Translation

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A famous saying links translation to treason, but it might better be linked to mediation. Before 1840, mediation was a factor in three major areas of translation activity – religious, administrative, and journalistic – affecting five linguistic groups: French,

English, Aboriginal languages, and, to a lesser extent, German and Gaelic, the last two already discussed by Juris Dilevko. Translation was used mainly in Quebec and Lower Canada, as a result of the British conquest of New France. Except for newspaper articles and legislative acts, many of the translations at this time appeared long after the document was written; they were, so to speak, awaiting publication. As well, a number of translations were published abroad, because the means to print them locally was lacking.[100]

Although it was not until the late 1850s that literary translation emerged, and then only timidly, relations and accounts of voyages printed in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with translations of these works, belong indisputably to the Canadian literary heritage.[101] The English-language versions of Jacques Cartier's *Voyages,* translated from the Italian by John Florio (1580); of Marc Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (1609); of accounts of discoveries by Louis Hennepin (1698) and Baron Lahontan (1703); and of Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix's *Journal d'un voyage* (1761) helped to propagate across Europe the image of an immense, rugged, exotic country populated by indigenous peoples. However, translations of more conventionally literary works were rarely printed during this period; only one novel, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), by the English writer Frances Brooke, appeared in French, in Paris in 1809.[102]

The missionaries' efforts to convert the Native peoples also encouraged translation activities, a subject studied earlier in this chapter by Joyce Banks. Chrestien Le Clercq in the late seventeenth century and Abbé Pierre Maillard in the mid-eighteenth century each worked to develop a writing system to be used in the conversion of the Mi'kmaqs of Acadia. Maillard wrote a Mi'kmaq grammar, recopied many times, which was employed to translate excerpts from the Bible, catechisms, prayers, and canticles, although these were not printed until much later, in the nineteenth century. For this work, he elaborated a hieroglyphic writing system that became part of the Mi'kmaq cultural heritage (see illus. 1.1, p. 17).[103] The manuscripts were later printed in both ideographic and alphabetic forms; a first edition appeared in Vienna in 1866. The provincial archives of Nova Scotia has preserved one of the few copies of this translation: *Buch das gut, enthaltend den Katechismus.*

Some portions of the Jesuit *Relations*, originally published in Paris, were also disseminated in the eighteenth century in Latin and Italian versions, first in Rome and then elsewhere in Italy.[104] Subsequently, booksellers and historical societies published fragments of these important ethnographic documents in English[105] before the definitive edition by Reuben Gold Thwaites appeared in Cleveland between 1896 and 1901. The translations made by Maillard and those of the *Relations* are examples of

deferred publication; in both cases, a gap of several centuries separated the original text from its translation.

Among the first publications printed in Halifax, starting in 1752, were translations in English and French, including a treaty of peace and friendship.[106] Also appearing in Aboriginal languages were governors' speeches, such as one in the Oneida language by General Frederick Haldimand that was printed in 1779.[107] The British and Foreign Bible Society published a Mohawk translation of the Gospel of John in 1805, with the English text on facing pages.[108] We should also mention the publication in 1806 of the French translation of *The Poor Man's Controversy* (London, 1769), written by the English Benedictine monk John Mannock. Translated by the curé of La Prairie, Jean-Baptiste Boucher, *dit* Belleville, and published at Quebec as *Manuel abrégé de controverse: ou controvese* [sic] *des pauvres*, the work was an amalgam of catechism, devotional book, and apologetic.

Official Translation

It was with official translations that the history of translation in Canada really began. The point of departure was the surrender of Port-Royal (Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia) in 1710. Paul Mascarene worked there as an interpreter and translator for the first governors; after him, these tasks were assumed by the provincial secretaries. Later, Isaac Deschamps translated, among other works, petitions by Acadians, a pledge of allegiance, and the deportation order of 1755.[109] During this period, three categories of administrative documents were translated: official correspondence, order books, and the council's minutes.[110]

With the Conquest of 1760 an important phase in official translation began. During the four years of the military regime, French was the de facto official language of the colony, and translation was needed for publication of official proclamations and the administration of justice. The three governors appointed at Quebec, Trois-Rivières, and Montreal were each assigned a bilingual officer as a secretary-translator. A civil regime succeeded the military administration in 1764, and from then on 'notices' were published in the *Quebec Gazette / La Gazette de Québec*. The translations in the gazette were improvised and of doubtful quality, with numerous anglicisms and barbarisms.[111] Given the need to translate laws, orders, proclamations, and other official texts into French, Governor Guy Carleton appointed jurist François-Joseph Cugnet to the position of official translator and French secretary to the governor and the council in 1768. For more than twenty years, Cugnet provided official translations in

the province of Quebec. The translation of British legal vocabulary posed problems for the first translators.[112] After the Quebec Act (1774) was passed, French translation became customary in the Legislative Council, and the parliamentary status of the French language was established in January 1793. The recognition of French in both legislative chambers led to translation of the *Journals* and their appendixes, of statutes, and of all official publications.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the old province of Quebec into the colonies of Upper Canada and Lower Canada. Unilingual francophone members of the Assembly in Lower Canada had to become familiar with representative institutions and British parliamentary rules. Just before the first meeting of the parliament, modelled on that of the home country, Samuel Neilson published, in English and French, *An Abstract from Precedents of Proceeding in the British House of Commons / Extraits des exemples de Procédés dans la Chambre des communes de la Grande Bretagne* (Quebec, [1792]), bringing together the regulations and orders of the British House of Commons.[113] In 1803 the Assembly asked jurist Joseph-François Perrault, who had translated Richard Burn's work on justices of the peace and parish officers in 1789, to translate a major compilation on parliamentary law, *Lex Parliamentaria*.[114] In his dedication, Perrault apologized that he had been obliged to borrow freely from English for lack of equivalent French terms.[115] Political and ideological conflicts crystallized around the translation of *Lex Parliamentaria*. In Lower Canada the treatise rapidly won the favour of francophone representatives, since it recognized the sovereignty of parliament over the monarchy. In spite of himself, Perrault had supplied ammunition to the proponents of strengthening of the legislative power over the executive.[116] Anglophone leaders viewed with disfavour this translation and the popularization of parliament, which they felt was likely to stimulate the demanding, even insubordinate, spirit of francophone representatives in the Assembly. This reaction by the British party explains why attempts to translate two other law books into French failed.[117] In these years of political agitation, the legal status of French was often thrown into question, and translation was both a political gesture and a barometer of political and linguistic tensions. Nevertheless, Perrault continued his work as a political educator, publishing a *Dictionnaire portatif et abrégé des loix et règles du parlement provincial du Bas Canada* in 1806.

The Press

The periodical press in Quebec and Lower Canada was at first largely a product of translation, and even unilingual newspapers borrowed materials from other lan-

guages. In the *Quebec Gazette / La Gazette de Québec* (bilingual until 1832), international news derived from London newspapers appeared in English and French in parallel columns.[118] It followed the North American news and official announcements, including public ordinances and regulations. In a notice on 29 May 1766, the printers asked their readers' indulgence for delays, 'as every Paragraph with us requires at least triple the Time.' Translation made the work more difficult not only for journalists but also for printers, who received orders for bilingual publications from the government or from Parliament.

Le *Canadien*, founded in 1806 and published until 1909 (with three interruptions), carried translated material that was significant: international news, letters, articles from the *Quebec Mercury*, and governors' speeches. In 1836 and 1839 the first translations of the Gosford and Durham reports appeared in this journal, edited at the time by Étienne Parent. *La Minerve*, founded in 1826, also contained a large number of translated articles. The editor complained of being forced, for lack of time and human and financial resources, to 'translate' the news instead of writing it: 'The publication of a French-language newspaper in Lower Canada is extremely difficult and tiresome; the Editor is reduced to laboriously translating from a foreign language almost all the pieces that fill his paper ... But we barely have the time, after all these translations, to engage in a few reflections on the affairs of the Country. And if we had to translate only foreign news ... But the authentic and official documents of our colonial policy, ... everything that can enlighten the people as to their rights, their duties, their relations with the government, comes to us in a foreign language; we must dress it in the language of the people so that they can profit from it.'[119] There does not seem to have been a 'professional' translator at *Le Canadien* or at *La Minerve* before the 1840s.[120]

Bilingualism was born with the country and is one of the fibres in its socio-cultural fabric. Religious writings, official documents, and newspapers were permeated with translation. Whatever the sphere of activity in which books and printed materials were produced before 1840, translation was present. We should recall that one of the very first political publications to come off the press of Brown and Gilmore at Quebec in 1765 and advertised as 'The Grand Jury's Presentments' was soon also published in French,[121] that the printers William Vondenvelden and Pierre-Édouard Desbarats were initiated to the techniques of printing when they were translators at the *Quebec Gazette / La Gazette de Québec*,[122] or that the journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada were bilingual. The histories of print and of translation are inextricably entwined.

90 T. Eadie, 'Enslin, Christian,' *DCB*, vol. 8.

91 Fleming UC n58.

92 H.K. Kalbfleisch, *History of the Pioneer German Language Press of Ontario*, 21.

93 M.S. Bird, *Ontario Fraktur*; E.R. Good, *Waterloo County Itinerant Fraktur Artists*.

94 Fleming UC n142.

95 H.K. Kalbfleisch, *History of the Pioneer German Language Press of Ontario*, 24.

96 Ibid., 29.

97 *Leabhar aithghearr a' cheasnachaidh*: Fleming UC 905.

98 *Laoidhean spioradail*: TPL 7400; *Dain spioradail*: TPL 7407.

99 Fleming UC n54.

100 For more information, see J. Delisle, *La traduction au Canada / Translation in Canada, 1534–1984*; J. Delisle and G. Lafond, eds, *Histoire de la traduction / History of Translation*.

101 P. Stratford, *Bibliographie de livres canadiens traduits / Bibliography of Canadian Books in Translation*, xi.

102 The literary work of Frances Brooke was widely distributed in Europe and translated into several languages. See L. McMullen, 'Moore, Frances (Brooke),' *DCB*, vol. 4.

103 C. Gallant, 'L'influence des religions catholique et protestante sur la traduction des textes sacrés à l'intention des Micmacs dans les provinces Maritimes,' 101. A new edition of this work was published in Restigouche in 1921 by the *Micmac Messenger*.

104 R.G. Thwaites, 'Introduction,' *JR*, 1:41.

105 Ibid.

106 Tremaine/*ECP* 9.

107 Tremaine 325.

108 TPL 771.

109 G. Tratt, 'Deschamps, Isaac,' *DCB*, vol. 5.

110 C. Gallant, 'L'Acadie, berceau de la traduction officielle au Canada,' 73.

111 P.-A. Horguelin, 'Les premiers traducteurs (1760 à 1791),' 20.

112 For the general quality of translations during this period, see P. Daviault, 'Traducteurs et traductions au Canada.'

113 Tremaine, 812; for the period 1751 1800, information and references on the work in various languages of the early printers can be found in the appendixes and indexes of *ECP*, 417–523, 575–600.

114 Tremaine 583; *Cat. coll.* 0265 and 0855; G. Gallichan, *Livre et politique au Bas-Canada, 1791–1849*, 127–43.

115 See also J. Hare, 'La formation de la terminologie parlementaire et électorale au Québec: 1792–1810.'

116 G. Gallichan, *Livre et politique au Bas-Canada, 1791–1849*, 133.

117 *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons*, by John Hatsell, and William Blackstone's treatise on criminal law.

118 F.-J. Audet, 'William Brown (1737-1789),' 106.

119 *La Minerve*, 17 November 1828.

120 G. Demers, 'La traduction journalistique au Québec (1764 1855),' 139.

121 F.-J. Audet, 'William Brown (1737–1789),' 99; Tremaine 66 and 67.

122 G. Gallichan, *Livre et politique*, 112.

123 S.E. Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, 4.