

Aneta Kliszc
(Jesuit University Ignatianum in Kraków)
ORCID: 0000-0003-2220-0778

Joanna Komorowska
(Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw)
ORCID: 0000-0001-7570-1045

Transcendancy of conceptual framework: some reflections on the non-translatability of Latin epic poetry

Abstract

Transcendancy of conceptual framework: some reflections on the non-translatability of Latin epic poetry

The essay explores questions related to the intrinsic elusiveness of intertextual dimensions of Latin imperial poetry. Starting with the existing Polish translations of imperial epic poets (Lucan, Silius, Statius) it considers the relationship of their opening verses to the iconic *Arma virumque cano...* of Virgil's *Aeneid* thus unveiling the massive semantic and poetic losses suffered by the target text, as its newfound independence results in the loss of an essential and purposeful connection with the 'master poem'.

Keywords: Intertextuality, translation, Latin epic, literary culture

When discussing various translations of his notoriously multilayered novel *Il pendolo di Foucault*, the late Umberto Eco noted the challenge involved in translating the single phrase *al di là de la siepe*¹. For an Italian reader the phrase is easily recognizable as a reference to Giacomo Leopardi, thus grounding the relevant conversation in the vast framework of legible connotations of the Italian culture. The Spanish translators of the *Pendulum* (R. Pochtar and H. Lozano), instead of following Eco verbatim, chose to reflect the intent rather than actual content of the passage, substituting the similarly recognizable phrase taken from Góngora (*el sublime, espacioso llano* comes from his *Soledad primera*, v. 228). While the solution is clearly applauded by the novelist himself (Eco puts considerable emphasis on his translators reflecting something of the literariness of the relevant conversation), one cannot but note the changed circumstances: the framework is no longer defined by the figure of the celebrated love poet of the Italian Romanticism, but by a giant of Spanish baroque poetry. Certainly, the inventiveness

¹ Umberto Eco. *Mouse of Rat? Translation as Negotiation* London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003, 67.

of the translatory solution is impressive, as it preserves the flow of narration together with its literary flavor, yet, at the same moment, it may be argued, the change turns Diotallevi and his companions into well educated and highly erudite Spaniards...² Effectively, in domesticating the allusion, the translator domesticates the protagonists who, after all, are originally (and steadfastly) Italian³.

The change wrought upon Eco's text is representative of a much wider phenomenon affecting any literary translation. The translated text exercises its function in circumstances vastly different from the original, the semantic matrix of the original often remaining inexpressible in the target culture. The phenomenon is easily observable in prose translation, but even more pervasive (and more intrusive) when attempting to recreate (in a foreign milieu) a work of poetry⁴. Our purpose in the present essay is to demonstrate the major loss (or a major tension) generated by translating an imperial epic poem into modern languages. Written in I CE, poems in question were all written by authors known – owing to Hardie – as epic successors of Virgil⁵. The description reveals their deep involvement with the *Aeneid*, the Virgilian masterwork considered unparalleled in literary history. This involvement manifests itself on every possible level, from lexical to conceptual and ideological, the Statian *Thebaid* being sometimes viewed as a reevaluation of Virgilian political philosophy⁶.

Now, since our aim is to study the varied types of confusion and loss resulting from translation of imperial epos, it may be best to start with what seems almost too obvious: the beginning. It has been long established that the opening lines of an ancient epic poem contain a programmatic declaration, a promise of the tale to come. At the same time, however, the opening is a indication of the tradition the author subscribes to, which he emulates. In this, the wording and sequencing of the proem are both the declaration of content to come (a point easily transferable into another language), but also a programmatic declaration in a more technical, literary sense.

² One could reasonably argue that the change becomes even more impressive with the solution preferred by the Catalan translator (Antoni Vicens), when substituting *tot tenia com un esplendor d'eternitat*, a line from Joan Maragall's *Torno de la dolçor de les muntanyes*. Maragall, whose life falls into the second half of the XIX century (1860–1911), is widely recognized as the poet of Catalunya. Thus, in quoting so casually a quintessentially Catalan poet, the originally Italian Diotallevi would come close to a declaration of his political allegiances.

³ The literariness of the passage remains absent in the Polish translation by Adam Szymanowski (Umberto Eco. *Wahadło Foucault*. Warszawa: PIW 1993). This has the effect of preserving Diotallevi's Italian-ness, but at the cost of missing the unusual fact revealed by the conversation (the protagonist no longer perceives the glories of nature through the lens of his literary education).

⁴ In fact, one could easily argue that translation of poetry is the best illustration of translation as a paratext phenomenon described by Gerard Genette in his *Paratexts* (Gerard Genette. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (tr. B. Lewin). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010); for a brief outline of the relevant argument, cf. Batchelor 2018 (Kathryn Batchelor Translation and Paratexts. London-New York: Routledge 2018).

⁵ Phillip Hardie. *The epic successors of Virgil: a study in the dynamics of a tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993.

⁶ On this cf. The exhaustive study of Randall T. Griban (*Statius and Virgil: The Thebaid and the Reinterpretation of the Aeneid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007).

The icon that is *Aeneid*

Let us begin with the opening of that masterwork and icon of Latin literature, Virgil's *Aeneid*. The poem opens with the clear statement concerning its subject and genre (*Aeneis* I 1–2):

"Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit litora".

Standing at the very beginning of the poem, the two Accusatives *arma virumque* foreshadow the double nature of the tale: it does tell the story of a man (*vir*) and of a war (*arma*). At the same moment, they look back to the Homeric tradition: the man (*vir*) harks back to the opening of the *Odyssey*, the metonymic *arma* standing for Homeric poem of war, the great song of wrath (μῆνιν ἀειδε A 1), the *Iliad*. Here however, yet another twist appears, for the *Aeneid* begins with an account vaguely resemblant of the *Odyssey*, to turn to war only in the second half of the poem – this, one may say, corresponds to the emphasis put on the person of Aeneas in the relative clause and the subsequent *Multum ille terris iactatus et alto, etc.*

Even more importantly, Virgil is quick to emphasize the poet's individuality by inclusion of *cano* – one would do well to remember that authorial presence is non-existent in the *Iliad*, with the song credited to a Muse (ἀεϊδε, θεα, A 1), the singer's 'I' emerging for the first time in the *Odyssey* (ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, α 1). In recognizing his own role in shaping the narrative of Aeneas' travels, the poet embraces a tradition much later than the Homeric one, namely Alexandrian poetry. Because of this, one could say, the first three words of the *Aeneid* imply the poem's superior nature, pointing to its roots (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*, Callimachus and his *Aetia*) while simultaneously embracing the entire epic legacy of the ages.

Many Polish translators of the work have attempted to capture the simultaneous conciseness and elevated tone of the original. Published in 1590, the once immensely popular translation by Andrzej Kochanowski (brother of the poet) openly mirrors the original *arma virumque cano* in *walki y męża powiem*, even though dispensing with the metonymy⁷. Still, it changes the emphasis by introducing an enjambment in v. 2:

"Walki y męża powiem, który naprzód z Troje
Zjehawszy, na brzeg włoski przybił nawy swoje"⁸.

Of the two translations published over two centuries later, the *Aeneid* by Jacek Idzi Przybylski⁹ introduces substantial changes to the original flow of exposition. While still

⁷ Andrzej Kochanowski. *Wergiliusz Aeneida. To jest o Aeneaszu trojańskim ksiąg dwanaście*. Kraków. 1590. Literally, the *arma* does not correspond to *walki* but to *oręż*, weapons or arms, as instruments of battle.

⁸ Interestingly, Kochanowski's rendition of *Lavinia litora as brzeg włoski* is heavily criticized in the paratext of the 1811 translation by Jacek Przybylski (*Wergilego Marona Eneida*, Kraków 1811, p. 9), who stigmatizes the use of the adjective *włoski*, related to the notion of *Włochy* (Italy) as highly anachronistic (similarly to Kochanowski's *kościół* as an equivalent of *delubrum* or *templum*). Interestingly, the Virgilian undertone emerges clearly in the translation of Tasso's *Gerasalemme liberata* produced by Piotr Kochanowski: *Woynę pobożną śpiewam y Hetmana, / który święty Grób Pański wyswobodził* (T. Tasso, Goffred, tr. Piotr Kochanowski, 1618)

⁹ Jacek Idzi Przybylski. *Wergilego Marona Eneida*. Kraków 1811.

opening with *walki* (an equivalent of *arma*), Przybylski puts an emphasis on the wanderings of the hero (one cannot but note the time of publication, falling within the period of Napoleonic wars):

"Walki śpiewam i imię Bohatyrą Troi,
co z Wyroków opuścił grunt oyczyzny swoi..." (Jacek Przybylski, Kraków 1811)

Meanwhile, the translation by Franciszek Dmochowski¹⁰ follows Virgil almost to the letter:

"Broń i męża opiewam, co losy wiecznymi
Uszedłszy z Troi, przybył do Italskiej ziemi".

Thus, Dmochowski opts for keeping the metonymy, but dispenses with the descriptive hendiadys *Italiam... Laviniaque litora*, instead opting for a simpler *Italskiej ziemi*.

The translation regarded nowadays as canonical, i.e. the version of Tadeusz Karyłowicz was originally published in 1924, with an introduction by Tadeusz Sinko¹¹. It was as good as enshrined in Polish literary culture by its inclusion in the prestigious Biblioteka Narodowa series, with the additional benefit of Sinko's heartfelt approval. Interestingly, Karyłowicz manages to keep the original metonymy and his introduction of an enjambment in v. 2 keeps the Virgilian emphasis on Italy (even more interestingly, the enjambment appears repeated in the case of v. 3, which strengthens the importance of 'Italy' in his version of the invocation):

"Broń i męża opiewam, co z Troi wybrzeża,
Do Italii, gnan losem, pierwszy na brzeg zmierza
Lawiński, ..."

The relatively recent translation by Zygmunt Kubiak¹² appears to double the original length of *Aeneid* I 1–2:

"Oręż opiewam i męża, co pierwszy
Z ziemi trojańskiej do Italii – tułacz
Zrządzeniem losu – na brzegi lawińskie
Przybył".

While the enjambment in v. 4 emphasizes the result of Aeneas' long travels, the rhythm of the hendecasyllable appears broken, unlike the smooth flow of the Virgilian hexameter (one notes that the previously quoted translations opted for the use of Polish Alexandrine or its variations). Also, Kubiak interferes with the syntax by separating *fato profugus* into a sort of add-on (*tułacz zrządzeniem losu*). In turn, the rarely read prose translation by Wanda Markowska (Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia 1987) has the unusual quality of stressing the travel aspect of the *Aeneid* story:

"Oręż śpiewam i męża, co losem z Troi wygnany płynie do Italii, zmierzając ku brzegom Lawinium".

¹⁰ Franciszek Dmochowski *Eneida Wergiliusza*. Warszawa 1803.

¹¹ Tadeusz Karyłowicz. *Wergilijusz Eneida z wstępem i objaśnieniem Tadeusza Sinki*, Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza. 1924.

¹² Zygmunt Kubiak. *Wergiliusz: Eneida*. Warszawa: PIW 1987.

The firm persistence of (the) present in this translation changes the impact of the narrative, endowing it with an immediate quality absent from the 'historical' approach of the original, with its events firmly grounded in a distant, mythical past.

Now, the important point to note is that regardless of the prominent place of Aeneas in the Sarmatian mythology, and despite the relative popularity of Kochanowski's version of the poem, never has a translation of the Virgilian epic reached a status parallel to that of the original within Latin culture. In other words, it is almost unthinkable that translators of other Latin poets would model their translations on a particular version of the Polish *Aeneid*. The point of reference, if recognized, would be always Homer, with his great invocations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. This necessarily influences the dynamics of allusion¹³ – instead of erudite Virgilian games, the translators would look to the icon of genre as such.

The 'successors'

Let us now turn to the difficulties involved in the translation of imperial Latin poems. Firstly, it is important to note that none of them has ever reached the cultural and literary status granted by the Polish literary tradition to the *Aeneid*. Even Lucan, who did enjoy some renown owing to his descriptions of the highly popular figure of Caesar and the particularly 'sublime' quality of his poetry, was not translated into Polish as frequently as the Mantuan poet. Indeed, Silius' *Punica* remains untranslated even today.

A. Lucan's *Pharsalia*:

Sometimes considered as an epitome of sublime style, Lucan's poem opens with something which may appear completely different to the Virgilian beginning:

"Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos
iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra
cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis
in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis
signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis" (*Pharsalia* I, 1–7)¹⁴.

The declarative statement, anecdotally attributed to the intervention of Lucan's famous uncle, the philosopher Seneca, contains once again a clear statement of purpose: the poem is the poem of war *par excellence*, and of a war that was fought in Thessaly

¹³ For a general overview of literary allusion in Latin poetry cf. Stephen Hinds. *Allusion and Intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998.

¹⁴ Mieczysław Brożek (Kraków 1994):

"Walki na polach tesalskich, nad wojnę gorsze domową,
I prawo zbrodni przyznane, i naród śpiewamy potężny,
Co swą prawicę zwycięską w pierś własną obrócił;
Armie krwi jednej i wódzów rozdarte przymierze:
Wojnę, co światem ku publicznemu nieszczęściu
Wszystkimi wstrząsnęła mocami, i chorągwie wrogie chorągwiom,
I bratnie orły, i włócznie bratnim grożące włóczniom".

(Emathia) and characterized by unusually internecine slaughter¹⁵. The high density of the oxymora immediately following this statement (*ius/scelus, ruptum foedus, commune nefas*, etc.) exacerbates the essential tension troubling the poem: this heroic tales is of deeds that are otherwise highly questionable and unheroic in their very nature. Verses 6–7, with their description of the torn nation, can easily be seen as alluding to the curse on the Aeneads voiced by Dido in *Aeneid* VI (*litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas*): here, however, the opposing factions are identical, non-distinguishable.

As for the expression of authorial persona, Lucan chooses the 1st person plural (*canimus*), which can be seen as both retaining and opposing the Virgilian, singular *cano*. It may be argued that this choice reflects something of the troubling relationship with individuality which can be observed in the entire poem. The plural 'I' seems, after all, particularly apt in a poem notorious for its refusal to openly acknowledge a single protagonist.

Two seventeenth century Polish translations of the complex epic (by Bardziński and by Chrościński respectively¹⁶) appear to reflect the content of the text in the traditional Polish epic verse, i.e. Polish Alexandrine. They both begin, mirroring Lucan himself, with *wojnę*, war, a singular noun standing for the originally plural *bella*. Thus, Jan Alan Bardziński (Oliwa 1691)¹⁷ opens his translation with:

"Woyne śpiewam na polach Ematskich toczone
cieszsze wnetrzey..."

While Wojciech Stanisław Chrościński (Oliwa 1690)¹⁸ opts for:

„Wojnę na polach Ematyckich walną
W swej zawziętości gorszą od domowy”.

Both translators preserve (fittingly for the celebrated learnedness of baroque poetry) the adjective *Emathios* – this adjective will be substituted in the twentieth century translation by Brożek¹⁹ by the more accessible *tessalski*. Intriguingly, none of the two older translations emulates the striking (and possibly allusive) iterations of I 6–7, the iterativeness being in turn reflected in Brożek's **chorągwie wrogie chorągwiom**,/ *I bratnie orły, i włócznie bratnim grożące włóczniom*. Also, in contrast with the two earlier translators, Brożek maintains a firm grasp on the Lucanian oxymoron *iusque datum sceleri*,

¹⁵ On the poem and its intertextual aspects, cf. e.g. Jesús Bartolomé "El proemio de la *Pharsalia* de Lucano y su recepción I", *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica Estudios Latinos* 29 (2009), 37–56.

¹⁶ Jan Alan Bardziński. *Odrodzona w ojczystym języku Farsalia Lukana...* Oliwa. 1691; Wojciech Stanisław Chrościński. *Pharsalia albo raczej wojna domowamiędzy Pompejuszem a Cezarem*. Oliwa. 1690.

¹⁷ The entire poem of Bardziński goes as follows: "Woyne śpiewam na polach Ematskich toczone/ cieszsze wnetrzey, y Wolność złościom pozwolona/ Lud możny y tryumfy na swą krew swą żożarte,/ Zerwane ligi, Wodzów skrewnieniem zawarte./ Na te woyny cały świat swoje zebrał siły,/ Spolne w Woyskach z obu stron zawziętości były;/ Jedneż Orły, chorągwie, belty”.

¹⁸ The Chrościński version: "Wojnę na polach Ematyckich walną/ W swej zawziętości gorszą od domowy/ I wolność śpiewam zbrodniom generalną/ Możny lud przy tym, ale na swe głowy/ Bo się sam juszyl ręką tryumfalną/ Tosz krewne szyki, Wodzów rozbrat nowy./ Jak wszelką siłą zgromionego świata /Na spolny nierząd, Rzym sam siebie płata”.

¹⁹ Mieczysław Brożek. *Lukan: Wojna domowa*. Biblioteka Przekładów z Literatury Starożytnej, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności. 1994.

rendered as *prawo zbrodni przyznane* rather than *Wolność złościom przyznana* (Bardziński) or *wolność generalna zbrodniom* (Chrościński).

The essential contradiction between law (even an unwritten one, *ius*) and sacrilegious crime (*scelus*) comes to the fore in the more recent translation, which seems particularly apt given the fact that the constant confusion of right and wrong of law and crime remains a staple feature of *De bello civili*. Yet, this fidelity to the original content and manner of its expression comes at the cost of formal arrangement as Brożek's translation seems to oscillate between 16- and 14-syllable verses, its coherence guarded by the firm cesura after the eight(h) syllable. For all its advantages, the solution has the unfortunate result of affecting the very rhythm of the translation: the resulting verse is in no way reflective of Lucan's mastery of the formal aspect of epic poetics.

B. Statius

Written during the Flavian times, the extensive poem of Pb. Papinius Statius recounts the fratricidal war between the last male descendants of the Theban royal house, thus dealing with events frequently celebrated in the ancient literature (one thinks of Stesichorus, of the three tragedians, of Seneca and others). The subject alone would account for a deep involvement with the existing tradition – however, Statius also enters into a multilayered metapoetic dialogue with his predecessors. The skill with which this debate is conducted becomes apparent once one considers in detail the opening lines of the poem (*Thebais* I 1–6):

"Fraternas acies alteraque regna profanis
decertata oddis sontisque evolvere Thebas,
Pierius menti calor incidit. Unde iubetis
ire, deae? gentisque canam primordia dirae,
Sidonios raptus et inexorabile pactum
legis Agenoreae scrutantemque aequora Cadmum?"

The translation by Mieczysław Brożek²⁰ provides a reader with an adequate equivalent of the contents:

"Braci opiewać zmagania w bezbożnej walce i wrogiej
O władzy pełnienie na zmianę, w Tebach przewiną splamionych,
Pieryjski ogarnął mnie zapał. Od czego zacząć każecie, boginie?
Mam śpiewać o tego miasta początkach nieszczęsnych?
O sydońskim porwaniu i nieprzełaganym Agenora rozkazie?
O Kadmosie zamorskie przeszukującym krainy?"

At a first glance, it would be easy to say that of the three imperial poets, Statius chooses the most 'Homeric' beginning: his poet is inflamed by Muse-induced fervor, commanded by the Muses to do their bidding. No 'I', after all, comes to the fore in the opening lines of his *Thebaid*, as the emergence of the poem results from a divine

²⁰ Stacjusz *Tebaida*. Biblioteka Przekładów z Literatury Starożytnej. Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności. 1996.

command. Yet, there is more – it may be argued that in its search for the starting point of the tale, the beginning revisits Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, a work whose opening lines appear to emphasize the sense of 'literary' beginning²¹. The *Unde iubetis ire deae?* begins an overview of possible starting points of the tale, from which the poet is to select the proper one. Thus, while the notion of Muses' command appears to look back to pre-Alexandrian concept of poetic inspiration, this point is immediately put into question by the subsequent considerations concerning the proper starting point of the tale. The Virgilian context is further indirectly stressed by the mention of Cadmus' wanderings: after all, like Aeneas, the son of Agenor is forced to seek a new homeland – the rejection of this particular starting point may be understood as a revealing departure from the Virgilian poetics, a conscious distancing from the hallowed model on the part of the poet²².

C. Silius Italicus

The *Punica* is an interesting if not particularly inspiring work. Depicting the events of second Punic war (218–202 BC) and heavily dependent on the Livian account, the poem is designed as a supplement of the *Aeneid*, with particularly strong affinity to the Carthaginian part of the Virgilian story²³. Its opening appears to stress the intertextual quality of the poem:

"Ordior arma, quibus caelo se gloria tollit
Aeneadum, patiturque ferox Oenotria iura
Carthago. Da, Musa, decus memorare laborum
Antiquae Hesperiae, quantosque ad bella crearit
Et quot Roma uiros, sacri cum perfida pacti
Gens Cadmea super regno certamina mouit";

Now, Silius is no Virgil: yet, his beginning is a conscious allusion to the *Aeneid* – emerging immediately in the first line of the poem, the noun *arma* looks back to the great legacy of the Mantuan poet, while the relative clause points toward the true purpose of the epic. This epic fulfills the promise contained in the Virgilian masterwork, as the destiny of the Romans (*Aeneades*), the reason for Juno's unrelenting hatred, comes to pass in the Punic wars. Even more importantly, the wording of the poem, a point convincingly argued by Tipping²⁴, presents a conscious attempt to position the *Punica* with respect to its great predecessor, the *Aeneid*. Thus, to provide only a handful of examples, one could easily note that *Ordior arma* is in fact an echo of *arma virumque cano*, with emphasis put squarely on the *arma* with an additional Livian flavor

²¹ On this cf. R.J. Clare, *The Path of the Argo. Language, Imagery and Narrative in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002, 9–33.

²² On the complexities of the Statius' dialogue with the Virgilian model cf. the comprehensive study of Ganiban *Statius and Virgil*.passim,

²³ Unfortunately, except for some excerpts Silius has not been translated into Polish, though some rumors of a forthcoming translation have been heard in the recent years.

²⁴ Ben Tipping. *Exemplary Epic. Silius Italicus' Punica*. Oxford Classical Monographs, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010, 1–7.

(this is particularly important given the importance given to Livy's account of war in the poem). Meanwhile, the *quot viros* looks back to the *Aeneid* VII 43–44²⁵ but also, one could claim, the visions of *Aeneid* VI, with its portrayal of Roman ranks ready to enter the world of the living and dominate the *orbis terrarum*. Also, the very *viros* anticipates the multiplicity of Roman heroes emerging in the proem (Fabius, Marcellus, Scipio), while at the same moment improving on Virgilian singular Accusative *virum*. Still, Virgil is not the only author whose echoes can be found in the Silian opening: as rightly noted by Tipping (2010: 3), the noun *bella* in I, 4 looks back to Lucan, yet the very opening line can be said to defy Lucan's idea of epic narrative by openly embracing order (*ordior*). In this way, Silius would consciously position himself with respect to the most Roman epic narration of Virgil (*ordior arma*, I, 1), but with respect to the distinctly non-Virgilian (or post-Virgilian) *Pharsalia*. As one will be reminded again and again in the work²⁶, the war Silius describes fulfils the promise of the *Aeneid*, which in turn ennoble the Silian tale as the true successor of that iconic poem.

Additional difficulties surround the *gens Cadmea*: while the Thyrian past of the Carthaginians would be well known to an original reader of the poem, one may justifiably wonder whether the phrase would also be read as an allusion to a highly contemporary work, namely the *Thebais*, a tale dealing with the more immediate descendants of Agenor's son²⁷.

Finally, like Virgil, Silius is quick to include the authorial 'I': his *ordior* openly acknowledged the author's control over his material. It is 'Silius the poet' who controls the flow of narration: furthermore, he clearly possesses the knowledge necessary for such an endeavor (I 17–18). Yet, he declares himself dependent on the Muse (of epic poetry) if only for her grace (*Da, Musa, decus memorare laborum*). In recognizing the privileged nature of his account (and his vision) Silius both acknowledges his own poetic autonomy and recognizes his limitations as a mortal, which in turn brings him close to the Virgilian ideal of piety (*pietas*), the defining virtue of the Augustan hero (and, should we follow Livy, of a Roman leader) and the important quality of the Roman protagonists of Silius himself.

Some additional problems

While the above difficulty lies mostly in the basic inability to include the original, for the most part intended, literary hypertext, the text may be mutilated in another way, as the cultural context of the translation may inflict on the text a meaning completely opposed to that intended by the poet. Thus, to provide a straightforward example,

²⁵ Tipping 2010: 3.

²⁶ Cf. e.g. Claire Stocks. *The Roman Hannibal. Remembering the Enemy in Silius Italicus' Punica*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2014: 53–79.

²⁷ As shown above, the founder of the city of Thebes, Cadmus makes a brief though prominent appearance in the opening verses of the Statian poem (*Thebais* I 6). The mutual dependence of Statius and Silius is briefly discussed by Raymond Marks ("Statio-Silian Relations in the *Thebaid* and *Punica* 1–2". *Classical Philology* 109 (2014) 130–139), and Francois Ripoll ("Statius and Silius Italicus". In William J. Dominik, Carole E. Newlands, Kyle Gervais (eds). *Brill's Companion to Statius*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 2015, 425–443). For further reading see the latter work, p. 425. n. 2.

Polish translations of Homeric poems remain characteristically unable to convey the deeply troubling nature of the Greek animal-similia (warrior as a lion, as a boar, etc.) because of the significant shift toward the positive symbolism of the animals involved. A more complex example of such a shift may be found in Sophocles' *Antigone*: as the Chorus compares Polynices' army to a flock of eagles, the original reader is sent back to the notorious birds of prey of the Aeschylean *Agamemnon*, to the implications of bloody hunt, savagery and slaughter²⁸. Meanwhile, for the Polish reader, the description reads as a highly complementary one: our semantic framework converts the bloody simile into an image of a hussar charge²⁹.

Let us turn to yet another example of impossibility and loss: the image of the wood as a place of non-civilization is a recurring one in ancient literature. For the Romans, as it was Greeks, the woodland is the domain of Diana (Artemis), the virginal hunter-goddess, the realm of hunters (as opposed to warriors) and un-civilized savagery, often conjoined with certain mystical flavour of primitive religious forms (as particularly manifest in the case of the woods of Aricia, or the primeval woodlands of Germania, as described by Tacitus or Pliny the Elder). Indeed, many Roman authors, particularly those of the imperial era, tend to locate the most horrific mythological acts in the midst of woods: the Senecan feast of Thyestes, Silius' oath of Hannibal, the necromantic ceremony of Statius' *Thebaid*, all take place in depths of the forest³⁰.

When we look at the Polish context, woodland (and primeval woodland at that) appears to be hallowed with glory of historical splendour. In Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, the Lithuanian woodland appears as the sacred place of greatness, where Polish kings used to hunt in times long past. For a Pole, the mere mention of ancient forest carries no connotations of dread and anxiety. Forests are our past, the object of nostalgic memory of times gone (*Knieje, do was ostatni przyjeżdżał na owy ostatni król, co kołpak nosił Witoldowy...*, ks. IV 19-20): primeval forest is thus seen as a relic of what we yearn for, a standing witness to men we once were³¹. The image carries no connotations of savagery, but rather those of valor and greatness. Thus, the Statian intimations of Atalante's (and Parthenopaeus') savagery expressed through her allegiance to a woodland dwelling pass unnoticed: in the Polish semantic matrix, she is a huntress of beasts the same way our kings are hunters of bear and boar alike, the emphasis laid squarely on the heroic, indeed ennobling, quality of the hunt. Also unnoticed passes the possible allusion to the Virgilian description of the forest of death in *Aeneid* VI, the intertextuality of the original text lost to a completely different literary context, as the vast woodlands of Atalante's

²⁸ On this cf. first of all John J. Peradotto. "The Omen of the Eagles and the ἩΘΟΣ of Agamemnon". *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 237–263.

²⁹ On this, cf. Aneta Kliszcz, Joanna Komorowska. "Polish Sophocles: Kazimierz Morawski and his Translation of the Tragedies", in: Tor-Ivar Ostmoe, Matilde Skoie, Anastasia Maravela (eds) *Translation in Antiquity, Translating Antiquity*, forthcoming.

³⁰ Cf. Aneta Kliszcz, Joanna Komorowska. "Glades of Dread; Ecology and Aesthetics of *loca horrida*". In Christopher Schliephake (ed.). *Ecocriticism, Ecology and the Cultures of Antiquity*, Lexington Books 2017, 45–60.

³¹ Cf. Józef Rostafiński *Las, puszcza, matecznik jako natura i baśń w poezji Mickiewicza*, Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie, Wydział Filologiczny, t. 60, n. 1, Kraków 1921.

dwelling merge with the image of the Lithuanian forests of the Polish national epos. Even worse, Polish nineteenth century literature tends to portray woodland not only as a place of memory, but also – and, at least for a translator, more damagingly – as a place of quiet, safety, and refuge (this can be easily illustrated by Mickiewicz's *Śmierć pułkownika* or, even more prominently, by several instances in Eliza Orzeszkowa's celebrated novel *Nad Niemnem*³²).

Conclusions

As demonstrated by the above considerations – limited as they are to the very opening lines of several Latin poems – the ancient epic encapsulates the basic difficulty of translating when the work under translation balances the stability of genre related style and motifs against the innovative and creative input of an individual poet. The works in question celebrate their being steeped in tradition while at the same time parading their departure from the established model. In translating such a poem, we are faced with a particularly difficult choice: either we follow the Ecoeque translators in trying to find some 'balancing' context capable of conveying the poem's traditional nature, or we choose to ignore the intertextual element. The latter option, which has been largely preferred by the translators, proves fatally damaging to the poems in question, as it ignores their involvement with the prior tradition thus effectively destroying the very foundation of the relevant poetics. The other possibility is also unpalatable: in the case of Polish, it means reverting to Homer, or, a more inventive, but far more dangerous possibility, falling back to a Romantic paradigm. The first option reduces and simplifies the intertextual dimension of the text, while the other not only implies anachronistic conversion, but also in many ways falsifies the content. As a result, Latin epic poetry (much like its Hellenistic counterpart) remains largely unreachable and untranslatable, its very poetics transcending the possibilities of translatory effort, the true complexity always beyond the reach of both the translator and the reader.

Bibliography

Translations:

(Virgil:)

Franciszek Dmochowski. *Eneida Wergiliusza*. Warszawa, 1803.

Tadeusz Karyłowicz. *Wergiljusz Eneida z wstępem i objaśnieniem Tadeusza Sinki*, Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza. 1924.

Andrzej Kochanowski. *Wergiljusz Aeneida. To jest o Aeneaszu trojańskim ksiąg dwanaście*. Kraków, 1590.

Zygmunt Kubiak. *Wergiljusz: Eneida*. Warszawa: PIW, 1987.

³² Aneta Narolska "Puszcza starożytna" Elizy Orzeszkowej, *Wiek XIX* 6 (48) 2013, 113–130.

Wanda Markowska. *Wergiliusz: Eneida*. Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia 1987.

Jacek Idzi Przybylski. *Wirgilego Marona Eneida*. Kraków, 1811.

(Lucan:)

Mieczysław Brożek. *Lukan: Wojna domowa*. Biblioteka Przekładów z Literatury Starożytnej, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności. 1994.

Jan Alan Bardziński. *Odrodzona w ojczystym języku Farsalia Lukana...* Oliwa, 1691.

Wojciech Stanisław Chrościński. *Pharsalia albo raczej wojna domowamiędzy Pompejuszem a Cezarem*. Oliwa, 1690.

(Statius:)

Stacjusz Tebaida. Biblioteka Przekładów z Literatury Starożytnej. Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1996.

Secondary literature

Batchelor, Kathryn. *Translation and Paratexts*. New York and London: Routledge. 2018.

Bartolomé, Jesús. "El proemio de la *Pharsalia* de Lucano y su recepción I". *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica Estudios Latinos* 29 (2009), 37–56.

Clare, R.J. *The Path of the Argo. Language, Imagery and Narrative in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Eco, Umberto. *Mouse of Rat? Translation as Negotiation* London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003.

Eco, Umberto. *Wahadło Foulcault*. Warszawa: PIW, 1993.

Genette, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (tr. B. Lewin). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Ganiban, Randall T. *Statius and Virgil: The Thebaid and the Reinterpretation of the Aeneid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Hardie, Phillip. *The epic successors of Virgil: a study in the dynamics of a tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hinds, Stephen. *Allusion and Intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Kluszcz, Aneta, Joanna Komorowska. "Glades of Dread; Ecology and Aesthetics of *loca horrida*". In: Christopher Schliephake (ed.) *Ecocriticism, Ecology and the Cultures of Antiquity*. Lexington Books 2017, 45–60.

Kluszcz, Aneta, Joanna Komorowska. "Polish Sophocles: Kazimierz Morawski and his Translation of the Tragedies". In Tor-Ivar Ostmo, Matilde Skoie, Anastasia Maravela (eds) *Translation in Antiquity, Translating Antiquity*, forthcoming.

Marks, Raymond. "Statio-Silian Relations in the *Thebaid* and *Punica* 1–2". *Classical Philology* 109 (2014) 130–139.

Narolska, Aneta. "Puszcza starożytna" Elizy Orzeszkowej. *Wiek XIX* 6 (48) 2013, 113–130.

Peradotto, John J. "The Omen of the Eagles and the ἩΘΟΣ of Agamemnon". *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 237–263.

- Ripoll, Francois. "Statius and Silius Italicus". In William J. Dominik, Carole E. Newlands, Kyle Gervais (eds) *Brill's Companion to Statius*, Leiden 2015, 425–443.
- Rostafiński, Józef. *Las, puszcza, matecznik jako natura i baśń w poezji Mickiewicza*. Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie, Wydział Filologiczny, t. 60, n. 1. Kraków, 1921.
- Stocks, Claire. *The Roman Hannibal. Remembering the Enemy in Silius Italicus' Punica*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014.
- Tipping, Ben. *Exemplary Epic. Silius Italicus' Punica*. Oxford Classical Monographs, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

