantly guided by his own original and by his readership's mental horizon. Thus, in choosing a “native” meter (the Saturnian) for his epic, he surely had his readers in mind. We know that Naevius was later to use the same meter and Ennius was the first to replace it with the hexameter.

Let us examine Livius' translation of the famous *incipit* of the Homeric *Odyssey*:

(11) Homer, *Od.* 1.1
Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε Μοῦσα πολύτροπον
“Tell me, o Muse, of the cunning man”

Livius 1: Virum mihi Camena insece versutum

In translating this verse, Livius not only tried to maintain the Homeric word order but also used archaic forms such as *insece* “tell” to render Homer’s ἔννεπε (Aeolian form -vv- < *-ns-: *in-sek^w-e); and *Camena* – the “ancient name of an Italic water divinity” – as equivalent to Homeric Μοῦσα, here relying on the contemporary etymology, according to which *Camena* came from *Casmena/Carmena* and thus from *carmen* “poem”. The first and last words were linked to one another through alliteration (*Virum ... versutum*). The proper name *Camena* stood in the middle of the verse, creating a symmetrically balanced structure as demanded by Saturnian metre which generally comprised a “rising” and a “falling” half; in keeping with another rule of Saturnian verse, Livius opted to translate the Homeric adjective πολύτροπον as *versutum* “cunning”, a derived form of the Latin noun *versus* in place of a compound adjective (bahuvrihi: as in the Greek πολύτροπον).

Livius simplified the Homeric expression ἔρκος ὀδόντων (the barrier of teeth), adopting a–so to speak–“prosaic” solution:

- (12) Homer, *Od.* 1.64
τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φῦγε ἔρκος ὀδόντων;
“my child, what a word has escaped the barrier of your teeth?”

Livius 3: mea puera quid verbi ex tuo ore supra fugit?

Thus, the phrase ἔρκος ὀδόντων “barrier of (your) teeth”, which would have sounded very strange in Latin, was simply rendered as *ex tuo ore* “from your mouth”.

Livius’ translation of θεόφιν μῆστωρ ἀτάλαντος (“peer of the gods”), the Homeric expression describing Patroclus, significantly altered the “spirit” intended by Homer:

- (13) Homer, *Od.* 3, 110
ἐνθα δε Πάτροκλος, θεόφιν μῆστωρ ἀτάλαντος
“there Patroclus, the peer of the gods as a councillor”

Livius 10: ibidemque vir summus adprimus Patroclus.

Homer spoke of a hero “equal to the gods”, but such a notion was unacceptable to the Roman mentality. This explains Livius’ translation strategy: he modified the Homeric concept and, without any loss of poetic solemnity, translated θεόφιν μῆστωρ as *summus adprimus* “greatest and of first rank”. Livius replaced the common Homeric images λῦτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτωρ (his knees and heart were loosed) with the impressive

phrase *cor frixit prae pavore* “(Odysseus’) heart was broken by the fear” (lit. “in front of the fear”):

- (14) Homer, *Od.* 5, 297
καὶ τότε Ὀδυσσεύης λῦτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ
“then were the knees of Odysseus loosened, and the heart within him”

Livius 16: igitur demum Ulixi cor frixit prae pavore.

Livius translated the expression εὐόπιδα κούρην (“nice-looking maiden”) as *virgo* (virgin), without rendering εὐόπιδα “nice-looking”, a frequently recurring adjective in the language of Homer:

- (15) Homer, *Od.* 6. 142-143
ὁ δὲ μερμήριζεν Ὀδυσσεύς
ἢ γουνῶν λίσσοιτο λαβῶν εὐόπιδα κούρην...
“and Odysseus pondered whether he should clasp the knees of the fair-faced maiden...”

Livius 17: utrum genua amplectens virginem oraret.

In another case, Andronicus interpreted rather than translated a verse of Homer’s describing a situation fraught with emotion and with irony. In Homer, the swineherd Eumaios speaks to the disguised Odysseus, and Odysseus is listening but not yet ready to reveal his identity. Eumaios says to Odysseus (calling him “son of Laertes”) *neque tamen te oblitus sum, Laertie noster* (“I have not forgotten you, o son of Laertes”): this expression was more emphatic than the Homeric Ὀδυσσεύης πόθος αἴνυται (“grief for Odysseus takes hold of me”):

- (16) Homer, *Od.* 14, 144
ἀλλά μ’ Ὀδυσσεύης πόθος αἴνυται οἰχομένοιο
“instead, **it is longing** for Odysseus, who is gone, that seizes me”

Livius 18: neque tamen te oblitus sum, Laertie noster.

In Livius’ translation, the Greek goddess of fate, Μοῖρα, became *Morta* (Ramat 1960a; Ramat 1960b), a choice criticized by Aulus Gellius who maintained that the more appropriate translation would have been *Moeram*... while the complex Homeric expression εἰς ὅτε (“until/when”) μοῖρ’ ὀλόη καθελῆσι τανηλέγεος θανατοῖο (“the cruel fate of pitiless death”) was simply translated as *dies*:

- (17) Homer, *Od.* 19, 144-145
 ... εἰς ὅτε κεν μιν [sc. Laertes]
 μοῖρ' ὀλόη καθελῆσι τανηλέγεος θανατοῖο
 “until the time when the cruel fate of pitiless death shall strike him
 down”

Livius 11: quando dies adveniet quem profata Morta est.

1.3. Epicurus' Περὶ Φύσεως and Lucretius' *De rerum natura*

Concerning the life of Titus Lucretius Caro, poet and philosopher (94-50 B.C.), we know almost nothing apart from the odd fact that he may have died at the age of forty-four as the indirect result of having taken a “love potion” (Conte 1994, 155). He lived in politically troubled times in which the old traditional religion had largely declined, and for the first time the full force of the Greek philosophical tradition, particularly the work of Epicurus, was available to Romans. The title of Lucretius' poem *De rerum natura* (On the nature of things) faithfully translates the title of Epicurus' most important work Περὶ Φύσεως comprising thirty-seven books. From these a now lost Μικρὴ Ἐπιτομή and a Μεγάλῃ Ἐπιτομή were derived. The latter was probably the outline chiefly followed by Lucretius. The date of the poem's composition is not certain. In it, Lucretius appeals for Gaius Memmius not to abandon his efforts for the public good at a difficult moment for the country (*De rerum natura*, I, 41: *hoc patriai tempore iniquo* “in this time of our country's troubles”): the entire first half of the century was ravaged by wars and Gaius Memmius was “praetor” in 58. There is a tendency to believe that the reference is to internal disagreements in the years after 59. However, earlier dates cannot be ruled out.

Lucretius' aim was to explain Epicurean philosophy to a Roman audience by means of a didactic poem comprising some 7,400 dactylic hexameters that was divided into six untitled books and explored Epicurean physics through richly poetic language and metaphors. Lucretius explained the principles of atomism, the nature of the mind and soul, the nature of sensation and thought, the birth of the world and its phenomena, both celestial and terrestrial. The subtitle of the poem was “Against superstition”, which is exactly what Lucretius understood “religion” to be: the mysteries that “bound back” the mind of men before Epicurus all disappeared when faced with thought, logical reason, and above all “science”. Lucretius displayed excellent knowledge of Greek literature: his poem contained many allusions to Homer, Plato, Aeschylus and Euripides, and he presented himself as the first poet to reach the

“trackless land of the Pierian Muses” in order to draw on a new source of poetry and win glory. In so doing, he reproduced the attitude of self-consciousness that Callimachus had made a commonplace in Hellenistic poetry:

(18) Lucr., *De rerum natura*, I, 925-934/IV, 1-9

Avia Pieridum pearagro loca nullius ante
trita solo. Iuvat integros accedere fontis
atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam
unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae:
primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.

“I traverse pathless tracts of the Pierides never yet trodden by any foot. I love to approach virgin springs and there to drink; I love to pluck new flowers, and to seek an illustrious chaplet for my head from fields whence before this the Muses have crowned the brows of none: first because my teaching is of high matters, and I proceed to unloose the mind from the knots of superstition ; next because the subject is so dark and the lines I write so clear, as I touch all with the Muses’ grace” (Rouse and Smith 1992¹²: 77).

As to linguistic choices (McIntosh Snyder 1980; Dionigi 1988), Lucretius deplored the limited nature of his ancestral vocabulary (*patrii sermonis egestas*):

(19) Lucr., *De rerum natura*, I, 830-833

Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian
quam Grai memorant nec nostra dicere lingua
concedit nobis **patrii sermonis egestas**,
sed tam ipsam rem facilest exponere verbis.

“Now let us also examine the *homoeomeria* of Anaxagoras, as the Greeks call it, which **cannot be named** in our language **because of the poverty of our mother speech**, but yet it is easy to explain the thing itself in words” (Rouse and Smith 1992¹²: 69).

Furthermore, given that certain philosophical concepts could not be expressed in Latin, in order to designate the notion of “atoms” (τὰ ἄτομα), Lucretius had to fall back on generic nouns such as *semina* “seeds”,

primordia “primary things”, *corpora prima* “first bodies”; alternatively, in order to designate the notions of “homogeneity” (ὁμοιομέρεια) and “air” (ἀήρ), he supplied coinages of his own such as *homoeomeria* [*De rerum natura*, I, 830] and *aer* [*De rerum natura*, I, 1000]. In addition, in order to compensate for the *egestas* of his *patrii sermonis*, Lucretius drew on a large corpus of poetic words made available to him by the archaic tradition as well as on rhetoric strategies such as alliteration, assonance, archaic constructions, and in general the “sound effects” characterising the expressive-pathetic style of early Roman poetry. Above all, Lucretius used compound adjectives drawn from Ennius’ epic lexicon (*De rerum natura*, I, 117-118: *Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno / detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam* “as our Ennius sang, who was the first to bring down / from lovely Helicon the crown of perennial leaves”) such as *suaviloquens* “sweet-speaking”, *altivolans* “high-flying”, *navigerum* “ship-carrying”, *frugiferens* “fruit-bearing”); or created adverbs of his own such as *filatim* “thread by thread”, *moderatim* “gradually”, *praemetuenter* “with anticipatory fear” and new periphrases based on Homeric models such as *natura animi* “soul” vs *animus* or *equi vis* “strength of the horse” vs *equus*.

1.4. Sappho’s Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος... vs Catullus’ *Ille mi par esse deo videtur...*

Another good example of the close relationship (and “competition”) between Greek poetic models and their translation into Latin is provided by the translation of an extremely well-known Sappho’s Ode by Gaius Valerius Catullus (84-54 B.C.), a famous Roman poet of the late Roman Republic who wrote in the Neoteric style, that is to say, in the manner of the so called “Poetae novi” (new poets) who flourished during the late Roman Republic. I first quote the text of Sappho’s Ode (with a “word for word” translation followed by both Arieti and Crossett’s and Barnstone’s poetic translations) and second its translation by Catullus followed by some linguistic considerations:

- (20) Sapph. Fr. 2 (handed on from the Περὶ ὕψους c. 10, 1-2):
 Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν *seems to me he equal to gods*
 ἔμμεν’ ὄνηρ, ὅτις ἐνάντιός τοι *to be the man in front of you*
 ἰσθάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδω φωνεῖ- *is sitting and nearby (you)* 4
 σας ὑπακούει *sweetspeaking listens*
 καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ’ ἦ μὰν *and sweetly laughing which my*
 καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν. *heart in breast passionately excited*
 ὥς γὰρ ἐς σ’ ἴδω βροχέως με φώνωσιν *as soon as I see you hardly to me sound* 8

flamma demanat, sonitu suopte	<i>a subtle flame steals down through my limbs,</i>	
tintinant aures, gemina teguntur	<i>my ears ring with inward humming, my eyes</i>	12
lumina nocte.	<i>Are shrouded in twofold night.</i>	
otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est:	<i>Idleness, Catullus, does you harm,</i>	
otio exsultas nimiumque gestis:	<i>you riot in your idleness and wanton too much.</i>	
otium et reges prius et beatas	<i>Idleness ere now has ruined</i>	16
perdidit urbes.	<i>Both kings and wealthy cities.</i>	

(Cornish, Postgate and Mackail 1988¹⁸: 59-61)

Catullus, in line with the Neoteric style of poetry, wished to “compete” with the Greek model and, in so doing, “reproduced” Sappho’s stylistic moods: the well-known *incipit* of Sappho’s poem Φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἴσος θεόισιν ἔμμεν’ ὄνηρ became “Ille mi par esse deo videtur (He seems to me to be equal to a god)”; the verses ὅττις ἐναντίος τοι / ἰσθάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδῳ φωνεῖ- / σας ὑπακούει / καὶ γελαίσας ἡμέρροεν were rendered as “qui sedens adversus identidem te / spectat et audit / dulce ridentem (who is sitting opposite watches and listens / to you again and again / sweetly laughing)”, etc. The only *variatio* in Catullus’ poetic translation concerned the verse ὀπάτεσσι δ’ οὐδεν ὄρημι, which he translated as “gemina teguntur / lumina nocte (our lights (eyes) are covered / by twin night.)”: a good example of *imitatio cum variatione*, typical of Roman Neoteric poetry.

2. Late Qing’s China, an “isolated” world, and the Yi 夷 “barbarians”

Before dealing with the problems faced by Chinese intellectuals of the Qing dynasty (清朝.Qing Chao) in translating Western works in the mid-19th century, it is important to remember that over the previous centuries China’s contacts with the West had had very little impact on the languages of the Chinese Empire. Indeed, prior to the 19th century, very few Chinese had undertaken any formal study of Western languages: the Chinese had always considered Westerners to be Yi 夷 “barbarians”, just like all the other populations of the Empire with whom they had come into contact over the centuries. The imperial court of Beijing was thousands of miles away from the coastal provinces: it did not need, fear, or even want to come into contact with foreigners. Chinese mandarins therefore took no interest in foreigners and in their countries of origin.