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Intralingual Diachronic Translation and Transfer: The Case of Old French

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ABSTRACT

Intralingual translation presupposes the crossing of several types of boundaries: societal, geographic, religious and diachronic among others. This paper focuses on the diachronic aspect. The French language has seen a large number of diachronic intralingual transpositions throughout its history, such as gloss, summaries, extracts, adaptations, reduced copies and translations. Interestingly, a text can be taken for a translation at a given moment, but viewed differently at a later stage and *vice versa*. The label 'translation' is significant because its use reflects accepted conceptions of change and linguistic continuity. Indeed, descriptive translation studies avoid formulating a rigid definition of the process and the product of translation. Based on a corpus of modern transpositions of medieval French texts, we aim to find the contexts and circumstances in which the term 'translation' emerged, demonstrating the different categories of intralingual transfer, in particular the affinities and relations between translation and paratext on the one hand and editions and translations on the other. As a case study, the paper reviews the various translations of *Saint Alexis* since 1880 and examines the circumstances of their production, their features and their positions on relevant questions of language and literature.

Introduction

The present paper aims to reveal how the relations between different transfer methods reflect on perspectives regarding language, linguistic change and continuity. Indeed, these transfer methods cultivate an interaction with the evolving views on language and translation, specifically the conception of diachronic translation within a linguistic community. We refer particularly to modern French versions of an Old French work, a type of transfer which may be designated as intralingual translation.[1]

Some prominent transfer modalities were used to make a medieval text more accessible to 19th and 20th century readers. Among those are editions, chrestomathies and translations, both partial and full.

The term intralingual translation is generally used to cover various methods of reproducing a text in the same language. This procedure can take place among several periods, regions or social classes, or within any one of them and may presuppose the crossing of several types of boundaries (Pillière 2010; Berk Albachten 2015; Brems 2018). Intralingual translation might also imply summaries, expert-to-layman communication, subtitles for the deaf and more (Zethsen 2009, 2018; Hill-Madsen 2015). Some of the broader more flexible definitions would even include intersemiotic intralingual translations, such as an animated film or an opera based on a literary text (Jakobson [1959] 2000; Gottlieb 2005).

It is well known that French literature was going through a very successful and productive phase in the Middle Ages, particularly from the 11th to the 14th centuries (Evdokimova and Smirnova 2014; Fasseur and Valette 2016; Ducos, Soutet, and Valette 2016). Consequently, most popular Medieval narratives were recounted several times during this period. These later renditions, composed and published throughout the history of the language, carried titles such as translation ('traduction' or 'translation'), adaptation, gloss ('glose'), summaries ('résumé'), reduced copies ('copie réduite') or extracts ('extraits' or 'fragments') (D'hulst 1995). Although literary and linguistic factors seem to have contributed to this variety and frequency of transfer methods, ideological and political considerations appear to have played an important role as well (*cf.* Schmid 2008).

As a case study, we use the modern renditions of *Saint Alexis*, a poem from the 11th century. *The Life of Saint Alexis* is a tale of a noble young man who abandons his wife on the eve of their wedding to live a life of poverty and chastity for God, and ends up dying in his father's house as an anonymous beggar. He is later sanctified.[2]

This paper focuses specifically on its 19th and even 20th century versions,[3] representing a moment in which intellectual and scientific interest in Medieval texts started to bloom in Europe. We look at both translations of the mentioned text, examining relevant paratextual and textual elements which clarify the purpose of renewing the text and eventually explain the transformations carried out. While the paper is mainly concerned with translation, it has been noticed that new and renewed translations often appeared in new editions; therefore, detailed reference will be made to editions, since they are the principal transfer products which were not translations.

The first part of this paper will briefly present recent theories regarding intralingual translation and other types of transfer. The second part will draw the path followed by the different transfer methods in the case of *Alexis* — their general chronological order and the assumptions they convey concerning the questions of language and translation mentioned above, including subtle differences and details from items in this corpus. The third part will suggest possible generalizations as to the change of modern intralingual transfer modalities over time.

Ambiguities of Intralingual Translation

The label 'translation' is at the focus of this study since its use reflects accepted conceptions of change and linguistic continuity (Sakai 2009; Karas 2016). Yet, it should be noted that descriptive translation studies have repeatedly avoided formulating a rigid definition of both the process and the product of translation (Toury [1995] 2012, 17–34; D'hulst 2012). Even though translation was not clearly defined, it was described as an object of

study in a manner that was open to specific interpretations (Toury, *ibid*.). It seems that as far as intralingual translation is concerned, the picture is even more blurred and complicated, since the apparent correspondence between source and target languages often provokes controversy regarding the use of the very term 'translation'. The source and target language may employ the same lexical and grammatical forms implying different meanings, hence creating ambiguity, sometimes disorienting the non-expert reader.

Inspired by Toury's 'assumed translation' and Sakai's 'regime of translation', it is suggested that for an intralingual diachronic translation to occur and be regarded as such, speakers' attitudes towards the older linguistic phase need to change: rather than treating it as an integral part of the same language, they need to conceive it as a separate component, or a distinct phase of one evolving entity, which may not be easily accessible for the lay contemporary reader (Karas 2020).

According to Sakai's (2009) schema of co-figuration, languages and nations are defined through comparison and opposition with what is judged as a different language or nation. Therefore, views on translation are likely to depend on historical circumstances and ideological shifts in society, reflecting the close relation between linguistic and national identity.

Indeed, significant questions were raised about the combination between 'translation' and 'intralingual'. While many cases of intralingual translation seem to take place within the same culture and are hardly accepted by speaking communities as 'translations', intralingual diachronic translations habitually bridge different cultures, depending on the time gap, and are very often labelled as 'translations' by speakers. Questions relating to intelligibility, similarity, double presentation and different types of equivalence can be raised in a more nuanced and subtle fashion given the intralingual and intrasystemic context (Karas 2020).

Reserarch on intralingual translation has taken some new turns recently. Karen Korning Zethsen has theorized intralingual translation based on Toury's 'assumed translation' definition (Zethsen and Hill-Madsen 2016, Zethsen 2009) and later on medical translations (Van Dam and Zethsen 2010). Özlem Berk Albachten (2013, 2015) has analysed literary translations from Ottoman Turkish to modern Turkish, explaining how the planned linguistic change was also accompanied by shifts in other textual features. Dirk Delabastita (2017) has worked on strategies used in modernizations of Shakespeare and their reception. Else Brems (2018) has treated intralingual translations between Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch. In 2016, Brian Mossop argued that dialectal and diachronic intralingual translations are the only types which actually qualify as translation, while Zethsen and Hill-Madsen (2016) vouched for an opposite point of view and suggested a criterial definition of translation which fully includes intralingual translation. A later publication stressed the indispensability of intralingual translation in the context of expert-to-layman communication (Zethsen 2018).

One of the most obvious reasons for intralingual translation is diachronic change (Robinson 1998). French constitutes a very clear example of language evolution and of the unintelligibility it produces, given its accelerated development. These changes are related to its phonetics, morphology, syntax and even semantics (Paris et Langlois 1908, ix–xc; Perret 2014).

This aspect of diachronic linguistic change is commonly associated with the phenomenon of retranslation, especially since the latter often participates in the formation of domestic literary canon and heritage ('patrimoine littéraire'), given that it grants nations a new access to their old assets. Classic pieces, combining issues of literature, education, economy, law and politics (Desmidt 2009, 677), are often treated as common property (ibid., 678); in the absence of copyright, justifications for changes and adjustments in the texts are not always discussed. For medieval works, issues related to history or philology may impact the process and the reception of retranslations (Brownlie 2006) or motivate their production (see Alvstad and Assis Rosa 2015). Political, ideological and other historical and societal considerations in the target culture may have significant influence on the recontextualisation of retranslations (Gambier 2011), as illustrated in the present study as well.

Theoretical Framework: Translation and Transfer

While translations are the object of our study, their distinction from other intralingual versions of a given text is far from obvious. In the framework of descriptive and cognitive translation studies, the relations and differentiations between translation and other methods of transfer change over time, and categories may merge and split.

Toury ([1995] 2012, 17–34) has defined 'assumed translation', the object of study for translation scholars, based on three postulates accepted in the depicted culture. The first one concerns the existence of assumed **source and target texts**. Thus, an assumed translation does not have to derive from a real source text; it just has to be viewed in this manner. The second postulate consists of an assumed **relation of equivalence** between source and target, namely: there are expectations for particular similarities or divergences between them. According to the third postulate, the translation is produced through a **specific procedure**, such as the search for lexical or stylistic parallels in target systems, or the insertion of special components. These three assumptions reflect societal norms, and do not have to exist in reality.

According to the above definition, the texts must also fulfill two conditions: first, they have to be part of separate languages or cultures, which can be easily claimed to hold for intertemporal intralingual translation. Secondly and equally important, the target text has to be considered by people-in-the-culture as a translation.

A similar state of affairs can be said to exist when it comes to transfer. Following a suggestion by D'hulst (2012), 'assumed transfer' is considered as a broader notion based on 'assumed translation' but not directly extrapolated from it. It includes a wider variety of products such as editions, adaptations, films and operas. Much like Toury's assumed translation, D'hulst's assumed transfer requires source and target poles, products, carriers (linguistic or other semiotic systems) and techniques (moving, converting, formal change, semantic change, functional change).

To find out the circumstances and the conceptions that enabled certain items to be viewed as translations, we have formulated three criteria to consider during the analysis of the assumed transfer products:

- First, the **label** given to the text by its producers: its translator, its publisher or the editor of the preface. A label can be found on the title page, in the peritextual components (such as preface, postface, comments), or deduced from the type of the collection it is published in.
- Secondly, indications for the **reception** of texts in the literary market, such as bibliographies, commentaries, remarks to authors by their colleagues, reviews, library catalogues and sales or reprints. In the present study, the existence of multiple editions or reprints and the reference to translations by other authors are the most prominent pieces of evidence in this category. These facts also prove that the publications were widely read and studied.
- A possible third parameter would be the consequences of the **diachronic axis** of reception, such as changes in the designation of a text over time in inventories, catalogues, studies and the like. In some cases, an item can be regarded as a translation at a given point, whereas later or in another region, it may be classified differently.

Methodology

It is difficult to find an exhaustive list of all the existing renditions of *Saint Alexis*. We limited the study to the 19th and 20th centuries, as previously mentioned, since it is in this period that the translation of Old French texts started to bloom and become a significant domain of activity for scholars and philologists. It should be clarified that even though German scholars were very interested in this endeavour and translated and analysed medieval French works, they remain outside the focus of this paper since their translations were not written in French.

We looked at the bibliographies of medieval literature, catalogues of prominent libraries all over the world (such as the BNF and the library of Congress), online archives of public digitized documents, and the main literary and scientific journals (for discussion of the reception of translations). Scholarly articles and the paratext of the identified translations provided information and references to additional translations. At times, an author would mention a planned edition, translation or anthology, which we could not trace in later catalogues and may have never been published.[4]

In order to find out to what extent the three criteria for translations apply to transfer products in our corpus, we defined a set of features, both from the texts themselves and their paratext. All the transfer products were examined in light of these features. Only items which qualify *a-posteriori* as translations are considered here. The characteristics we analysed are:

- *Title of the work and it segments*: the mention of terms related to translation in these titles;
- *Partial or complete* translation;
- *The form of the translation*: verse or prose;
- *Presentation*: single or double presentation; mutual layout of the translation and its source;
- *Variants*: the importance given to variants in the book, whether they are included in the text, in footnotes or in a separate section at the end of the volume;

- *The publishing platform*: scientific journal, anthology, standalone publication etc. Publishing houses and collections are also included in this parameter.

In addition, some particular traits regarding the items are also discussed below based on their relevance to the main issue and provide information on the nature of the academic context, for example.

To provide a fuller context, the transfer items designated as editions will also be subject to a detailed discussion, given their high relevance to the translations.

Saint Alexis — Various Versions

It has already been established that French intralingual renditions can carry various labels. More specifically, French language labels explicitly related to translation are 'traduction' (translation), and 'translation' (an earlier term for translation — first used approximately in the 12th century).

As mentioned previously, to provide a specific example of the transfer products based on a single text as a starting point, we looked at the various versions of the *Vie de Saint Alexis*.

The story of the *Life of Saint Alexis* holds a particularly important position in French literature, not just as one of the earliest extant poems in the vernacular, but also one of the oldest themes of intensive study of medieval French. In fact, Gaston Paris affirmed its special significance as a French literary text as early as 1869.[5] The work is considered part of the French canon, often studied by scholars and students. The fact that it has been repeatedly renewed during the last three centuries indicates its unique value as an Old French masterpiece. The work probably originates from a Syriac tale later transmitted in a variety of ancient languages such as Aramaic, Ethiopian, Greek, Latin, Old Slavonic and Old Norse (Amiaud 1889; Meunier 1933, 1; Perugi and Fasseur 2017, xxxvii). The story has migrated to the West, producing not only French but also other Romance, Germanic and Slavic language versions (Stebbins 1975; Guscin 2016, 107).

It was reproduced in several French medieval manuscripts, which later became the subject of many scholarly dissertations and publications, mostly focusing on the content, style or language (*cf*. Bansen-Harp 1998; Storey 1987, 1–60), but not on its transfer. The most famous manuscript is known as the Hildesheim manuscript, probably copied in England in the 12th century and currently kept in Hanover (Meunier 1933, 17).

It is therefore clear that the genesis of the text(s) is multilayered, since the French medieval versions themselves are based on previous ones in various languages. At the same time, it was necessary to verify and determine whether the modern French texts were derived from French sources, or at least claimed to be so.

As a first stage, in accordance with the theoretical framework discussed above, we look at assumed transfer products in modern French in order to trace the translations and reconstruct their immediate context.

Modalities of Transfer and Their Products

As we have noticed, the term translation ('traduction') was not often used by authors or transcribers, while other specific labels were much more prominent. In addition to translation, assumed transfer products documented in the study carry labels such as literal translation, edition, song, cantique, biography, poem, miracle and episodes.[6] The most frequent method explicitly mentioned was edition ('critical', 'scientific' or standard). In the field of philology, the edition of ancient texts covers several main operations: the deciphering of the source literal text, the collation of various manuscripts, the standardization according to a specific philological approach, and a possible paratextual component named 'critical apparatus', consisting of linguistic, literary, historical, religious and cultural comments.

In the current context, critical editions are considered as transfer products, even though they reproduce the Old French text rather than provide a modern language version, for several reasons. It should be stated that for our purpose, there is no distinction between edition, scientific edition and critical edition. The terminological differences at that period of time, derived from the philologists view and aimed to attribute a more scientific authority to the text. The same purpose is served by indications such as 'couronné par l'Académie', 'membre de l'Académie' and others. First of all, even a simple reprint of an existing text in a new environment fits within the category of 'assumed transfer' as defined above. In addition, while the text is in Old French, its entire peritext (immediate paratext) is formulated in modern French. Furthermore, the ancient text itself undergoes elaborate manipulations as previously explained, and is far from a transparent representation of the source manuscripts. Finally, the two poles involved in a transfer operation can definitely make use of a common language, while belonging to distinct cultural systems or polysystems, as suggested by D'hulst (2012, 147). Evidently, scientific editions make use of criteria derived from the academic discipline of modern philology. It is therefore an obvious product of the target system, rather than a source item naïvely introduced in it. Moreover, critical editions often serve as sources for other modern transfer operations such as translations or adaptations.

Numerous editions of *Saint Alexis* have been published since Müller's 1845 and Hofman's 1868 editions. In fact, it has even been stated (Storey [1934] 1968, 78) that any history of the research on this work should start with Paris' seminal edition (1869-72 and on). Indeed, this paper highlights some of the more influential editions with the purpose of exploring their relations to translations along with the links between both categories.

Let us start with the aforementioned work by Gaston Paris (see the review article by Nicol 1874), which applied the Lachmannian editorial method on a medieval French text for the very first time.[7] Paris included in this pioneering publication three different versions of the tale, based on several manuscripts. The inaugural work was published by the Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, under the auspices of the ministry of public education.

Gaston Paris re-edited this poem several times with many publishing houses, in some cases offering slight modifications (see Storey 1987, 17–19).

All the other important critical editions (Paris and Langlois 1908, Meunier 1933; Storey [1934] 1968; Perugi 2000) were published by Droz.[8] They are all based solely or mainly on the Hildesheim manuscript. Features common to all the major editions are: lists of variants, glossaries, as well as linguistic and historical information presented in the 'critical apparatus'. Every edition had its own particularities. Canon Meunier (1933) elaborated on the transmission of the *Alexis* legend throughout the Syriac, Greek and Latin traditions as well as on the stanza structures and other prosodic matters. His edition seems to represent a split from the Lachmannian method and the adoption of a more Bédier-styled approach.[9] One year later, Christopher Storey's edition ([1934] 1968), the fruition of his doctoral research at the University of Strasbourg, also openly states his affiliation to Bédier's theory.

Finally, Maurizio Perugi's editions (2000, 2014) propose a new collation of several manuscripts as well as quite elaborate discussions of the genetic development of the tale itself. Other chapters in the volume are dedicated to the specific editing methods used to establish the stemma and the text itself. Perugi's 2017 publication (with Fasseur) includes the edition (based on his 2014 version) along with the translation in a facing-page format.

As expected, the absence of translation in most editions suggests that they were designed to encourage their readers to deal with the original language text, with the assistance of grammatical and lexical tools, rather than to rely on a modern translation. Out of the discussed editions, covering over 20 reprints, only 2 featured translations (Meunier 1933; Perugi-Fasseur 2017) — always in a bilingual spread layout. In both cases, despite the 84 years separating them, extremely long debates are dedicated to issues related to the philological (textual, grammatical) aspects, whereas the accompanying translations are hardly touched upon: Meunier does not provide any explanation or recommendation related to his translation, while Fasseur offers a brief three-page 'note on the translation' (Perugi and Fasseur 2017, XLVII–XLIX). In this section she mentions the preference for a prose translation formulated in a more naturally modern language, which avoids repetitions and tends towards the use of contemporary syntax, morphology and punctuation.

As mentioned above, these scholars did not seem to attribute great consideration to the translation or to view it as an important element of an academic body of research. Storey explicitly refers to Raoux' translation as 'simply a translation into modern French' (Storey [1934] 1968, 21, n. 27), as if it required very little scholarly effort. This creates a striking conflict with the fact that philologists composed these translations themselves based on their scholarly knowledge and expertise. Indeed, it appeared to be viewed as a minor component of the scientific work.

Translations

Prior to discussing the list of criteria formulated above for the analysis of the various products, a preliminary division has been made into partial and full translations. Indeed, the documents in our corpus can be classified into those two categories. Partial translations were published mainly in chrestomathies, and integral translations published in

a variety of formats. This distinction is important since it largely converges with the diachronic publication order as well as the gradual process of the emergence of standa-lone translations and the increasing visibility of this label.

Partial Translations

Three partial translations were found in French chrestomathies, and one — in a commentary section serving as a precursor and as a promise for a future chrestomathy (Gautier [1872] 1881). Chrestomathies offer a selection of texts and excerpts representing the most important authors of a nation or a language, to be used as a learning tool. The original (edited) texts are sometimes accompanied by different types of explanations, and often by translations. Gautier's work and the three chrestomathies were explicitly or implicitly inspired by the very famous work of the same genre by German scholar Karl Bartsch (1866), which did not offer translations. Most importantly, it should be stated that these four works were done within the time frame of ten years, which is significant in itself and deserves further discussion.

The first partial translation of *Saint Alexis*, by Léon Gautier, is featured in the postface for his annotated translation of the *Chanson de Roland* in a volume honoured by the French Academy and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He declares in his afterword that old texts are the monuments of the language, which should be known by heart, and that he translates them to make them loved (Gautier [1872] 1881, 413). Gautier's *Roland* was first published in 1872, and in at least 20 more editions. These editions differed from each other in their intended readership (high school or university students), use (classroom or preparation for agrégation) and peritexts (historical introduc-tion, linguistic chapters).

The postface with the partial *Alexis* translation initially appeared only later (probably 1880). The text included a list of recommended old French literary works, that according to him, should be part of the National Heritage, accompanied by some partial translations and a short commentary justifying the selection. He intended to prepare a brief chres-tomathy-like collection with a facing-page translation (413), which we were unable to find in archives.[10] It is explicitly stated that knowing the canonical literary texts since child-hood is indispensable for the creation of a unified nation.

As far as the title is concerned, since the book is dedicated to the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Alexis* translation is obviously not the main purpose of the volume. However, the postface clearly explains that translations of the old monuments are provided since they are not found elsewhere and are of the highest importance for the Nation's unification. The text does not include the source; only a translated version is provided, which partially reconstructs the original assonance in paragraphs, where the break between verses is marked by dashes. For the sake of concision, short summaries replace the stanzas left untranslated. Even though the author-translator is a well-known scholar and the texts are seriously studied, the main issue of the book is less philological, at least for the *Alexis* text. Hence, the philological aspect is less developed and no footnotes nor variants are mentioned. The publishing house is *Alfred Mame and sons* from Tours. The earliest edition that we have traced with the Alexis poem is the 11th.

The second partial translation, the first one to be published in a chrestomathy, was composed by Charles Aubertin ([1883] 1897), an ex-professor at the École Normale Supérieure and a Humanities faculty member in Dijon. The chrestomathy titled *Choix de textes du Xe au XVIe siècles*, was reprinted in 1884, 1892, 1897, 1911. The work, published by *Les Frères Belin* in Paris included historical information along with grammatical commentary. This publishing house, known for its speciality in academic and scholarly texts, established in 1777, was a main contributor to the circulation of knowledge in this period. Aubertin presents this chrestomathy as complementary to his previous book, *Origins of the French language and poetry* (1874) printed by the same publisher. He declares that making the old French easy to read (« faciliter l'intelligence de l'ancien français », vi) is the safest way to attract people to it, but he does not explicitly say how this is achieved in this volume apart from the comments. The translation component is mentioned neither on the cover, nor on the front page, but only in the text itself: following every Old French fragment, a 'modern French translation' appears. Those fragments constitute sometimes several pages. The fact that the translation is not highlighted may indicate that for this author, it serves mainly as a comprehension tool, raising very few complex issues. While the original text presents essentially grammatical remarks, the translation does not provide any footnotes at all. The translation, written in small characters, tries to convey the meaning of the original without versification, using dashes in order to separate stanzas. It seems that for Aubertin the content of the translation was most important, much more so than the reconstruction of any literary features. Also, rather than encouraging the reader to compare source and target texts, the linear presentation invites the reader to lean on the translation only when necessary.

The second chrestomathy, *Chrestomathie de l'ancien français IX–XV siècles* was produced by Léon Constans ([1883] 1906), professor at the University of Aix-Marseille and distinguished philologist. It included a translation as a supplement (first published in 1885) which was integrated later into the second edition. It is worth mentioning that the first edition of the book was published at the same time as the one by Aubertin, when the interest in French poetry was obviously increasing, probably due to the change of programme at the beginning of the school year ([1883] 1897). It was republished several times (1884, 1890, 1905 1906, 1918, 1934, 1960, 2010, 2017) both in Paris (Vieweg and Welter) and in New York (1905, 1918, 1934, Stechert) and recently (2017) in Charleston (USA) as a photo edition. Constans' translation encompasses stanzas 78–101 (34–37), and is intended for the use of high school and university students and teachers according to the newly approved official program (1), mainly as a helpful tool.

The text is presented in the format of two consecutives colons preserving the versified original. Each column displays part of the original and part of the translation. The translation is presented in smaller and denser characters. It tries to deliver the story in a pleasant way. The division into stanzas is marked in the text by numbers. The etymological, phonological and grammatical remarks regarding the text itself follow the translation. Beside the translation, this volume features a representative list of medieval French literature and an etymological glossary. It was honoured by the Académie Française.

Here as well, the translation component is absent from the cover and front pages, mentioned first in the preface of the supplement (1885). It should be noted that only the older pieces, such as *Eulalie* and *Alexis*, were translated in this chrestomathy. The absence of the label 'translation" may therefore be explained by the fact that this component only accompanied some works, or by its relatively low scientific prestige.

The third chrestomathy (1887, 22–31), *Chrestomathie de l'ancien français (IX–XV siècles)*, was published by Ernest Devillard (1887), a *professeur agrégé* at the Angoulême high school. It offers the edition and translation of selected stanzas in a facing page format, along with a glossary. The book was published by Klincksieck in Paris, a well-known publisher founded in 1842, specializing in the humanities since the 1880's. The chrestomathy was reprinted in a photo in 2010.

As opposed to the previous items, the front page of this chrestomathy states clearly 'Old French Chrestomathy: Text, Translation and Glossary', emphasizing the element of translation. The purpose of this 'almost-literal' (II) translation, as stated by the author, is to allow every reader, even one who does not master the Latin [sic] language, to access the Old French writers (III).

The translation is displayed in prose paragraphs containing the verses separated by dashes. It strives to preserve the literal meaning and often uses the same lexeme, but does not maintain the structure of assonance. It is important to note that this chrestomathy includes a very limited apparatus, offering only a glossary and a name-index, without footnotes concerning grammar, variations or other linguistic information. Indeed, the author presents the volume as 'totally elementary' ('un ouvrage tout à fait élémentaire', ii), aiming at the general public.

Full Translations

The first integral translation was published as part of Canon Meunier's 1933 edition, *La vie de Saint Alexis: poème français du XIe siècle* as opposed to the partial translations in the earlier anthologies. Meunier was not merely a priest but is described on the front page as a professor of experimental phonology and historical French linguistics at the Catholic Institute and the Collège de France in Paris. The Parisian publisher, Droz, is one of the most famous editors in the field of Old French and linguistics in general. The full title of the book mentions the 'literal translation' included along with the grammatical comments and the glossary. The text is presented in a bilingual format, where each verse faces its translation. Meunier does not discuss his translational choices, but he does refer to the previous version by Constans.

The novelty of this translation deserves some discussion. It presents two particular features: its fullness and its format, exhibiting two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, it strives to adopt, to a certain extent, the features of the modern French language, particularly with respect to word order. On the other hand, as far as the lexicon is concerned, it emphasizes characteristics of the Old French language preserved in the translation, for example through the use of some lexemes in their Old French meaning (*siècle* in the sense of era or period, or the material world; *riche* in the sense of powerful) or in a form directly reflecting the Old French morphology (*fortement* instead of *fort* or *beaucoup*).

In addition, to allow the reader to detect Old French linguistic features in the translation itself, Meunier uses parentheses pointing at many insertions and shifts: explicitations and elaborations of original phrases ('tout (entier) il s'en va déclinant'; additions of grammatical markers which were not necessary in the source (negation adverb, partitive article, prepositions, conjunctions); elimination of ellipses acceptable in Old French but not in the modern language ('ils laissent courir (la nef) par mer'); the use of obsolete forms out of current use, in a modern spelling: *moult, contrée, onque*. This last phenomenon of preserving outdated items in a modern way, is quite common in other Old French translations (*cf.* Buridant 2005; Corbellari 2014).

We find that this ambivalent attitude towards the linguistic differences and similarities is quite revealing, as it exposes the editor/translator's desire to present the reader with not just both versions but rather both languages and to acquaint the reader with both French forms. The translation then is not meant to replace, but rather to accompany, enhance or help familiarize the source.

Marcel Raoux's full translation (1940) was published in the periodical *Nuova et Vetera, Revue Catholique pour la Suisse Romande* (326–345) without the source version. Its title clearly indicates the nature of the text 'La vie de saint Alexis. Poème normand du XIe siècle, traduit et présenté par Marcel Raoux'. Raoux's aim is to demonstrate the universal value of the poem and to praise the qualities of Alexis himself. Unlike most of the translators, he is hardly preoccupied by language or linguistic issues and focuses on the character and the content of the poem: no variants or grammatical remarks are present. In his preliminary note, after a historical overview, Raoux mentions Meunier's (1933) translation, whose edition he uses as a reference text, as well as two other partial translations (Constans and Gautier). He then explains the reasons for choosing this text, emphasizing the extreme difficulties that students face trying to read Old French poems. He decided to enable them to have a glimpse at the life of saints (*Vie de saints*). *Alexis* was chosen for several reasons. It was one of the three oldest hagiographic pieces, in his opinion — the most impressive one. According to him, Alexis represents well the saintly ideal qualities of the early Middle Ages: he was chaste, poor, humble and pious. He strives to translate the text as faithfully as possible, in a pleasant language which appeals to the modern reader, while conserving the original characteristics of a vigorous but naive text. The translation maintains the original structure of five verse lines, each line corresponding - apart from a few exceptions - to the translation of a verse.

It is only 32 years later that the next full translation was published, this time by a major prestigious editing house (Champion). The authors are two scholars from the University of Ann Arbor — Guy René Mermier and Sarah Melhado White ([1972] 1983). Their rendition entitled *La vie de Saint Alexis: poème du XIe siècle* clearly mentions the translated nature of the text on the front page. A long introduction of 21 pages explains the origin, history, style and prosody of the poem, while a short one-page note on the translation addresses issues of method and sources. It states that the translators aimed mainly at referential precision and 'formal fidelity' rather than poetic elegance (22), which can be interpreted as preferring the older linguistic and poetic properties to modern ones, even though their text is partly rhymed or assonanced, and is displayed in verse form. They do mention, however, that they were sometimes 'forced' to introduce shifts regarding word order, verbal tenses and specific 'untranslatable' expressions. They referred both to Paris' and Storey's editions, but apparently used Paris as their basic source (see p. 59). It is important

to note that while this translation is offered as a standalone text, the authors suggest in their note that students follow one of the above-mentioned editions while reading their text, and they even attach a list of variants where they accept Storey's readings rather than Paris'. This comment along with the scholarly expertise of the publishing house suggests that a considerable part of the intended readership consists of students and academics.

It is interesting to compare the translators' declarations with their textual production. A close look at the text reveals in fact that informational equivalence has indeed been maintained as far as possible. However, word order and tenses were modified more often than not, while the translators' statement only states that 'at times they were forced' to change them.

In the same vein, many lexemes were replaced and even added, rather than preserved through calques of Old French forms, as one would expect given the translators' claims.

The fourth full translation was published in 2014 as part of the anthology 'Vies imaginaires' (Demartini and Lucken 2014) in the famous collection 'folio classique' by Gallimard, Paris. The book is dedicated to the genre of 'biofiction' — a life story seeking to deliver a meaningful model rather than maintaining historical accuracy. *Alexis* (87–108) is featured as the oldest French text in this volume. The translators Dominique Demartini and Christopher Lucken explain that their version preserves the stanzas but presents them as prose paragraphs, while making an effort to keep the syntactic unit structured by the verses as well as the narrative rhythm and style, characterized as 'simple' and 'somewhat rough' (86). Indeed, this version reads more like metered poetry in spite of its prose form. As opposed to Raoux for example, who tries to conserve an ancient and religious format in his translation, the above Demartini and Lucken looks more like a modern poem.

The fifth integral translation was Perugi and Fasseur's 2017 bilingual facing-page paperback publication by Droz in Geneva. It dedicated 38 pages to a thorough introduction concerning literary and historical facts. In addition, a short thematic bibliography was provided, as well as a note from the editor about his method. Following the text itself, an index of forms presented Old French lexemes and grammatical information. Finally, photocopies from different manuscripts were provided at the end of the volume.

The translators' note (XX) explicitly states they avoided *calques* and other phenomena, which might encumber the modern day reader. They list the major shifts applied in the translation process: modern word-order was used, and the frequent repetitions in the source text were eliminated unless reflecting stylistic choices; the exact meaning of the monosyllabic adjectives was made explicit; syntax and morphology were modernized. More importantly, the 5-verses stanzas were transformed into prose paragraphs.

Like the one published in Gefen's edition, this translation conforms to the standards of literary modern-day French, even though both translations are quite different, particularly in their choice of vocabulary. The prose paragraphs brought about new sentence structures, and as a result, created new chains of coherence and fluency inside the paragraphs.

Conclusion

This paper examined more closely the relations between translations, including chrestomathies (featuring translated fragments) and integral translations on the one hand, and editions on the other. All these modernized versions of the *Alexis* text were published over

a relatively short time frame, between 1880 and 2017. Interestingly, within a period of eight years (1880–1887) four different translations were printed in Paris and other regions of France. This seems to be a particularly significant fact, which needs to be explained. It is clear from the translators' paratext that the nationalist aspect was very important at this period. The use of terms as the 'monuments of the language' and the need for a shared heritage was obviously expressed by the scholars. At the same time, the importance of recognizing the unity of the French language was evidently implied. While the literary texts were considered of great value, the translations were, most of the time, only a tool for understanding the 'patrimoine' of the French nation. In some cases, the translation was added only in a later edition, in order to fulfil requests for a more easily accessible version, which could include non-initiated students of schools and, to a certain extent, the general public. Furthermore, there was hardly any discussion concerning the translation itself: grammar, lexicon, structure of the stanzas or prosodic issues were mostly ignored, particularly compared with the elaborate discussions of parallel issues in the source manuscripts or critical editions.

The emerging production of chrestomathies, anthologies and annotated (bilingual) editions reflects the point where models accepted in the teaching and research of classical languages were applied to Old and Medieval French, possibly following the new German trend (*cf.* Bartsch). In addition, the prestige of some university and privileged high-school professors enabled them to publish editions offering translations of different sections from the same text. Indeed, it is notable that the first translations were mainly partial and only the later ones were complete. The editions with the translation received immediate recognition and awards from various academic institutions.

As far as the assumptions about Old French as a separate language are concerned, it would seem that a certain ambivalence did exist regarding the degree of intelligibility that modern speakers may attribute to Old French, and that perspectives on these issues evolved over the decades. While editions, the first and largest category of transfer, are based on the scientific, historical and perhaps literary significance of the work in question, the manner in which it presents the text to 19th and 20th century speakers evidently assumes some degree of understanding as their baseline.

In the chrestomathies class, however, a certain shift occurs since these fragmented anthologies are oriented towards a bigger readership — not just scholars and students specializing in language and literature, but also high school students and possibly the general public, as noticed above. Indeed, the turning point in the emergence of translations in our corpus was the revision of the educational program in French high schools and universities. As a result, the nationwide scope of the intended readership encouraged publishers not only to curate texts and excerpts, but also to cater to a much less sophisticated trained audience: hence the need to admit the very low intelligibility of Old French (Cerquiglini-Toulet 2018; Bat-Zeev Shyldkrot and Karas 2019). Moreover, the famous existing chrestomathy by the German scholar Bartsch could not be used as a basis for these new publications, given the tendency noted among French philologists and linguists at the time to protect the language and claim ownership over its study and expertise, showing a strong preference for works produced by French scholars (see Meillet 1915; Rousseau 1988; Paris 1864 in Perugi 2017, XXVI; Meyer 1872).

The translations have been apparently added precisely to reconcile these contrasting requirements: on the one hand, appropriating Old French language and literature as a national resource and heritage, thus emphasizing linguistic continuity; and on the other, as a means to disseminate universally this national heritage, a more indulgent mediation was in fact needed, albeit implicitly admitting the complexities and nuances involved in this very same linguistic continuity.

Finally, translations — published with or without editions — are made possible in an environment where national and linguistic continuity may be less in question doubted, and the linguistic mediation through translation is gradually normalized without compromising the continuity. This enables the use of bilingual editions and later, standalone translations. This itinerary seems to indicate a general tendency which can be further examined.

Notes

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   The project aims at a cultural examination of translations from Old into Modern French, investigating modern transpositions that were presented or considered as translations, and their relation to other types of transposition.
2. For more information on the legend, see: L. J. Engels, 'The West European Alexius Legend, with an Appendix presenting the medieval Latin text corpus in its context', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker, *The Invention of Saintliness*, London and NY, Routledge 2002.
3. For another study regarding *Saint Alexis*, see also Bat-Zeev Shyldkrot and Karas (2021).
4. Such an example may be found in Gautier's 1881 postface in which he also presented the partial translation to Alexis. Gautier promised to publish later a chrestomathy, which we were unable to trace.
5. As mentioned in a review (Meyer, *Romania*, 1872, 111–113) this text is particularly important as its versions draw the evolution of the language, literature and culture in the course of four centuries and provides a scientific corpus for the recently-founded École pratique.
6. This variety of items includes a *cantique* accompanied by pious 'reflections' and a short miracle story published in the Bibliothèque bleue.
7. A method developed by K. Lachmann in the nineteen century aiming to provide a systematic way to trace the genealogy of manuscripts according to their common mistakes. The procedure is titled stemmatic recension. For a detailed review see Timpanaro 1963 (2016).
8. Meyer's partial edition was published by Slatkine (Meyer 1874).
9. The French Philologist J. Bédier introduced a new approach to reconstruct ancient texts relying on a single manuscript, which is corrected as little as possible. For a further discussion see Trotter (2015) see also Trovato (2014).
10. He seems to have participated, perhaps as a secretary, in Guessard's *Anciens poètes de la France* and in a list of the poetry of the Troubadours, conserved in files at the École de Chartes (Léon Gautier, Henri-François Delaborde, Léon Le Grand, Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, 1899: 60, 228–266).

Disclosure Statement

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