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Ivanhoe, *Rob Roy* and the History of English: Difficulties for Translation*

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ABSTRACT

Walter Scott made wide use of his knowledge of historical linguistics—of the history of English and Scots—in writing dialogues in *Ivanhoe* and other novels. This causes some difficulties for translators; the opening conversation between Gurth and Wamba in *Ivanhoe* is a curious case. Scott's use of period language in his medieval novels, and of a type of Scots interspersed with words that by his time were archaic in English, in the case of Rob Roy's speech, should ideally be rendered in translation, since both help to convey the author's historical point of view (as does his use of linguistic variety). This, however, cannot always be achieved with a result that performs the function intended in the original. Some examples are offered from French and Spanish as tokens of difficulties that arise in most languages. It is suggested that introductions and notes in scholarly editions of translations should include more discussion of these aspects, so that Scott's skill in writing dialogues, where translation can do him less justice, is brought to his readers' attention.

KEYWORDS: Walter Scott, Historical linguistics, Translation, Spanish, French, Etymologies

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* This paper is to the memory of Professor Koldo Mitxelena, outstanding linguist, who first called my attention to the historical socio-linguistics lesson in *Ivanhoe* when I was his student.
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I. Introduction

As part of his didactic and illustrative purpose in writing historical novels, Walter Scott made very effective use of his knowledge of historical linguistics. This relevant feature of his writing, naturally aimed at his British readership, is not always easy to reflect in other languages. This paper focuses on translations of passages from two novels, *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy*, significant for comparative translation studies precisely because they present problems derived from the history of English—difficulties that translators all over the world have come across and will continue to face in the future. Its main aim is to call attention to elements in the original texts that cause such difficulties, to show how some translators tackled them, and to make readers reflect on what might have been done in other languages and perhaps re-read translations in this light. It is not a descriptive study of the many translations of those novels or of the passages analysed. A few examples are given, from the first translation into French of *Ivanhoe*, in 1820, and from some twentieth-century Spanish translations of *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy*.[1] In the conclusion, it is suggested that better publishing policies might help to make readers aware of the linguistic nuances that Scott so skilfully worked into his novels but cannot be fully appreciated in translation.

The first work considered is *Ivanhoe*, because it is Scott's first medieval novel set in England, and in its Dedicatory Epistle he discussed the strategies employed in order to convey the flavour of an older stage of the language. The advice he gives there for writers who wish to do something similar can serve as useful guidelines for translators, though it will not always help to produce the effects found in the source texts. Scott recommends that an excessive or exclusive use of archaic vocabulary items should be avoided, but that the grammatical character and turn of expression of older periods can be imitated or evoked to good effect, and this can be applied in translation. In *Ivanhoe*, however, old and new vocabulary items in English become vital at one point where lexical change is the means used by Scott to illustrate historical change. In the first chapter, he presents innovation through borrowing in the transition from Old to Middle English as a reflection of the "blending" of Normans and Anglo-Saxons into a single English people. The dialogue he writes works very

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[1] Murray Pittock has sections on Scott in France (including Paul Barnaby) and Spain (José Enrique García-González and Toda). Susan Bassnett includes César Domínguez, about Scott, which also covers his early reception in Latin America.

well in the original, but it has caused translators to resort to some strategies that, from a strictly philological point of view, could be accused of constituting "linguistic falsity." Attention is also drawn to his use of the different forms of the second-person singular pronouns (*thou* and *you*), in his wish to archaize the speech. Since Scott was quite inconsistent in this respect, many translators have corrected his usage, making it more coherent, but some, in attempting to observe Scott's usage strictly, employing corresponding pronoun forms used in earlier stages of the target language, may have produced texts where the inconsistency, which usually goes unnoticed in English, becomes more evident. An example of this is offered from a Spanish translation; readers of editions in other languages may wish to examine how this key marker of "ancient language" has been treated.

The other novel, *Rob Roy*, is set in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland just before the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715; there, Scott shows awareness of linguistic trends in the early eighteenth century and works this into his dialogues, and, in one particular passage, draws on words that were already archaic in English and inserts them in Rob Roy's speech, thus implying that some of his Highland values have also become archaic in post-Union Scotland. The effects of this skilful use of archaic vocabulary are difficult to replicate in translation.

In the case of *Rob Roy*, as in all the Scottish novels, there is, of course, the much more prevalent difficulty, for translation, of the different varieties found in the dialogues: English (both Standard and dialectal), Scots (the evolution of Old English in Lowland Scotland, the variety used by most of the Scots characters in the Scottish novels), Highland Scots (sometimes called Highland English, though it is based on Scots, with interferences from Gaelic), and even a special kind of English used by some speakers who are either supposed to be speaking in Gaelic or expressing themselves by translating their Gaelic thoughts into English.[2] Rob Roy himself is a linguistic melting-pot and uses several of these. For his didactic purposes, Scott manipulates Rob's use of language, and in this process, he includes the use of archaisms. This is a problem for translators, because the historical nuances implied by the use of those archaisms in the source text are practically impossible to convey in the target text. The use of different varieties in the dialogues in the Scottish novels, one of the major issues for translation, needs to be mentioned in dealing with

[2] Complete descriptions of these, with many examples from the novels, are found in Graham Tulloch.

Rob Roy, but it is not the object of this paper, which only seeks to emphasize Scott's intention in bringing his awareness and knowledge of the history of the language into his writing, and that translation, which made him a world-famous author, sometimes cannot do him full justice in this regard.

II. *Ivanhoe*

In this first novel set in medieval England, Scott included a Dedicatory Epistle signed by its author, Laurence Templeton (Scott's fictional voice), who discusses in some detail the way in which a writer should attempt to imitate the language of past periods. This can be considered the theoretical basis for what Scott did in *Ivanhoe* (1819) and other medieval novels to follow, using what Graham Tulloch called "period language" (13-17). Unfortunately, the omission of this Epistle in most "complete" Spanish editions of *Ivanhoe* (excluding abridged and adapted versions) deprives the readers of a part of the work. It is a component of the novel, not an extra paratext. In the past this practice was common with first editions of translations,[3] but in Spain it has continued into the twenty-first century. Omitting the Epistle diminishes Scott's didactic purpose, in historical and linguistic terms, leaving the readers without some references that relate to what he is trying to show in his dialogues, since this information might have made up for some of the nuances that are lost in translation.

The period language appears mostly in the dialogues, and we might assume that translators would do well to follow the advice offered to writers in those pages. In the Epistle, after having stated that the main difficulties in reading Chaucer arise from the spelling, but that in fact most of the language used by that author is perfectly understandable to modern readers (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 18) Scott makes the point that a writer who wishes to evoke earlier times "would act injudiciously if he were to select from the Glossary the most obsolete words which it contains, and employ those exclusively of all phrases and vocables contained in modern days" (18). Some lines later, he goes on to add that:

> He who would imitate an ancient language with success, must attend rather to its grammatical character, turn of expression, and

[3] Gérard Genette analysed this, and discusses editions of Scott.

> mode of arrangement, than labour to collect extraordinary and antiquated terms, which . . . do not in ancient authors approach the number of words still in use, though perhaps somewhat altered in sense and spelling, in the proportion of one to ten. (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 18-19)

This sounds like good advice for writers, but it may not always work well for translators, especially when the author of the original is not very accurate in his use of some points of grammar and morphology, what Scott called the "grammatical character" of the language. Here we will refer to one point in particular, but one which comes up repeatedly in *Ivanhoe* and many other period novels: the use of second-person singular pronouns.

Indeed, a good deal of caution is required with regard to this part of Scott's period language, namely his peculiar use of the old forms of address *you* and *thou* for the second-person singular (the polite or "reverential" form *you* versus the familiar form *thou*). Many languages, and certainly most Romance languages, had a similar distinction in the past, and this should be useful in producing a similar effect in translations. In fact, the English distinction *thou-you* in terms of politeness is a linguistic consequence of the Norman Conquest: in Old English (Anglo-Saxon) *thou* (objective *thee,* possessive *thy, thine*) was strictly singular and *ye* (objective *you,* possessive *your*) was plural (Modern English spellings are used here). French, like other Romance languages such as Spanish, had developed the distinction by using the plural form *vos*, from Latin *vos*, for the "reverential singular"; in the case of French, this became *vous*. English followed suit under the pressure of contact with French in England after the Norman Conquest and, as a calque, began to use *you* in the same way, as opposed to *thou* which, like *tu* in French, came to be reserved for friendship or intimacy (or abuse), or for a superior addressing an inferior. This system of usage appears quite straightforwardly in English up to Chaucer's time and even later (with *you* eventually also used for the nominative). It continued in Shakespeare's time, though usage in terms of respect or familiarity was no longer so clear-cut. What we might expect in period novels like *Ivanhoe* (set in the late twelfth century) would be to find the distinction used much in the way that we find it in Chaucer, but in fact inconsistency appears to be the rule with Scott. With regard to this, Tulloch, in his chapter on period grammar, points out that even in Shakespeare we sometimes find inconsistencies, changes from *thou*

to *you* or vice-versa for which we cannot provide a reasonable explanation, such as this sentence from *Julius Caesar* (II. iii. 7): "If thou beest not immortal look about you" (Tulloch 135). He makes a comparison: "Scott's works show alternations of pronoun equally inexplicable, that is, if one tries to make Scott's usage follow rules" (135). Two examples of such inconsistency from *Ivanhoe* are given, with a general comment: "Any attempt to explain the wavering between *thou* and *you* forms in Scott according to rules will break down after, at the most, a page" (135). For him, the best explanation for these alternations is not in terms of historical usage; sometimes the reason appears to be simply that using *you* allows the writer to use uninflected verbs in the simple past rather than "the ugly past forms ending in *–st*" (136). As may be inferred from the following statement, translators would be justified in assuming that such inconsistencies are not part of Scott's authorial intention, and therefore should not be replicated.

> Certainly, too, many examples of inconsistency are mere carelessness—meticulousness in such a matter would have been unlike Scott. He would only be careful in what he considered worth the trouble and inconsistency serves his purposes here as well as careful regularity. It is surprising how little we notice the inconsistency until we look for it. (Tulloch 136)

Nevertheless, this inconsistency, which indeed tends to go unnoticed for readers of English, may imply a risk for translators if they insist on giving the "exact equivalents" for *thou* and *you*, since the sudden, inexplicable changes from one form of address to the other stand out as more disconcerting in the target language. A 1990 translation of *Ivanhoe* into Spanish (Hernández 2004) opted for a nearly exact one-for-one rendering of the pronoun forms (and their corresponding verb endings) throughout the novel. As a sample, here are some instances from the final chapter of *Ivanhoe* (chapter 44), in the interview between Rowena and Rebecca, when the latter is about to leave England: They call each other "lady," and the pronoun form most often used is *you*, but we find two or three unjustifiable changes. Thus Rowena says to Rebecca in the same speech (my italics): "Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day rendered back but in slight measure *your* unceasing charity . . . Speak, is there aught remains in which he or I can serve *thee*?" (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 446) and later Rebecca

uses *thou* to Rowena: "*Thy* speech is fair, lady . . . and *thy* purpose fairer" (446), but then reverts to *you*. The translator seems to have made a deliberate effort to keep closely to the equivalents: *thou* is *tú* and *you* is *vos* (with their corresponding verb endings). So, for the first lines quoted, she writes (my italics): "Wilfred de Ivanhoe en aquel día no *os* devolvió sino una pequeña parte de *vuestra* incesante caridad . . . *Habla*: ¿hay algo más en que él y yo podamos servir*te*?" (Hernández 568). The translation makes the same change as Scott's text, yet where the inconsistency may pass unnoticed in English, in Spanish it is more striking. Although the translator does not give the "proper equivalents" in absolutely all the cases, she appears to have made a conscious effort to translate the Middle English pronoun forms and verb endings with their medieval Spanish equivalents. This edition was a very complete volume, a welcome and thorough effort. It included Scott's 1830 Introduction (for the *Magnum Opus* edition), his complete 1830 Author's Notes at the end, and the Dedicatory Epistle. However, in the case of these forms of address there is an excess of exactitude in the rendering of Scott's inconsistent usage, and the result is that the translation reads awkwardly in this respect. Consulting Tulloch on this aspect might have led to avoiding such scrupulous one-for-one equivalences, producing a more coherent Spanish text.

Having noted this risk in the translation of the forms of address, let us move on to Scott's illustration of post-Norman Conquest vocabulary, and its difficulty for translators. Early in the first chapter of *Ivanhoe* there is an amusing dialogue between two secondary characters, Wamba the jester and Gurth the swineherd, who are out in the country. Wamba tells Gurth that the pigs he herds will end up, as he says,

> ". . . converted into Normans before morning, to thy no small ease and comfort."
>
> "The swine turned to Normans to my comfort!" quod Gurth; "expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull, and my mind too vexed, to read riddles."
>
> "Why, how call you those grunting brutes running around on their four legs?" demanded Wamba.
>
> "Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

> "And swine is good Saxon," said the jester; "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels like a traitor?"
>
> "Pork," answered the swineherd.
>
> "I am very glad every fool knows that too," said Wamba, "and pork I think is good Norman-French; and so, when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles; what dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha?" (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 31)

The difficulty is not hard to detect: how can the linguistic duality "swine-pork" in English be rendered in other languages? As a sample, we can look at Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Defauconpret's French version, published in 1820, one of the earliest full translations of *Ivanhoe* (a German one also came out in 1820). We must bear in mind that the author has already set the historical linguistic background to this dialogue, providing a lesson in the social history of the English language within the opening paragraphs of the first chapter, where he mentions the condition of the Anglo-Saxons, especially the lower classes, under the Norman feudal system up to the time of Richard I. In the first chapter, after recounting the ways in which the Normans had imposed their rule and laws on the Anglo-Saxons, he describes the linguistic situation:

> At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where the pomp and state of a court was emulated, Norman-French was the only language employed; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were delivered in the same tongue. In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even of justice, while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned to the use of rustics and hinds, who knew no other. Still, however, the necessary intercourses between the lords of the soil, and those oppressed inferior beings by whom that soil was cultivated, occasioned the gradual formation of a dialect, compounded betwixt the French and the Anglo-Saxon, in which they could render themselves mutually intelligible to each other; and from this necessity arose by degrees the structure of our present English

> language, in which the speech of the victors and the vanquished have been so happily blended together; and which has since been so richly improved by importations from the classical languages, and from those spoken by the southern nations of Europe. (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 26-27)

In a few lines, Scott summarizes the Middle, Early Modern and Modern English periods. There is, of course, no difficulty for the translation of this information, which is vital for setting the historical background of the novel and laying the groundwork for the Anglo-Norman reconciliation that it presents at the end. The problem appears with the examples that Scott uses to illustrate the linguistic aspect. Some pages later, once he has introduced Gurth and Wamba and given a detailed description of their physical appearance, and before they begin to speak to each other, he provides this indication:

> The dialogue which they maintained between them, was carried on in Anglo-Saxon, which, as we said before, was universally spoken by the inferior classes, excepting the Norman soldiers, and the immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles. But to give their conversation in the original would convey but little information to the modern reader, for whose benefit we go on to offer the following translation . . . (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 30)

The artifice of "offering a translation" ties in with the Dedicatory Epistle, in which Laurence Templeton mentions "the . . . motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon or in Norman-French" (17): in terms of language, of course, the piece has to be understandable for modern readers. After the narrator's indication about the language they speak, the dialogue begins, and not many lines later Wamba makes the witty remark that, in any case, Gurth's swine will end up being slaughtered, saying that they will become Normans and giving rise to the lines quoted above.

So, having provided the readers with the necessary historical and linguistic information, Scott illustrates the point by making Wamba give a lesson in what today we would call historical sociolinguistics: after the Norman Conquest, the Norman-French speaking upper classes ate the animals that the subjected Anglo-Saxons raised for them; eventually the Anglo-Saxons, such as Gurth and

Wamba, came to use the French names for the dead animal whose meat is to be consumed, and English has continued to do this with a number of animals.

The example is ingenious, but this simple lesson of Wamba's becomes a problem for translation. The clash between English ("Saxon") and Norman French mentioned in the original is certainly relevant to the context, since it reflects the tension between the conquering Normans and the Anglo-Saxons and helps to highlight it. This has to be conveyed, but requires some manipulation. In 1820, Defauconpret went about it as follows. After Wamba has stated that Gurth's swine "ne peuvent manquer d'être changés demain matin en Normands, ce qui ne sera pas un petit soulagement pour toi" (Defauconpret 30), the dialogue continues:

> —Mes pourceaux changés en Normands ! dit Gurth. Explique moi cela, Wamba; je n'ai le cerveau ni assez subtil ni le cœur assez content pour deviner les énigmes.
>
> —Comment appelles-tu ces animaux à quatre pieds qui courent en grognant?
>
> —Des pourceaux, fou, des pourceaux; il n'y a pas de fou qui ne sache cela.
>
> —Et pourceau est du bon saxon. Mais quand le pourceau est égorgé, écorché, coupé par quartiers, et pendu par les talons d'un croc comme un traître, comment l'appelles-tu en saxon?
>
> —Du porc, répondit le porcher.
>
> —Je suis charmé, dit Wamba, qu'il n'y ait pas de fou qui ne sache cela; et *porc*, je crois, est du bon franco-normand; ainsi donc, tant que la bête est vivante et confiée à la garde d'un esclave saxon, elle garde son nom saxon; mais elle devient normande et s'appelle porc, quand on la porte à la salle à manger du château, pour y servir aux festins des nobles. —Que penses-tu de cela, mon ami Gurth? Eh! (Defauconpret 30)

As we can see, the translator decided to use two different words meaning "swine." Since *porc* in French can be both the animal and the animal's meat, he opted for "du porc" to convey the culinary context in Gurth's reply. He also added the words "en saxon" which are not in the original, to Wamba's question "comment l'appelles-tu?" so as to stress the point that the French word is being

used in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, both words are French (*porc* from Latin *porcus* and *pourceau* from its diminutive form, *porcellus*). Stating that *pourceau* "is good Saxon" could be stigmatised, fastidiously, as "a philological untruth," but the translator's strategy supplied his French readers with two different words that they could recognize. In English, of course, readers were familiar with both terms, though many might never have stopped to think that *pork* was originally French, and it seems clear that Scott wanted them to consider this: the Norman masters ate the meat, but the Anglo-Saxon serfs who raised the animals would have heard the Norman-French name used by their Norman foremen, "immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles," and ended up using it to refer to the dead animal, bringing about the duality that the English language still reflects.

To add to his argument, Wamba gives two more examples of this duality with vocabulary that is, of course, familiar to English-speaking readers:

> . . . there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet, while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner; he is Saxon when he requires tenance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes a matter of enjoyment. (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 31)

In this case, English readers, many of whom would probably be puzzled by the Dutch *Mynheer*, might also be slightly confused by *Monsieur de Veau*, since the English word for the flesh of a dead calf is "veal," which, indeed, comes from Anglo-Norman *vel*, from Old French *vel* (in modern French, *veau*). Defauconpret's translation of this part reads:

> . . . il y a encore le vieux alderman Le Boeuf, qui garde son nom saxon *Ox*, tant qu'il est conduit au pâturage par des serfs et des esclaves comme toi, mais qui devient *Beef*, un vif et brave Français, lorsqu'il se présente devant les honorables mâchoires destinées à le consommer. Le Veau, *Mynheer Calve* (sic) devient de la même façon *Monsieur de Veau*: il est Saxon, tant qu'il a

> besoin des soins du vacher, et acquiert un nom normand, dès qu'il devient matière à bombance. (Defauconpret 30-31)

In this part, the translator followed a different approach. He was not passing French words off as Saxon; he left in the English words and added "Le Boeuf" behind "alderman," so as to let his readers know the meaning of *ox* and see the relation to *beef*, which comes from French *boeuf.* He also added "Le veau" in front of *Mynheer Calve* to ensure that there is no doubt as to what animal this personification refers to.

All translators of *Ivanhoe*, whatever their language, have had to deal with this passage, of course; in the case of Spanish, this is the Scott novel that has been the most translated and adapted by far (reference to sites such as WorldCat or the Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation will show that this applies to most, if not all, of the numerous languages into which Scott has been translated). For the sake of brevity, just two translations done in Spain are quoted here, and only their renderings of the first part, the "swine-pork" duality.

One of the most frequently published twentieth-century translations is that by J. R. Rodríguez de Vera, which came out in 1947 and was reissued by at least six different publishers in that century. This is his version of this passage, beginning with Wamba's question (my italics):

> —¿Cómo llamas tú a esos gruñidores brutos que andan a cuatro patas? —preguntó Wamba.
>
> —*Cerdos*, idiota, *cerdos* —dijo el pastor—. Cualquier idiota lo sabe.
>
> —Y *cerdo* es un buen sajón —dijo el bufón—. Pero ¿cómo se llaman cuando están cortados y en canal y colgados por los talones como traidores?
>
> —*Puercos* —contestó el porquero.
>
> —Me alegro de que cualquier idiota sepa eso también —dijo Wamba—. Cuando vive el animal y está al cuidado de un esclavo sajón, vive con su nombre sajón; pero se vuelve un normando y le llaman *puerco* cuando lo llevan al castillo para algún festejo entre los nobles. ¿Qué piensas de esto, amigo Gurth? ¡Ah! (Rodríguez de Vera 12)

In a strategy similar to Defauconpret's, the translator chose two Spanish words, *cerdo* for the Saxon and *puerco* for the (Norman) French. Here too, both are of Latin origin. The etymology for *puerco* is the same as for French *porc*: Latin *porcus*. The curious story of how Vulgar Latin *cirra,* with the meaning of 'thick hair on animals such as horses and pigs' becomes *cerda* and then the masculine *cerdo* can be found in the etymological dictionary by Corominės and Pascual. Through a process of synechdoche, in the case of pigs the part was eventually used to name the whole, and by 1729 it is first recorded with the meaning of "swine" (therefore, a fastidious philologist would also object to using it in a twelfth-century context). Rodríguez de Vera may well have been following a tradition that started with Defauconpret. He writes that *cerdo* is "good Saxon" and also adds a footnote that translates as: "Some animals do not have the same name in English when they are alive as when they are dead; thus *swine* (a live pig), *pork* (its dead flesh)".[4] In this way he was helping to make the point more clearly, as opposed to translations that use two Spanish words (not always *cerdo* and *puerco*) without annotations.

Nevertheless, there are other possibilities, and the tradition of using synonyms in the target language has not always been followed in Spain. An abridged Catalan version for young readers by Jordi Tiñena, published in 1994, opted for a solution in which there is no translation and no footnote: the word *swine* was simply transferred. To Wamba's question "how call you those grunting brutes . . . ?" Gurth answers: "Com els he de dir si no *swine*?" ("How should I call them but swine?") and Wamba goes on to say that "*Swine* es una paraula ben saxona, y *porc*, seguns crec, una de ben normanda" (Tiñena 23); there is, in this case, a fortunate similarity in the case of Catalan *porc* with the Norman-French word that became English *pork.*

Although it may have passed unnoticed in the original, in this scene Wamba addresses Gurth as *thou* when he makes the joke about the pigs and says that their destiny "can be little else than to be converted into Normans . . . to thy no small ease and comfort" but immediately afterwards, when he presses him with a question, he uses *you* ("Why, how call you those grunting brutes . . . ?" (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 31), and once he has remarked on the use of the two different names for "pig" he goes back to *thou*: "what dost thou think

[4] Several nineteenth century translations of Scott into Spanish were done from French (some quoted in García-González and Toda). Defauconpret added an explanatory note to this dialogue, at the end of the "ox and calf" part, in the 1839 edition. See Brownlie's section on "Addition of non-fictional notes."

of this, friend Gurth, ha?" and Gurth uses *thou* in his reply: "It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool's pate" (Scott, *Ivanhoe* [1977], 31). Here is the first example of Scott's inconsistency in the use of those pronouns. This unjustifiable change in register was not reflected in Defauconpret's translation, in which they call each other *tu* all the time (and in the final chapter Rowena and Rebecca use *vous* consistently). Rodríguez de Vera, as can be seen above, does the same; he uses *tú* throughout the whole scene (in the final chapter Rowena and Rebecca use *vos* consistently). Other translations also correct the inconsistencies; again, the tradition may well have started with Defauconpret as a direct or indirect model. As indicated before, one exception is Hernández. In her version of this scene she uses *tú* for the *thou* forms, but opts for the old Spanish "reverential" form *vos* and its corresponding verbal form (*llamáis*) in the plural in the question with *you*: "¿Cómo llamáis vos a esas bestias gruñidoras . . . ?" (Hernández 41). In line with what we saw earlier, she employs the equivalent of the "reverential singular" found in the original, but the effect of the use of this single instance among the two friends is confusing in the Spanish text, as it does not reflect a deliberate change of register among the characters.

These examples show that Scott's knowledge and use of earlier stages of English and of the historical circumstances that shaped the language, which helped him to create the linguistic atmosphere and the period language for novels like *Ivanhoe*, causes more difficulties for the translation of the medieval novels than one might at first expect. They also illustrate that although some of his inaccuracies in imitating the usage of the past may not disturb his readers in English, the resulting inconsistencies, if reproduced, may cause some detrimental effects in the translated text.

III. *Rob Roy*

The way in which Scott instructs his readers about the linguistic situation in post-Norman Conquest England in *Ivanhoe* can be compared to what he had done with the linguistic situation in post-Union Scotland in *Rob Roy*, by means of the first-person narrator.

With regard to the role played by the history of English and the difficulties for translation, in *Rob Roy* (1818) there is one scene in chapter 34 (Scott [1978], 323-24) where the patterns of linguistic switching on the part of Rob Roy,

perceived and set out in some detail by the first-person narrator and protagonist, appear to be contradicted by a speech made by this character. Here, however, the apparent linguistic inconsistency seems deliberate: through Rob Roy's use of language, Scott is reinforcing his historical point of view, and once more his knowledge of the history of the language comes into play.[5] In terms of translation, the difficulty in rendering this linguistic manipulation may prevent the readers from fully appreciating the author's skill.

Frank Osbaldistone, the English protagonist and narrator of the story, seems fascinated by Rob Roy's linguistic behaviour. From the lines in chapter 4, where Frank remarks on how his "Scottish accent" struck his ears (Scott, *Rob Roy* 32) to the moment in which he recognizes "a voice which I knew right well" at the end, in chapter 39 (379), there are numerous observations about Rob Roy's speech. These include changes of register or dialect that Frank perceives, and Rob's emotional state at the moment of communicating. Thus, when Frank first meets him in England, he realizes that the Scotsman "Mr. Campbell" (Rob Roy under a different name) is trying to modify his usual manner of speaking, since in his speech he detects "the national intonation and slow pedantic mode of expression arising from a desire to avoid peculiarities of idiom or dialect" (Scott, *Rob Roy* 35). There are several remarks inserted in the narrative at points in which Rob Roy changes from English to Scots. So, for example, Frank is aware of a change in dialect in chapter 21 when "Mr. Campbell," who has been talking to him in English, is about to lead him into the prison at Glasgow. Rob Roy's boast about how the authorities would love to see him in that jail, if they knew who he really was, is preceded by the narrator's indication that his language "became more broadly national as he assumed a tone of colloquial freedom" (192) and his speech becomes markedly Scots. Such observations, appearing in the novel before Rob Roy's true identity is revealed to Frank, highlight one of his characteristics: the use of language as a means of disguise. When he needs to hide his identity, he alters his speech to approximate English, but under certain conditions he may give himself away by reverting to Scots.[6]

Frank Osbaldistone's interest in Rob Roy's speech is understandable; he is the character that presents the widest range of linguistic diversity in the novel. Frank finds that he speaks Gaelic, Scots, English and, at times, a more literary

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[5] This part about Rob Roy's language draws on and revises a section of Fernando Toda, relating the function of the historical-linguistic component to translation, an aspect not discussed there.

[6] Joseph Kestner commented on Frank's observations about Rob's language and the association of language with disguise.

variety of English, usually rich in metaphors, which Scott would have us believe is the "translation" of Rob Roy's native Gaelic when he is, so to speak, thinking in his mother tongue but addressing people who do not understand it.[7] Frank's observations have a function that goes beyond the character's mere curiosity about the peculiarities of Rob's speech; they are closely linked to Scott's use of linguistic variety as an expression of the historical conflict underlying the story.

The longest passage devoted to commentary on the characters' linguistic behaviour in the novel comes in chapter 35 and includes remarks about Rob Roy's wife, Helen MacGregor, and Rob Roy himself, together with some general considerations on the speech of the Highlanders. About his wife, Frank observes that "the language rendered by Helen MacGregor, out of the native and poetical Gaelic, into English, which she had acquired as we do learned tongues . . . was graceful, flowing, and declamatory" (Scott, *Rob Roy* 343). The speech she produces is worded in Ossianic English (see note 5). With regard to Rob Roy, the narrator continues:

> Her husband, who had in his time played many parts, used a much less elevated and emphatic dialect, —but even *his* language rose in purity of expression, as you may have remarked, if I have been accurate in recording it, when the affairs he discussed were of an agitating and important nature; and it appears to me in his case, and that of some other Highlanders whom I have known, that, when familiar and facetious, they used the Lowland Scottish dialect, —when serious and impassioned, their thoughts arranged themselves in the idiom of their native language; and in the latter case, as they uttered the corresponding ideas in English, the expressions sounded wild, elevated, and poetical. (343-44)

Frank's reference to Rob Roy as a man who had played many parts alludes to the fact that, due to circumstances and his situation as an outlaw, he had been forced to live in the Highlands, the Lowlands and England. Therefore, it relates to his use of language as a disguise. The comments on the use of Lowland Scots

[7] This English tends to be archaic; it includes some Gaelic words but avoids Scots and includes many metaphors and proverbs. Since W. P. Ker noted the influence of Ossianic poetry on it, in Fernando Toda it is called Ossianic English.

and English on the part of the Highlanders, depending on the situation, can be read as an attempt by Scott at justifying the high-flown English used by Rob's wife (who does not use Scots). Commenting on this same passage, David Murison remarked that, not knowing Gaelic, Scott "had to make do with the theatrical inflated English he puts in the mouth of Helen MacGregor" and, more significantly for our purposes with reference to translation, added: "nor is he very consistent about her husband, who speaks Scots when he is most animated" (Murison 226). Indeed, the few passages in which Rob Roy uses an English comparable to his wife's Ossianic style are not the ones in which he is "most animated." But the apparent inconsistency with regard to the sociolinguistic pattern that Frank detects is not so much a shortcoming on Scott's part as a device that helps him to reflect the historical tension of which Rob Roy is a product and an actor. The choice of Scots for his more lively and impassioned speeches has a purpose. In spite of Frank's comments, Ossianic English is not very effective as a means of expressing strong emotions; as Murison says, it sounds theatrical and inflated.[8] The conventional representation of Highland Scots (which Scott used for some secondary characters such as Duncan of Knockdunder in *The Heart of Midlothian*) would not be suitable as a way of reflecting Rob Roy's Celtic spirit because it would be unwarranted in the speech of Rob Roy, a man who, in his travels and contact with other peoples, has learned to speak both Scots and English correctly. This use of different varieties is of course a difficulty for translators, but again, here we will focus on the use of archaic forms as part of Scott's authorial intention.

Bearing this in mind, we can approach a passage of Rob Roy's speech that is a good instance of Scott's manipulation of dialogue aimed at producing an effect where the function is more important than the mere "realistic" representation of speech, something that makes it especially difficult to replicate in translation. In this particular case, his knowledge of and feeling for the history of the language play an important role.

In chapter 31, a group of Highlanders that belong to Rob Roy's clan, led by his wife, ambush and capture a small party made up of some government soldiers, Frank Osbaldistone, Andrew Fairservice (his servant), bailie Nicol Jarvie and the English gauger, Mr. Morris. On learning that Rob Roy has been captured by the royalist Lennox militia and that his captors refuse an exchange of prisoners (Rob Roy for Morris), Helen orders her men to tie a stone around

[8] Fernando Toda elaborates on this in his essay "Archaisms and Scotticisms."

Morris's neck and throw him into a lake. Later, Rob Roy manages to escape from his captors and in chapter 34 he meets Frank, who tells him the story. He is surprised to hear that Morris is dead.

> "Eh! What?" exclaimed [Rob Roy] hastily. "What d'ye say? I trust it was in the skirmish he was killed?"
>
> "He was slain in cold blood, after the fight was over, Mr. Campbell."
>
> "Cold blood?—Damnation!"—he said, muttering betwixt his teeth—"How fell that, sir? Speak out, sir, and do not Maister or Campbell me—my foot is on my native heath, and my name is Mac Gregor!"
>
> His passions were obviously irritated; but, without noticing the rudeness of his tone, I gave him a short and distinct account of the death of Morris. He struck the butt of his gun with great vehemence and broke out, "I vow to God, such a deed might make one forswear kin, clan, country, wife and bairns!—and yet the villain wrought long for it. And what is the difference between warsling below the water wi' a stane about your neck, and wavering in the wind wi' a tether around it? —it's but choking after a', and he drees the doom he ettled for me. I could have wished though, they had rather putten a ball through him, or a dirk; for the fashion of removing him will give rise to many idle clavers—But every wight has his weird, and we maun a' dee when the day comes—And naebody will deny that Helen Mac Gregor has great wrongs to avenge." (Scott, *Rob Roy* 323-24)

If we were to consider this passage in the light of the narrator's statements about Rob Roy's use of Scots and English quoted above (which appear in Chapter 35), we would have to agree that here too there is inconsistency. He is undoubtedly dealing with an affair of "an agitating and important nature," and Frank's indications about his behaviour make it plain that he is being "serious and impassioned." He is not, however, "uttering the corresponding ideas in English," as might be expected if we were to follow Frank's pattern through. The high number of Scottish forms in terms of spelling, vocabulary and morphology, especially when compared to other instances in which he speaks

English, cause the impression that in this moment of emotional tension he is using Scots. He is in no mood to make concessions to Frank, whom he usually addresses in English. Unlike Helen, who is isolated within the Highland system and only speaks Gaelic or Ossianic English, her husband expresses his feelings through the other language of Scotland, Scots. His first reaction is one of disgust. Before considering the possible political consequences of such a deed, he is horrified by it to the point of abjuring the things that are dearest to a Highlander. As he says of his people later, he is a violent but not a cruel man, and he does not approve of this cold-blooded action. However, he goes on to offer some sort of justification for it, but this is unacceptable to Frank and the society he stands for. Nevertheless, what in England or Lowland Scotland would appear as an abominable crime is not considered in the same way in a more primitive society that has other rules and principles. Having been brought up in the Highland clan system, Rob Roy can regard the deed in a way that Frank cannot; he comes to grips with an event that has taken place in the Scottish Highlands using a language that is not Frank's. Expressions like "we maun a' dee when the day comes" gain in force, since there is an evident clash not just in the concept (the statement could never be a justification for Frank) but in the way it is expressed, which varies notably from Frank's English (and this is not easy to show in translation). Here, the use of Scots is effective in highlighting the differences between Frank and Rob Roy and the cultures they stand for. Although not the language of the Highland people, Scots is more adequate than Ossianic English in presenting the conflict, and it reminds us that the Highlands are a part of Scotland (and ultimately of the United Kingdom). In any case, Rob Roy's demand that, being in the Highlands, he should be called by his proper name clearly recalls his Celtic origin. This part, of course, can be rendered easily in translation; the other connotations stemming from the variety used in the dialogue are almost impossible to convey.

In addition, and more to our point, there is a historical linguistic component to be highlighted here. Some elements in this speech give it a flavour that is not merely Scots. An accumulation of forms that would be considered archaic by his English readers suggests that Scott is trying to make yet another point. After focusing on these forms, and suggesting a reason for their appearance in this passage, the reflexion must be made that, for translation, apart from the difficulty of representing the Scots as a variety in strong contrast with English, there is also the added problem of the nuances conveyed by the

use of archaisms. Therefore, we need to identify these archaisms in order to evaluate the difficulties.

In Rob's question "how fell that, sir?" the absence of the *do* auxiliary is possible in Scots grammar, especially with monosyllabic verbs (Murray 216), but it would have been acceptable only as an archaism in English in the early nineteenth century (Barber 263-67). In fact, absence of the *do* auxiliary is one of the characteristics of Scott's period English (Tulloch 157-59). The use of the verb *to fall* in its Scots sense of "happen, befall" is also archaic from the point of view of English. Similarly, the past form *wrought* (from the preterite *worhte* of the Old English *wyrcan*, later regularised as *worked*) is also archaic in English, but Scots still retains *wrought* as the preterite and past participle of *wirk* "to work"; again we find a coincidence between Scots and archaic English. This occurs once more in the phrase "he drees the doom" where the verb *dree* shares both possibilities, as Tulloch points out referring to its use in *The Fair Maid of Perth*.[9] Moreover, the word *dree* (from Old English *dreogan*, "suffer, endure") is often used in Scots in connection with *weird* ("fate, destiny," from O.E. *wyrd*) in the phrase "to dree ane's weird." Ernest Weekley dealt with this phrase and included both words as part of the word-stock that Walter Scott reintroduced into English literature after centuries of disuse (Weekley 601). In Rob's speech, *weird* also appears with the sense of "fate," coupled with another archaism, in "every wight has his weird." *Wight* as "a creature, person, being" had long been archaic in English; G. L. Brook remarks that Shakespeare already used it deliberately as such, as a means of characterizing Gower, the fourteenth-century poet who appears as the chorus in *Pericles* (Brook 27, 193). It should be noted that the Scots form *wicht* meaning "person" is still in use in Scots, though the *Scottish National Dictionary* adds that it is now "only poetic."

The accumulation in a few lines of so many Scots forms that at the same time are archaisms in English cannot be accidental. Their use is deliberate, and part of what Scott is trying to show his readers about Rob Roy and his people: the Highlanders live in a society that is archaic by comparison to that of England and Lowland Scotland. Rob Roy says so to Frank in chapter 35, on the day after Morris's death, when they visit the scene together with Nicol Jarvie. This time, in a less agitated state, he is speaking in English:

[9] The novel is set in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Tulloch remarks that in it "some of the Scotticisms blend into the period English, since words like *dree* . . . are both Scots and archaic English" (323).

> "You must think hardly of us, Mr. Osbaldistone . . . but remember, at least, that we have not been unprovoked—we are a rude and an ignorant, and it may be a violent and a passionate, but we are not a cruel people—the land might be at peace and in law for us, did they allow us to enjoy the blessings of a peaceful law. But we have been a persecuted generation."
>
> "And persecution," said the Bailie, "maketh wise men mad."
>
> "What must it do then to men like us, living as our fathers did a thousand years since, and possessing scarce more lights than they did?" (Scott, *Rob Roy* 338)

This explicit statement was already implied in Rob's use of language in the previous chapter; the archaisms help to create the feeling of an earlier, more primitive stage of society. Intertwined with the Scots traits in the speech, they produce the effect that Scott wants to cause on his British readers, underscoring the historical situation. It is in reproducing this kind of effect that translation will fall short; perhaps other resources should be employed so as to let the readers know what Scott was doing, as is suggested at the end.

With regard to this insertion of archaisms in Rob's speech, the interpretation of it as deliberate can be supported, within the same novel, by the fact that in *Rob Roy* we can find further proof of Scott's awareness of linguistic history and his use of it in dialogue. A good sample of this is a remark made by Nicol Jarvie in chapter 27 when, speaking of the Union, he says that no one in Scotland was "keener against it than the Glasgow folk, wi' their rabblings and their risings and their mobs, as they ca' them nowadays" (Scott, *Rob Roy* 246). The story takes place in 1715, and Jarvie feels that *mob* is a novelty in the language. This almost certainly echoes an observation made by Jonathan Swift in *Polite Conversation* (1738) where he expressed his dislike for the shortening, in his days, of some words and expressions, which he referred to, ironically, as "some abbreviations, extremely refined; as *pozz* for positive, *mobb* for *mobile*" (Swift, "Polite" 315). It should be noted that *mobile*, which in Swift's time was used as a noun (*the mobile*) was already a shortening of the Latin expression *mobile vulgus* ("the fickle populace"). In 1814 Scott had edited, with notes, the complete works of Swift, and he must have remembered the comment. Swift may have opposed such abbreviations, but the fact is that some became consolidated, and this had certainly been the case of *mob*, already in the

eighteenth century. Scott used the word quite normally in the narrative in his works; to quote just a few cases from three of his best-known Scottish novels, we can find *mob/s* in *Waverley* (ch. 57) or *Guy Mannering* (ch. 48) used in narration very much as we would use it nowadays. In *The Heart of Midlothian* the word comes up several times, in the narrative and in the Author's Notes, including, of course, references to what had become known as the Porteous mob of 1736.

Numerous examples of Scott's interest in and knowledge of the history of the language can be seen in his annotations to Swift's "Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue" of 1712. There, for example, he mentions in a footnote that "Many of the words quoted by Swift as the offspring of affectation and pedantry, are now in common and every-day use" (Swift, "Proposal" 345).

Including the observation about "mob" in Jarvie's speech shows Scott's fine awareness of language change and how others had recorded it. The remark is really not necessary for the story, but it adds to the ambience and serves as one more sample of Scott's didactic purpose, whether historical or linguistic. Unfortunately, when it comes to rendering this in translation, the result will necessarily distort the echoes in the original.

In the case of "mobs, as they ca' them nowadays" Hipólito García (whose 1983 translation of *Rob Roy* was reissued at least six times, by several Spanish publishers, in the twentieth century) opted for "asonadas, como se dice ahora" (García 265). He retains the remark *como se dice ahora* for "as they say now" from the source text, but the word *asonada*, meaning "a numerous assembly aimed at reaching a certain aim tumultuously,"[10] which fits in perfectly with the context, is documented in Spanish as far back as 1256 and has been in use since then. From the point of view of translation, the problem is not really that the choice is, strictly speaking, philologically inexact in terms of dates, but that it hardly gives the impression of a new linguistic fashion. In a similar way to the translations of "swine" by words of Latin origin in *Ivanhoe*, this is a plausible strategy on the part of the translator, but since such solutions cannot fully reflect what Scott was doing, perhaps the only thing that can be done is outside the translation itself, in a more thorough use of paratexts (not simply footnotes), as suggested in the conclusion.

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[10] A translation of the definition can be found in Joan Coromines and José Antonio Pascual.

Before we come to that, however, it should be noted, with regard to the use of linguistic varieties and their function in Scott's plan, that the passage containing this last fragment, Nicol Jarvie's defence of the Union and its benefits for Glasgow, is, significantly, expressed in Scots, but this is definitely lost in García's translation, which is in standard Castilian Spanish. Something similar happens in the previously quoted passage, Rob Roy's speech about the "execution" of Morris in chapter 34. Nothing in it reflects his use of Scots, and nothing suggests earlier stages of the language that could evoke a more primitive society. The same can be said of other Spanish versions, and readers of translations of Scott into other languages may want refer back to them to see if a similar process of standardization took place, and whether the following conclusion would apply to those editions.

IV. Conclusion

From the point of view of translation, it has to be accepted that a relevant component in the author's intent to convey a message through the use of language is inevitably lost when rendering Scott's novels, even by the most careful and dedicated translators. As the examples from *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy* illustrate, it is not just the implications of the function of the different linguistic varieties, but also those derived from his skilful use of his knowledge of earlier stages of the language in order to put across his historical lesson that cannot be transmitted to the readers in an ideally satisfactory way.

This could be remedied to some extent if publishers, editors and translators gave more importance to including sections devoted to such translation issues within the introductions to the works, and some reminders in the footnotes, especially in scholarly editions. In Spain, at least, this has not usually been done for editions of Scott, although a commendable policy in this line is that of the publishing house Cátedra which, since the 1970s, has a collection of world literature in translation, Letras Universales. All the volumes have scholarly introductions and notes and include a section where reference is made to aspects such as the edition of the source text employed, textual problems, and the criteria applied in preparing the Spanish edition, with references to translation procedure. Cátedra has published two works by Scott: *El corazón de Mid-Lothian* (1988) and *Ivanhoe*. In the first case, the introduction devotes a considerable part of that section to explaining the different linguistic varieties

that appear in the dialogues, calling attention to the relevance of their function in the work and discussing the difficulties and the strategies employed by the translator. Where necessary, some of the translator's notes refer back to those pages.

In the edition of *Ivanhoe* (2013) the introduction was written by the translators themselves and the section about the edition focuses mostly on the source texts collated and employed and their decisions regarding the adaptation or transference of proper names and the translation of some medieval terms such as *minstrel* or *yeoman*. The difficulties derived from the historical aspects considered here could have been more emphasized, but the edition includes the Dedicatory Epistle, the 1830 Introduction, and all the 1830 Author's Notes. Thus, the reader has access to all of Scott's information, which in the case of *Ivanhoe* is especially relevant. If new editions (not necessarily new translations) of works like *Rob Roy* (and many others) were to be published with similar criteria in Spain (and perhaps in other countries), readers might be able to appreciate Scott's talent as a historical novelist even more.

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