



Brief History of Western Translation Theory

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Sunday, October 11, 2020

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Ancient Translation

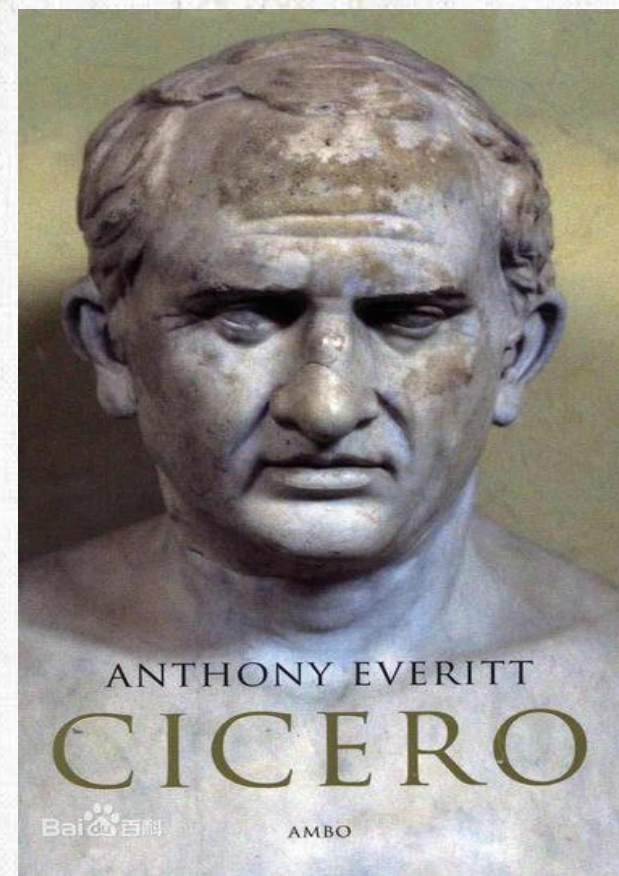
characteristics:

Translation of Greek drama works into Latin, or adaptation of Greek drama in Latin language, so that ancient Greek literature can be spread and inherited.

Representatives: Cicero, Jerome

Cicero was one of the most prolific Roman writers, and the number of his speeches, letters and treatises that have survived into the modern era is a testament to his admiration by successive generations. For Cicero, philosophical understanding was an orator's paramount virtue.

----..And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms....





Jerome

In the early translation of the Bible, Jerome was the representative. He expounded his principle of translation, that is, he should adopt flexible principle of free translation instead of word pairing. His flexible translation principles, which are based on correct understanding, have a positive guiding significance for current translation theories and practices.

Translation in Middle Ages

characteristic:

Closely related to the Christianity;

Translation of the Hebrew and Greek Bible into Latin.

From Arabic to Latin. Spain became the center of academic activities in Europe.

Representative: The Toledo School

The Toledo School

How was it developed?

...As the original works of many Greek classics were lost, and Arabic versions flooded into Europe, western translators could only take the Arabic versions as the original works. To some extent, the rise of Arab academic studies in the Middle Ages should be attributed to Greek culture. However, the importance of Arab translation went far beyond time and space, and its influence later spread to Europe. By the middle of 11C, Arabic works were flooding into Spain and being translated into Latin. Toledo replaced Baghdad as the European Academy of Translation. It was not until 13C that the Original Greek was introduced into Toledo, and the original Greek was directly translated and no longer translated.

The Toledo School

Three characteristics of The Toledo School of Translation:

- 1) The translation activities are always subject to the independence of the Church**
- 2) Translated works are mainly Arabic translations of Greek works, followed by Arabic and Greek original works**
- 3) Toledo was a center of education and Muslim scholarship in Spain at the time.**

Translation in the Renaissance Period

Translation thought in this period mainly has the following characteristics:

- Advocate the respect for the original, pay attention to the combination of content and form, free translation and literal translation
- Pay attention to the innovation and the style of translation on the basis of respecting the original.
- Lay emphasis on the practical spirit

Representative: Jacques Amyot, Etienne Dolet, Georga Chapman, Martin Luther

Various Translation Thoughts

Jacques Amyot, French bishop and classical scholar famous for his translation of *Plutarch's Lives* (*Les Vies des hommes illustres Grecs et Romains*, 1559), which became a major influence in shaping the Renaissance concept of the tragic hero.

He believed that the translator must have a thorough grasp of the original. When Amyot translated ancient Greek and Roman classics, he put forward the idea of "trying to be on a level with the original".



Etienne Dolet, orator, poet, historian, grammarian, linguist, translato-logist, editor, publisher, and printer, believed that a translator must fully understand the content of the translated work, and only on the basis of a **complete understanding of the original work** can he translate the pure Greek and Roman classical culture, which is the basis of translation.

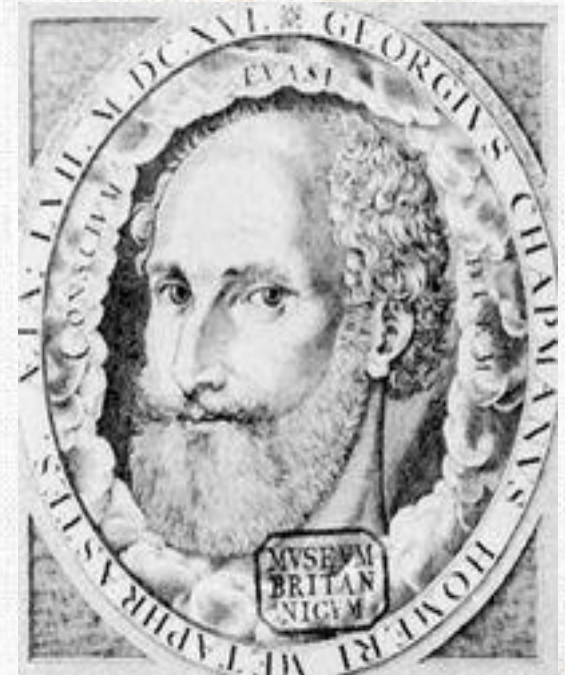
Dolet didn't advocate literal translation, thinking that the order of sentences should be adjusted flexibly so as to produce a good style and effect in the translation.



Various Translation Thoughts

Georg Chapman, English poet and dramatist, whose translation of Homer long remained the standard English version, paid special attention to the stylistic and metrical unity of poetry in his translations of Homer's epics, he translated the Iliad with sonnets and the Odyssey in heroic couplets.

Chapman thought that the translation of any work, especially Homer's works, should make use of **the most suitable lexicon, style and form** to express and decorate the translation.



Various Translation Thoughts

Martin Luther, a Christian theologian and Augustinian monk whose teachings inspired the Protestant Reformation and deeply influenced the doctrines of Protestant and other Christian traditions, believed that translation must focus on **the connection between grammar and meaning**. Luther believed that translators should not "go against grammar". He emphasized the reducibility of languages and the grammatical differences between different languages.



Modern Translation

This period of translation have made great progress from many aspects such as its scope, scale, influence and form.

Representative: Schleiermacher, John Dryden, Tytle etc.

Friedrich Ernst Schleiermacher was himself a masterful translator, and his views on translation carry a certain authority. He explains his theory of translation mainly in the brilliant essay *On the Different Methods of Translation* (1813).



Schleiermacher's main points:

- Translation typically faces the problem of a conceptual gulf between the language of the text to be translated and the translator's home language.
- Translation is justified.
- “Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him.”





John Dryden

John Dryden, English poet, dramatist, and literary critic who so dominated the literary scene of his day that it came to be known as the Age of Dryden.

As a poet himself, he believed that to be a good translator, one must first be an excellent poet, especially in style, the translator and the original author must be similar.



John Dryden

Dryden divides poetry translation into three categories:

- **metaphrase** The so-called metaphrase is to translate word by word according to the corresponding relationship of words. He thought it was almost impossible to translate well in this way.
- **paraphrase** Dryden believes that translators in imitation enjoy great freedom to choose words and sentences regardless of the language of the original text, or to modify the original text according to their own preferences. He disapproved of imitation, which, in his view, was a creation rather than a translation.
- **imitation** Dryden thinks that metaphrase and imitation are two extremes of translation and should be avoided.

Alexander Fraser Tytler was a Scottish-born British lawyer and writer. About translation, Tytler wrote a treatise that is important in the history of translation theory, the "Essay on the Principles of Translation".

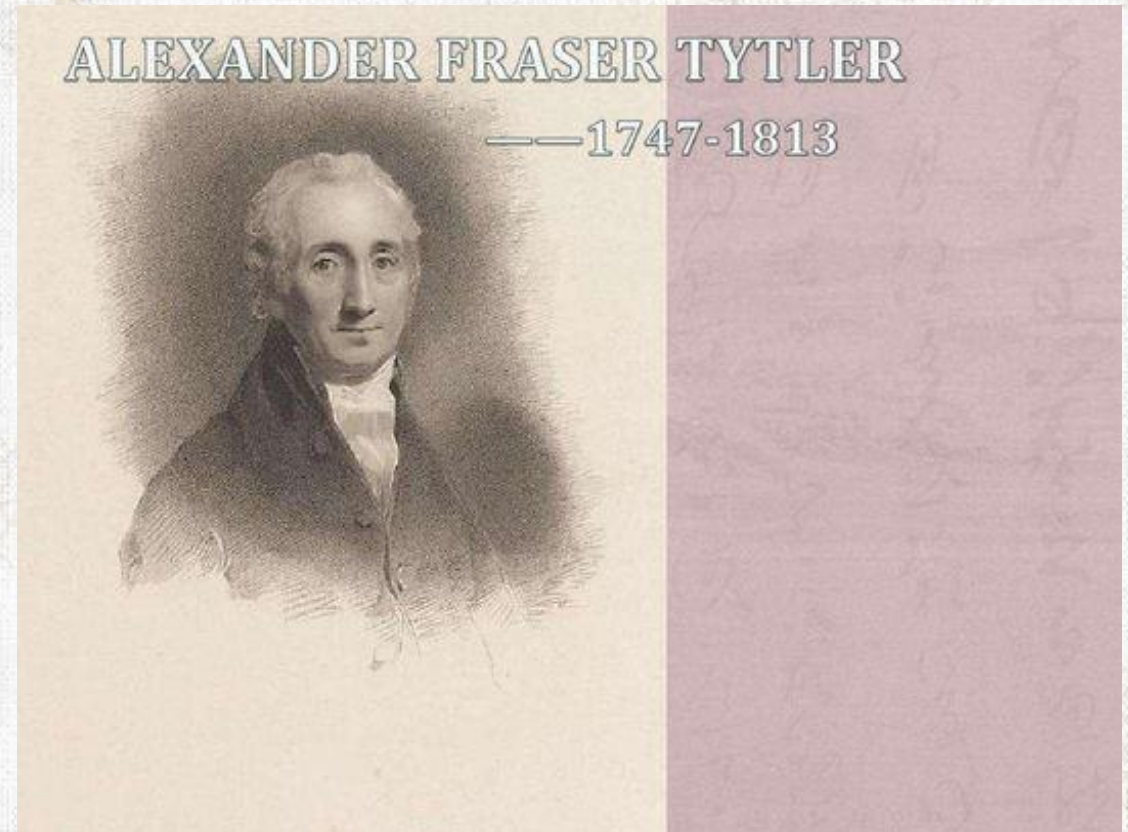
ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER

—1747-1813



Tytler's principles on Translation

- The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work
- The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original
- The translation should have all the ease of the original composition



The importance of the three aspects is decreasing step by step



Thank you
for
listening~