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MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHERS AND TRANSLATION

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Even if no less a person than Roger Bacon condemned translators as frauds, many of his contemporaries were grateful to them and tried to lay down some norms for translation itself. True, the thirteenth century had no coherent theory of translation, a patchwork of quotations from Cicero, Horace and St. Jerome still doing duty as a rough set of rules of thumb. Even so, medieval thought on religious and technical translation rests on some very well defined attitudes to language taken for granted by grammarians, philosophers and theologians. It is clear from discussions by Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon in particular that they both regard the *proprietas linguae* (or *idiomatis*) as mainly semantic, and that the major practical problem in translation is what they euphemistically call *diversitas linguarum*. Though Roger Bacon takes this as sufficient grounds to consider translation impossible, Anselm, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, commenting on both Scripture and Aristotle, had to come to terms with the fact that their religious and intellectual lives depended on translation from one language to another.

Just how did the medieval theologian regard language? Here we shall let Aquinas do most of the speaking for his colleagues. His many statements on language itself, e.g., from his commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans 14.1, relate mainly to its purpose:

> Omnis enim lingua intelligi potest expressio cognitionis sive hominum, sive angelorum, secundum illud I. ad Corinthios xiii.1.
> [Every language can be said to be an expression of the knowledge of either men or angels as we find in I Corinthians 13.1.]

And equally to our point this ambiguous use of *lingua* from his Commentary on Psalm 44.2 (Lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis [My ton-

gue is like the pen of a scribe writing quickly]:

> Operatio linguae est, quod per eam diffunditur sapientia cordis ad alios (*In Ps.* 44. nrl. 129).
> [The operation of the tongue /language?/ is this: through it is poured out the wisdom of one's heart into others.]

The goal of language is truth, measured by the concordance between *res* and *verba* one wishes to achieve (Aquinas, 1 *Sentences*. 19.5.3. ad 5), and this principle is transferred intact to thought on translation.

Aquinas's most extended statement on translation comes from the beginning of his *Contra Errores Graecorum*. He emphasises to Pope Urban IV that translation is an issue crucial to Christianity and is a task for a professional:

> Unde ad officium boni translatoris pertinet ut ea quae sunt catholicae fidei transferens servet sententiam, mutet autem modum loquendi secundum proprietatem linguae in quam transfert. Apparet enim quod si ea quae in latino litteraliter dicuntur vulgariter exponantur, indecens erit expositio, si semper verbum ex verbo sumatur. Multo igitur magis quando ea quae in una lingua dicuntur, transferuntur in aliam, ita quod verbum sumatur ex verbo, non est mirum si aliqua dubietas relinquatur (§ 1030)
> [Hence the duty of a good translator can be summed up thus: he who translates what belongs to the Catholic faith must preserve the purport of his text while changing the mode of expression acording to the property of the language into which he is translating. For it is obvious that if what one says in Latin is related in the vernacular, the account one makes of it will be inadequate if one persists in a word for word version. It is even more obvious when text in one language is translated into another: if one works word-for-word, we need not wonder that some room for confusion is left.]

Aquinas's *transfero* is the standard medieval Latin word for "translate", and for "translation", *translatio*. Occasionally one will find *reddo*. The classical term, *interpretatio*, with its congeners, *interpres* and *interpretor*, seems to be almost entirely restricted to the strict sense of exegesis of texts, though there are a couple of passages that use this term for oral translation between languages. Another ambiguous reference comes in the presentation of Aquinas's contemporary, Humbertus de Romanis, to the Council of Lyons (1274). There he calls for systematic *interpretatio* of Geek documents in an effort to mend the schism between East and West. He remarks in passing that knowing several languages is a divine gift. Probably he had in mind the mystical importance of the Biblical gift of togues (cf. *Acts of the Apostles* 2). Indeed his word, *interpretatio*, could mean both translation or exegesis. His model of it in the *Speculum religiosorum* he

wrote at about the same time for his Dominican confreres has two moments: *excogitatio*, (thinking through the text), and *significatio*, (exposition of what it means), a model based on St Augustine's norms for exegesis.

Though taking their terminology seriously, the medievals were not above exploiting the etymological sense or the polysemy of a technical word to illuminate even the most rigorous of discussions. *Translatio* as a verbal noun has the sense of a "carrying-over" (*trans* plus *fero*). Philosophers often define *translatio* as a change in ownership and use; which brings us to Aquinas's use of *translatio* in *Sententiae librorum politicorum* I.8.13 to mean financial speculation:

> —sicut illi qui lucrantur in excessu denariis instituendis. Ista enim acquisitio fit ab ipsis denariis;... facti sunt enim denarii gratia translationis, id est commutationis.
> [—like those who grow rich by placing money out. For their gain comes about from the money itself... Their money has been made by a sort of transfer, that is, by exchange.]

Translatio as exchange is the metaphor that seems to colour thirteenth-century discussions of translation, rather than *translatio* as a term in logic. And indeed, both the monetary and exchange metaphors have remained constant in translation criticism since.

Aquinas's comments on translation difficulties are typical of the Scholastics. They run from anodyne comments on slight disagreements between various Latin Aristotles to substantive explanations of why translators behaved the way they did. Behind all his discussions is Jerome's use in *Ad Pammachium* of the famous passage in Cicero's *De optimo genere oratorum* I.v.14, that it is the translator's duty to weigh out words (*appendere*) not count them out (*annumerare*). It is this passage that suggests the link between *translatio* and *commutatio*.

There is therefore, considerable interest in Aquinas's discussions of how one does a fair *commutatio* with the difficult Greek word, λογος:

> Tertia quaestio est Augustini in *Lib LXXXIII Quaestionum* (Q.63) quae talis est: In graeco, ubi nos habemus "verbum", habetur λογος. Cum ergo λογος significet in latino "rationem" et "verbum", quare translatores transtulerunt "verbum", et non "rationem", cum "ratio" sit quid intrinsecum, quemadmodum etiam "verbum"?
> Respondeo dicendum quod "ratio" proprie nominat conceptum mentis, secundum quod in mente est, etsi nihil per illam exterius fiat; per "verbum" vero significatur aspectus ad exteriora: et ideo quia Evangelista per hoc quod dixit λογος, non solum intendebat significare respectum ad exis-

> tentiam Filii in Patre, sed etiam operativam potentiam Filii qua per ipsum facta sunt omnia, magis antiqui transtulerunt "verbum", quod importat respectum ad exteriora quam "ratio", quae tantum conceptum mentis significat (*Super evangelium Ioannis* I.1.32).
>
> [The third question is treated by Augustine in the *Book of 83 Questions* (Q.63) which is this: Greek has λογος where we have *verbum*. Since λογος corresponds to both *ratio* and *verbum*, why have the translators put *verbum* and not *ratio*, since *ratio* is what is intrinsic, just as *verbum* is too? Answer: *Ratio* properly denotes the concept of the mind according as it is in the mind, although nothing is done by it outside the mind. But by *verbum* is signified looking to the things outside the mind. Therefore, because the Evangelist by λογος meant to signify not only what concerns the existence of the Son in the Father, but also the operative power of the Son through whom all things were made, the Ancients preferred to translate *verbum*, which looks to things outside the mind, rather than *ratio*, which signifies the concept of the mind only].

Augustine's problem had been set up by the Roman grammarian, Varro, who had translated λογος by *ratio*. In the terms of both Aquinas and St John, this was not a fair *commutatio* as it had nothing to say on the operative power of God while the Neo-platonist *verbum* did.

Given the emphasis on knowledge and wisdom in defining language, it may be a fortunate accident of tradition that pronouncements on translation revolve around *verbum* rather than the more scientific *dictio*. In normal use it means "word", in grammar "verb", in theology the Word, i.e. the creative power of God. These meanings were not too far apart. Trinitarian theology treated the second person of the Trinity as the *Verbum*. As well, the human word itself had power, as their religious duties constantly reminded churchmen — one need only glance at the Ambrosian hymns for Lauds, the part of the Divine Office said in the morning, to see how easily Christian Neo-platonism connects attainment of wisdom with the coming of daylight, the clearing of the mind by waking up, and the creative power of the word God and Man. Under these circumstances *potestas*, the usual classical word for "meaning", is an apt label for the Platonist concept of the efficacy inherent in a word. One can therefore see why names were as important a guide to the nature of things to these theologians as they had been to the Jews: the frequency of comment on Neo-platonist documents like the *De divinis nominibus* ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite shows that Aristotelian attitudes to language as a set of arbitrary signs were not as unchallenged as one might think: for the word reflected the nature of the thing.

Translation failures also reveal the sense of fair dealing inherent in *commutatio*. Commenting on the retention of the Hebrew word, *amen*, in the Greek and Latin New Testaments, Aquinas (*Super Ioannem* VIIIA. 1203) writes that *amen* is a Hebrew word meaning "truly" or "so be it". And he quotes Augustine as authority for the fact that neither Greek nor Latin translators dared give an interpretation of it (the Latin word here is *interpretari*) — they wished to keep it as a sacred mystery, not bound down to one meaning, nor "cheapened" by being "laid bare". Besides it is a particularly important word as it is often used by Christ.

Aquinas also takes upon himself to explain why translations of the same original differ in their wording. In his commentaries on the *Perihermeneias* this is a constant sore point. But when it comes to Scripture Aquinas, the Platonist, sees his problem in hermeneutic terms drawn from St Augustine. On Psalm 40.10 he compares the traditional Gallican version with Jerome's "Hebrew Version":

> "Magnificavit super me supplantationem". Ecce peccatum. Hieronymus habet, "Levavit contra me calcaneum suum". Et loquitur ad similitudinem eius qui vult aliquem omnino comprimere; quasi dicat: Attentavit ut me totaliter contereret. Et diversitas translationum videtur processisse ex aequivoco: quia quod in altum levatur, magnificatur (*In psalmos* XL.n6.50).
>
> ["(My friend) has built up slander over me." Here the translator's mistake. Jerome has, "He has lifted his heel against me." He is using the metaphor of somebody who wishes to completely crush a person. He may as well have said, "He has tried to grind me down completely." It seems that the different versions are due to an equivocal sense in the original. For what is built up is also lifted up.]

In the light of what he says in the *Contra Errores Graecorum*, Aquinas credits the translator with doing what he could with the multiple levels of the *sententia*. These will bring about *aequivocatio* in its strict philosophical sense. This allows him to save the early Christian translator's bacon somewhat reluctantly by ascribing to the original Hebrew expression a possibility of metaphor which the two translators saw differently.

Aquinas's examples imply that a translated text as any other, demonstrates an *adaequatio intellectus et rei* through its *commutatio* of words. Therefore a translation, because it has as direct a link with its subject as an original, is in no sense of the term a sign of its original. It is on the grounds that attainment of a second original is largely impossible that Roger Bacon refuses to countenance the possibility of good translation:

> Igitur merito magis accidit haec discordia et proprietas in linguis omnino diversis. Quapropter non est possibile ut quod in una lingua secundum proprietatem factum est, explicetur proprie et veraciter in alia; et maxime de scientiis quae sunt difficultates ex se ipsiis (*Compendium Studii* 467). [Therefore one can expect this exclusiveness and lack of fit between languages that are completely different. So it is not possible that what is said in one language according to its nature can be said properly and truthfully in another. And this is particularly true of sciences which of themselves bring extreme difficulty.]

To sum up, the critical climate enjoined on translators two duties somewhat difficult to reconcile: a version as close to word-for-word as possible; and preserving the *sententia*, which I take to mean the mental structure of the text, that is both the obvious or "literal" meaning, and its purport, the "moral", "allegorical" and "analogical" sense discoverable by hermeneutics. One normally assumed that these were as fixed as the literal sense, and did not depend on the ideas of the reader. Despite saying that he disapproves of word-for-word translation in the *Contra Errores Graecorum*, Aquinas makes it clear that he has no use for any but the closest translations. For these, when properly bounded as Jerome recommends by *cola et commata* (by sentence segments), give the *sensus litteralis*. And without this one has no hope of passing to the other three senses necessary to the exegesis of a sacred text. This opinion is crucial just over a century later in the condemnation of the Lollard Bibles in England (cf. Deanesly 1920:428).

One need hardly remark that theological and technical translators commenting on their own work, whether going from Greek to Latin or from Latin to the vernaculars, made no distinction between religious and technical work, as both types of text bring knowledge whose final goal is the divine. They therefore claim that word-for-word translation is the thing. It is tempting to write their prefaces off as the scientist's assumption that language must be an exact terminology if it is to be useful. Oddly enough in its modern form even this is Platonist, for a terminology, by reflecting the structure of the theory it is based on, reflects the reality that theory has been developed to structure.

Running through these prefaces from the fifth-century work of Marius Mercator to the 1350 *Evangéliaire* of the Hospitalier, Jehan de Vignay, is the constant theme of truth, "la pure vérité de la lettre". Truth for these translators consists in the words and word-order of the author reproduced in Latin or the vernacular as closely as can be. For the phonic shape of word and sentence is the only guide to the truth under it. At least on the surface

they follow Boethius's introduction to his version of Porphyry (ca. 500 A.D.) in deliberately rejecting rhetoric as something added on afterwards. Even more to the point, through fear of denying others access to the truth of the text, they definitely separated translation and interpretation. For instance, Henricus Aristippus, Archdeacon of Catania, the twelfth-century Sicilian translation of Plato, promises a word-for-word translation of Plato's *Meno* "to avoid thrusting alien meanings on the text by trusting to my own poor abilities". And he accepts inelegant Latin as the price to be paid. Thus it would seem that though Jerome is the person most quoted by both philosopher and translator, it is Boethius to whose use of the word *veritas* in his Porphyry, we must ascribe the paternity of this approach with its strong Platonist overtones. For *veritas*, in Boethius's eyes, was incompatible with elegance.

Truth being the goal of language, its nature is the central issue joining philosopher, translator and theologian. According to Alexander of Hales *Summa theologiae* II §386 quoting Anselm *De veritate,* truth resides in three things: *veritas rei, veritas cognitionis, veritas significationis.* Thus in a translated text as in any other, truth depends on a number of criteria expressed in the passage of the *modi intelligendi* to the *modi significandi*. It is for this reason that a translated text is not a "sign" of the original. This doctrine was not at all new to high scholasticism: a generation before Aquinas, Alexander of Hales speaking of the Vulgate, which he knew to be a translation, had already noted that in the Bible the historical books have truth *quantum ad significationem vocum,* and the poetic and figurative books, *quantum ad significationem rerum* (*Summa theologiae* I.iv.§7).

After *veritas* comes *sapientia*, a word loaded by both Hebrew and Neoplatonist tradition. In the psalms *sapientia* means the divine illumination enjoyed by the Wise Man through yielding the *Verbum*. According to the Platonist tradition the language by which one becomes wise partakes of the nature of the *Verbum*, and therefore has the power of generating in all its complexity the reality which it describes. This is what Henricus Aristippus means when talking of Plato's vocabulary rising up like the heads of the Hydra once one comes to grips with it. Not that this prevents him from promising his readers direct experience of Plato's wisdom through literal translation. Roger Bacon clearly does not accept this, and he drives home the impossibility of translation by a philosophically relevant pun:

> Nam proprietas unius /linguae/ non concordat cum alia, et quod optime sonat in una pessime vel nihil **sapit** in altera, sicut manifestum est illis qui

> Latinum et maternas linguas noverunt, et se exercitaverunt in hac parte (*Compendium studii* 466).
> [For the nature of one language does not accord with another. What sounds good in one language has little or no savour in the other — as is clear to those who know Latin and the common languages, and have drilled themselves in translation.]

Sapit means either "to taste" or "to give wisdom". Differences in language are not the only block to translation: the translator himself is fallible and in a bitter passage in the *Opus tertium* 92, Bacon accuses Jerome of translating according to the prejudices of his age.

Bacon's skepticism on the power of one language to reflect the conceptualisation patterns of another does refer back to one of Jerome's constant themes repeated by practically every philosophical and religious translator since, and so Bacon does not take it any further. Among those who do are the English Churchmen who fought the Lollard Bible at the end of the fourteenth century. Anti-Lollard determinations at times sound a little like twentieth-century symbolist delineations of the issues of translation. Part of the linguistic argumentation against translation rests on the different phonology of Latin and English (cf. Palmer quoted Deanesly 1920:428); if English could furnish no dress of sound comparable to that of Latin, the first essential generative element of the Platonist sign was missing. Then follows an argument drawn from the lack of abstract vocabulary in English, not unlike Cicero's complaints about the poverty of Latin in the face of Greek (Deanesly 1920:428). Finally, even where two languages, Latin and Greek, "are regulated by the same grammatical rules", mistakes in translation can occur. The mistakes he mentions as possible all come from the rhetorical handbooks, "grammar" here being the descendant of the ancient school discipline which took in the study of authors. It is even more to be expected then, that in the case of a pair of languages like Latin and English which do not share grammatical rules, mistakes though inevitable, can not be identified and corrected because of the lack of a common rhetorical and grammatical base. In saying this Palmer parades the common assumption that correctness and incorrectness in a language depended on the grammarian's fiat. Thus a translation *verbum ad verbum* is impossible because English just does not have the vocabulary; and a translation *sententiam ad sententiam* is equally impossible because the sentence shapes differ between the two languages (quoted Deanesly 1920:428). There is also no guarantee that the purport, i.e. the hermeneutic senses, of the version will be the same as those of the original.

This Platonist attitude to language had been crucial in Roger Bacon's condemnation of translation. He does begin from Jerome, quoting him on the impossibility of a completely accurate translation, and on his preference for translating the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. As a good Platonist Bacon takes careful note of Jerome's term *Hebraica veritas* identifying truth with the language in which it is expressed. The result of *veritas* in text is *sapentia* in the intellect. Though Bacon interprets *veritas* in the standard manner as *adaequatio rei, intellectus et signi,* he does not see the relationship between these three as entirely conventional because he accepts it is divinely sanctioned. He is clear that, though this relationship was the quarry of the *sapiens*, translators, even the great St. Jerome, have owned themselves defeated by the *proprietas linguarum* by which Man becomes wise. And yet he does credit certain translators, in particular Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln, with managing to produce fine translations. Therefore, *sapientia* depending on sanctity (as we know from the psalms), Roger Bacon placed these great Aristotelian translators among the saints, for they had shown divine and human prudence in making sure they were capable of following the Spirit by getting a good knowledge of Greek.

All this comes up a century and a half later in the condemnation of the Lollard and their Bibles at the Council of Oxford (1402). The orthodox experts were William Butler, a Franciscan, and Thomas Palmer, a Dominican, both noted theologians. Starting from first principles, Palmer makes it clear that in the first place the Lollards, not being loyal children of Mother Church, were not saintly enough to translate the Bible. His reasoning is of a piece with Bacon's praise of Grosseteste (but as Bacon was suspect, he is not cited). He quotes Alexander of Hales (*Summa theologiae* I.ii.3) that Adam's sin had so clouded the human intellect that divine light was necessary as a basis for the human effort involved in forging an entry to the divine secrets of the Bible (Deanesly 1920:404). Therefore the Lollard's revolt against ecclesiastical authority meant they were in a state of sin and therefore not fit to be illuminated by the λογος.

His ultimate authority for this is Augustine's expositions of the linguistic sign in *De magistro* and *De trinitate*. There Aristotle's model of the sign as being made up of *significatum* and *sonus* is married to the Platonist view which held that the linguistic sign as a participation in the divine, had a generative energy all of its own. Though Augustine does attempt to juggle the contradiction between arbitrariness and quasi-identity between sign and thing, there seems little doubt among both the ecclesiastical authorities and

the Lollards that as far as the Bible text is concerned, sign and thing call each other forth. But, in quoting pseudo-Augustine *Dialectica* that language can place two impediments in the way of truth, obscurity and ambiguity, (i.e. too little information and too much) (Deanesly 1920:405), Butler accuses the Lollards of a moral condition that gave them no recourse to the λογος to protect them against either. Thus from the very nature ot the teaching efficacy of language truth was definitely not open to the Lollards.

His colleague, Thomas Palmer, too adduces all the mystical arguments against Biblical translation, placing particular weight on the legend of the seventy translators of the Septuagint who attained accuracy *ieiuniis et orationibus peractis* [by prayer and fasting] (Deanesly 1920:429), a nice Augustinian touch that emphasises the moral aspect of translation. We have already seen how he brings rhetoric and grammar to bear. His argument that both *verbum ad verbum* and *sententiam ad sententiam* are impossible has its Platonic angle too. Because no matter what, English by the nature of things does not give the same scope for interpreting the literal sense (if one can agree on it) the moral, anagogical and allegorical senses essential to proper biblical scholarship.

The Lollards were equally good Platonists, and denied the charge of being outside the church tradition. Thus in all good conscience they laid claim to the divine illumination their opponents enjoyed, and were equally sure of access to the λογος. They met their opponents on linguistic grounds as well, producing one of the first assertions that non-standard languages had grammar in the same sense as Latin and Greek. John Purvey, a colleague of John Wyclif's writes:

> But thei schulde understonde that "grammaticalische" is not ellis but habite of rigt speakyng anf rigt pronounsyng and rigt wrytynge (Deanesly 1920:443).

This means that they were confident in putting forward a functionalist idea of translation: for the λογος worked in English as efficiently as it did in Latin. And why not, because the Latin text though a translation too, had all the privileges of the Greek original. Therefore their rejoinder to formalist arguments was that the nature of language allowed one to translate sense for sense, and find functional grammatical equivalence for Latin sentence shapes by "making the sentence more open". Both before their judges and in their prefaces, they argue on a case-by-case basis, the only consistent principle being Jerome's that one translates *per cola et commata*, which we

find in Aquinas anyway.

Vivien Law (1986) has demonstrated quite conclusively that as in our own day, there was a certain distance between the medieval "scientific" theories of language and what was believed and taught outside the ranks of the specialists. That even philosophers expert in *grammatica speculativa* shared much of the common view of language is made quite clear by their thought on translation. For translation is hardly thought of apart from the Biblical work; and hence this makes it a theological problem, rather than one pertaining to scientific grammar.

The background theory of language is Augustinian: language leads to wisdom, and wisdom leads to God. But it can only do so if one leaves oneself open to the λογος, the illuminating power of the divine which is best expressed through language. Hence the overriding importance of *verbum*, whose mystical polysemy had been delightedly exploited by Christian theologians from the second-century bishop of Lyons, St Irenaeus, to Aquinas himself. Much has been said about the way the word, *verbum*, moved from one sense to the others (cf. Meissner 1958). But it is important to note that in each one of these senses, including even the grammatical one of "verb", the word, *verbum* remains operative entity. As a creative entity then, *verbum* is hardly arbitrary. Already in Augustine there is considerable tension between the mystical Platonism of the λογος and Aristotle's more sober view that the connection between *sonus* and *significatio* is *ad placitum*. During the Middle Ages Augustinian thought developed to an extreme in people like Ramon Lull and Nicholas of Cusa, who see necessary links between the nature of the thing and the word denoting it. The speculative grammarians, and all the philosophers that interest us here were such, remained emmeshed in Augustine's dilemma. On one hand their grammars quoted Aristotle that the *modus significandi* was *ad placitum*, and on the other traced as many features of the *modi significandi* back to the nature and features of the thing as they could. And indeed no grammarian seems to have concerned himself with translation, except for a couple of fleeting remarks in Roger Bacon's Greek Grammar.

But theories of language and theories of grammar are not the same thing. Bacon's attack on translation in reflecting the sheer difficulties both inherent in the task itself and imputable to the nature of the translator's own grasp of language, harks back to the Jewish disquiet about Scripture translation in the two centuries before Christ: for many took the translator as substituting his word for God's. It also seems certain that Bacon's

attitude is coloured by the influence of Eastern thought on language and magic. Given the substantial agreement between Biblical and Arab attitudes to the powers of language, just what influence Arab thought had through the interests of people like Bacon we do not know.

Given his attitude to the Biblical gift of tongues, Thomas Aquinas praises translators from much the same assumptions that prompt Bacon, Butler and Palmer to prove translation impossible. And Humbertus de Romanis is witness that scientific "linguistics" had very little to do with it. Indeed for all concerned translation is a practical activity which still held its traditional position as a sub-branch of rhetoric: hardly surprising, as traditional theology had learnt its methods from rhetoric (cf. Chenu 1935 for a good discussion). Hence even by the traditional rhetorical principle that *res* and *verbum* should be commensurate, the nature of the *verbum* demanded literal translation. In the terms of our original metaphor, the *commutatio* involved in translation had to take place without loss of value. Assessment of this "value", especially in the light of the metaphor of fair exchange, turns on a type of metaphorical thinking at the base of most theological speculation. The normal medieval way out of the dilemma we see in Aquinas reflects the synthesis reached by the Jewish Neo-platonists at the time of Christ. This solution, postulating that language was participation in the creative power of God, was to become peculiarly Christian, as we see in Henricus Aristippus and Jehan de Vignay. Under these conditions, the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* suddenly takes on a mystical tone not covered by a simple link between word and existing thing: a word-for-word translation was called for because the target text being as independent a piece of language in its own right as the source text, it was to have the generative power of its original. Thus it had to yield a literal sense that led the mind to find the other three types of sense recognized by hermeneutic practice and theory. And yet truth demanded that both the literal sense and the hermeneutic senses derived from it be the same in the target language as in the source. It is this that Aquinas probably means by his term *sententia* at the beginning of rather than the more normal *sensus*.

Hence the medieval avoidance of the word, *interpretari,* when one speaks of translation. In the world of the Bible and the Greek philosophers, translation was a necessary prelude to interpretation, and a good translation did not cloud the truth inherent in the text by cutting down the possibilities to those open to the translator's imagination.

The contradictions between what the thirteenth century knew about

language and what they thought about translation indicate the hold over the Middle Ages exercised by Augustine. It also makes one wonder a little about the everyday importance of the deep-rooted mystical view of language on which grammar sat a little uneasily. It suggests more research is needed on how the medievals conceived language itself in contradistinction to grammar. The situation is one with a rather modern ring. Where the *grammatici* in the technical sense wished to make the study of language into a science, the philosophers and theologians had the wider view included by the traditional discipline of *grammatica* which saw language in a cultural context: it is significant that translation is not regarded as a linguistic problem but as a philosophical and theological problem relating to knowledge and the influence of language on it. It is not to be wondered at then, as the general mystical and theological climate was strongly Platonist, that thought on translation by remaining Platonist in a largely Aristotelian age should show up the conflicts in the intellectual traditions of the time.

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