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TRANSLATION FROM THE ANCIENTS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

"ENFIN MALHERBE VINT." Boileau little thought that these words could be applied to the originator of a style of translating that he was one of the first to criticise. And yet Malherbe's translation of the thirty-third book of Livy is typical of the new era about to dawn in French literature, an era in which after a long series of civil wars the French nation created for itself a discipline. The refinement in manners and social habits inaugurated at the beginning of the century naturally had its influence upon letters. The *salons* not only produced writers of the type of Gomberville and Scudéry but were indirectly res-ponsible for a new type of translator. The age of pure savants was passed, that of original writers was come, whose task it was not only to modernise the language of the ancients, but to make it suitable to rank in politeness, grace and refinement with contemporary literature. In a word, translations, like everything else, had to conform to the *bienséances*.[1] The reading public increased as the leisured classes grew in size, and moreover it was a public to whom the ancients, if translated literally, would make hardly any and perhaps no appeal. Translators continued to open up new worlds, but worlds that had suffered much disfigurement owing to their efforts. Yet they were regarded with the same degree of popularity as original writers, and their numbers multiplied. The Academy welcomed many of them within its walls.

Thus it is that Malherbe says in his extremely important preface[2]: "Si, en quelques autres lieux, j'ai ajouté ou retranché quelque chose, comme certes il y en a cinq ou six, j'ai fait le premier pour éclaircir des obscurités qui eussent donné de la peine à des gens qui n'en veulent point; et le second pour ne tomber en des répétitions ou autres impertinences dont sans doute un esprit délicat se fût offensé. Pour ce qui est de l'histoire, je l'ai suivie exactement et ponctuellement; mais je n'ai pas voulu faire les grotesques qu'il est impossible d'éviter quand on se restreint à la servitude de traduire mot à mot. Je sais bien le goût du collège, mais je m'arrête à celui du Louvre." War, then, was now declared between the *Collège* and the *Louvre*, a war which lasted for nearly two hundred years. Let us examine the protagonists and try to gather what were their aims.[3]

The most noted translator of the early part of the century was Perrot d'Ablancourt. He was the apostle of the literary as opposed to the accurate type of translation,[4] and it was round his works that the battle was chiefly waged. He states his method quite frankly in his prefaces: "Il suffit à un traducteur de voir le sens. Car de vouloir rendre tous les mots, ce serait tenter une chose impossible… Deux ouvrages sont plus semblables quand ils sont tous deux éloquents, que quand l'un est éloquent et l'autre ne l'est point… Ce n'est rendre un auteur qu'à demi que de lui retrancher son éloquence; comme il a été agréable en sa langue, il faut qu'il soit encore en la nôtre; et d'autant que les beautés et les grâces sont différentes, nous ne devons point craindre de lui donner celles de notre pays, puisque nous lui ravissons les siennes."[5] And again à propos Lucian: "Comme la

plupart des choses qui sont ici ne sont que des gentillesses et des railleries qui sont diverses dans toutes les langues, on n'en pouvoit faire de traduction régulière… L'auteur allège à tous propos des vers d'Homère qui seroient maintenant des pédanteries, sans parler de vieilles fables trop rabattues, de proverbes, d'exemples et de comparaisons surannées qui feroient à présent un effet tout contraire à son dessein; car il s'agit de galanterie et non pas d'érudition. Il a donc fallu changer tout cela pour faire aucune chose d'agréable."[6] The following is an example of d'Ablancourt's method. Tacitus, speaking of men going into battle with fierce expressions on their faces to terrify their enemies, says in his usual style: "Nam primum in acie vincuntur oculi." D'Ablancourt renders this: "Car les yeux sont vaincus les premiers en guerre comme en amour."!

It will be seen from this that the chief object of d'Ablancourt and his followers was to create a work pleasing to a modern public. Their translations were marked by a complete disregard for accuracy, a complete lack of feeling for the spirit of the original, and often a deficiency in their knowledge of Latin and Greek. In the seventeenth century the simple if rugged language of a Montaigne gave way to the refined elegance of a Mme de Sévigné, to the ponderous majesty of a Bossuet. With this change of language and of fashion a false idea grew up of the ancients. Authors who had been distinguished for their simplicity were invested with new qualities of elegance, or else of pomp and grandeur. An exaggerated amount of importance was attached to style. It is recorded that Vaugelas spent thirty years in revising and correcting his Quintus Curtius. The supreme instance of the arrogance of this new type of translator is to be scen in the Abbé Perrin, who claims with pride that he is the first to reproduce Æneas "sous l'habit d'un cavalier françois et avec la pompe des plumes et des clinquants."[7]

D'Ablancourt's critics were not so numerous as his followers. Among the former was Ménage, who gave him the nickname of *le hardi d'Ablancourt*, saying of his translations: "Elles me rappellent une femme que j'ai beaucoup aimée à Tours, et qui était belle mais infidèle."[8] Henceforth the translations were known as "les belles infidèles de M. d'Ablancourt." Furetière ranged himself in the same camp as Ménage and says: "À la gauche combattoient les traductions en grand nombre et divisées en plusieurs corps dont le premier marchoit sous d'Ablancourt, capitaine magnifique qui leur avoit donné des habits neufs faits à la mode, qu'il avoit taillés et rognés à sa fantaisie."[9] Amelot de la Houssaye, a well-known translator and scholar criticises him again in *La Morale de Tacite*, and calls his followers rather impolitely "La secte Perrotine."[10] He was answered in extremely vigorous language by a nephew of Perrot d'Ablancourt, who says: "Au lieu que M. d'Ablancourt sacrifioit le mot au sens, M. de la Houssaye pour ne pas mettre ses traductions à fonds perdu sacrifie le sens au mot."[11] He then challenges La Houssaye to produce a better translation. The latter takes up the challenge and produces a travesty not only of Tacitus but of d'Ablancourt.[12] It is not only full of inaccuracies – La Houssaye's greatest fault was that he did not understand Latin – but also lacks the elegance of style that characterises his opponent.

The *belles infidèles* have been praised in many ways and for various reasons. It is interesting to collect some of the eulogies, as they throw light upon the different conceptions of a translator's functions. Patru, who besides his fame as forensic orator also won a

reputation for his translations, naturally praises his friend, d'Ablancourt, in his Life. He writes: "La belle manière de traduire que d'Ablancourt accrédite, emporte l'admiration de tous les illustres de notre siècle, et il s'est proposé la vraie idée d'un bon traducteur qui n'ôte rien à l'original de sa force ni de ses grâces."[13] The *Jugement des Savants* says: "Mr. de Balzac écrivant à Mr. Chapelain disoit qu'il avoit une si haute opinion du François de notre traducteur (d'Ablancourt), qu'il étoit prêt de parier contre le Docteur Heinsius et contre le Jésuite Strada, qu'il vaudroit dans la suite beaucoup mieux que le Latin dont ils avoient tant affecté l'imitation."[14] This is praise indeed, and is all the more significant as coming from Balzac with his love of the ancients. Saint-Evremond on the other hand, showing his usual moderation, sums up both the merits and defects of d'Ablancourt's method: "Ce n'est pas qu'une fidélité fort exacte fasse la recommandation de notre Ablancourt: mais il faut admirer la force admirable de son expression, où il n'y a ni rudesse ni obscurité. Vous n'y trouverez pas un terme à désirer pour la netteté du sens, rien à rejeter, rien qui nous choque ou qui nous dégoûte... Mais, à mon avis, il a l'obligation de ces avantages au discours des anciens qui règle le sien : car si-tôt qu'il revient de leur génie au sien propre… il perd la meilleure partie de toutes les beautés; et un auteur admirable tant qu'il est animé de l'esprit des Grecs et des Latins, devient un écrivain médiocre quand il n'est soutenu que de lui-même."[15] Finally no less an authority than Egger himself praises him in the following terms: "Perrot d'Ablancourt ne doit pas au hasard la réputation dont jouirent longtemps ses traductions, notamment son Tacite, si souvent réimprimé. Il sait le Latin, et sa plume en français est souvent d'une fermeté remarquable. Ce vieux traducteur peut donner encore plus d'une leçon à ses émules modernes."[16] It is only fair to say that d'Ablancourt besides being a master of style was a great scholar. His aim was to present ancient history in a way that would interest contemporary readers. He was an original writer rather than a translator, a novelist rather than an antiquary. Can we see in the *belles infidèles* the origin of the modern craze for *vies romancées*?[17]

Mention has been made of Vaugelas' translation of Quintus Curtius. This work, the fruit of a misguided conscientiousness, was published in 1657 after the translator's death by Conrart and Chapelain. Vaugelas had taken thirty years not in aiming after greater accuracy, but in polishing what was already an over-polished style. Quintus Curtius is made to indulge in the same language as a *galant* from the Hôtel de Rambouillet. One of the characters in his History, Sysigambis, uses the vulgar second person singular *tu* and *toi*, because, says the preface, "cela se rapporte mieux aux coutumes des barbares, qui n'avoient pas la délicatesse, ou pour mieux dire, la mollesse des Grecs." Again Du Ryer, in the 1668 edition, of which he is the editor, informs us in his preface of the changes Vaugelas wished to make in the text.[18] He quotes him as saying: "Cum amni bellum fuisse crederes; j'ai supprimé cela, tant parce qu'il y a trop de jeu et d'affectation, qu'à cause qu'il a déjà employé la même pensée ailleurs, ce qui lui arrive souvent, et qu'il faut corriger dans la traduction, avec la permission des critiques." Du Ryer goes on to say that the translator's plan was to change all the repetitions and affectations of the original "qui ne sont pas en petit nombre." And yet this translation, or rather parody, of Quintus Curtius won a tremendous reputation and was looked upon as a *chef d'œuvre*. Patru adds

an interesting note to the third edition of 1659 when he says: “Quittant enfin le style de M. Coëffeteau qu’il avoit tant admiré, il voulut suivre celui de M. d’Ablancourt.” This would seem to imply that Vaugelas was leaving accuracy for inaccuracy. Coëffeteau’s Florus (1621), although by no means a model of exactitude, is not in the same category as the *infidèles*.[19]

One of the most prolific and at the same time one of the worst translators of the seventeenth or any century was Michel de Marolles. His sixty or seventy volumes are the subject of some caustic comment by Sainte-Beuve who calls him a *latiniste de société* and says of him: “Marolles est un des comiques, sans le vouloir, de notre littérature.”[20] Marolles himself, whose prefaces show an excessive confidence in his own talents and a growing disappointment that the public should fail to appreciate them, gives an indication of his method of work: “Il ne faut pas aussi, pour faire une belle version, rendre toutes les choses mot à mot; ce seroit une fidélité bien infidèle, et cela ne serait ni heureux ni de bonne grâce. Je ne l’ai pas fait ainsi.”[21] The last sentence is only too true. The apparent reason why Marolles often failed to render the original text word for word was that he did not know what the original word meant. Chapelain, whose anger he had incurred by an adverse criticism upon the *Pucelle*, attacked him with all the vitriolic abuse of which a critic was then capable.[22] He calls his translation of Statius “un des maux dont notre langue est affligée.” Indeed Marolles’ translations are entirely worthless. Not only are they a mere paraphrase of the original, but are also completely lacking in style. He says of himself: “Si je n’ai pas rendu en cela un grand service au public, je crois facilement aussi que je ne lui ai pas fait beaucoup de mal.” This is true, for his works were hardly read.

Perhaps the final word on this kind of translation was pronounced by Charles Sorel, the novelist, in his *Bibliothèque françoise*.[23] His chapter on translation contains several contradictions. He begins by refuting the idea that ancient technical terms should be rendered by modern equivalents.[24] For “on ne doit pas faire dire aux auteurs des choses auxquelles ils n’ont point pensé, et les faire aller plus loin que leur intention.” But a few lines lower he writes what amounts to the reverse of this statement, and thus well sums up the attitude of the majority of translators of his day: “C’est le privilège de la traduction de pouvoir être réitérée dans tous les siècles, pour refaire les livres selon la mode qui court.”[25]

To bring a work up to date, in other words, to make it fashionable, represents a very human ambition. The only fault, as we have seen, seems to be a lack of understanding of the original and an excessive confidence that it can be changed without being impaired. The translations produced by d’Ablancourt’s school were the product of the society of their day. They were unscholarly, but often they were elegant and pleasing. D’Ablancourt himself was a fervid admirer of the ancients. If anyone had told him that modern literature was superior to theirs, he would certainly have denied it. And yet underlying the type of translation popularised by him there lay an intellectual problem which critics were not slow to perceive. The mere fact that d’Ablancourt was unfaithful to the original texts meant that *unconsciously* he thought they could be improved upon. In other words, he did

not believe that the works of the ancients formed a standard to which modern writers must conform. Thus it happened that the problem of translation became identified with the larger and bigger problems that exercised the minds of critics towards the end of the seventeenth century.

It would be out of place here to speak of the history of the Quarrel between the Ancients and Moderns, and of the philosophical problem of the Idea of Progress which this quarrel involved. But it was not long before partisans of the former recognized in the unfaithful translators their worst enemies, whilst the Moderns used them as some of their most formidable, if unwilling, allies. The latter asked the question: why did translators alter the original works? Was it not because they considered that, admirable as they might have been in ancient times, they could no longer be appreciated by a modern reader? Did not translators understand that progress had been made since the days of the Greeks and Romans, and therefore see the need for improvement? Again, the partisans of the Ancients realized the danger, for they saw that with the so-called improvements introduced by the translators the results were far inferior to the original. What a bad advertisement, then, this species of translation was for the classics! A critic such as Perrault not only derived a false idea of ancient literature, but actually considered the Moderns superior because they had to alter it and to introduce original ideas into their translations.

At the close of the century the truth of this statement became more obvious as the identification between the accurate and inaccurate schools and the partisans of the Ancients and Moderns respectively became more marked. As we shall see, a translator such as La Motte is deliberately inaccurate because he is a Modern, whilst an Ancient such as Mme Dacier has accuracy as her aim.

But this distinction did not hold good until quite late in the century, as is shown by the fact that d'Ablancourt was a fervid admirer of the Ancients, whilst a champion of modern literature such as Charpentier produced translations from Xenophon remarkable for their comparative fidelity to the text.[26] They are praised as such by Furetière,[27] and Charpentier says himself that his object has been to present the author's work "tel qu'il est, m'étant principalement étudié d'être fidèle dans l'opinion où je suis que la fidélité et l'exactitude sont les plus nécessaires qualités d'une traduction."[28]

Up to the end of the century the number either of translators or of critics who were sincere champions of accuracy was small. One of the earliest critics was Bachet de Méziriac whose treatise on translation is given in the *Menagiana*.[29] He says that a translator must observe three points. He must not add anything of his own to the original, nor must he subtract from it. Further, he must not make any change liable to alter the meaning.[30] His remarks are summed up in the following words: "La seule beauté du langage ne suffit pas pour faire estimer une traduction excellente. Il n'y a personne qui n'avoue que la qualité la plus essentielle à un bon traducteur c'est la fidélité... Et les Italiens ont fort bonne grâce lorsqu'ils disent que s'écarter du sens de l'auteur n'est pas le traduire, mais le trahir."[31]

A certain Gaspar de Tende writing under the pseudonym of the Sieur de l'Estang, does not go quite so far as Méziriac.[32] Although an obvious admirer of ancient literature, he says that it is not always necessary to copy slavishly the style of the original text. One

must "joindre ensemble les périodes trop courtes, lorsqu'on traduit un auteur dont le style est concis et coupé comme Tacite." But a word must never be altered so as to impair the sense of the original. "Un traducteur," he continues, "est un peintre qui peint d'après un original; il représente les traits de son modèle; il copie, il ne produit point; lorsqu'il passe ces bornes, ce n'est plus un traducteur, c'est un auteur, c'est un homme qui compose."

De l'Estang does not show that the latter type of translator does harm to the cause of ancient literature. The first great critic and scholar to do so was Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches.[33] He was the first to enter the fray as a conscious champion of the Ancients and of accurate translation combined. He was the first to make an attack both upon a Modern in the person of Desmarets[34] and on an unfaithful translator in the person of d'Ablancourt. His treatise on translation should serve as a model for translators of all countries and of all ages. Perhaps the only fault that can be found witli his *De optimo genere interpretandi*[35] is that it is written in Latin. As only those possessed of a sound knowledge of that language would be likely to read it, he was to a certain extent preaching to the converted. The treatise, written in the form of a dialogue, attacks in plain language the *belles infidèles*. The rules given for a translator to follow are the very reverse of d'Ablancourt's. The whole work is full of sound judgment and common sense. One quotation will suffice to show how Huet regarded a translator's functions: "Optimum ergo illum esse dico interpretandi modum, quum auctoris sententiae primum, deinde ipsis etiam, si ita fert utriusque linguae facultas, verbis arctissime adhaeret interpres, et nativum postremo auctoris characterem, quoad eius fieri potest, adumbrat; idque unum studet, ut nulla eum detractione imminutum, nullo additamento auctum; sed integrum, suique omni ex parti simillimum perquam fideliter exhibeat."[36]

The soundness of Huet's arguments and his plea for accurate translation was recognized by some of the most prominent writers of the century, who were at the same time champions of the Ancients. Boileau is reported to have said: "Savez-vous pourquoi les anciens ont si peu d'admirateurs? C'est parce que les trois quarts de ceux qui les ont traduits étoient des ignorants ou des sots."[37] La Bruyère in the preface to his Theophrastus claims that accuracy in all its forms is necessary for a translator.[38] Boileau and La Fontaine in their letters to the latter's friend, Maucroix, add some interesting comments upon his translations and criticise them when they are not accurate enough. Finally Racine attacks Tourreil's first edition of his Demosthenes as being the work of a "bourreau qui a voulu donner de l'esprit à Démosthène."[39] Maucroix and Tourreil are in a way two of the most interesting translators of the century since they represent a transition from the inaccurate to the accurate school. The various editions of their works undergo substantial modifications. For this reason it would seem opportune to devote a separate section to them.

François Maucroix was recognized by contemporary and subsequent critics as one of the foremost translators of his time, but no separate study of his translations appears ever to have been made. He is regarded at the present day as a writer of rhythmical and harmonious French prose, but as a translator he is generally placed in the inaccurate school. This is true only to a certain extent, and in so far as his early translations are concerned.

For there is abundant evidence to show that Maucroix changed his ideas about a translator's functions. Let us, therefore, examine this evidence, and secondly attempt to trace a reason for the change.

Maucroix[40] in all probability received his education from the Jesuits. Hence his taste for oratory – many of his translations are from rhetorical works – and his striving after felicity of expression and elegance of style. In his prefaces he does not give a systematic theory of translation; he provides us with but a few hints as to its functions and purposes. But from his works themselves, from his correspondence, and more particularly from outside criticism we are able to gather what was his aim.

The change that came over his style may roughly be dated by the year 1685.[41] Up to that date his translations were marked by inaccuracy in thought, style and language. From that year onwards he seems gradually to have modified his views. Before 1685 he is apt to modernise classical expressions and technical terms. In his preface to the *Homélies de St. Jean Chrsostome* (1671) he states that since certain views of his author are inconsistent with those held in his own day, he has taken the liberty of omitting these altogether from his translation. He quotes Cicero as an authority for doing so, saying that the latter's translations were remarkable not only for concessions made to the spirit of the age, but for their vigour and beauty. "Après cela," he says, "je ne pense pas que l'on doive condamner une traduction pour n'être pas assez littérale."

On the other hand, in 1710 there appeared the *Œuvres posthumes* of Maucroix, published under the direction of the Abbé d'Olivet. Contained in this volume are four *Philippics* of Demosthenes, an edition of which had already appeared in 1685. The two editions show marked dissimilarities. Not only is the preface to the later one more elaborate, but the text is much more accurate.[42] The *Journal de Trévoux* calls this work "le chef d'œuvre d'un écrivain, qui, profitant de ses réflexions et des critiques, a toujours été attentif à perfectionner ses ouvrages, et qui dans celui-ci paroît s'être entièrement corrigé de ce style un peu lâche qu'on blâme dans ses premières traductions; pour s'en convaincre, on n'a qu'à comparer la traduction des Philippiques de Démosthène imprimées en 1685, avec celle qui paroît; la différence de l'une à l'autre est sensible."[43]

The reason for this change is largely to be seen in Maucroix' letters to and from Boileau written in the last decade of the century. Those dealing with translations are concerned chiefly with the dialogue *De Oratore* which Maucroix was translating in 1694-95. He here shows himself as an ardent supporter of the Ancients. He writes to Boileau:[44] "J'ai déjà lu beaucoup de vos réflexions où vous soutenez comme il faut le mérite des anciens. En vérité, je suis fâché qu'un aussi galant homme que M. Perrault se soit engagé à soutenir une si mauvais cause.[45] Bon Dieu! Est-ce que l'Alaric et la Pucelle entreront en comparaison avec l'Enéide? Je vous laisse défendre l'Iliade et l'Odisée [*sic*]; vous êtes plus grand grec que moi; mais pour l'Enéide c'est me blesser au cœur que d'en dire du mal!" Maucroix looked upon Boileau not only as the foremost champion of the Ancients but, very significantly, as an authority on the functions of a translator. He therefore sends him his manuscripts for correction. Boileau enters into a detailed criticism of certain passages, suggests better renderings, and asks Maucroix' forgiveness for the corrections, saying it would be a pity if such a worthy piece of work were to be spoilt by a few inac-

curacies. The translator in reply says he is flattered by Boileau's corrections – the more pencil-marks the greater the obligation he will feel towards him. He entirely agrees with Boileau's criticisms, acknowledges his own mistakes, and admits he has been guilty of inaccuracy.[46]

The letters that passed between Maucroix and La Fontaine show the same desire for guidance, the only difference being that Maucroix treats La Fontaine as a friend and not as the lawgiver of Parnassus.[47] But the significance of this correspondence is that the discussions as to the superiority of the Ancients coincide with the desire for an increase in accuracy, an increase amply shown in the later translations. Here then is a striking proof of a translator coming gradually to realize that he could not at the same time pose as a true Ancient and as a follower of d'Ablancourt.[48]

A similar and even more striking example of a translator changing his ideas is afforded by Jacques de Tourreil.[49] We can trace the complete evolution of his ideas in his three editions of Demosthenes. Influenced by his Jesuit education with its cult of eloquence and style, the first edition of 1691 is typical of other inaccurate translations of the period. Tourreil in his preface says: "Il (Démosthène) parle avec une telle impétuosité que sa langue ne peut pas suffire à son esprit, et ses paroles suspendues ne forment souvent avec toute leur énergie qu'une ébauche de sa pensée. Ainsi un attachement trop scrupuleux à la lettre, après en avoir défiguré le sens, m'eût éloigné de la fidélité où j'aspire, et où je ne pouvais parvenir qu'avec un tour plus libre et plus étendu. J'ai donc cherché un tempérament, qui, sans trop m'écarter du texte, n'en étouffoit pas le feu et la vigueur." In other words Tourreil has achieved the task, and that in a most skilful fashion, of modernising Demosthenes. For this reason he was called a *bourreau* by Racine. The thrust went home, and Tourreil brought out a second edition in 1701. In this, however, there are only minor corrections of detail, and the ideas presented in the preface are the same as those of 1691. He talks of "concilier le génie de mon auteur avec celui de ma nation et de ma langue." The Abbé Massieu, Tourreil's biographer, tells us that the new edition was the cause of much comment. "Mais il produisit des impressions fort différentes sur les lecteurs, selon les différentes dispositions où il les trouva. Les admirateurs des Anciens blâmèrent M. de Tourreil de ce qu'il vouloit avoir plus d'esprit que Démosthène, et prétendirent qu'au lieu de l'embellir, il ne faisoit que le défigurer. Au contraire les partisans des Modernes jugèrent que les infidélités de la traduction tournoient à l'avantage de l'original."[50]

Tourreil, as an ardent Ancient and as one of their chief supporters naturally resented the praises of the Moderns "comme la plus cruelle censure qu'on pût faire de son ouvrage."[51] He began a third edition, published in 1721 after his death by the Abbé Massieu. This translation, completely different from the two previous editions, is a *chef d'œuvre*.[52] Not only does it attain a degree of accuracy remarkable for the period, but it is written in admirable French. The author adheres strictly to the text without any addition or alteration. It is indeed a translation which does credit to the original author. Tourreil's views have undergone a complete change. He is now quoted as saying: "Toute paraphrase déguise le texte. Loin de présenter l'image qu'elle promet, elle peint moitié de fantaisie, moitié d'après un original; d'où se forme je ne sais quoi de monstrueux."[53] From this it is

clear that Tourreil, like Maucroix, gradually came to look upon accuracy in translation as a useful weapon in the hands of the Ancients. The only difference between the two men is one not of ideas, but of the extent to which these ideas were put into practice.[54]

Mention has been made of the fact that Maucroix and Tourreil had received their education – the former probably, the latter certainly – from the Jesuits. Before returning to the question of translation at the end of the century it is necessary to insert a short digression upon translation as it affected the chief educators of the period, the Jesuits and the Jansenists. The question of translation in schools presented then, as it does now, a most important problem that was, of course, closely connected with the controversy in the wider sense.

The love of eloquence which Jesuit teachers aimed at fostering by means of a study of rhetoric naturally exercised its influence upon their translators. The *Ratio studiorum*[55] had as one of its effects that of causing classical literature to be looked upon in a purely utilitarian light. It was only regarded as fit for study if it pointed a moral, or if it could teach its readers how to be eloquent. The value *per se* of ancient literature from the point of view of education counted for very little in Jesuit schools. The ancients were cultivated not for their own intrinsic merit, but for the use to which they might be put by a modern teacher. He regarded them as useful in his efforts to turn out pupils who should be worthy members of the Church and citizens of the world. As a Jesuit himself says, the education of the Company is "une pure gymnastique de l'esprit, laquelle consiste bien moins dans l'acquisition d'un savoir que dans la culture de la forme."[56]

Whether this is strictly true or not, and whether it is a commendable object to have in view is a matter or opinion. What is certain is that translations either by Jesuits themselves or by their pupils were often marked by a peculiar character. They paid less attention to the inner thought of the original than to the manner in which they expressed it. Thus translation was largely an exercise in style. Further, if ancient literature was looked upon in a purely moral light, it had often to be Christianised. Hence it happens that a Jesuit influence is often found to lie behind translations of the inaccurate type.[57] This does not imply that the Jesuits were lacking in scholarship, or failed to appreciate the beauty of ancient literature. Far from it. It is only too often forgotten that Greek literature was read in Jesuit schools in the seventeenth century as much as it was at the *Petites Écoles* of Port-Royal. It was the spirit in which it was read that differed.

The Jesuits were fervid upholders of the Ancients, and many of their pupils, Huet and Tourreil included, were among their principal champions.[58] They did not see the paradox that they could still regard the Ancients as supreme and yet find it necessary to bring their works up to date. An exception, however, was provided by the *Journal de Trévoux*, a Jesuit publication, whose contributors embraced the cause of the Moderns. The reason they did so was not that they sincerely felt their cause to be the true one. They were forced to take up the cudgels against Boileau and Racine, who were not only Ancients but had approved of Pascal's earlier attacks on the Jesuits in his *Provinciales*. The Jansenist convictions of Boileau in particular had obliged the Jesuits to retaliate. The *Journal de Trévoux* attacks the Ancients, but at the same time, and again paradoxically, sets itself up

as an advocate of accurate translation. Thus, in 1726, it criticizes the posthumous translations of Maucroix contained in the *Nouvelles Œuvres* by saying: "Il s'est réservé la liberté de lier les pensées ou de les détacher, de les étendre ou de les resserrer comme il jugeoit à propos, pour les mieux dépaiser en leur donnant un air tout à fait françois."[59]

In a word, the Jesuits as teachers of classical literature and as translators present certain contradictions. On the one hand – with the exception of the *journalistes de Trévoux* – they set themselves up as champions of the Ancients. On the other hand their translators were guilty of infidelity to the original text.

The Jansenists, in spite of all their differences, present similar problems. Translation formed part of the regular curriculum at their *Petites Écoles*, and the *solitaires* themselves were some of the foremost translators of the day.[60] The translation of the New Testament by Antoine Arnauld and his collaborators is well-known for the fact that they allowed their own convictions to insinuate themselves into the text, and to corrupt what is otherwise a most praiseworthy piece of work. Not only were their pupils made to translate passages from Greek and Latin authors, but Guyot, de Sacy and others prepared versions of the classics and of the Fathers of the Church for their benefit. These were put before them as soon as they could read and write, so that they could have a working knowledge of authors they would read later on in the original. Their school texts provide most interesting and illuminating reading. There is no doubt that the spirit which animated the earlier Jansenist translators was more or less the same as that of the Jesuits. They regarded ancient literature as useful for education in the moral sense. But on the whole it was held in suspicion for the dangerous thought it contained. Unlike the Jesuits, however, the elder and more puritanical Jansenists also regarded the cultivation of style for its own sake as a dangerous thing. Towards the middle of the century a somewhat modified attitude was taken up, and Greek and Latin authors, especially the former, were looked upon as providing models of style. But while cultivating to a much greater extent than the Jesuits a true appreciation of classical literature, the results were curiously similar. They attempted to Christianise the original texts. They agreed that the ancients were superior in language, but upheld on grounds of divine revelation the superiority of modern thought and morality. Thus to all intents and purposes their ideas were the same as those of the Moderns, and we find Saint-Cyran and Desmarets expressing practically identical views!

On the whole, then, so far as language is concerned the Jansenist style is less rhetorical and far less adorned than the Jesuit.[61] Unlike their opponents the Jansenists rarely indulge in *bel esprit*. Both Antoine and Robert Arnauld[62] are fairly literal as translators, but their works are cold and unemotional and rather uninteresting to read. Accuracy was of course possible when translating from the Fathers of the Church, but was quite unthinkable when translating from an author such as Terence. It is to be wondered at that it was ever attempted, and yet Lemaître de Sacy's version of the *Comedies* is one of the better translations of the century.[63] It is good only comparatively, since naturally much of Terence had to be omitted. The title itself is illuminating: "Comédies de Térence, traduites en François, avec le Latin à costé, et rendues très-honnestes en y changeant fort peu de chose. Pour servir à bien entendre la langue latine et à bien traduire en François." The preface is in the form of an apology to show why he has abridged the text. After praising

the *Comedies* he says that they contain many passages which excite "des images très dangereuses." Thus he adds: "Considérant que d'une part c'étoit un malheur pour ceux qui instruisent la jeunesse de ne pouvoir leur mettre entre les mains un auteur si excellent, sans exposer leur innocence à un grand péril, et que de l'autre ce seroit un crime de préférer l'avancement de leurs études au règlement de leurs mœurs, et la pureté du style à celle du cœur : j'ai cru que le moyen d'allier ces deux choses qui sembloient inalliables, étoit de faire avec adresse quelques petits changements." It is interesting to note that the Jesuit *Ratio* goes even further: "Si omnino purgari non poterunt, quemadmodum Terentius, potius non legantur."[64]

One of the novelties introduced into Port-Royal was that of giving the French language a due place in their educational scheme. The Jesuits conducted their classes in Latin, and that language formed the basis of all their studies. They used it as a foundation for the teaching of a rhetorical style. The Jansenists, on the other hand, aimed at teaching their pupils to write dignified and sober French. For the first time translation was looked upon, as it is to-day, as providing a suitable discipline for their pupils. It served to clarify their ideas and to make them express them in clear and unambiguous language. As Pierre Coustel says: "L'application qu'ils sont obligés d'apporter pour poser toutes les paroles et trouver le sens d'un auteur latin exerce en même temps leur esprit et leur jugement et leur fait autant apprendre la beauté du François que celle du Latin."[65] Thus it is not surprising if, in their efforts to create models of French suitable for their pupils to copy, Jansenist translators were sometimes guilty of the same extravagances as d'Ablancourt, and if the spirit of the original was too often violated. Thomas Guyot in his translation of Cicero's letters (1666) has as a heading: "Cicéron à Monsieur de Pomponne" (for T. Pomponius Atticus)![66] "Postumia tua me convenit et Servius noster" is rendered by him: "Madame votre femme m'ayant fait l'honneur de me venir voir avec Monsieur votre fils."

The inaccuracies of language prevalent in this sort of translation are perhaps advocated by Antoine Lemaître himself, whose rules drawn up for the benefit of his pupil Du Fossé are quoted by the latter in his *Mémoires*.[67] "La première chose," he says, "à quoi il faut prendre garde dans la traduction françoise c'est d'être extrêmement fidèle et littéral, c'est-à-dire, d'exprimer en notre langue tout ce qui est dans le latin, et de le rendre si bien, que si par exemple Cicéron avoit parlé en notre langue il eût parlé de même que nous le faisons parler dans notre traduction." This rule, excellent in itself, led to exaggerated attempts to avoid a literal translation. In fact infidelity to Greek and Latin authors, whether due to expurgation or to a desire to regard the original texts as an exercise, distinguish Port-Royalist translations as much as those of the Jesuits. The chief difference is one of style, and the question which of the two styles, Jesuit or Jansenist is the better, is purely a matter of opinion.

We have seen that it was only at the end of the seventeenth century that the quarrel between the accurate and inaccurate schools of translators became merged in the greater one of the Ancients and Moderns. The quarrel chiefly centred round one author of antiquity, namely Homer. No ancient author has been so badly misunderstood and consequently so cruelly mutilated in translation. It was only natural that a generation lacking in

simplicity should fail to appreciate the quality that makes the greatest appeal to a modern reader. Homer was either endowed with qualities he does not possess or divested of characteristics that constitute his greatest attraction. Too often, of course, he was translated from Latin versions, themselves devoid of all the Homeric atmosphere. The majority of his translators knew no Greek, and had they done so, it is doubtful whether their translations would have been very different. It is therefore not surprising that a champion of the Moderns such as Perrault, who himself knew no Greek, should express the profoundest contempt for one who is recognized by most modern admirers of the ancients as the greatest poet of antiquity, but who even in ancient times did not entirely escape from criticism.[68]

One of the phases, then, of the famous Quarrel took the form of divided opinion as to Homer's merits and demerits, and it was as a result of the Quarrel that Mme Dacier undertook to translate Homer into French prose. This lady, one of the most fascinating characters of her day, was a competent Greek scholar and a fervid upholder of the Ancients. She saw the harm that had been done to her idol by inaccurate translators and set herself the task to repair it. Her work forms one of the landmarks in the history of translation. It was the direct outcome of Perrault's unjustifiable attacks upon the Homeric poems.

To understand the advance made by Mme Dacier in her versions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[69] it is only necessary to glance at the other translations of the time. Those of the *Iliad* by Du Souhait (1617) and of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in verse by Certon (1615) provide no more entertaining reading than Chapelain's *Pucelle*. Almost a century later Homer was just as misunderstood. Of the Abbé Regnier-Desmarais' verse rendering of the first book of the *Iliad* Boileau rightly observes in a letter to Brossette: "Ne voilà-t-il pas Homère un joli garçon?... Cette traduction, je crois, va donner cause gagnée à M. Perrault. Dii magni! horribilem et sacrum libellum!"[70] In the same category, but an even worse piece of work, was La Valterie's *Iliad* in prose (1681), the preface to which is enlightening as showing a complete misunderstanding of Homer, and the sort of spirit prevalent among translators of the time. After boasting that he has translated the original as accurately as possible he makes the following ingenuous remark: "Pour prévenir le dégoût que la délicatesse du temps auroit peut-être donné de ma traduction, j'ai rapproché les mœurs des anciens, autant qu'il m'a été permis. Je n'ai osé faire paraître Achille, Patrocle, Ulysse et Ajax dans la cuisine, et dire toutes les choses que le poète ne fait point difficulté de représenter.[71] Je me suis servi de termes généraux, dont notre langue s'accommode mieux que de tout ce détail, particulièrement à l'égard de certaines choses qui nous paraissent aujourd'hui trop basses."

Mme Dacier well realized the danger of such translations and says in her preface to the *Clouds* and *Plutus* of Aristophanes (1684): "Ce qui empêche aujourd'hui la plupart des hommes de goûter les ouvrages des anciens, c'est qu'on ne veut jamais perdre de vue son siècle, et qu'on veut le reconnoître en tout." She regarded the rôle of translator from the point of view of an apologist for ancient literature. In the preface to her *Iliad* she shows that she understands Homer's simplicity and the functions of a translator. She not only states her convictions, but has the courage to attempt to put them into practice. Her translation is no more than an attempt, for it would be too much to expect that she should

be wholly free from the style of her age. She is guilty to a certain extent of anachronisms and is at pains here and there to alter what was obviously unsuitable for her generation. But if anachronisms coming from one who had a real feeling for antiquity surprise us, what are we to say of the plays of Racine? Neither the playwright nor the translator could entirely escape the atmosphere of Versailles. But the highest praise we can give her, and that which would have pleased her above all others, is that her translations of the classics and especially of Homer are a real vindication of the ancients.[72]

The following translations of a famous passage from the *Iliad* by La Valterie and Dacier show how much better the latter is in rhythm, in phrasing and in conserving the pathos of the original:[73]

> je vous conjure, divin Achille, d'avoir égard à ma vieillesse, je vous en prie par celle de votre père; il la passe bien plus heureusement que moi. Quand il auroit des ennemies qui troubleroient son repos durant votre absence, il a l'espérance de votre retour, et de s'en venger. Pour moi ne suis-je pas bien malheureux de n'oser espérer que d'un si grand nombre d'enfants, il n'en reste un seul qui soit ma joie et ma consolation.
>
> (La Valterie)

> Achille égal aux dieux, en me voyant, souvenez-vous de votre père; il est accablé d'années comme moi, et peut-être qu'à l'heure que je suis ici prosterné à vos pieds, ses voisins profitant de votre absence, lui font une cruelle guerre, et il n'a personne qui le secoure dans un si pressant danger. Mais hélas! il y a entre lui et moi cette différence, que les nouvelles qu'il reçoit, que vous êtes plein de vie, entretiennent la joie dans son cœur et le soutiennent dans cette extrémité par la douce espérance qu'elles lui donnent tous les jours qu'il va vous voir de retour couvert de gloire triompher de ses ennemis; et moi, le plus infortuné des hommes, de tant de fils si braves que j'avois dans Troye, je ne crois qu'il m'en reste un seul.
>
> (Mme Dacier)

Mme Dacier's translations and prefaces were only events in the Quarrel. They did not terminate it, and one of the principal champions of the Moderns was still to take up the challenge. But Houdar de la Motte belongs in the main to the eighteenth century and it is impossible here fully to analyse his ideas, extremely interesting though they be. His *Discours sur Homère* forms a fitting *pendant* to Boileau's and Mme Dacier's conception of ancient literature and the functions of a translator. It begins with La Motte himself invoking Homer's aid:

> je veux sous un nouveau langage
> Rajeunir ton antique ouvrage;
> Viens toi-même, viens m'exciter,
> Seconde, règle mon ivresse,

Et si ta gloire t'intéresse,
Dis-moi comme il faut t'imiter.

To which Homer replies:

Mon siècle eut des dieux trop bizarres,
Des héros d'orgueil infectés :
Des rois indignement avares,
Défauts autrefois respectés.
Adoucis tout avec prudence :
Que de l'exacte bienséance
Ton ouvrage soit revêtu :
Respecte le goût de ton âge
Qui, sans la suivre davantage,
Connoît pourtant mieux la vertu.[74]

Here we have a friend of Perrault and Fontenelle, a partisan of the Moderns, advocating, or rather making Homer an advocate of, inaccurate translation. Poor d'Ablancourt would indeed have been shocked had he but known who were to be his successors. In the eighteenth century the translation problem became merged in that of the Idea of Progress, and we have the apostle himself of this Idea saying: "Le premier joug que les traducteurs souffrent qu'on leur impose, ou plutôt qu'ils s'imposent euxmêmes, c'est de se borner à être les copistes plutôt que les rivaux des auteurs qu'ils traduisent; superstitieusement attachés à l'original, ils se croiraient coupables de sacrilège s'ils l'embellissaient, même dans les endroits foibles."[75]

La Motte puts his precepts into practice with a vengeance. He claims with pride that he has been able to diminish the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* by half. But in his execrable version of the original even this is too long.[76] The amazing thing was that it was not unappreciated in its day. La Motte gained the royal favour and 8oo *livres* for this most shameful piece of work.[77]

Boileau considered Mme Dacier's translation of Homer a *chef d'œuvre*. This would scarcely be the view of a modern reader to whom the anachronisms and excessive delicacy of taste could not fail to be somewhat repugnant. On reading it he probably would not feel "like some watcher of the skies, When a new planet swims into his ken." But the old controversy over translation still continues. Are we not at the present day undergoing an unconscious reaction to the type of translation we are told at school should be our model? If we have travelled far from the days when *ἄνδρες δικασταί* was translated 'Messieurs les juges' and *ἄνασσα* by 'Madame,' do we yet think that 'hipparque' is an adequate translation for *ἵππαρχος*? Do not the modern archaeological transcriptions 'Ouranos' and 'Helios' strike us as somewhat pedantic? It may be that as the classics are less and less read we are again in need of works of popularisation such as the *infidèles*. There are signs that the scientific translation of the nineteenth century has passed its heyday and that something more popular in appeal is taking its place. Recent

stage productions in France and America of modernised classical plays would seem to bear this out. In England Lawrence's *Odyssey* is rather a literary than a scholarly achievement and in certain aspects presents a not unworthy comparison with seventeenth century translations. The problem is still with us of the amount of accuracy to be aimed at in language, style and thought. Indeed the whole purpose of translation is and must still remain a subject for discussion. We will therefore not attempt to offer a solution but will close on an even greater note of controversy by quoting from the seventeenth century sceptic Colletet, who enquired, with what degree of pertinency we leave to the reader to decide, whether there is really any use in translation at all:

> C'est trop m'assujetir, je suis las d'imiter,
> La version déplaît à qui peut inventer;
> Je suis plus amoureux d'un vers que je compose
> Que des livres entiers que j'ai traduits en prose.
> Suivre comme un esclave un auteur pas à pas,
> Chercher de la raison où l'on n'en trouve pas...
> Et vouloir bien souvent par un caprice extrême
> Entendre qui jamais ne s'entendit soi-même;
> Certes, c'est un travail dont je suis si lassé
> Que j'en ai le corps foible, et l'esprit émoussé.[78]

Notes:

1. For theories about translation in the sixteenth century cf. H. W. Lawton, *Térence en France au XVI^e^ siècle*, Paris, 1926.
2. Paris, 1616.
3. Verse translations are excluded from the present study, because in the 17th century the majority of such renderings of ancient poets into French were little more than paraphrases. A useful, but sometimes inaccurate, general study of the whole subject is F. Hennebert's *Histoire des traductions françaises d'auteurs grecs et latins pendant le XVI^e^ et le XVII^e^ siècles*, Brussels, 1861. G. Duhain's *Jacques de Tourreil, traducteur de Démosthène*, Paris, 1910, contains some excellent observations upon translation in general, as does M. Delcourt's *Étude sur les traductions des tragiques grecs et latins en France depuis la Renaissance*, Brussels, 1925. J. Bellanger's *Histoire de la traduction en France*, Paris, 1903, is no more than an introduction to the subject.
4. The distinction corresponds to the one made by Hilaire Belloc in his essay "On Translation" (*The Taylorian Lecture*, Oxford 1931) between "literary translations" and "translations of instruction."
5. Pref. to trans. of *Octavius* by Minutius Felix, Paris, 1637.
6. Dedicatory epistle to Conrart in his Lucian, Paris, 1654.
7. Pref. to trans. of the Æneid, Paris, 1648. The same idea can be seen in Rodolphe Lemaistre's *Le Tibère françois* (1616), in which he aims at bringing Tacitus up to

date. Although this study does not deal with verse translations, a quotation from Perrin's Æneid cannot be resisted. It is far more comic than Scarron's Travesty.

"Holà, Zéphir, le Vent, l'orgueil de votre race
Vous a-t-il bien, dit-il, inspiré tant d'audace?
Quoi, Vents, vous osez donc sans mon consentement
Bouleverser ainsi l'un et l'autre élément,
Confondre ciel et terre, et dessus mes campagnes
Élever sans respect ainsi tant de montagnes?
Si je – mais il vaut mieux calmer cet élément."

8. *Menagiana*, ed. 1715, tom. 3.
9. *Nouvelle allégorique ou histoire des derniers troubles arrivés au pays d'éloquence*, Paris, 1658.
10. Paris, 1686.
11. Nicolas Frémont d'Ablancourt, *Perrot d'Ablancourt vengé ou Amelot de la Houssage convaincu de ne plus parler François et d'expliquer mal le Latin*, Amsterdam, 1686. Published anonymously.
12. The first six books of the *Annals*, Paris, 1690.
13. *Vie de Perrot d'Ablancourt*, tom. 2 of *Œuvres*, 1681.
14. 1725, tom. 1. (Ed. by Baillet.)
15. *Réflexions sur nos traducteurs* in tom. 3 of *Œuvres*, London, 1706.
16. *L'Héllenisme en France*, Paris, 1869.
17. A claim might also be made for Amyot's Plutarch. But the aim of this writer was more philosophical. D'Ablancourt undoubtedly had the modern taste for popular biography.
18. Du Ryer, the playwright and critic, also acquired fame by bringing old translations up to date. He even attempted a modern version of Amyot's Plutarch. This did not prevent him from being elected to the Academy instead of Corneille.
19. Nicolas Coëffeteau, Bishop of Marseilles, (1574-1623). His translation of Florus was inscribed in the list drawn up by the Academy in 1638 of the most famous French books.
20. Article on Marolles in *Causeries du Lundi*, tom. 14.
21. *Les tragédies de Sénèque en latin et en françois de la traduction de M. de Marolles*, etc., Paris, 1660.
22. *Lettres*. Ed.Tamizey de Larroque, tom. 2, no. 6, etc.
23. Paris, 1667. The chapter referred to is entitled "Des traductions des livres grecs, latins, italiens et françois. Et la manière de bien traduire." p. 235 ff.
24. Thus one should translate names of Roman officials by Ediles, Préteurs, Tribuns, Proconsuls, and not by Intendants des bâtiments, Prévosts, Colonels, Gouverneurs de provinces.
25. He continues: "Je dirai premièrement que pour parvenir à l'excellence des traductions, il faut garder un milieu judicieux; c'est de ne se point trop attacher aux sens ni aux mots d'un auteur, et de ne s'en point trop écarter aussi." It may be noted that in nearly all their prefaces the translators at first make a profession of accuracy. They then pro-

ceed to modify their statements in such a way as to contradict their original remarks. But whereas they are at pains to give the reasons why they deviate from the text, the translators of the previous century were generally inaccurate without trying to excuse themselves.

26. *Memorabilia*, 1650. *Cyropædeia*, 1659-60. F. Charpentier wanted to banish Latin from public monuments. Cf. his *Défense de la langue françoise pour l'inscription d'un arc de triomphe*, Paris, 1676.
27. *Op. cit.*
28. Pref. to trans. of *Cyropædeia*.
29. *Op. cit.*, tom. 2. His treatise was originally pronounced as a *discours* in the Academy in 1636.
30. He blames Amyot for the last fault, and finds him guilty of 2000 mis-translations!
31. "Traduttore, traditore."
32. *Traité de la traduction*, Paris, 1660. This work was well-known in its day. According to Vigneul-Marville (*Mélanges*, ed. 1725, tom. 3) the author was connected with Port-Royal.
33. 1630-1721.
34. Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin (1593-1676) author of the famous comedy *Les Visionnaires* (1637). He was the forerunner of Perreault in the Quarrel, and was the opponent of Nicole and Boileau.
35. Paris, 1661.
36. Huet's precepts, although often commended, were unfortunately too frequently disregarded by translators in the 17th century. One of the notable exceptions (Mme Dacier excluded) is Ezéchiel Spanheim, whose translation of Julian the Apostate (Paris, 1683) is full of interest both for the general accuracy of the text and for the sentiments contained in the preface. In the latter he renders homage to Huet and says: "Tout bon traducteur doit avoir pour but de faire voir son auteur tel qu'il est, et non tel qu'il doit être; de le mettre en son jour, mais non de le farder et de le travestir sous prétexte de le vouloir rendre plus agréable ou plus intelligible." Again: "Il ne s'agit pas véritablement de s'attacher trop à la lettre en prenant la tâche de traducteur, mais qu'aussi il n'est pas permis de s'éloigner du sens de l'auteur, pour l'ajuster trop à la mode, ou pour le corriger." Spanheim wrote in correct French, though he was a German. His translation is marked by Teutonic thoroughness, which may be seen in the long and elaborate notes.

    Another translator who owed nothing to Huet but whose translation of a Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1654) is marked by accuracy and straightforward French is Félix Cassandre. He worked for twenty years on a second edition of this which was never published.
37. Pellisson and d'Olivet, *Histoire de l'Académie Françoise* (Article: Gilles Boileau). Boileau continues: "Madame de la Fayette, la femme de France qui avoit le plus d'esprit et qui écrivoit le mieux, comparoit un sot traducteur à un laquais que sa maîtresse envoie faire un compliment à quelqu'un. Ce que sa maîtresse lui aura dit en termes polis, il va le rendre grossièrement, il l'estropie; plus il y avoit de délicatesse dans le compliment, moins ce laquais s'en tire bien, et voilà en un mot la plus parfaite

image d'un mauvais traducteur."

38. It is true that his translation falls rather short of the standards he sets himself. This was largely due to the fact that he was translating from a faulty text. Ménage (*op. cit.*, tom. 4) meaning to praise him says: "La traduction des Caractères de Théophraste est bien belle et bien françoise, et montre que son auteur entend parfaitement le grec. Je puis dire que j'y ai vu bien des choses que peut-être faute d'attention je n'avois pas vu dans le grec." It is more literal than previous translations of Theophrastus, e.g. that of J. de Bénévent (1613).
39. It is interesting to note that these four *grands classiques* were exceptions to the general rule in the 17th century in that they were Greek scholars. They were, according to Rigault (*Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, 1856) "des hellénistes d'exception." He classes Maucroix with them, which is wrong. Maucroix himself admits that he was not a *grand grec*, and it is probable that his translations from the Greek were made from Latin originals. Boileau's version of Longinus is not strictly a translation, as he himself admits. The *Traité du Sublime* is an endeavour to produce for the benefit of his contemporaries a similar work to that of Longinus.
40. 1619-1708.
41. The year in which appeared the *Ouvrages de prose et de poésie*, a joint publication of Maucroix and La Fontaine. This contains among other translations by Maucroix that of part of Demosthenes. He was the first in the 17th century to translate him.
42. It might be thought that d'Olivet was responsible for the alterations. Quérard in his *Supercheries littéraires* goes so far as to state that the second edition is wholly by him. There is no evidence at all to show that either is true. Indeed, in his preface d'Olivet comments upon Maucroix' alterations in the later edition.
43. A proof of Maucroix' striving after accuracy in his later works is also to be seen in the autograph MS. of his translation of the second *Philippic* of Cicero (Bib. Nat. fonds fr. 12794). This is full of erasions and corrections and would seem to provide abundant evidence of an endeavour to find the *mot juste* and to be accurate in langage, style and thought.
44. Sept. 6th, 1694.
45. In point of fact Maucroix was a friend of Perreault. D'Olivet tells us (*op. cit.*) that Maucroix did not take up the dispute with him on grounds of friendship. "Il ne voulut pas de gaîté de cœur se mettre sur les rangs contre lui, aimant mieux perdre un ouvrage qu'un ami." Perrault in his *Siècle de Louis XIV* pays a striking tribute to Maucroix' translation of Plato, saying:

    "En vain son traducteur partisan de l'antique
    En conserve la grâce et tout le sel attique."

46. He adds: "Au cas que la chose s'imprime, si vous voulez me la permettre, je mettrai : traduite par…, de la correction de M. Des Préaux, cela me fera de l'honneur en toute manière."
47. La Fontaine's *Épître à Huet* shows how far the fabulist is a follower of the Ancients. He had himself had some experience as a translator. His version of Terence's *Eunuch* is a good piece of work. He had been helped by his cousin Pintrel in a translation of

Seneca's letters.

48. Maucroix had been in his youth a friend of d'Ablancourt and of Patru.
49. 1656-1714. His work as a translator of Demosthenes has formed the subject of a scholarly and elaborate thesis by M. Georges Duhain (*op. cit.*).
50. J. R. Malet in his *Discours prononcé dans l'Académie française le...* 29 *décembre* 1714 also pays him a doubtful compliment by saying: "Quels nouveaux traits ce facile interprète n'a-t-il pas joints aux richesses de l'original?"
51. Massieu's preface to 3rd edit. p. LVI (and not p. XXII as given by M. Duhain). Tourreil's extremely sensible ideas about the Quarrel may be seen in his *Discours* pronounced in the Academy and quoted by Massieu. His friends included Huet, the Abbé de Longuerue, theologian and scholar, Boivin, another translator and supporter of the Ancients, de Sacy, and Boileau. Like Maucroix, Tourreil consulted the last-named about his translations, but unlike him Tourreil had the advantage of being a Greek scholar.
52. Interesting comparisons of extracts from the three editions are given by M. Duhain.
53. *Op. cit.*, p. LXXXI. He also says in his *Discours* (p. 66): "On a tort d'imputer à d'excellents originaux ce que leur prête un traducteur, c'est-à-dire un copiste, qui souvent les défigure et les dégrade toujours."
54. Massieu (*op. cit.*, p. LXXI) makes some shrewd observations when comparing the two translators of Demosthenes. After praising Maucroix' work he says: "Mais enfin par son caractère doux et modéré, il étoit peu propre à traduire un écrivain tel que Démosthène, plein d'emportements et de fougues. Au lieu que M. de T. par ses dispositions personnelles sembloit être tout fait pour cela… Le style du premier a plus de douceur et plus d'égalité; le style du second plus de véhémence et plus de force." The fact is that Maucroix was an Epicurean, a lover of "la douce vie." Tourreil was "insensible aux attraits de la volupté… Il ne vivoit le plus souvent que de légumes et de fruits."
55. Rome, 1599.
56. Le Père Beck in 1854, quoted by Egger.
57. Tourreil in his earlier style is of course an outstanding example. A notable exception is Huet himself, who was educated by the Jesuits. But he is a critic and not a translator.
58. E.g. the Abbé d'Olivet. Bouhours, a moderate partisan of the Moderns, is an exception.
59. The same journal had praised Maucroix' *Œuvres posthumes*, published in 1710 for their accuracy. Here is an obvious and inexplicable contradiction, for as regards fidelity to the text, both these posthumous publications are an improvement upon Maucroix' earlier method of translating.
60. Cf. Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal*.
61. J. de Maistre in his *De l'Église gallicane* attacks the dryness of style characteristic of Jansenist translations.
62. A. Arnauld (*le grand Arnauld*) translated St. Augustine's *De vera religione* (1647). R. Arnauld translated the *Confessions* (1649, in the course of which he consulted

9 Mss.) and Josephus (1667-68). Mme de Sévigné is full of admiration for the latter and writes: "Quelle honte si vous n'achevez pas ce livre… Et l'Histoire et le style, tout y est divin." (Ed. Regnier, no. 454, etc.).

63. Paris, 1647. Published anonymously. De Sacy's translation of the Letters of the younger Pliny is very good also.
64. The *Jugement des Savants* (tom. 3, edit. 1725) in its critical article upon translators contains a separate section upon translation at Port-Royal and praises the *solitaires* "d'avoir agréablement retiré les gens des lectures dangereuses par leurs traductions." It also says: "Le Père Bouhours témoigne que ces Messieurs ont beaucoup contribué à la perfection de notre langue; mais qu'ils aiment les grandes périodes et les longues parenthèses."
65. Les *Règles de l'éducation des enfants*, Paris, 1687. Coustel (1621-1704) was for some time a *solitaire*. The work referred to contains some excellent advice to translators and is not unworthy of Huet. But he errs too much on the side of modernising the original.
66. This misuse of Greek and Latin names is a common feature of 17th century translation. Indeed the gallicising of foreign names, whether ancient or not, has always been a peculiar feature of the French genius. Compare the extraordinary spellings of the name Marlborough in the 17th century. Many modern examples could also be given.
67. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal*, Utrecht, 1739. (Vol. 1, p. 329). They are also quoted by Fontaine in his work of the same title, Cologne, 1738. For further details concerning translation at Port-Royal and Coustel in particular cf. H. C. Barnard: *The Little Schools of Port-Royal*, Cambridge, 1913, and the selections given by him in his *The Port-Royalists on Education*, Cambridge, 1918.
68. Cf. the famous passage in Book 3 of Plato's *Republic*. Maucroix himself writes in a letter to a Jesuit father (March 30th, 1704): "On a dit aussi qu'en lisant Homère, il semble qu'on entende une trompette, tant ses vers sont harmonieux. Pour moi qui ne suis pas grand grec, je n'ai pas entendu la trompette… Est-ce une belle chose de voir Junon suspendue au milieu de l'air avec deux enclumes à ses pieds? Un crocheteur traiteroit-il sa femme plus durement? Oui, mais c'est une allégorie. Je n'ai que faire d'allégorie, je ne vois là qu'une déesse, et du premier ordre encore, traitée comme une misérable par un brutal époux. Il y a dans Homère bien d'autre traits de cette nature."
69. The Iliad publ. in Paris, 1699; the Odyssey, Amsterdam, 1708.
70. July, 1700.
71. La Valterie reduces to 3 lines the 15 of the original.
72. For an account of Mme Dacier's importance as a translator cf. P. Mazon: "Madame Dacier et les traductions d'Homère en France" (*The Zaharoff Lecture*, Oxford, 1935). He shows that Mme Dacier wanted to prove to her contemporaries that Homer's poems are *selon la nature* and *courtois*, not barbaric as Leconte de l'Isle and the Parnassians tried falsely to make out. This accounts for her omission of coarse passages.
73. Book XXIV, 486 ff. Priam's visit and prayer to Achilles:

Μνῆσαι πατρὸς σοῖο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ, τηλίκου, ὥσπερ ἐγών, ὀ λοῷ ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῷ. καὶ μέν που κεῖνον περιναιέται ἀμφὶς ἐόντες τείρ

ουο᾽, οὐδέ τίς ἐστιν ἀρὴν και λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι· ἀλλ᾽ ἦτοι κεῖνός γε, σέθ εν ζώοντος ἀκούων, χαίρει τ᾽ἐν θυμῷ, ἐπί τ᾽ἔλπεται ἤματα πάντα ὄψε σθαι φίλον υἱὸν ἀπὸ Τροίηθε μολόντα. αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ παναποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέ κον υἷας ἀρίστους Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ᾽οὔτινά φημι λελεῖφθαι.

74. *L'Iliade en vers françois et en douze chants, avec un discours sur Homère*, Paris, 1714.
75. D'Alembert: *Observations sur l'art de traduire*, which precedes his translation of *Morceaux choisis* of Tacitus. (*Œuvres*, ed. 1821, tom. 4). He only translated select passages from Tacitus as he did not think, being a true Modern, that the rest was worth translating.
76. J. B. Rousseau writes of it (*Épigrammes*, tom. 2, no. 2):

    "Le traducteur qui rima l'Iliade
    De douze chants prétendit l'abréger;
    Mais par son style aussi triste que fade
    De douze en sus il a su l'allongés."

    Voltaire said (*Essai sur la poésie épique*, Ch. 2):
    "On eût dit que l'ouvrage de M. de La Motte étoit d'une femme d'esprit, et celui de Mme Dacier d'un homme savant."
77. La Motte's Iliad raises the question whether Homer can really be successfully translated into verse. Verse translations from the classics in the 17th and 18th centuries were usually very bad. The question whether Homer should be translated into verse or prose was a subject of controversy in Mme Dacier's day. She said: "Les poètes traduits en vers cessent d'être poètes," thus agreeing with Huet. A. de La Fosse, however, in his Odes of Anacreon (1704) says: "Les vers ne doivent être traduits qu'en vers." It is also interesting to note the following extract from Pope's preface to his Homer: "It is the first grand Duty of an Interpreter to give his Author entire and unmaim'd; and for the rest, the Diction and Versification only are his proper Province."
78. *Discours contre la traduction*, (contained in his *Art poétique*) Paris, 1658.

Reference: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 2, 1938-1939, Kraus Reprint, Liechtenstein, Neudeln, p. 85-204.