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AUTHOR, AUDIENCE AND LITERARY PURPOSE IN TRANSLATING ANCIENT TEXTS

The theoretical research of translating process deals with one important problem: the problem of the nature of the translation act. Translation is a fact of bilingualism, where two structures get in contact and interact with each other. There arises the question to what extent these structures could remain intact and how strong their influence on each other is.

Translation is an idiosyncratic process. As far as translating ancient texts is concerned we may define it as a literary process, based upon linguistic procedures. The question of adequacy of literary translation from Latin can be considered from two point of views: grammatically and lexically. Attaining grammatical adaptability is the easier task. This relative ease is predetermined by the target language structure, which imposes by itself the modification of rules in the act of transformation. Changes of word order, the substitution of noun forms with verb forms, the substitution of pronoun forms into noun forms is inevitable.

The accommodation of source language lexical structures to the target language semantic requirements causes more difficulties to translators. The differences, these difficulties result from, can be observed on three lexical levels: the first one is the level, where we can easily discover the necessary equivalent; the second one is the level, where are included denominations, signifying different objects in different cultures, yet having the same functions; the third level contains specific cultural attribute (realia), where it is impossible to avoid target forms and expressions, especially if deep differences exist in cultural type.

The textual meaning is constructed in a different literary manner in various languages. The content substance may be the same in diverse languages, but it is inseparably connected to the content frame, which varies according to languages and their syntactic and morphological rules. This is because every language system makes in itself an analysis of the exterior world and this analysis is specific and different from other languages analyses. The content and language frame of human spiritual life cannot be separated. Every language makes its own structure according to the world it reflects. The inherent difference expressed in various languages creates the greatest obstacle in translation. Every language builds its proper concept of the world. Arguments for that could be discovered on the lexical levels of languages.

As far as antiquity is concerned specific problems arise: age remoteness, communities' nature, which outlines cultural originality, the development stage of culture etc. In this case the possibility of translation is connected to knowledge of several cultural realia and the cultural type as a whole. Translation cannot be considered as a simple linguistic operation, because it is related to facts of cultural and historical context. Understanding Latin means two different things inseparably linked to each other: both knowledge of Latin language and knowledge of Latin world culture. Each dictionary is a representation of a civilisation and words cannot be correctly understood, if they are isolated from the cultural phenomena of which they are symbols. For translating textual meaning knowing the denotative meaning is not sufficient. It is necessary to know the things that the text is about. And that

is the ancient idea of Greek and Roman translators. The content of language semantics reflects the ethnography of the community speaking this language.

Translation is a part of any linguistic research, but it cannot be only considered as subject of linguistics. It cannot be closed in linguistics framework and especially in modern descriptive linguistics, structural linguistics. Translation is not a mechanical process of transferring one-language system formulas to another language system formulas. The morphology and syntax can be classified into a system, but lexis cannot be classified in the same manner. Translation is a kind of interpretation. It has to both define concrete semantic meanings for empty formulas and enter in the meanings world. That is why, translating ancient Greek and Latin means for us in the first place to understand relations between the signified and the signifier in ancient linguistic system and in the second place, to understand the same relations in the intellectual and cultural system of this world quite different from our own. Antiquity is a specific cultural type based on texts and production of texts. In the beginning the concept of text belongs to the literary theory and is closely related to language researches. The link between text and language is based on the common verbal construction of the text and language. Texts production and reception is an activity with great value for any generation and maintenance of community unity.

Creating a literary work of art presents a new stage in the complication of text structure. Text acquires ability to create sophisticated relations not only with cultural context, but also with the readership. Cultural context is a heterogeneous phenomenon. A text could become a part of different cultural contexts. In this sense translation can be considered as a conscious act of transference from one context into another. Translation motivation results from the target text audience desire for peculiar contact with the source language and its cultural area. Target language texts result from communicative target language situations. Source language texts are produced for source language readership. In the act of translation text has to be transformed for satisfying audience needs that it was not originally aimed at.

One of the main issues in translation practice and theory is related to the concept that each text is orientated at a determinate audience and can be realised entirely only in its mind. Here arises the question of the peculiar relation in communication between text and audience. Antiquity has its own specificities in this communicative process. Ancient text owns two quite important peculiarities: on the one hand, it is created to be orally received, i.e. for reading aloud; on the other hand, it is aimed at determinate community. The immediate experiencing of texts by community is more important to antiquity than receiving from more people individually. The reading problem and the oral type communication are directly related to the understanding of the text and its translation. Reading and writing on someone's own are not characteristic of antiquity.

These issues concern the original source text and source language audience. But translation is a bilateral process. It is interested in source language text and target language text at the same time. Here arises the question of the readership of the target text. Modern audience is quite individualised. The contact with the text is an independent process. Nowadays reading gives to the personality the opportunity to be on his/her own. Reading is an instrument by which man can be absorbed in a world, identifying himself with various literary heroes. Individual's freedom to both separate himself by the act of reading from other individuals and to integrate himself with the others, predetermines varied and rich spiritual life of modern people. As far as translation is concerned, this fact is of great importance because target text readers differ from each other in their preferences, in the motivation they read translated text. Actually the primary function of translation is purely utilitarian: to overcome the lack of knowledge of source text language. Therefore, after defining original text audience, we have to ask ourselves whom translation is aimed at. In such a way, we can generally set apart two main readers groups: readers who do not know the source language and read the text because of some precise interest or curiosity; the second group includes people who study the source language and read texts with the help of translated texts. Contrast between collective and strictly individualised use of

texts in antiquity and modern age is one of the main reasons for the different impact on text audience. We may add the fact that ancient audience mainly consisted of listeners, whereas modern audience consists mainly of readers.

The specific human activity of translating begins in III c. BC. Thus we may consider the original value of Livius Andronicus' fragments of the *Odyssey* as a beginning of a new cultural activity. In Livius Andronicus' work we may see not only the origin of Roman literature, but in a wider sense the origin of European tradition in poetic translation. By virtue of translation act Greek original texts become generally known to Romans and thus came the beginning of an essential process development – this process goes along with the evolution of literature: this is the process of unimpeded communication and cultural penetration into literatures of various communities and civilisations, i.e. the translating process.

Translation process, if we assume its beginning started with Livius Andronicus' translation of the *Odyssey* into Latin, owns a set of specificities. The first reason that determines Livius Andronicus' translation peculiarity is its main purpose: Livius Andronicus' task was not to make generally known to Romans one of Homer's poems. Romans' aesthetic tastes were quite satisfied with Plautus' comedies and they did not need this kind of classic text. Livius Andronicus' translation aim had been to set the beginning of Latin literary language on the one hand and on the other hand, to lay the foundations of the language system formation. For this purpose Livius Andronicus translated the *Odyssey* in "saturnian verse" and changed Greek nouns with their Roman correlates:

Virum mihi, Camena, insece versutum (Od. a, 1)

He avoids here the address *Μοῦσα*, using *Camena*. In one of the next verses he gives *Κρονίδη* with the periphrasis *Saturni filius*:

pater noster, Saturni filie ... (Od. a, 45)

For reproducing *Μοῦρα* from the Greek original, he coins *Morta*, which do not fill up the meaning of the Greek noun, but its priority is to be purely Latin denomination.

In such a way Livius Andronicus stimulated Roman *homines docti* to use their language, to seek creating their works Latin equivalents for Greek words, although most of them were translated Greek originals. Livius Andronicus translation of the *Odyssey* is the introduction to Roman literary history and Latin language system evolution. In this sense, we can say his aim is not purely utilitarian: to remove the barrier of language difference. It is much greater: to create a new language and to encourage its development.

Two centuries later Latin had already its own established place within the borders of antiquity. Cicero, who became a model of Roman eloquence with his works, used in them many fragments of Greek drama authors and Homer's poems, translating them into Latin and not quoting them in Greek. Cicero's translations are quite different from Livius Andronicus' ones, Naevius' and Ennius' translations. Cicero's translating purpose is to transfer the artistic merits of texts or authors' ideas and concepts. Translated fragments give us a possibility to observe the way Cicero gives Roman form to Greek thought.

Cicero used translated verses from the Iliad in his work *De divinatione* (2, 63). The fragment contains a description of the omen sent from gods to Greeks and Kalchas' prophecy.

- 299 τλήτε, φίλοι, καὶ μείνατ' ἐπὶ χρόνον, ὄφρα δαῶμεν,
ἢ ἔτεόν Κάλχας μαντεύεται ἦε καὶ οὐκί.
εὐ γὰρ δὴ τόδε ἴδμεν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἐστὲ δὲ πάντες
μάρτυροι, οὓς μὴ κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτοιο φέρουσαι·
χθιζὰ τε καὶ πρωίζ', ὅτ' ἐς Αὐλίδα νῆες Ἀχαιῶν
ἠγερέθοντο κακὰ Πριάμῳ καὶ Τρωσὶ φέρουσαι·
- 305 ἡμεῖς δ' ἀμφὶ περὶ κρήνην ἱεροὺς κατὰ βωμοὺς
ἔρδομεν ἀθανάτοισι τελεέσσας ἑκατόμβας,
καλῆ ὑπὸ πλατανίστῳ, ὅθεν ῥέεν ἀγλαὸν ὕδωρ·
ἔνθ' ἐφάνη μέγα σῆμα· δράκων ἐπὶ νῶτα δαφινόσ,
σμερδαλέος, τόν ῥ' αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος ἦκε φόωσδε,
- 310 βωμοῦ ὑπαίξας πρὸς ῥα πλατανίστον ὄρουσεν.
ἔνθα δ' ἔσαν στρουθοῖο νεοσσοί, νῆπια τέκνα,
ὄζω ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, πετάλοις ὑποπεπτηῶτες,
ὀκτώ, ἀτὰρ μήτηρ ἐνάτη ἦν, ἣ τέκε τέκνα.
ἔνθ' ὅ γε τοὺς ἔλεεινὰ κατήσθις τετριγῶτας·
- 315 μήτηρ δ' ἀμφοποτάτο ὄδυρομένη φίλα τέκνα·
τὴν δ' ἔλελιξάμενος πτέρυγος λάβεν ἀμφιαχυῖαν.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ τέκνα φάγε στρουθοῖο καὶ αὐτήν,
τὸν μὲν ἀρίζηλον θῆκεν θεός, ὅς περ ἔφηνεν·
λαῖαν γὰρ μιν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω·
- 320 ἡμεῖς δ' ἑσταότες θαυμάζομεν, οἷον ἐτύχθη,
ὥς οὖν δεινὰ πέλωρα θεῶν εἰσηλθ' ἑκατόμβας,
Κάλχας δ' αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα θεοπροπέων ἀγόρευεν·
'τίπτ' ἄνεω ἐγένεσθε, κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί;
ἡμῖν μὲν τόδ' ἔφηνε τέρας μέγα μητίετα Ζεὺς,
- 325 ὄψιμον ὀπιτέλεστον, ὅου κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται.
ὥς οὗτος κατὰ τέκνα φάγε στρουθοῖο καὶ αὐτήν,
ὀκτώ, ἀτὰρ μήτηρ ἐνάτη ἦν, ἣ τέκε τέκνα,
ὥς ἡμεῖς τοσσαῦτ' ἔτεα πτολεμίζομεν αὐθι,
τῷ δεκάτῳ δὲ πόλιν αἰρήσομεν εὐρυάγυιαν·
- 330 κείνος τῷ ἀγόρευε· τὰ δὲ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται.

(Iliad, 2, 299-330)

There are proofs in several verses that Cicero followed the tradition established by L. Andronicus to search Latin equivalents for the Greek names of gods. Cicero translates Greek goddess of death κῆρες as pernicious fate, *fata funesta*. The idea of “death” and “destruction” is contained in the meaning of the two words in the compound word – in *fata* as well as in *funesta* (v. 302). In the next verse αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος is represented directly with the name of *Iuppiter*. Linking into one three verses (v. 317, 318 and 319), which present two sentences in the Greek original, Cicero uses the denomination *Genitor Saturnius*, which is precisely corresponding to θεός, on the one hand and, to Κρόνου πάϊς on the other hand. *Genitor* corresponds to θεός and *Saturnius* means literally “son of Saturn” and corresponds to Κρόνου πάϊς.

There is an interesting translation of the word groups ἴδμεν ἐνὶ φρεσίν (v. 301) and θανάτοιο φέρουσαι (v. 302). Saving descriptive manner of expression, Cicero do not simply use the verbs meaning “remember” and “die”. He uses compound word groups – *retentant memori mente* and *linquo lumen*. The first Latin equivalent is precise not only in its meaning as a whole, but as well as in

the meanings of each detached component-word. The second one is also a close equivalent, although its two parts are not exact correspondences of the Greek word group constituents.

The concept of κακόν is a peculiar one in antiquity. There is a quite an interesting though not literal translation of it in verse 304. Cicero uses two denominations to represent the word in Latin: *clades* and *pestis*, linked with the conjunction *et*. In ancient Greek and especially in the Iliad κακόν contains the idea of “calamity” (disaster), “destruction” and more precisely “war distress” or “defeat”, which causes damages and misfortune. In this sense the words *clades* and *pestis* entirely fill up the meaning of the Greek word κακόν. Instead if using a formal equivalent translating the concept with the Latin *malum* Cicero turns to dynamic equivalence subdividing the meaning of κακόν into two separate meanings. He acquires the full and exact sense of the translated concept by linking two words with the conjunction *et*. It is little probable that Cicero had done this parcellation for the metre sake. In ancient Greek mental system the concept κακόν – “evil” contains the idea of some failure, most often sent by gods whose agent on earth are human beings or nature. Evil for the individuals of the closed community is not an abstract concept. It has concrete dimensions and carries the marks of some system disturbance in human and natural world. In this sense it is something exterior, detached and independent from people themselves and community as a whole. The meaning of the word *malum* in Latin has quite a different nuance. Evil is rather human quality. It is some vice or defect of the individual personality. That is to say, as interior human characterisation evil become a cause of crime, malefaction or harm to someone else.

In the next three verses (305-307) there is some diversion from the accurate translation. There may be two reasons for this: the lexical rules of Latin language system and the fact that this is a poetic translation, where content is privileged to form. The Greek word κρήνην has its exact equivalent in Latin – *fons*. Cicero chooses a descriptive manner of expression and translates *latex gelidus*. The understanding of a “source” as a place where flows limpid and cold water is motivated for any length of time in human mind. There is a substitution of translated equivalents. In verse 307 the Latin *fons* represents the idea contained in ἀγλαὸν ὕδωρ. In the verse 305 the Greek κρήνην is translated as *latex gelidus*.

For the sake of doing a translation not alien to Romans and sounding well in Latin Cicero gives dynamic equivalents to some Greek word groups and single words. He searches for equivalents not only in language, but also in thought. He does not mechanically represent the word group ἱεροὺς βωμοὺς with *ara sancta* in Latin. He uses *ara fumans*. This compound word unit is stable in Latin language and Roman’s mind as well as the Greek ἱεροὺς βωμοὺς is for the Greeks. I.e. here is a substitution of a stable word group from the source language with a correspondent stable word group from the target language. A similar motivation may be behind the translation of the word group τεληέσσας ἑκατόμβας into the Latin *aurigeris tauris*. The idea of perfection, meaning best, selected sacrifices contained in the Greek adjective τέλειος has not an exact equivalent either in Roman’s thought or language.

The adjective καλός in Greek is peculiar on the one hand with its meaning, on the other hand with its use. Specificity results to a great extent from its being included in the important to Greeks concept of καλοκαγαθία. The first meaning of the word καλός is “beautiful”, “pretty”, “handsome” – here appearance is concerned – hence arise meanings related to the so called “inner beauty” and “inner handsomeness” of human kind – “gentle”, “valiant”, “honest”. A similar use of Latin *pulcher* would not be natural. It would be quite artificial, because it is used to name a human quality. Cicero translates καλός as *umbrifer* to represent a quality of an object, more precisely of a tree.

As far as the Greek verb πλατάνιστος is concerned, it has a strong emotional connotation “tuck in (under)”, “nestle”, “lurk”, “hide”. In the original text it is related to birds tucked under a tree. In the Latin text we read the following verses:

*qui platani in ramo foliorum tegmine saeptos
corripuit pullos;*

The sense of “tucking”, “hiding” contains on the one hand the verb *saepio*, on the other hand it is strengthened by the noun *tegimen*, which has got similar meanings to the verb.

The preference for expressing action in Latin purely with verbs or nouns, but not with verbal nouns or forms (participles) is probably the reason ὀδυρομένη is to be translated with *tremulo clangore*. Cicero could use the Latin verb *queror*, but it seems not to have the same emotional effect and intensity. Nevertheless, this verb is used in Horace’s works in the same context: *queruntur in silvis aves*.

The literary poetic expression is also achieved in verse 320:

*nos autem timidi stantes mirabile monstrum
vidimus*

The Greek verb θαυμάζω is not represented with the literal Latin equivalent *miror*. The verb sense is covered by two adjectives: *timidus* and *mirabilis*. The second one has the same root as the verb *miror* and embraces completely its content. At first sight *timidus* has a remote meaning – it means “timid”, “reverential”, “cautious”. Nevertheless, in these meanings is hidden the idea of “miracle”, “wonder”. Timidity and reverence are emotions people feel in the presence of some unusual, unexpected, inexplicable phenomena, something extraordinary and unknown, which goes out of their notions of world. Greater emotional effect is often achieved by putting in implicitly ideas and words meanings. In the same manner we may interpret the use of the two verbs *torpeo* and *obstupesco* as translations of ἄνεω ἐγένεσθε (v. 323). Their meanings “stiffen”, “stupefy” have a greater impact than the literal translation “to stay stilly”. The adverb *subito* formally divides the two verbs, but it relates them lexically.

Cicero’s task is quite easier to solve. The time-place-tradition elements of the original and translated text are almost the same. The audience had not completely changed. Literary purpose in translation concerns the same epoch – antiquity.

As far as modern literary translation of ancient texts is concerned there arise some additional questions. What makes a written work a work of literature? Could we place a translated ancient text in our target literary system? As far as each text has got its own context and time-place-tradition elements how could we cut the original text from its own context and put it in translator’s one?

Let us see briefly some translations of the famous Catullus’ poem 86. The choice of this poem is not fortuitous. The poem is peculiar with the fact that there is no depicted image. It represents a description of an emotion, a feeling. There are no clearly sketched frames. This is something we cannot see and imagine. We must feel it. These emotions were felt by an individual personality 20 centuries ago. So, the translator must try to achieve an equivalent effect in the translated text audience as it was for the original text audience.

Prose Translation

*I hate and I love. Why I do so
Perhaps you ask: I do not know,
But I feel it I am in agony.*
(T. Savory)

*I hate and love. Why I do so,
Perhaps you ask, I know not, but
I feel it and I am in torment.*
(Loeb Classical Library)

Verse Translation

*I hate yet love. You ask how this can be.
I only know its truth and agony.*
(T. Savory)

*I hate and love. And if you ask me how,
I do not know: I only feel it and I' m torn in two.*
(P. Whigham)

Prose translation of verse can not have the same equivalent impact. It does not matter how many poetic words are used: *torment, agony*. The distortion of verses distorts the effect. Prose translated poems are, in fact, destroyed literary works. We cannot place them in the target literary system because of their distorted literary framework.

With the distortion of literary frames translated text audience also changes. Prose translations of poems would not satisfy people interested in ancient literature who do not know the source language. Works of literature must be saved i.e. translated as works of literature. Literary purpose seems to be a basic issue in translation. Equivalent literary devices must reach impact on the new audience.

When translated work is read as work of literature by the new audience independent of context and literary system changes, we could say that translator's task has been accomplished.

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