Dante's Remarks on Translation in the "Convivio"

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in Sardinia it seems to mean the same thing. Formerly also in Venetian, *x* was used in this way; from there it passed into temporary use in Hungarian¹ and Croatian².

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THE DATE OF D'URFÉ'S 'L'ASTRÉE.'

In the text of Vol. VIII (p. 14) of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* and in the chronological tables of Vols. VI and VIII, the date of Part I of *L'Astrée* is given as 1610. This is an old error which appears in histories of French Literature of fourteen or fifteen years ago, e.g. Petit de Julleville, Vol. IV (1897), Brunetière, *Manuel* (1898), Lanson, 5th ed. (1898). It used to be supposed that Part I of *L'Astrée* was first published with Part II in 1610, the earliest known edition being of that date. But a statement in Bassompierre's memoirs that the book, *qui lors était en vogue*, was read to Henri IV in January, 1609 three nights in succession when he was suffering from an attack of the gout led Brunet naturally to suspect the existence of an earlier edition. His conjecture was confirmed in 1869, when the bookseller Tross discovered a copy of an edition of Part I, dated 1607 (the privilege is of August 18 of that year). This copy was acquired by the late Baron James de Rothschild, and is fully described by M. Emile Picot in 1867 in his admirable catalogue of the Rothschild library (II, 197). A second copy has in recent years found its way into the sale-room (O.-C. Reure, *La vie et les œuvres d'Honoré d'Urfé*, 1910). The correct date of the First Part of *L'Astrée* is now given in histories of French literature, and in M. Lanson's *Manuel bibliographique*. But oddly enough the latter work, which is very imperfect and disappointing, gives 1612 instead of 1610 for the Second Part.

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DANTE'S REMARKS ON TRANSLATION IN THE 'CONVIVIO.'

At the conclusion of his exposition of the reasons which decided him to write the commentary on the canzoni of the *Convivio* in Italian and not in Latin, Dante says:—

Sappia ciascuno, che nulla cosa per legame musaico armonizzata si può della uia loquela in altra trasmutare, senza rompere tutta sua dolcezza e armonia. E

¹ Simonyi, *Die ungarische Sprache*, Strassburg 1907, p. 229; now *zs* instead.

² Ballhorn, *Alphabete*, Leipzig 1856, p. 44; now *z* as in Bohemian.

questa è la ragione per che Omero non si mutò di Greco in Latino, come l' altre scritture che avemo da loro ; e questa è la ragione per che i versi del Psaltero sono senza dolcezza di musica e d' armonia ; chè essi furono trasmutati d' Ebreo in Greco, e di Greco in Latino, e nella prima trasmutazione tutta quella dolcezza venne meno (1, 7, ll. 91—103).

It has not, so far as I am aware, been observed that these remarks were apparently inspired, directly or indirectly, by a passage in St Jerome's *Praefatio* to the second book of the *Chronica* of Eusebius, a work which must certainly have been familiar to Dante, as being one of the chief text-books of chronology current in his day. St Jerome, who translated (and amplified) the work of Eusebius, expresses himself as follows, in his prefatory address to two friends, as to the difficulties of the task of a translator:—

Vetus iste disertorum mos fuit, ut exercendi ingenii causa Graecos libros Latino sermone absolverent, et, quod plus in se difficultatis habet, poemata illustrium virorum, addita metri necessitate, transferrent. Unde et noster Tullius Platonis integros libros ad verbum interpretatus est : et cum Aratum jam Romanum hexametris versibus edidisset, in Xenophontis *Oeconomico* ludit ; in quo opere ita saepe aureum illud flumen eloquentiae quibusdam scabris et turbulentis obicibus retardatur, ut qui interpretata nesciunt, a Cicerone dicta non credant. Difficile est enim alienas lineas insequentem non alicubi excedere : arduum, ut quae in aliena lingua bene dicta sunt, eundem decorem in translatione conservent. Significatum est aliquid unius verbi proprietate ; non habeo meum quo id efferam ; et dum quaero implere sententiam, longo ambitu vix brevis viae spatia consummo. Accedunt hyperbatorum anfractus, dissimilitudines casuum, varietas figurarum : ipsum postremo suum, et, ut ita dicam, vernaculum linguae genus. Si ad verbum interpretor, absurde resonat : si ob necessitatem aliquid in ordine vel in sermone mutavero, ab interpretis videbor officio recessisse.

Itaque, mi Vincenti charissime, et tu Galiene pars animae meae, obsecro, ut quidquid hoc tumultuarii operis est, amicorum, non iudicum animo relegatis : praesertim cum et notario, ut scitis, velocissime dictaverim, et difficultatem rei etiam divinorum voluminum instrumenta testentur, quae a LXX interpretibus edita, non eundem saporem in Graeco sermone custodiunt. Quamobrem Aquila, et Symmachus, et Theodotio incitati, diversum pene opus in eodem opere prodiderunt : alio nitente verbum de verbo exprimere, alio sensum potius sequi, tertio non multum a veteribus discrepare....Inde adeo venit, ut sacrae litterae minus comptae, et dure sonantes videantur ; quod isti homines interpretatas eas de Hebraeo nescientes, dum superficiem, non medullam inspiciunt, ante quasi vestem orationis sordidam perhorrescunt, quam pulchrum intrinsecus rerum corpus inveniant. Denique quid Psalterio canorius, quod in morem nostri Flacci, et Graeci Pindari, nunc iambo currit, nunc Alcaico personat, nunc Sapphico tumet, nunc semipede ingreditur ? Quid Deuteronomii et Isaiae cantico pulchrius ? Quid Salomone gravius ? Quid perfectius Job ? Quae omnia hexametris et pentametris versibus, ut Josephus et Origenes scribunt, apud suos composita decurrunt. Haec cum Graece legimus, aliud quiddam sonant, cum Latine, penitus non cohaerent. Quod si cui non videtur linguae gratiam interpretatione mutari, Homerum ad verbum exprimat in Latinum. Plus aliquid dicam, eundem in sua lingua prosae verbis interpretetur, videbit ordinem ridiculum, et poetam eloquentissimum vix loquentem.

PAGET TOYNBEE.

BURNHAM, BUCKS.