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Kafka pluriel : réécriture et traduction

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The barriers to advances in theoretical TS will not be removed by journals of international scope (which we already have) or by more translations of theoretical works (though certainly there is a dearth of universal reference points — Nida being the rule-proving exception). The real barriers are much more daunting: just as theoretical linguistics could not advance until basic training in the discipline provided a knowledge of languages around the world, so translation theory will be hampered as long as *each scholar's* range of basic knowledge is narrow. Valuable applied and descriptive studies such as many of those collected here will be possible, but theory will lag.

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Roger ELLIS, ed. *The Medieval Translator. The Theory and Practice of Translation in The Middle Ages.* Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1989, 202 p.
Roger ELLIS, ed. *The Medieval Translator, volume II.* London, Centre for Medieval Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1991, 276 p.

These two volumes contain papers presented in 1987 at the first Cardiff Conference on the Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages. In the first, some eleven papers deal with topics ranging from the general — a consideration of the ways in which oft-quoted classical formulas proscribing literal translation were interpreted by medieval translators, and a reflection on the genre of translation in Middle English and its relation to original writing — to the particular: translation of a specific genre of writing (Lives of Christ), analyses of individual translations (Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*, Hue's *Ipomedon*, Richard Rolle's *Melos Amoris*, and a version of *Sir Ferumbras*) and of the practices of individual translators (Chaucer, Dame Eleanor Hull, Malory). A variety of topics then, but a common area — that of Middle English. In the second volume there is greater diversity, with studies of Toledo school in Spain, of French texts and their Welsh translators, and of translations done in Scandinavia at the Monastery of Vadstena, but studies also of translations of particular works or groups of works — the correspondance of Abélard and Héloïse, the *Li*

Fet des Romains, the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, and of tracts of spiritual guidance. In addition, other issues are raised: medieval attitudes to the relation between adaptation and translation, Chaucer's use of imitation and translation in his writing of *Troilus*, the difficulties involved in editing a medieval translation, and the examination of medieval translators at work in the translations of *Guy of Warwick* and *Partonopeu de Blois*. Taken together then, the two volumes give a sense of the richness of the practice of translation in the Middle Ages and of the variety of approaches to be found during that period. This is brought out in the introductions to the two volumes, by Roger Ellis, which, especially in the case of the volume published in 1989, manage to give some unity to what are, by their very nature, a disparate group of presentations.

Certain themes recur in the papers collected in the first volume, of which the most important is certainly the need always to contextualize pronouncements on translation. Even though certain authorities are constantly cited by medieval translators (Cicero or Jerome, for instance), their ways of translating do not necessarily correspond either to each other or to the authorities cited. Indeed, as Rita COPELAND shows in "The Fortunes of 'Non Verbum pro Verbo': or, Why Jerome is not a Ciceronian," to give a sense of what the theory and practice of translation in the Middle Ages involved it is necessary to situate them in relation to other modes of discourse:

> We must look beyond the explicit practice and theory of translation to other discursive practices, such as hermeneutics or political theory, or to the relationship between academic and vernacular cultures, to locate the terms by which the aims of translation have been redefined. The history of translation and its theory through the Middle Ages can only be written as a history of the confluence and rupture of these and many other systems. (p. 35)

Among these practices in terms of which translation must be situated are certain which derive from the classical rhetorical tradition, notably invention, compilation, imitation, adaptation, and transposition. Thomas Usk, for example, in his *Testament of Love*, a text which S. MEDCALF considers to be the first philosophical text in the English language as well the first book "in which English prose is made to have something of the pattern, gorgeousness and poignancy of poetry" (p. 182), is shown to be very free in his handling of Boethius, transposing rather than translating. J.D. BURNLEY ("Late Medieval English Translation: Types and Reflec-

tions") demonstrates the interconnection between translation, composition (*enditing*) and compilation: "Translation from a source is therefore not incompatible with *enditing*, and by the same token translating is not necessarily oriented towards, even less limited to, the individual source text; and so it may involve compilation." (p. 39) The interconnection of what would for us be different practices needs to be seen in terms of one of the functions given translation: the broadening of the appeal of the text through popularization. In such a context, the original text becomes a source to be exploited, a source of new texts and new themes within the translator's own culture. This brings to the fore another theme: the opposition between meaning and form. For most translators in the Middle Ages, at least for those not translating religious texts, the principal interest was in the content of the text rather than its form. An exception here, would perhaps be Dame Eleanor Hull, a fifteenth-century translator from French and "one of only four women writers in Middle English to whom we can confidently put a name" (Alexandra BARRATT, "Dame Eleanor Hull: A Fifteenth-Century Translator," p. 87), whose translations tend to remain close to the source texts, even literal. For Chaucer, on the other hand, translation and original composition were interconnected in the emphasis which they placed on the primacy of meaning. Tim William MACHAN, in his discussion of "Chaucer as Translator," shows that the overlap between translation and composition in Chaucer's production exists as a way of resolving the question of the possibility and prestige of authorship in medieval times for those who wrote in the vernacular:

> To be simply a vernacular writer precluded Chaucer from exercising his unique literary genius; but to be an author was a cultural impossibility. By conceiving literary production in general as translation to a greater or lesser extent, Chaucer enabled himself to act as that paradoxical creature, the vernacular author. As a translator, whether actual or not, Chaucer obtained not simply texts, stylistics and ideas. He obtained status and authority as well, for if the sources he translated — or claimed to translate — had prestige, this prestige was necessarily a part of his own texts; the *Troilus* acquired poetic achievement from Chaucer's genius, but it acquired respectability from Lollius's alleged authorship. (p. 66)

For Nicholas WATSON ("Translation and Self-Canonization in Richard Rolle's *Melos Amoris*"), Chaucer's concern with the authority of his text is part of an ironic reflection on the concept of literary authority

itself, different from that of Richard Rolle, whose work operates as a translation of exalted experiences he personally underwent. Unlike Chaucer, Rolle makes every attempt to hide his own inventiveness, wishing to convince the reader of his own holiness and to "establish his text, *Melos Amoris*, as of an equivalent status to the authoritative earlier writings of Christian tradition." (p. 179) Such a concern with authorship and valorization of the text can also be found in Catherine BATT's study of Malory: "Malory's Questing Beast and the Implications of Author as Translator." Malory is seen to be drawing on but not replicating French romances, at the same time making use of the topos of translation found in these texts and displacing it. Malory is not a typical transaltor but more a critical reader, offering "us a text which is the product of the dynamic interchange between translator-as-reader and the translator-as-writer, the subject matter, and the reader." (p. 148) Even in the case of less secular writing, such as the Lives of Christ, where the overriding purpose was to transmit meaning without corruption, the translator needed to keep in mind the intended audience. As a result, translation was given an exegetical function, and translators were also compilers and preachers. (Ian JOHNSON, "Prologue and Practice: Middle English Lives of Christ") Such intermingling of translation and interpretation was not limited to religious works and is also described in Anne SAVAGE's "Translation as Expansion: Poetic Practice in the Old English *Phoenix* and Some Other Poems," where expansion and editing of material in the original are taken as signs of the poetic intention of the translator:

> Digressions from the phoenix story, and reworkings of its material, occur throughout the translated portion of the poem as well; the translator's extension and focussing of certain ideas, and the themes of sections which depart altogether from Lactantius's *Carmer*, point to a structure which overrides the apparent split of a 'story' followed by an 'interpretation' riddled with vaguely related material. This structure results in a work based very much on the translator's own sense of direction, which seems to be suggested by the process of translation itself. (p. 128)

Adaptation of works to a new audience was, as has already been mentioned, one of the functions given translation in the Middle Ages. Such adaptations are of interest not only for what they tell us about the readers/audience at that time, but also for what they show about the evolution of literary forms. This is brought out by Rosalind FIELD in her examination of a Middle

English translation of Hue de Roteland's *Ipomedon*, where one vision of courtliness is replaced by another:

> To turn from Hue's *Ipomedon* to *Ipomadon A* [the translation] is to encounter a very different work, not a pallid imitation of its original, not a flustered popularisation of a courtly work, as is the case with all too many Middle English translations, but a careful, critical transformation and modernisation of Hue's work which provides valuable insight into attitudes towards, and expectations of, courtly romance in fourteenth-century England. ("*Ipomedon* to *Ipomadon A*: Two views of Courtliness," p. 138)

In addition to the comparison of source text and translation, different stages of a translation can be of interest in what they can tell us about the way in which the translator worked. Such is the case of the text examined by Stephen H.A. SHEPHERD ("The Ashmole *Sir Ferumbras*: Translation in Holograph").

The second volume opens with a study by Karen PRATT, entitled "Medieval Attitudes to Translation and Adaptation: the Rhetorical Theory and the Poetic Practice." Pratt highlights the debate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries between the classical rhetorical tradition of reworking given subject-matter and the tradition based on biblical translation, in which fidelity was much more of a concern. However, while German adaptors claim to have rendered their texts faithfully, there very often is in fact innovation, interpretation and amplification, showing the rhetorical tradition of rewriting to often be more in use than is biblical translation theory. This focus on the intended audience rather than on the source text is also to be found in an even more conscious way in the following three papers, which all deal with the role of translation in developing the vernacular. Clara FOZ, in a paper in French — "Pratique de la traduction en Espagne au Moyen Age: les travaux tolédans" — , presents the work and the context of the so-called Toledo school in twelfth and thirteenth century Spain. In fact two distinct periods of translation can be identified (1130-1187, and 1252-1287), periods in which the aims and methods used by translators varied. In the thirteenth century, for example, translation was given a particularly important role to play:

> L'entreprise de traduction du treizième siècle se présente donc comme une entreprise essentiellement espagnole et le choix opéré par Alphonse X d'adopter, à une époque où le latin avait pratique-

ment l'exclusivité en Occident en matière de communication écrite et d'enseignement, le roman castillan comme langue cible de la plupart des travaux, témoigne d'une volonté d'inscrire ces réalisations dans un cadre national. D'instrument oral intermédiaire qu'elle était au siècle précédent, la langue espagnole, commune à l'ensemble des intervenants du treizième siècle, acquit, par la traduction, un statut de langue écrite...". (p. 39)

Translation also had a similar role to play in the development of Welsh. Ceridwen LLOYD-MORGAN ("French Texts, Welsh Translators") shows the importance of translation, and in particular translation from the French, in this regard. In the thirteenth century, large-scale borrowings were made from French source texts and the material was adapted to the Welsh context. In the following two centuries, however, translation in the narrower sense of the term, although still quite free at times (abstract and psychological elements tended to be abridged), almost entirely replaced any original composition directly in Welsh. Another example of the role of translation in the development of the vernacular is Swedish. Lars WOLLIN shows the importance of the translations from Latin into Swedish done in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries at the monastery of Vadstena: "It may be asserted that the monks of Vadstena, translating from Latin, took the very first steps towards standardizing the Swedish language." ("The Monastery of Vadstena. Investigating the Great Translation Workshop in Medieval Scandinavia," pp. 68-69) Other texts in this volume show translators at work, adapting their source texts to the needs of their readers. According to Jeanette BEER, in "Julius Caesar, Philip Augustus, and the Anonymous Translator of *Li Fet des Romains*" one of the reasons for undertaking the translation was because the activities of the Romans were considered to contain both positive and negative lessons applicable to the context at the time. A concern with the needs of the audience is also found in Leslie C. BROOK's article, "The Translator and his Reader: Jean de Meun and the Abélard-Héloïse Correspondance." After completing the *Roman de la rose*, Jean de Meun embarked on a number of translations from Latin into French for the young comte d'Eu. These translations take into account that his reader, or readers (his patron, but also a wider public with no Latin, or clerks who might find Latin too difficult) would find a literal translation too difficult and so he puts the emphasis on general clarity and overall coherence, matching the complexity of the Latin sentences while at the same time producing a clear and easily readable text. A similar adaptation to the readers/audience's expectations can also be seen in three Middle English translations of *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*. Robert

EASTING shows how the translations preserve only certain parts of the original text, simplify the theological and dogmatic material, and expand the didactic, explanatory and interpretative elements. As a result the poem is shifted towards realism:

> All three Middle English versions, by their excisions and additions, allow us to trace some of the tendencies in late medieval translation from Latin to the vernacular, from the monastic to the secular, from the potentially meditative to the more purely narrative, from an interest in theoretical eschatology to the immediate romance and drama of personal heroism. (p. 173)

In "Brigittine Tracts of Spiritual Guidance in Fifteenth-Century England: a Study in Translation," Domenico PEZZINI examines different English versions of St. Bridget's *Liber Revelationum Celestium*, which, since they were done independently of each other, show various techniques being applied to the same Latin source text. Certain versions demonstrate literalness, while others rephrase and restructure the original. Smaller parts are abstracted out of longer works, and translated and adapted for the general reader, defined as a growing literate audience increasingly composed of lay people, mostly women. Brenda HOSINGTON's study ("*Partonopeu de Blois* and its Fifteenth-Century English Translation: a Medieval Translator at Work") also shows the translator producing changes and adapting to new literary and social conventions. The translation produced reflects the debate between literalness and freedom, close renderings existing side by side paraphrase. Translators' techniques are also examined in Maldwyn MILLS's "Techniques of Translation in the Middle English Versions of *Guy of Warwick*." In at least one case, the translator uses his role as an opportunity not merely to adapt the source text to the expectations of the intended audience but to use it as an occasion to give further emphasis to questions raised in the original. This, according to N.S. THOMPSON, is the relation existing between Chaucer's *Troilus* and Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. Chaucer's text can be considered a public critique of its source, in its attempt to encourage the audience's powers of judgment:

> Whereas the *Filostrato* remains within the narrow confines of courtly debate, its rather superficial references to the profounder ethical issues of the *dolce stil nuovo* provide a springboard for Chaucer to open out a full ethical debate about human aspirations

and failings, set against a wide variety of perspectives, from literature to theology." (p. 150)

Finally, a last paper, "Problems of Editing a Translation: Anglo-Norman to Middle English," by C.W. MARX, raises the problems involved in editing a translation by lack of access to the source exemplar.

As will be gathered from this very rapid presentation of the papers contained in these two volumes, a wealth of material is to be found therein, exemplifying for the most part nevertheless certain basic recurrent themes which seem to be an essential aspect of any reflection on translation. There is of course a need always to consider such themes within the particular context in which they occur, and indeed, the obligation to contextualise is a question these papers raise. Such a collection, in its very diversity, makes it possible for the reader to get a sense of the multiplicity of practices and approaches which existed in medieval times, and for this alone it is extremely useful. Other themes as well — the limits of translation (its relation to rewriting, to adaptation and to imitation), the role of translation in terms of national literatures and languages, and the relation of translators to their readers/audience — are also still of importance to us. Thus the interest of the papers presented here for anyone concerned with the history and theory of translation.

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Barbara FOLKART. *Le Conflit des énonciations. Traduction et discours rapporté.* Montréal, Les Éditions Balzac, 1991, 481 p.

L'Altérité essentielle de la traduction: le faire producteur du sujet traduisant

C'est contre une certaine conception de la traduction traversée encore par le mythe de la fidélité et par la nostalgie de la transparence que Barbara Folkart s'élève dans cet ouvrage aux prolongements nombreux tant pour la pragmatique et la théorie littéraire que pour la traduction. Car, plutôt que