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Translation and Transcreation in the Castalian Period

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In 1876 Sir James Murray produced his masterwork *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*: a landmark in the history of linguistic thought, since it not only incorporated the most comprehensive account yet produced of any European non-standard speech, but provided a model for future work in the field: in fact, it placed the study of spoken dialects on a scholarly and scientific basis. Murray's methods of investigation, analysis and description were immediately adopted in France and Germany, and researchers produced important accounts of continental European dialects. Scotland, however, proved stony ground: despite the enormous wealth of material for dialect study, it was decades before the country in which the new techniques had been first developed came near to catching up with later scholarship.

In the same way, the great *Übersetzungskultur* of Renaissance Europe may be said to have been heralded by one of the finest secular translations ever made, Gavin Douglas's *Eneados* of 1513. Yet while the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century saw a positive spate of vernacular translations—first from classical literature, and subsequently also from one vernacular to another—Scotland produced virtually nothing further for many years apart from translations into Scots of Scottish historical chronicles in Latin; and nothing at all, until we come to the present century and Lorimer's New Testament, of equal importance and merit to Douglas's pioneering work. Nonetheless, if the *Eneados* proved a false dawn in Scotland, the morning when it finally broke saw a vigorous and distinctive national contri-

bution to the *Übersetzungskultur* in the works of James VI and his Castalian Band.

The German word which I am using was introduced as a semi-technical term by the Göttingen Centre for the Study of Literary Translation.[1] What it implies is a literary ambience of which the production and appreciation of poetic translations is an integral part: one in which not only specific poems but themes, tropes, and verbal constructions are freely transferred from one language to another, and cross-linguistic influences are deliberately exchanged in a mutually stimulating inter-relationship. Such a culture would be one in which, paradoxically, the divergences between one literature and another were both emphasized and transcended: by hypothesis if a poem requires to be translated it is part of the literary achievement of the source and not of the target language, and the differences between the original and the translation will necessarily throw into relief the contrasting qualities of the two languages; yet a translation is always a tribute, a gesture of admiration, to the original poem or poet, or to the entire literary culture of which the poet and his works form part, and as such it is an affirmation that linguistic and cultural barriers do not preclude mutual appreciation and respect.

If a genuine *Übersetzungskultur* ever existed in the history of Western Europe, it was surely during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Translations of the Bible, of the classics of antiquity, and—chronologically slightly later—of vernacular poems were of fundamental importance in the development to full literary maturity of English, French, German, even Italian: it is of interest to note that sixteenth-century Italian literature also includes a distinguished translation of the *Aeneid*, by Annibale Caro: and though circumstances prevented Scots from developing in the same way, the achievement of Gavin Douglas, and later of James VI's court poets, showed that at any rate the potential was there. The value of translation as a means of enriching the target language was clearly recognized; and in this age of strongly-developing national consciousness many translators, including the Scots, wrote from overtly patriotic motives.

Then as now, translators discussed the principles according to which they were working; and a considerable body of theoretical writing on the purpose and method of translation was added in the Renaissance to that which had survived from classical times. A "theory of translation" properly so-called, however, showed no signs of developing: what emerged was an extended series of debates on the issue of freedom versus literalism: whether a close translation or a paraphrase shows the greater degree of respect for the

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[1]See A. P. Frank, "Translation as System and Übersetzungskultur: on Histories and Systems in the Study of Literary Translation," *New Comparison*, 8 (1989), 85-98, and references therein.

original author, and which of the two is more beneficial to the target language.

Gavin Douglas, in the Prologue to Book I of his *Eneados* and elsewhere in the course of his work, makes several statements regarding the principles he is observing as a translator, and the practical difficulties which he has encountered. A commonplace of mediaeval scholarship is expressed in his observation that words in one language have not always single-word equivalents in another: the corollary of this for his purpose is that an exactly literal translation is sometimes impossible or to be achieved only at the price of intelligibility, so that a translator must claim the license to include some exposition (cf. I Prol. 347 ff.). He shrewdly identifies a fundamental weakness in a poet-translator's position in any age when he notes that whereas a poet might be able to demonstrate his verbal ingenuity to better effect in an original work, in a translation the necessity of remaining faithful to his model not only constrains his thought and expression, but exposes him almost inevitably to the risk of being compared unfavorably to his source (cf. I Prol. 289 ff). There can be no such thing as a definitive translation: recognition of this is implicit in Douglas's challenge to his critics to do better if they think they can; though characteristically there is more than a hint that he has little fear of his own work being improved upon by any of his contemporaries (cf. I Prol. 477 ff., and the first Envoy). These are observations which are generally applicable to the practice of poetic translation: other statements made by Douglas have a relevance more restricted to his own particular project. His painful sense of the limitations of his language compared to that of his model (cf. I Prol. 21, 43, 46) would not necessarily have been felt by a translator working from another vernacular instead of Latin (Fowler gives no hint of such concern in the introduction to his rendering of Petrarch's *Trionfi*), and his offering of his translation as a humble gesture of homage to his original (cf. I Prol. 1-74) might not have been expressed with such intensity by the translator of a poet regarded with less reverence than Virgil (Thomas Hudson translating Du Bartas' *Judith* speaks of his model with respect but scarcely with awe).

Douglas was fully aware of his position as an innovator in the art of poetic translation, and in some respects his work remained outside the mainstream of subsequent European poetry. In the course of the sixteenth century the doctrine at the heart of the developing *Übersetzungskultur* was that of "imitation." According to this principle, which received its most extensive discussion and exposition in France in the works of such scholar-poets as Dolet, Pelletier and above all Du Bellay, a fairly clear theoretical distinction was made between what might be called borrowing or paraphrasing—adopting themes, images or ideas from other men's writings—and translating, or rendering their actual words. Whether translation was a form

of imitation or a different and a lesser activity remained controversial: Du
Bellay disagreed with several of his compatriots in taking the latter view, but
the subordinate status of translation was also argued in England by Putten-
ham[2] and in Scotland by James VI.   James in his *Reulis and Cautelis*
(Chapter VII) stated his belief as follows:

> Bot sen *Inuention*, is ane of the cheif vertewis in a Poete, it is best that ze inuent
> zour awin subiect, zour self, and not to compose of sene subiectis. Especially,
> translating any thing out of vther language, quhilk doing, ze not only essay not
> zour awin ingyne of *Inuention*, bot be the same meanes, ze ar bound, as to a staik,
> to follow that buikis phraises, quhilk ze translait.[3]

However, since borrowing of themes or subjects passes almost inescapably
into verbal reminiscence, and that into direct translation (if the source is in
another language) or what would now be called plagiarism (if in the poet's
own), it was extremely difficult to set a boundary between the meritorious art
of imitation and the lower-ranking craft of translation; and indeed poets do
not in practice appear to have been particularly concerned to observe the exi-
stence of any such boundary. James VI in the introduction to his translation
of Du Bartas' *Uranie* makes it clear that this is nothing other than the work
of the French poet rendered to the best of his ability into Scots;[4] but one of
James's sonnets is a quite close rendition of a poem by Saint-Gelais, included
among the King's works with no acknowledgement of the source nor any hint
that he expected the reader to regard it differently from his own original son-
nets.[5] The same is true of other poets of the period: the sonnets in Mont-
gomerie's sequence which are translations or adaptations from Ronsard, for
example, are simply items in the series, not in any way distinguished from
their neighbors; Fowler includes sonnets derived from Petrarch in his
Tarantula of Love but introduces his version of Petrarch's *Trionfi* as a trans-
lation.

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[2]See George Puttenham, *The Arte of Poesie* (London, 1589), I, 1.

[3]*The Poems of James VI*, ed. James Craigie, STS, 3rd Series, 22 (1955), 79.

[4]*Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[5]*Amatoria 5*, in *The Poems of James VI*, ed. James Craigie, STS, 3rd series, 26 (1958),
70-71. For discussion see R. D. S. Jack, "Imitation in the Scottish Sonnet," *Comparative
Literature*, 20 (1968), 313-28; and J. D. McClure, "O Phoenix Escossois: James VI as
Poet," *A Day Estivall*, ed. A. Gardner-Medwin and J. H. Williams (Aberdeen, 1990), 96-
111.

It would of course be absurd to imagine that James and his court poets actually wished on occasions to deceive their readers by passing off other men's work as their own: even if this were conceivable it would be impossible in a small intimate group like the Castalian Band, writing principally for each other and well acquainted with all the French and Italian poets who served as sources.   Nor can it be suggested that a poet's reason for acknowledging an original for one work but not for another is the degree of literal fidelity to the source text: James's translation of *Uranie* is extremely close (sadly, inviting the comment that literal accuracy, even if combined with technical skills in meter and rhyme, is no guarantee of high quality in a poetic translation), but Hudson's *Judith*, which is much less faithful to the letter of Du Bartas' poem, is also offered as a translation: the title page reads "The Historie of Judith in forme of a poeme penned in French, by the Noble Poet, G. Salust, Lord of Bartas.   Englished by Tho. Hudson."[6]

The principle, if indeed there was any recognized principle at all, appears to have been simply that a poem regarded with particular respect, such as an epic or a work by the King's favorite poet Du Bartas, when rendered into Scots was called a translation and credited to the original poet; a less important poem, such as a sonnet, song or other small-scale piece, was simply absorbed into the collective opus of the translator.   Another factor was the translator's motive on a particular occasion.   James's *Uranie* and Fowler's *Triumphs* are offered, as Douglas's *Eneados* had been, as attempts to spread the renown of the original poets among people incapable of appreciating their work as first written.   James was determined on "publishing some worke of his to this yle of Brittain (swarming full of quick ingynes,) aswell as they ar made manifest already to France";[7] Fowler claims to be "spurred . . . and pricked fordward incontinent be translatioun to mak thame sum what more populare then they ar in thair Italian originall."[8]   Such an exercise suggests a very different attitude on the part of the translator from that of producing poetic renderings of French or Italian sonnets for the admiration of fellow poets who knew the original poems and their languages perfectly well.   Douglas, the supreme translator, also provided a precedent reason for Fowler to claim his *Triumphs* as a translation: he too was attempting a version more worthy of his model than the incompetent productions of earlier writers; and for Hudson to do likewise for his *Judith*:   he too was aiming to

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[6]*Thomas Hudson's Historie of Judith*, ed. James Craigie, STS, 3rd Series, 14 (1941), 1. See also Hudson's dedicatory letter to the King, pp. 3-5.

[7]Craigie (ed.) 1955, *op. cit.*, 16.

[8]*The Works of William Fowler*, ed. Henry W. Meikle, STS, 2nd Series, 6 (1914), 16.

demonstrate that his native language was not tou "barbarous and corrupted
. . . rude and impollished"[9] to express something of the poetic merit of the
original.   But the effusions of the Castalian band included numerous poems
which, though not called translations, are in fact renderings of foreign mod-
els almost as close as any of those.

Much excellent work has already been done in identifying and discussing
the sources of Castalian poems, particularly with reference to the models
which each Scottish poet favored and the literary use he made of his origin-
als.[10] In what follows three instances of fairly close translation will be ex-
amined in some detail.

> Qui voudra voir comme Amour me surmonte,
> Comme il m'assaut, comme il se fait vainqueur,
> Comme il r'enflame et r'englace mon cueur,
> Comme il reçoit un honneur de ma honte;
> Qui voudra voir une jeunesse pronte
> A suivre en vain l'objet de son malheur,
> Me vienne lire : il voirra la douleur,
> Dont ma Déesse et mon Dieu ne font conte.
> Il cognoistra qu'Amour est sans raison,
> Un doux abus, une belle prison,
> Un vain espoir qui de vent nous vient paistre;
> Et cognoistra que l'homme se deçoit,
> Quand plein d'erreur un aveugle il reçoit
> Pour sa conduite, un enfant pour son maistre.[11]

> Vha wald behold him vhom a god so grievis?
> Vhom he assaild, and dantond with his [dairt,]
> Of vhom he freiʒis and inflams the hairt,
> Vhais shame siclyk him gritest honour givis?
> Vha wald behald a ʒouth that nevir [leives,]
> In vain, to folou the object of his smarte?
> Behold bot me, persaiv my painfull pairt,
> And the archer that, but mercy, me misch[eivis.]

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[9]*Thomas Hudson's Historie of Judith*, pp. 3-4.

[10]See for example Matthew P. McDiarmid, "Notes on the Poetry of John Stewart of
Baldynneis," *Review of English Studies*, 24 (1948), 12-18; R. D. S. Jack, "Imitation in the
Scottish Sonnet," *Comparative Literature*, 20 (1968), 313-28, and *The Italian Influence on
Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh, 1972); H. M. Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of
Scotland under King James VI* (Cambridge, 1969).

[11]Pierre Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes* , ed. G. Cohen (Paris, 1950), I, 3.

Thair sall he sie vhat Resone then [can do]
   Against his bou, if once he mint bot to
   Compell our hairts in bondage basse to be[ir,]
   3it sall he se me happiest appeir,
That in my hairt the amorous heid does [lie]
Vith poysond poynt, vhairof I glore [to die.][12]

Ronsard's influence is conspicuous in Montgomerie's sonnets, seven of which show varying degrees of indebtedness to the French poet. In this example, the resemblance is very close in the octave, though the sestet has little in common with that of Ronsard's poem.

The three changes which Montgomerie makes to his source are the replacement of Ronsard's relative pronouns by interrogatives and of his first person pronouns, until the seventh line, by third person, and his use of the relatives *whom, of whom* and *whais* instead of Ronsard's repeated *comme*. Slight though these changes seem, their effect is considerable. The first greatly increases the rhetorical force of the quatrains, directly involving the reader by demanding an answer of him; the second allows the identity of the speaker with the unspecified "him" of the first line to be revealed as a surprise half-way through the poem, making "Behald bot me" a far more dramatic stroke than "Me vienne lire"; the third emphasizes to a greater degree than in Ronsard the personal presence of Love's victim. "Behald bot me" involves a further change to the original, the repetition of a verb which Montgomerie has already used twice to introduce the quatrains, thus reinforcing the impressive effect of the introduction of the speaker in his own person. Also noteworthy is the absence of *Amour* from Montgomerie's first line: the identity of "a god" is not revealed until the next line, and then only by implication, by the reference to his "dairt." (If this was suggested by the necessity for a rhyme with "hairt," it is a happy instance of rhyme-forcing.) The changes in emphasis are partly explained by the different status which this sonnet has in Montgomerie's opus: Ronsard's is the first in his entire sequence, stating the theme of his "livre des amours" and inviting the reader—"Me vienne lire"—not only to the poem but to the whole book. Montgomerie makes it the penultimate in a self-contained group of five towards the end of his collection, and increases the dramatic force of the poem to compensate for its positional demotion. The lessened emphasis on *Amour*, too, is all that is necessary when Love is already firmly established as the theme of the series. Other changes in the section where the Scots closely follows the French are of less consequence: *grievis*, even with its then-current sense of *injures* or *oppresses*, has not the force of *surmonte* but serves to

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[12]*The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, ed. James Cranstoun, STS, 9 (1887), 117.

establish the pattern of alliteration maintained throughout the first quatrain: *dantond*, which changes the grammar but not significantly the meaning of the French, is chosen for the same purpose. The sestet is Montgomerie's own, deriving from Ronsard only the use of *raison*, though in a different context, and perhaps the suggestion of *bondage* from *prison*. (Though Montgomerie abandons his model in this section, incidentally, no reader can fail to observe the resemblance of Ronsard's conclusion to the last line of Mark Alexander Boyd's famous sonnet: "Led be a blind and teachit be a bairn".)

Sotto caliginose ombre profonde
    Di luce inaccessibile sepolti,
    Tra nembi di silentio oscuri, e folti,
    L' eterna Mente i suoi secreti asconde.
E s' altri spia per queste nebbie immonde
    I suoi giudici in nero velo auolti,
    Gli humani ingegni temerari, e stolti,
    Col lampo abbaglia, e col suo tuon confonde.
O inuisibil Sol, ch' a noi ti celi
    Dentro l' abisso luminoso, e fosco,
    E de' tuoi propri rai te stesso veli;
Argo mi fai, dou' io son cieco e losco,
    Nela mia notte il tuo splendor riueli,
    Quando t' intendo men, più ti conosco.[13]

Beneath a sable vaile, and Shadowes deepe,
Of Vnaccessible and dimming light,
In Silence ebane Clouds more blacke than Night,
The *Worlds great King* his secrets hidde doth keepe:
Through those Thicke Mistes when any Mortall Wight
Aspires, with halting pace, and Eyes that weepe,
To pore, and in his Misteries to creepe,
With Thunders hee and Lightnings blastes their Sight.
O Sunne invisible, that dost abide
Within thy bright abysmes, most faire, most darke,
Where with thy proper Rayes thou dost thee hide;
O euer-shining, neuer full seene marke,
    To guide mee in Lifes Night, thy light mee show,
    The more I search of thee, The lesse I know.[14]

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[13]*Rime*, 1602, Pt. i, p. 176. The text is taken from *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. L. E. Kastner, STS, 2nd Series, 3 and 4 (1913), II, 336.

[14]*Ibid.*, II, 26.

The most wide-ranging and most accomplished translator of James's reign is of course Drummond of Hawthornden; and he is also the poet in whom the full range of "imitation," from close translation to re-working of an idea, is most clearly visible. It is an education in itself to examine the variety of expressions used by Kastner, in his invaluable listing of Drummond's sources, to suggest the degree of the Scottish poet's indebtedness to his models: a poem may be "a close translation of," "translated from," "a paraphrase of," "a transmutation of," "a rendering of," "adapted from," "borrowed from" or "suggested by" a French, Italian, Spanish or even English original. I select his version of Giambattista Marino's *Sotto caliginose ombre profonde*. This is one of the poems in which Drummond is most literally faithful to his original: only in some of the madrigals does he adhere to the words of his source with more exactitude. An unusual number of the words he uses are etymologically identical to those in the Italian poem; many more are the most straightforward translation equivalents. On occasion a phrase in the Scottish poem which corresponds to nothing at the same point in the Italian can be related to a detail found elsewhere: the *sable vaile* of Drummond's first line is the *nero velo* of Marino's sixth, and his *dimming light* (l. 2), at first sight a piece of line-padding, anticipates *luminoso e fosco* (l. 10)—translated again, but differently, in its own place. Interestingly, two words which have no counterparts in the Italian bear a certain similarity of sound structure, though not of meaning, to words that occur at the same or a close point in Marino's poem and may well have been suggested by them: *ebane/nembi* and *aspires/spia*. There are no examples of serious departures from the original enforced by rhyme or meter, a sure sign that the translator is not in control of his material: when Drummond departs from the intellectual content of his model it is clearly intentional, as in the obvious change in the sense of the last line, the omission of Marino's emphasis on his own defectiveness in *io son cieco e losco* (Drummond places the focus of the corresponding line on God, and here re-states the central theme of the poem instead of asking for man's ignorance to be, for the poet, miraculously dispersed), and the softening of the moral tone in the quatrain[15] where Drummond rejects Marino's strongly condemnatory *temerari e stolti* for images suggesting weakness and helplessness. The effect of these changes is to make of Drummond's persona a much more humble figure than Marino's; and this is suggested in other ways as well: first-person pronouns and verb forms in the original do not always appear in the translation (*mia notte* becomes *life's night*, and Drummond here interpolates a verb (*guide*) which emphasizes the dependent status of the speaker), and Marino's imposing rhymes are replaced by semantically and phonaesthetically unimpressive

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[15] See R. D. S. Jack, *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature*, p. 140.

monosyllables. It is of course true that the possibilities for sound-patterning afforded by Scottish English and by Italian are vastly different, and that a specific sound effect in one language can never be replicated in a translation; but the contrast between *profonde—asconde—immonde—confonde* and *deep—keep—weep—creep* is too extreme to be accidental. This change in tone is to integrate the sonnet with its companions in Drummond's sequence; but it is impossible not to be reminded of the striking discrepancy in personality and life events between the reclusive, home-keeping Scot and the flamboyant, adventurous Italian.

D'UNE FONTAINE

Cette fontaine est froide, et son eau doux coulante,
A la couleur d'argent, semble parler d' amour :
Un herbage mollet reverdit tout autour,
Et les aunes font ombre à la chaleur brulante.

Le feuillage obéit à Zephir qui l'évente,
Soupirant, amoureux, en ce plaisant séjour,
Le soleil clair de flamme est au milieu du jour,
Et la terre se fend de l'ardeur violente.

Passant, par le travail de long chemin lassé,
Brûlé de la chaleur, et de la soif pressé,
Arrête en cette place où ton bonheur te mène.

L'agréable repos ton corps délassera,
L'ombrage et le vent frais ton ardeur chassera,
Et ta soif se perdra dans l'eau de la fontaine.[16]

OF ANE FONTANE.
SONNET.

fresche fontane fair And springand cald and cleine,
As brychtest christall cleir vith siluer ground,
Close cled about be holsum herbis greine,
Quhois tuynkling streames ʒeilds ane luiflie sound,
Vith bonie birkis all vbumbrat round
from violence of Phebus visage fair,
Quhois smelling leifs Suawe ʒephir maks rebound
In doucest souching of his temperat air,
And titan new hich fla*mm*yng in his chair
Maks gaggit erth for ardent heit to brist,

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[16]*Oeuvres de Phillippe Desportes*, ed. A. Michiels (Paris, 1858), p. 434.

Than passinger, quho Irkit dois repair,
Brynt be the Son, And dryit vp vith thrist,
    Heir in this place thow may refreschment find
    Both be the vell, The Schaddow, And the vind. [17]

A translation in which the Scottish poet's treatment of his original is much freer, at least on the surface, than in the previous examples is *Of ane Fontane* by John Stewart of Baldynneis. Exact literal equivalences in the two sonnets, occurring at corresponding points in the lineation or in the sequence of thought, are relatively few: each poem has *fontaine/fontane* as its second word and describes it in the same line as *froid/cald*; *argent* suggest *siluer* in the second line although the phrasing is entirely different; *passinger* is clearly a reflection of *passant*; Stewart's "the schaddow and the vind" translates *l'ombrage et le vent*; and "Brynt be the Son and dryit up with thrist" is a fairly close rendering of Desportes's line 10, though intensifying it by replacing *chaleur* with *sun* and *pressé* with the more unpleasantly sensory *dryit up*. However, the verbal correspondence between the two poems is closer than it at first appears. As in the Drummond sonnet but to a much greater extent, individual words in the source have suggested words—close translation equivalents, etymologically related forms, or merely words with some similarity of form or meaning—which Stewart uses at different points in his poem. Thus *ardeur violente* (*l.* 8) prompts *violence* (*l.* 6) and *ardent heat* (*l.* 10), *la terre* in line 8 gives *erth* in *l.* 10, *se fend* (*l.* 8) is in effect translated twice, as *gaggit* and (*maks to*) *brist* (*l.* 10), and *soupirant* (*l.* 6) suggests *souchin* (*l.* 8) in both form and meaning, enabling Stewart in the phrase *doucest souchin* to imitate something of Desportes's vowel-harmony (*soupirant—amoureux—séjour*) and onomatopoeic repetition of *s*. *Flamme* (*l.* 7) is echoed in *flammyng* (*l.* 9) likewise applied to the sun, *un herbage [qui] reverdit* (*l.* 3) becomes, by a change in the syntax, *herbis greine*, the uncommon word *obumbrat* (*l.* 5) (first recorded for Gavin Douglas) was perhaps prompted by *ombre* (*l.* 4), and *zields ane luiflie sound* (*l.* 4), if not identical in meaning to *semble parler d'amour* (*l.* 2), was clearly suggested by it. *Refreschment* (*l.* 13), to judge by the *DOST* a much rarer word and of more recent adoption in Scots than in English, may have been suggested by *frais* (*l.* 13). It is even possible to see the implications of *au milieu du jour* (*l.* 7) specifically represented by the word *high* (*l.* 9) and those of *obéit* (*l.* 5) in *maks* (*l.* 9). And though *aunes* (*l.* 4) are not the same kind of trees as *birks*, Stewart is at any rate faithful to his model in mentioning some kind of tree, with a name which, as in the French, harmonizes with the sound-

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[17]*Poems of John Stewart of Baldynneis*, ed. Thomas Crockett, STS, 2nd Series, 5 (1913), 152.

patterning of the line. Stewart alters the *proportions* of Desportes's sonnet, introducing the *passinger* only in line 11 instead of at the beginning of the sestet, and thus denies himself the opportunity of expanding on the delightful sensory impression; but the verbal relationship between the two sonnets is unusually intimate.

In fact, of the three poems discussed, it is Stewart's (and not Montgomerie's, even if we consider only his octave) which comes closest to being a translation in the most obvious sense. Montgomerie and Drummond alter the "arguments" of their models in a way that Stewart does not do, his theme and imagery being the same as Desportes's throughout. Yet even Stewart hardly comes as close as is conceivably possible to literal fidelity; and the other two are patently not even attempting it. What *are* they attempting, and how should we assess the results of their endeavors?

Though the subject of translation, including poetic translation, has in recent times given rise to an extensive and wide-ranging body of speculative thought, there is still no generally-accepted set of theoretically-defined criteria for assessing a translation of a poem. In particular, the question to what extent a poet-translator is licensed to depart from literal fidelity to his source is no nearer to an agreed solution than it was in the Renaissance. It is not a question which can be answered on literary grounds, since there is self-evidently no direct and automatic relationship between the merit of a translation as a poem in the target language and its literal accuracy as a translation; nor can a purely linguistic approach provide a solution, for—an essential insight of modern thought—a work of literature is a cultural artifact, and any attempt at translation must take account of cultural as well as linguistic factors. Perhaps the most searching analysis of the problem, and the one leading to the most challenging conclusion, is that made by André Lefèvre,[18] who draws a distinction between the culture-bound and the structure-bound aspects of a poem—that is, those aspects which reflect the common range of knowledge shared by the poet and his original audience, and those which form the individual "message" by virtue of which the poet augments his readers' range of experience—and suggests that an ideal poetic translation will retain all the structure-bound elements of the original, if necessary adding some clarification for the translated poem's new audience, retain unaltered the culture-bound elements which the new audience shares with the old, and for the remaining culture-bound elements of the poem, modify them so that each element relating to the original culture is replaced by a corresponding one from the new. Everything which has communicative value in the original poem must be matched, point for point, with something having

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[18] André Lefèvre, *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*. Approaches to Translation Studies, No. 3 (Amsterdam, 1975).

an equivalent value in the translation. This analysis is theoretically dubious in its apparent assumption that something in the translator's culture can always be found, or devised, to match anything which the original poet can produce from his; but at any rate it places the discussion of poetic translation on a far sounder basis than the traditional but simplistic idea that the task is merely that of striking a balance between literal fidelity to the source text and the demands of rhyme and meter in the target language.

However, it has the disadvantage of being a counsel of perfection. Probably no poetic translation ever made could survive measurement against such rigorous standards; and a poet-translator accused of failing to meet them could quite justifiably evade the charge by claiming that his sights were not set so high, and that without producing a perfect reproduction of his model he has produced a very good poem in his own language. From which it follows that we are no nearer than before to a criterion for assessing, on literary, linguistic or even moral grounds, the work of a poet, like the three discussed here, whose aim is not accurate translation but close imitation or—to use an attractive recently-introduced term—"transcreation."

The emphasis placed by modern theory on the cultural aspects of translation provides us with a more appropriate context in which to discuss the work of James VI's court poets. Any single instance of successful poetic translation involves a degree of cultural transference: a product of one linguistic, literary, social and historical ambience is transmuted into another. Clearly for the Castalians, translating from (in most cases) the works of contemporaries from countries which shared with Scotland a vast amount of common artistic and intellectual heritage, this issue presented less difficulty than for, say, Arthur Waley translating *Genji Monogatari*; but it is nonetheless of fundamental importance. Cultural transference was the clearly-perceived aim of James and the Castalians: not on the individual scale, however, but on the collective. A contemporary Scottish poet-translator—Edwin Morgan translating Mayakovsky, for example—has a pre-existing literary culture into which he can introduce his model; and the Russian poet, helped by the master translator, adds a very harmonious voice to the chorus of twentieth-century Scots poetic idiolects. The Castalians were aiming not at adopting their French and Italian confrères into an established Scottish literary tradition, but at the much more ambitious task of creating a new, Scottish, version of their entire poetic culture. The wholesale borrowing of themes, images, tropes and verbal echoes, and above all the enthusiastic and prolific adoption of the sonnet form, by the poets of James's reign are aspects of the deliberate effort in Scotland to transplant the continental poetic tradition as a fully-developed living organism into Scottish soil. In such a context, the issue of verbal fidelity to an original poem on any single occasion was of minor importance, unless the translator tried specifically for

whatever reasons to achieve this: what was being translated was not a collection of poems but a whole conception of poetry and set of poetic practices. A sonnet with only a generic resemblance to the European models could be as valid and as important a contribution to this aim as one which was an accurate translation.   And given the scale of the Jacobean endeavor and the quality of the best of its products, the experiment of wholesale cultural translation in Renaissance Scotland must be judged a success, albeit a short-lived one.   The desire of modern theorists for poetic translations which conform exactly to their models may be said to have been realized at the court of James VI: not necessarily in any individual poem, but in the collective poetic achievement.

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