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THE PIONEER TRANSLATORS OF RABELAIS: SIR THOMAS URQUHART AND PIERRE MOTTEUX


Sir Thomas Urquhart

When I was a graduate student in England, I heard it said of a well-known academic that if he could have one wish granted it would be to experience reading Rabelais for the first time again. Apocryphal or not, the story has a strong ring of truth, not for what it says about the academic (whose name was not known to me) but about the exhilaration that Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* arouses in all readers at all stages of their lives, but especially the very first. *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is unique in literature. In a vast unembarrassed sprawl in five books over 16th-century France and the globe, it loosely charts with satire, wit, fantasy, and extravagant word-coinages the adventures of the giants Gargantua and his equally immense son Pantagruel. Although it has its philosophical and serious reaches insisting that knowledge leads to virtuous action, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is a torrent of a book that abounds in the good humor, cheer, and robust coarseness that Rabelais saw as making life the enjoyable experience that it is.

Since the Renaissance, Rabelais has been known to writers and laymen alike, Swift and Smollett being his greatest admirers. However, it is easy to overlook the fact that Rabelais normally enters the English-speaking consciousness not through being read in his original French, but in translation, and it is the two earliest translations that are my concern

here. First was Sir Thomas Urquhart's 1653 version of the first two books of *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* After the Restoration, Pierre Motteux published three of Rabelais' books (the third stemming from an unpublished manuscript of Urquhart's), and then all five in 1708. Twenty-nine years later, in 1737, these combined works of Urquhart and Motteux were revised and published by an editor named James Ozell whose edition became the standard volume of the 18th and 19th centuries.

By far the best and most important of these translators was the first. Sir Thomas Urquhart was a man whose eccentricity, curiosity, flights of fancy, and sheer joy in neologisms matched Rabelais' own. His turbulent and in many ways fantastic life began in 1611 in Cromarty in the north of Scotland, which he left in 1622 at age eleven (which at that time was not early) to attend Aberdeen University. During his vacations back at Cromarty the young Urquhart busied himself with "optical secrets, mysteries of natural Philosophie, reasons for the variety of Colours, the finding out of the Longitude, the squaring of a circle, and wayes to accomplish all Trigonometrical calculations by signes (sic), without tangents" (Urquhart, *Logopandecleision:* 2, 36), and also with horsemanship and fowling. This pattern of scholarship and action, in some ways reminiscent of Gargantua's childhood in Rabelais, was to continue throughout his life. Like many young men of his time, he took no degree but went to the Continent, where as well as traveling he defended Scotland's honor and his own by dueling. Having returned to Scotland he took up arms for the Royalists against the Covenanters, but when the former were forced to relinquish Aberdeen, he left for London. In 1640 he made his first sally into literature with *Apollo and the Muses,* a vast folio volume in manuscript (the only copy is in the Beinecke Library at Yale University) of 1,103 epigrams in which he displays a relish for crudity and licentiousness that resurfaced only when he came to translate Rabelais. Certainly he was in a more serious, not so sluggish, frame of mind in his next work, *Epigrams Divine and Moral* (1641) but recovered his exuberance in *The Trissotetras (1645),* a copiously erudite attempt to create an *aide-memoire* for trigonometry: here Urquhart the word-coiner, the *in ovo* translator of Rabelais, makes his first appearance, declaring, for example, that "loxogonosphericall triangles, whether amblygonosphericall or oxygonosphericall, are either monurgetic or disergetick" *(Triss.* 39).

After 1645 his fortunes, such as they were, took several turns for the worse. Not only did *The Trissotetras* join *Epigrams Divine and Moral* in sinking without trace (something that Urquhart, innocent of modesty, would have found incomprehensible), but he was pressed by creditors for debts on his father's hopelessly ill-managed estates. Although laboring under these "solicitudinary and luctiferous discouragements" (which is Urquhartese for pressing claims and debts), he was swift to join the Scottish Royalists as they made their way into England only to be defeated by Cromwell at Worcester in 1651. One wonders which smarted more: the defeat, or the fact that at Worcester the Protectorate soldiery scattered to the winds his "Manuscripts in *folio,* to the quantity of sixscore & eight quires and a half, divided into Six hundred fourty and two Quinternions and upward" (Urquhart, *Ekskubalauron* 2). These he hoped to have published on his arrival in London. What these manuscripts amounted to we shall never reliably know, but Urquhart harps on their loss time and again in the cumbersomely titled books that he dashed off from 1651 to 1653 in an attempt to secure his freedom from imprisonment in the Tower of London. First came *Pantochronocanon* (1652), an elaborately contrived history of the Urquhart lineage stemming from Adam and Eve Urquhart and culminating in none other than Sir Thomas himself. Later in the same year was published *Ekskubalauron* in which he praises 125 Scots of the previous 50 years (being careful to emphasize that not one of them was a Presbyterian). He singles out James ("The Admirable") Crichton and himself. Also in *Ekskubalauron,* Urquhart proposes, in exchange for his freedom, to reveal the lexicon of a universal language: this is a bargain he repeats in *Logopandecteision* (1653), along with some bitter railings against his creditors. Also in 1653 he published his masterpiece, the translation of the first two books of Rabelais *(Gargantua [1R]* and *Pantagruel [2R]).* He was later freed from prison and spent his remaining years in the Scottish community in Middelburg, in Holland, supposedly dying of laughter on hearing of the Restoration.

Urquhart was probably the only man in mid-l7th-century Britain qualified by personality and circumstance to achieve a scintillating translation of Rabelais. The quality that most clearly makes Urquhart's *Rabelais* exceptional, which distinguishes it from other translations of the Renaissance, is its utter lack of inhibition. Translation since its recorded

beginnings has never been able to liberate itself from the stigma of inferiority; it tacitly denies the possibility of its own success because of the assumption that it is impossible to replicate a text faithfully from one language to another. Translators, even those of the Renaissance who were freed by Cicero's warning not to translate *verbum pro verba*, placed their confidence not in their own versions but in the value of the original work. Sir Thomas Urquhart, however, felt no such qualms. Far from characterizing translation, as Estienne Pasquier did, as "Un labeur misérable, ingrat et esclave" (qtd. in Zuber 24), Sir Thomas would have seen it as a joyous and masterly achievement, and one so worthy of gratitude that it would have him released forthwith from his prison cell. Like his other books at the time, Urquhart's translation is a *tour de force* of his own accomplishments, qualities that he valued far more than he did Rabelais. Consequently, his pages read with all the gusto of the original, never once smelling of the oil lamp or betraying the unease that one often senses in translation.

Enthusiasm and self-confidence can only take a translator so far, however. Rabelais' thorny vocabulary, his neologisms, his dialect words, and his wide range of allusions had already proved too much for many a would-be translator before Urquhart, and only fragments of their efforts remain[1]. Their failures were not lost on Urquhart, who in his Preface to *Pantagruel* crows that the "Pentateuch of Rabelais" is

> so difficult...to be turned into any other speech, that many prime spirits in most of the Nations of *Europe*, since the year 1573 (which was fourscore yeares ago) after having attempted it, were constrained (with no small regret) to give it over, as a thing impossible to be done.[2]

Of course it was not in Urquhart's interest to reveal that he had at his disposal an

[1] For details of earlier attempts to translate Rabelais, see Huntington Brown, *Rabelais in English Literature* (NewYork: Octagon Books, 1967), pp. 31-70.

[2] Urquhart may have known of Fischart's extremely digressive translation into German, *Affenteurliche vnd Vngeheurliche Geschichtschrift vom Leben Rhaten vnd Thaten vor langen weilen vollenwolbeschraiten Helden vnd Herren Grandgusier, Gargantoa vnd Pantagruel* (Strasbourg, [1575*]),* or of his earlier Rabelaisian almanac *Aller Practik Grossmüter* (1572), which is nearer to the date that Urquhart gives.

invaluable aid that all his predecessors lacked. This was Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), a volume towering over all previous French-to-English dictionaries. Although it borrows slightly from Claude de Sainliens' *A Dictionarie French and English* (1593) and from Nicot's *Thresor de la langue francoise* (1606), Cotgrave's dictionary is a storehouse of assiduously collected knowledge: entries come from the lore of crafts, botany, poetry, and ornithology, to mention only a few. As well as ransacking a host of contemporary writers for literary language, Cotgrave pours into his book colloquialisms, dialect terms, proverbs, entire anecdotes, oaths, vulgarities, and obscenities. He is thorough and organized, always listing all possible meanings of any doubtful and difficult terms, and accompanying alternative spellings with helpful directions to the one spelling that is defined. Most important of all, Cotgrave had read all five of Rabelais' books and translates all but 1,000 of the words which Rabelais invented, marking each Rabelaisian term (and some unrabelaisian ones) Rab.

Urquhart, whose French was not expert, had Cotgrave to hand all the time that he was translating. Therefore, if we ourselves sit with the 1542 revised edition of Rabelais and with Cotgrave's *Dictionarie,* we can place ourselves in Urquhart's mind in the mid-l7th century *in the very process of translation*.

Like all translators, Urquhart is naturally guided by the context and by his own common sense when selecting the most appropriate meaning or meanings from Cotgrave's many strings of synonyms. Often he does so quite simply, by copying out either all of a short entry or the first couple of terms. Urquhart, though, is no mere transcriber of Cotgrave: he is quick to remold or even overrule Cotgrave as he sees fit, as when, for instance, he indulges his relish of alliteration. The hearty drinker of the "Prologue" to Pantagruel defends his anecdotes by swearing that "ce ne sont pas fariboles," a word that Cotgrave pleasingly translates as "Trifles, nifles, flim-flams, why-whawes, discourses, fond tatling, tales of a tub, or of a roasted horse." Urquhart's rendering of Rabelais' phrase as "these are no flimflam stories, nor tales of a tub" not only shows he is attracted by the alliteration of the two terms he chooses, but also concerned, by adding "stories,"
Cotgrave:

> ENCHEVESTRER. To halter, fetter, tye in a halter, put in a coller; to insnarle, intangle, as a horse with his own coller; also, to inueagle; or any way, to insnare.

In the first instance (one of the last titles in St. Victor's Library), having already used Cotgrave to recast the titles of several volumes about farting, Urquhart realizes not only the need to shun repetition but to create a climactic effect. Rightly adjudging Cotgrave's definition of "Tyrepet" to be too tame for the occasion, he cuts loose with the magnificent onomatopoeic "bumsquibracker," a word which only he and no later translator could have coined. In the second example, he rejects Cotgrave in order to avoid the awkward juxtaposition of the *Dictionarie's* "into high matters" and Rabelais' own adjectival phrase "du temps iadis."

The third example shows Urquhart alive to the balance of Rabelais' sentence. Before translating "taille," Urquhart has noticed Rabelais' pair of linked synonyms, "apophthegmes et dictez." This word pair prompts him to construct a syntactical order for this phrase and the next, a symmetry which requires two meanings of "taille." From Cotgrave he selects "carve" and "grave" and turns the latter to "ingrave" on alliterative grounds. Intending in the second phrase to match these correspondences, he consults Cotgrave for two definitions of "enchevestre." There are several euphonically pleasing combinations at his disposal, such as "insnare and intangle," "insnare and inveagle," and "inveagle and intangle," but he realizes that all of these omit Cotgrave's important first meaning, "to halter, fetter, tye in a halter, put in a coller." With a stroke of ingenious wit that is very close to punning, although the intent is humorless, he hits upon "trapped," with the twin meanings of putting halters and harnesses on a horse, and of catching in a trap, entrapping, or ensnaring. "Caparisoned," too, is Urquhart's own, sharing the first sense of "trapped" and conveniently echoing that word's first syllable, thus signaling to the reader that the symmetry of the first phrase is being repeated in the second, and preparing him or her for the corresponding pair of nouns, "Mules and Sumpter-horses."

I hope that this discussion does not give the impression that it was easy for Urquhart to locate unfamiliar words by looking them up in the *Dictionarie*. On the contrary, the many

differences in spelling between Rabelais and Cotgrave often force him to scour Cotgrave's pages in search of a particular word. Sometimes his quests are aided by Cotgrave's meticulous cross-references; Rabelais' spelling may be given accompanied by a direction to a variant against which the English terms are given. But often Cotgrave does not list a word as Rabelais spells it, and in these cases Urquhart's determination is truly remarkable. When he comes to the word "orripilation" *(Pant.*, Ch. 13), he naturally searches for that form in Cotgrave but is unable to find it. In a nearby column in the relevant area, he comes across the word spelled with one "r"; "ORIPILATION. Rab. Looke HORRIPILATION." Following this instruction he discovers, some 40 pages further back, the correct entry: "HORRIPILATION. A suddaine quaking, yerning, shuddering, shivering, or quivering; also, a growing rough with hair." Characteristically, both senses are incorporated into the translation, which reads, "the sudden quaking, shivering, and hoarinesse" *(2R*, Ch. 13, p. 20).

That particular quest was easier than many because an alternative spelling is on the same page as the desired one, and Urquhart is soon following Cotgrave's directions. But there are times when there is no such help and then Urquhart, convinced that the required term is in Cotgrave, hunts painstakingly through the *Dictionarie.* Does he laboriously look through all the entries under a certain letter until he hits on the right one, or does he select "likely" areas? He uses both methods. His alighting on "veautroit" for Rabelais' "vaultroit" and on "gabregeux" for Rabelais' "gaubregeux" suggests that homophony is his guide *(Garg.*, Chs. 11, 25). On the other hand, it might be fanciful to argue that his arrival at "Racletorets" comes from his own pronunciation of Rabelais' "ragletorelz" to yield a "c" sound that indicates the correct area of Cotgrave. Here it is more probable that he doggedly sifts through all the words beginning with "ra" until he comes to the correct entry.

The defective editions in which Cotgrave read Rabelais account for many errors on the lexicographer's part, and there are times when Cotgrave's misunderstandings pass into the translation. In these instances Urquhart cannot be held responsible since he can hardly be expected to improve on Cotgrave, whose *Dictionarie* is fuller than any of its predecessors and whose French is manifestly superior to Urquhart's. When faced with an unfamiliar word that Cotgrave does not give, Urquhart creditably provides a translation that makes *some*

sense, despite imprecision. A less determined and more self-critical translator would probably have been discouraged and would have abandoned his task, but Urquhart is a stranger to self-criticism.

He himself, though, is responsible for most of the translation's inaccuracies. Interestingly, the traps into which he falls do far more than confirm how difficult an author Rabelais is to translate (and thus underline Urquhart's achievement in completing his task); they reveal a great deal of Urquhart's temperament and moods while at work.

Many oversights stem from inattentiveness. In full flight of translation, Urquhart gives hardly a thought to the word "duc" in this line of the "Antidoted Franfreluches"—"avec son duc tendoit a la pipee" *(Garg.*, Ch. 2)—and dashes down "Duck" *(1R*, Ch. 2, p. *15)*, ignoring the *Dictionarie* where he would have found the term correctly explained as "the great Owle, tearmed, a Horne-owle." The context (the use of the "duc" to catch birds) should warn Urquhart, by no means an ignorant man, against this interpretation. This shortcoming suggests haste and lack of revision, both well-known Urquhartian traits in his earlier works but unmentioned in connection with his composition of *Rabelais.* Thoughtlessness, too, causes him to translate "Voire" *(Garg.*, Ch. 5) as "yea forsooth Sir" *(1R*, Ch. 5, p. 24) in a conversation that is plainly between women, and it is also to blame for two misreadings of correct translations in the *Dictionarie.* When Urquhart looks up the "troys cens hostardes" gorged by Gargantua *(Garg.*, Ch. 37), he misreads the correct translation, "bustards," as "buzzards" *(1R*, Ch. 37, p. 168). While neither this error nor his reading of Cotgrave's "helve" ("emmancher") as "halve" *(2R*, Ch. 27, p. 174) mars our overall understanding of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, both fail to convey Rabelais' meaning.

In those instances Cotgrave would have helped, but there are times when he does not list a particular word. Then Urquhart scans the relevant area of words of similar construction and, consequently, of similar typographical appearance. As "manillier," meaning a church warden and mentioned in Chapter 30 of *Pantagruel*, is not given, Urquhart allows his eye to wander on the column until it settles on "maniller," which Cotgrave translates as a "Bracelet-maker." Hence, in Epistemon's vision of hell, "Jason was a Bracelet-maker" *(2R*, Ch. 30, p. 199). In his quest for "croquinolle" *(Pant.*, Ch. 30) Urquhart opts for "croque-

quenouille," which has a different meaning altogether. Similarly "trinquemaille" *(Pant.,* Ch. 30: given by Cotgrave as "such a box as Players take money in at their doors") is adopted in the absence of Rabelais' "trinquamolle" (a term from Toulouse meaning "almond breaker" and hence, metaphorically, "a braggart"). The cry of the Mistral bowls players, "Cambos!" *(Garg.,* Ch. 22), meaning "mind your legs!" is omitted from the *Dictionarie,* but Urquhart, undeterred, alights on "camboy," which is explained as "The blacke, and oilie grease, of a wrought cart-wheele; some call it, the Gome."

Because the world of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is so bizarre and fantastic, and because his translation is so unembarrassed in its sweep, most of Urquhart's shortcomings are camouflaged. By contrast, an intentionally striking feature of Urquhart's *Rabelais* is his inclusion of what appear to be Rabelais' own words, that is, Greek, French dialect, and Rabelaisian words[3] Far from being duplications of words used by Rabelais, these are new English words derived from and frequently identical to those in Rabelais. Where necessary they have English inflections, but these, applied to nouns and adjectives, are the same as the French and hence are unobtrusive. Above all, they have English senses and are embedded in English prose:

Rabelais: il y a dix huyt iours que ie suis a matagroboliser ceste belle harange.
(Garg., Ch. 19)

Urquhart: I have been these eighteen dayes in *metagrobolising* this brave speech.
(1R, Ch. 19, p. 83)

Rabelais: Et si personne les blasme de soy faire rataconniculer.
(Garg., Ch. 3)

Urquhart: If any blame them for this their *rataconniculation* and reiterated lechery.
(1R, Ch. 3, p. 21)

[3] This section draws on but takes issue with lazare Sain'e an's article "Les Interprètes de Rabelais en Angleterre et en Allemagne", *Revue des études Rabelaisiennes* 7 (1909): 137-258.

Rabelais: Les maroufles le regardoient
(Garg., Ch. 34)

Urquhart: The *maroufle* Rogues looked upon him
(1R, Ch. 34, p. 157)

Urquhart's italicizing all his coinages shows him more concerned to advertise his linguistic inventiveness than to echo Rabelais' words and thus permit the translation to retain the flavor of the original. By devising new words Urquhart does unintentional homage to his master, and even betters him. Rabelais brought into his work Latin and Greek-based expressions that he transformed into French by means of French suffixes; this is a small act of translation in itself. For his part Urquhart goes further still, molding into English Rabelais' coinages (thus conserving their flavor) and zestfully creating his own at will. Not only does he repeat his own habit of forming words from Greek and Latin, but he also breaks new ground by creating English words from French bases. Every word in Rabelais affords the egoistical Urquhart an opportunity for innovation.

These neologisms' closeness to the French words from which they are formed allows Urquhart many chances to display his own ingenuity. He makes his coinages particularly conspicuous by accompanying them with Cotgrave's entries framed into definitions:

> Panurge gave *Pantagruel* to eate some devillish drugs, compounded of *Lithotripton* (which is a stone-dissolving ingredient,)nephrocatarticon (that purgeth the reines) the marmalade of Quinces, (called *Codiniac)* a confection of *Cantharides,* (which are green flies breeding on the tops of olive-trees) and other kindes of diuretick or pisse-producing simples. (2R, Ch. 28, p. 182)

Generally, since the movement of translation (and of Cotgrave's *Dictionarie)* is from French to English, Urquhart's invented term precedes a synonym or stands at the head of a list: "torcheculs, arsewisps, tail-napkins" *(1R,* Ch. 13, p. 66); "*lougarous* or man-eating wolves" *(1R,* Ch. 8, p. 42); "the bedondaine or belly-tabret" *(1R,* Ch. 20, p. 86); and "*Dronos,* that is, so many knocks, thumps, raps, dints, thwacks, and bangs" *(1R*, Ch. 27, p. 128). Interestingly, the synonyms not only point to the Urquhartian coinage by defining it but also

serve as English translations of the seemingly French word which they follow, and by these means the act of translation is suggested by, and preserved in, the translation itself. But from time to time Urquhart will invert the pattern so as to allow the new term to complement its preceding commonplace equivalents with a flourish of erudite, self-regarding emphasis, redolent of the original French: "but hearken joltheads, you viedazes" *(1R,* "The Authors Prologue"); "I never saw any have a better countenance in his hanging and *pendilatory* swagging" *(1R,* Ch. 42, p. 189); "a little powder of projection, otherways called *doribus" (2R,* "The Authors Prologue").

Those of Urquhart's coinages that expand on Rabelais' neologisms are particularly successful. In Rabelais, Latin and French clash, and Greek becomes French while remaining recognizably Greek. In Urquhart, the elegance, poise, and ostentation of latinate diction is countered by dismissive snarls of Anglo-Saxon English. Rabelais' Greek-based nonce-words emerge in Urquhart as Greek-based nonce words, unmarred by translation. Many of Rabelais' elaborate coinages, composed of compressed syllables taken from many words, appear in 1653 as Rabelaisian, French, and English all at once. The obvious translation of Rabelais' "robidilardique" as "*Robidilardick" (1R,* Ch. 3, p. 20) retains all the comic ingenuity of the original, while Urquhart's English suffix echoes that of the French. When Urquhart understands the tone of a passage in Rabelais (and he does not always do so) he succeeds in retaining the intentional harmonies and discords of the original while adding impulsively his own Anglo-Gallicisms:

> Would to God I knew the shop, wherein are forged these divisions, and factious combinations, that I might bring them to light in the confraternities of my parish. Beleeve me for a truth, that the place wherein the people gathered together, were thus sulfured, hopurymated, moiled and bepist, was called *Nesle,* where then was, (but now is no more) the Oracle of *Leucotia:* There was the case proposed, and the inconvenience shewed of the transporting of the bells: After they had *ergoted pro* and *con,* they concluded in *Baralipton,* that they should send the eldest and most sufficient of the facultie unto *Gargantua.*

(1R, Ch. 17, p. 79)

The more of Urquhart's translation one reads, the more aware one becomes of Urquhart as translator: his unflagging exuberance makes reading Rabelais an exhilarating experience. Nowhere is he more himself and at the same time more Rabelaisian than when he exerts himself over Rabelais' lists, such as the endearments that Gargantua's governesses lavish on the young giant's penis:

> Lune la nommoit ma petite dille, laultre ma pine, laultre ma branche de coural, laultre mon bondon, mon bouchon, mon vibrequin, mon poussouer, ma teriere, ma pendilloche, mon rude esbat roidde et bas, mon dressouir, ma petite andouille vermeille, mon petit couille bredouille.

(Garg., Ch. 11)

Urquhart expands these 13 synonyms to 38:

> One of them would call it her little dille, her staff of love, her quillety, her faucetin, her dandilollie: another her peen, her jolly kyle, her bableret, her membretoon, her quickset Imp: Another again, her branch of coral, her female adamant, her placket-racket, her cyprian scepter, her jewel for Ladies: and some of the other women would give it these names, my bunguetee, my stopple too, my busherusher, my gallant wimble, my pretty boarer, my coney-borow ferret, my little piercer, my augretine, my dangling hangers, down right to it, stiffe and stout, in & to, my pusher, dresser, pouting stick, my hony pipe, my pretty pillicock' linkie pinkie, futilletie, my lustie andouille, and crimson chitterlin, my little couille bredouille, my pretty rogue, and so forth....

(1R, Ch. 11, p. 56)

In his sensible discussion of this passage Richard Boston notes that Urquhart "follows the spirit rather than the letter" (55). He does not mention, however, that Urquhart is heavily reliant on Cotgrave here, or that Urquhart's method of "following the spirit" is through a combination of inspired adaptation of Cotgrave, his own inventions, and his own delicate

response to the original's literary qualities. Here are the definitions Urquhart uses:

DILLE.	The Quille, or Fawcet of a Hogshead, &c.
PINE.	A bung, or stopple.
BOUCHON.	A stopple; also, a wispe of straw, &c; also the bush of a taverne, or alehouse.
VIBREQUIN.	A wimble.
TERIERE.	An Augur.
TERRIER.	The hole, berrie, or earth of a Connie, or Fox.
TERRIERE.	A Terrier, or Augur.
PENDILOCHES.	Jugs, danglings, or things that hang danglingly.
ESBAT.	Sport, pastime, play, recreation; delight, pleasure, dalliance, jeasting, recreation.
DRESSOUIR.	A setting yron, or poating stick, for ruffe bands; a standing thing.
ANDOUILLE.	A linke, or chitterling.
COUILLE.	A mans yard; also (but less properly) a cod, ballocke, or testicle.
MA PETITE	My pretty rogue, my little
BREDOUILLE.	knave (a tearme used much by the nurses of France).

With these entries before him, the reader can follow Urquhart's *modus operandi*. Urquhart continually fashions diminutives from Cotgrave's entries, thereby echoing the voices and attitudes of Gargantua's admiring governesses. By adopting a variety of suffixes, he catches the rhyme and rhythm of baby-talk in the terms "quillety," "faucetin," "bableret," "membretoon," "bunguetee," "linkie pinkie." Furthermore, he delights in pouring into his translation as many of Cotgrave's meanings as he deems appropriate; in particular, relish of Cotgrave's rhyme "hang danglingly" inspires "dangling hangers" (with the plural giving a slight hint of testicles). Even Urquhart's errors enhance the writing. The marvelous "busherusher," with its twin suggestions of childish language and sexual activity is prompted by "the bush of a taverne," but this is not the correct sense. Another error is "coney-borow ferret," for Urquhart's eye mistakenly fell on this definition while seeking that of "terriere."

This technical flaw does not matter. From Chapter 8 we remember that Gargantua's member is "bien longue et bien ample," and certainly capable of the depth of penetration with which Urquhart now invests it.

There is less to be said about the French-based coinages here, which effectively recall the original French, than about Urquhart's additions. Many of these, in the following example, reveal an unrecognized aspect of Urquhart's *Rabelais;* and this is the way that he enriches his version by quietly adding details remembered from an earlier stage. For instance, the adjectives "gallant," "hony," and "lustie," which are apparently apt but gratuitous, are all drawn from a previous description of Gargantua's penis as

> tousiours gualante, succeulente, resudante, tousiours verdoyante, tousiours fleurissante, tousiours fructifiante, plene dhumeurs, plene de fleurs, plene de fruictz plene de toutes delices.

(Garg., Ch. 8)

This insistence on young, energetic, sappy life inspires Urquhart's addition "quickset Imp," meaning a young shoot set in the earth to take root and grow there. And an earlier episode, too, explains "futilletie," which seems unconnected to the list. I am sure this word comes from Cotgrave's "FUSTE. Any staffe, stake, stocke, stumpe, trunke, or log," which Urquhart would have encountered in his search for the meaning of the phrase "de haulte fustaye." Since this expression occurs only in the "Prologue" to *Pantagruel* and since the word "fuste" does not figure in *Gargantua*, it is certain that Urquhart translated Pantagruel first. (It is highly improbable that he was acquainted with this most unusual word through his own knowledge of French.) Reading Urquhart we assume that he began with *Gargantua,* but the other order is more natural since the single volume (1542) used by Urquhart contains first the earlier work, *Pantagruel,* and then *Gargantua*.

But how could Urquhart be so plainly dependent on Cotgrave and at the same time so fluent in his translation? Surely, if he were regularly interrupting his writing to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words, wouldn't his *Rabelais* be a halting affair, smelling of the oil lamp, rather than the untrammelled gesture that it is? I am certain that Urquhart wrote down all the definitions before he translated, thus availing himself of a "pool of words" from

which to draw while writing. In one sense, dictionary labor and creative writing become two separate acts, but in another sense Urquhart must have been mentally limbering up to translate during the time he was writing down Cotgrave's entries. Mechanical as it may seem, this copying out is an important stage of the translation process, a time when Urquhart's pen and brain were active and when sentences were forming in his mind.

George Saintsbury observed that "it is impossible to read Urquhart without conceiving a strong liking for the man and a great admiration for his literary powers" (466): this large statement is wholly appropriate, emphasizing as it does "literary powers" which are always impressive even when they are not Rabelaisian. It is unfortunate that the few critics of Urquhart's *Rabelais* (and there have indeed been few) have busied themselves with the translation's idiosyncratic aspects rather than with its sustained mastery, for the latter is everywhere. Here, selected almost at random, is Rabelais' description of the drought prevailing at the time of Pantagruel's birth:

> En icelle annee feut seicheresse tant grande en tout le pays de Africque, que passerent XXXVI. moys, troys sepmaines quatre iours, trez heures, et quelque peu dadvantaige sans pluye, avec chaleur de soleil si vehemente que toute la terre en estoit aride. Et ne fut au temps de Helye, plus eschauffe que fut pour lors. Car il nestoit arbre sus terre qui eust ny feuille ny fleur, les herbes estoient sans verdure, les rivieres taries, les fontaines a sec, les pauvres poissons delaissez de leurs propres elemens, vagans et crians par la terre horriblement, les oiseaux tumblans de lair par faulte de rosee, les loups, les regnars, cerfz, sangliers, dains, lievres, connilz, belettes, foynes, blereauz, et aultres bestes lon trouuoit par les champs mortes la geulle baye.

(*Pant.*, Ch. 2)

Urquhart's translation runs as follows:

> In that year there was so great drought over all the countrey of *Affrik*, that there past thirty and six moneths, three weeks, foure dayes, thirteen houres, and a little more without raine, but with a heat so vehement, that the whole earth was parched and withered by it: neither was it more scorched and dried up with the

> heat in the dayes of *Eliah,* then it was at that time; for there was not a tree to be seen, that had either leafe or bloom upon it: the grass was without verdure or greennesse, the rivers were drained, the fountains dried up, the poore fishes abandoned and forsaken by their proper element, wandring and crying upon the ground most horribly:the birds did fall down from the aire for want of moisture and dew, wherewith to refresh them; the wolves, foxes, harts, wild-boares, fallow-deer, hares, coneys, weesils, brocks, badgers, and other such beasts were found dead in the fields with their mouthes open.

(2R, Ch. 2. pp. 10-11)

In his own excited tones Urquhart proclaims the drama of the drought not by letting his eye wander over aspects of the scene, as Rabelais does, but by thrusting a unified bustling picture before us and by calling on syntactical symmetry to strengthen links between members of the extended sentence. He echoes "Parched and withered" by "scorched and dried up" by means of assonance and parallelism. Not only can Urquhart reproduce Rabelais' pair of adjectives by rendering "vagans et crians" as "wandering and crying," but he also matches his master's structure by coupling the two adjectives "abandoned and forsaken." These adjectives, which Urquhart probably sees as more consistent with his own parallelism than with Rabelais', also heighten the sense of pity (which he also does to great effect in translating Friar John's massacre of Picrochole's men, an incident that is too long to be discussed here). Urquhart also draws on alliteration to connect the historical allusion "then there was at that time," with the next observation "for there was not a tree to be seen." Rabelais' biblical comparison is a measured comment placing in historical context what has gone before and gaining force from the fuller description that follows. In Urquhart this reflective statement becomes an interjection that is firmly embedded in an established syntactical framework.

Urquhart's apparently headlong writing belies its skillful use of small details. The simple conjunction "but," absent in Rabelais, continues the sentence by underlining the fact that although there is no rain, there is heat. The words "by it" are true to Rabelais' "en," which stresses the role of the sun's heat as an agent. For this reason, too, Urquhart has noted but has not wholly accepted Cotgrave's definition of "aride" as "dry, withered, without sap";

only "withered," formed from a transitive verb, can reflect the force of "en." Accordingly Cotgrave' s alternatives are spurned in favor of "parched." The parallelism of the phrases "by it" and "with the heat," each placed after a pair of participles, gives Urquhart's sun greater activity than Rabelais'. The second phrase, as well as avoiding the repetition of "by," may seem tautological but in fact makes the crucial distinction between the earth, as subject of the sentence, and the heat: the "it" of "was it" is the earth, and this has to be distinguished from the "it" of "by it." Urquhart's introduction of one clause by "neither" is also extremely adroit: first it permits the subsequent inversion of the verb (to provide variation); secondly it faintly recalls the immediately preceding statement; thirdly it anticipates the more compressed balance of "either leaf or bloom." All these effects enhance the writing's imaginative power, as does Urquhart's preserving the way that Rabelais deliberately wrecks his Ciceronian period with the polysyllabic "horriblement" and destroys rhythmic expectancy by allowing his final sentence to tail off with "la geulle baye." Finally, Urquhart actually improves on Rabelais by translating "en tout le pays de Africque" by "over all the country of *Affrick,"* thereby suggesting both geographical size and the heat operating from above and destroying all life below. (The Penguin translator J. M. Cohen's "throughout all the land of Africa" [175] is less evocative by far.)

Accomplished though Urquhart's translation is, and even though it was published at a time when Puritanism was at its strongest, it failed to attract notice on either count. Urquhart, who died in 1660, was at least spared the humiliation of living to see his original sheets re-issued in 1664 along with eight leaves containing a general title and two accounts of Rabelais.

In his preface to *Pantagruel,* Urquhart had pledged "very speedily to offer up unto this Isle of *Britaine,* the virginity of the Translation of the other three most admirable books," in exchange, of course, for his freedom and the return of his confiscated estates. This promise bears the hallmark of Urquhartian boasting, and probably no one heeded it. But astonishingly, in 1693 the French refugee Pierre Motteux found among Urquhart's papers a manuscript translation of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre,* the third book, and speculated that Urquhart "probably would have finished the whole, had not death prevented him" (1: xliii). Motteux

took it upon himself to complete Urquhart's task, but, being a modest man unlike his predecessor, contented himself with editing Urquhart's three books rather than essaying a fresh translation of his own. For this purpose he brought in a man called Kimes, of whom I am able to discover nothing, but whom Motteux acclaims as "a very great Linguist...deservedly famous for ingenious and learned Composures" (1: xliii). Kimes, according to Motteux, "thought it necessary to make considerable alterations" (1: xliii), the effect of which is best illustrated by examples: here is the Prologue to Urquhart's translation of *Gargantua*:

> So saith a *Turlupin* or a new start-up grub of my books, but a turd for him. The fragrant odour of the wine; O how much more dainty, pleasant, laughing, celestial and delicious it is, then the smell of oile! and I will glory as much when it is said of me, that I have spent more on wine then oile, as did *Demosthenes,* when it was told him, that his expense on oile was greater then on wine; I truly hold it for an honour and praise to be called and reputed a frolick *Gaulter* and a *Robin* goodfellow; for under this name am I welcome in all choice companies of Pantagruelists: for this cause interpret you all my deeds and sayings in the perfectest sense; reverence the cheese-like brain that feeds you with these fair billevezees, and trifling jollities, and do what lies in you to keep me alwayes merry. Be frolick now my lads, cheer up your hearts, and joyfully read the rest, with all the ease of your body and profit of your reines; but hearken joltheads, you viedazes, or dickens take ye, remember to drink a health to me for the like favour again, and I will pledge you instantly, *Tout ares metys.(1R*, pp. 6-7)

Motteux and Kimes changed this to:

> A certain Addle-headed Cocks-comb saith the same of my books; but a turd for him. The fragrant Odour of the Wine; Oh how much more sparkling, warming, charming, celestial and delicious it is, than of Oil! And I will glory as much when it is said of me, that I have spent more on Wine than Oil, as did

> *Demosthenes,* when it was told him, That his Expense on Oil was greater than on Wine.
>
> I truly hold it for an honour to be called and reputed a good Fellow, a pleasant Companion, or *Merry Andrew;* for under this name am I welcome in all choice Companies of Pantagruelists. It was upbraided to *Demosthenes* by an envious surly Knave, that his Orations *did smell like the Sarpler, or Clout that had stopped a musty Oil Vessel.* Therefore I pray interpret you all my Deeds and Sayings in the perfectest Sense; reverence the Cheese-like brain that feeds you with all these jolly Maggots and do what lies in you to keep me alwaies merry. Be frolic now my Lads, and cheer up your Hearts, and joyfully read the rest, with all the Ease of your Body and Comfort to your Reins. But hearken, Joltheads, 0 dickens take ye, off with your Bumper, I will do you Reason, pull away, *Supernaculum*.

(1: 1)

The Prologue to Urquhart's *Pantagruel* reads:

> After the like manner, St. *Anthonies* fire burne you: *Mahooms* disease whirle you; the squinance with stitch in your side and the *Wolfe* in your stomack trusse you, the curst sharp inflammations of wilde fire, as slender and think as Cowes haire strengthened with quick silver, enter into your fundament, and like those of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha,* may you fall into sulphur, fire and bottomlesse pits, in case you do not firmly believe all that I shall relate unto you in this present *Chronicle*.

In 1693 this becomes:

> In like manner St. *Anthony*'*s* Fire burn you, *Mawmet*'*s* Disease whirl you, the Squinzy choke you, Botches, Crinckums sink you plumb down to *Pegtrantums,* Plagues of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah,* cram your pocky Arse with Sorrow, Fire, Brimstone, and Pits bottomless swallow you all alive, in case you do not firmly believe all that I shall relate unto you in this present

Chronicle. (2: 8)

Beside Urquhart's, Motteux's translation seems workaday. Reading him, one never senses (as one does with Urquhart) "the perpetual vibration of light frenzy" (Spiller 37) or that something even more fantastic or unpredictable than anything even Rabelais invented could at any moment break into the translation: Motteux has no viedazes, bellevezees, or bumsquibcrackers. And although it was at the very end of the Renaissance that Urquhart was writing, he was of the Renaissance just as Rabelais himself was, exulting in the lustre and the sounds of words as if they were new and being used for the first time. Only an artist in strange words, an eccentric, could have preserved Rabelais so excellently in another tongue, and only a literary slang, a slang of the Renaissance, could have been equal to Rabelais' own. The latter, as I have shown, Urquhart drew from Cotgrave. As Charles Whibley has pointed out, Motteux was a Grub Street hack whose *Rabelais* smacks of the topical *bons mots* of the coffee house and the tavern in the late 17th century (xxxiii). Finally, it should not be forgotten that although Motteux possessed Urquhart's manuscript translation of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre,* he did not keep it, which is a great loss.

At a distance of more than three centuries throughout which Rabelais has been in print in English, it is easy to belittle Motteux. He has not received his due. After all, it was he, not Urquhart, who established Rabelais in English: his translation was the popular success that Urquhart's, for all his hopes, never was. One wonders, had Motteux not drawn Urquhart out of obscurity, how many centuries the Laird of Cromarty would have languished undiscovered (as John Donne was), or, indeed, whether he would have been discovered at all. With equal justice one might ask whether, if Urquhart's three books had not been there for Motteux to build on, Motteux would have managed to translate Rabelais *in toto*.

Thus, in their different ways, Sir Thomas Urquhart and Pierre Motteux share the credit for introducing one of the greatest Renaissance humanists to the English-speaking world. Furthermore, no subsequent translator is not in their debt. Among readers, only scholars of translation read Motteux with Urquhart in mind, and to the former's disadvantage. Very few of the countless people who have enjoyed Rabelais in English have ever paused to ponder

the merits of respective translators: the lay reader thinks only of what he or she is reading and relishes Rabelais throughout, from the first book to the fifth, carried along by the gusto of Rabelais' narrative. This is how Motteux should be read, with Urquhart rather than against him, and their works should be taken as a whole and valued not only as a colossal achievement of translation but as an invaluable contribution to English literature.

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Source : *Translation Review,* n^{0} 51/52, 1996, p. 31-34; 36-42.