

高等学校翻译专业硕士（MTI）系列教材

丛书主编 刘军平

MTI

西方翻译理论名著选读

刘军平 覃江华 编著



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社

高等学校翻译专业硕士 (MTI) 系列教材

丛书主编 刘军平

西方翻译理论名著选读

刘军平 覃江华 编著



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

西方翻译理论名著选读/刘军平,覃江华编著. —武汉:武汉大学出版社,2012.7

高等学校翻译专业硕士(MTI)系列教材/刘军平丛书主编

ISBN 978-7-307-09620-2

I. 西… II. ①刘… ②覃… III. 翻译理论—西方国家—研究生—教材 IV. H059

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2012)第037044号

责任编辑:谢群英 责任校对:刘欣 版式设计:马佳

出版发行:武汉大学出版社 (430072 武昌 珞珈山)

(电子邮件: cbs22@whu.edu.cn 网址: www.wdp.com.cn)

印刷:武汉中远印务有限公司

开本: 720 × 1000 1/16 印张: 58.25 字数: 1235 千字 插页: 1

版次: 2012年7月第1版 2012年7月第1次印刷

ISBN 978-7-307-09620-2/H · 875 定价: 65.00元

版权所有,不得翻印;凡购我社的图书,如有质量问题,请与当地图书销售部门联系调换。

高等学校翻译专业硕士（MTI）系列教材专家委员会

柴明颀 郭著章 罗选民 穆 雷

平 洪 屠国元 谢天振

高等学校翻译专业硕士（MTI）系列教材委员会名单

丛书主编 刘军平

丛书编委会名单（按姓氏音序排列）

曹 曼 陈秋劲 董元兴 方 兴

胡孝申 胡 玲 黄 莉 李 纯

刘军平 刘晓华 雷万忠 马 萧

覃江华 王森林 汪 涛 许明武

肖水来 熊 伟 余承法 余健明

张立玉 左广明

前 言

人类区别于其他动物的一个重要特点，在于人类能够运用语言进行交流，并且自觉地运用不同语言进行翻译和交际。翻译这种“宇宙进化以来最为复杂的人类活动”越来越成为人们关注的对象。随着翻译活动的深入和翻译事业的发展，翻译理论家从最初随感式的翻译评论，逐步演进到对翻译实践进行反思和总结的阶段。进入 20 世纪，翻译理论家们从纷繁多样的规定性、描写性或预测性角度，对翻译实践进行理论建构。钩沉史海，环顾当今，我们发现古今中外最伟大的翻译家们不仅在实践方面勤于耕耘，译作丰硕，而且他们中的大多数也善于对翻译活动进行自觉的反思和概括。西方翻译理论由于其思辨性、逻辑性、新颖性成为启迪当代翻译学科的活水源头，嘉惠中西翻译界。

一名优秀的译员，除了熟练掌握翻译技巧与策略，具备良好的双语能力、跨文化交际能力之外，还需要具备良好的理论素养。对于翻译专业的学生而言，虽然翻译实践能力的培养是重点，但翻译学科的批判性思维能力的训练也是不可或缺的。埋头拉车不问方向，只会南辕北辙。从“知行合一”，“道器不离”，到“技进于道”是善于思考的译员的更高追求和理想境界。

20 世纪 80 年代以降，西方翻译研究取得了长足的发展，各种理论流派如千帆进发，百舸争流。进入新世纪以来，西方翻译界更是新论与旧理一色，标新和立异齐飞。不同的翻译理论家或从语言学、文化学、比较文学，或从哲学、社会学、心理学的角度切入翻译学科，从而形成了百花齐放的局面。如何去粗取精，去伪存真？怎样才能有限的教学时间内，提高学生的基本翻译理论素养？如何使其接受翻译学最基本的翻译方法论和思维能力训练，把握西方翻译理论的精髓？这是摆在广大翻译教师面前的紧迫现实问题。我们编写这本《西方翻译理论名著选读》的初衷，就是为了帮助翻译专业学生和广大翻译爱好者步入西方翻译理论的广厦，了解其理论成果及发展脉络，学习其思想的真谛，为我所用。

西方翻译理论研究涉及的范围极广，它不仅涉及语言活动，而且还涉及社会、文化与意识形态的方方面面。西方翻译理论从不同的侧面揭示了语言学、文化学乃至哲学观念，探索了人类心智与行为的过程。它不仅能传递口笔译背后的重要机制，让学习者熟悉翻译概念的演变过程，而且还涉及译者的主体地位、伦理职责。尤其是“文

化转向”之后，西方翻译理论与不断变化的语言、政治、文化语境融为一体，要读懂这些翻译理论，掌握传统的语言学知识还远远不够。因此，哲学、比较文学、跨文化研究等跨学科知识是了解当代西方翻译理论的一把钥匙。从中西比较的角度看，相对于重体悟、重感性的中华传统译论，西方翻译理论重逻辑、重实证的特点值得我们学习。西方翻译理论的“洋为中用”已经或正在改变我国翻译研究的传统范式，影响着我国翻译研究的发展趋势。从跨学科的角度看，当代西方翻译理论已经走出了语言学科的单一羁绊，从理性主义出发，闪烁着非理性的光芒；从诗学出发，洋溢着思辨的火花。它不再属于单一的语言学科或比较文学学科，它属于整个人文和社会学科。简言之，学习西方翻译理论也就是学习和了解西方批评理论、哲学、美学、人类学、政治学、社会学、文化学等学科知识的过程，包括熟悉形式主义、结构主义、后结构主义、解构主义、马克思主义、后殖民主义、女性主义、新历史主义等理论思潮。

系统地掌握西方翻译理论需要在卷帙浩繁的材料中，埋头于青灯黄卷之下数年并通过广泛和深入的阅读才能得到涵泳和陶冶，然而由于学制及课时所限，在短短的时间内要横贯数千年的翻译历史，掌握古代、现代和当代的各种流派，理论观点的奥秘，熟悉西方翻译理论的概念、术语，还存在一定的实际困难。本教材在皇皇卷帙的西方翻译理论的各种原典中，精选了52篇西方翻译理论家的代表性译论，“弱水三千我只取一瓢饮”，每位翻译理论家撷取的是最具代表性或最有影响的文章或代表作片段。本书编排内容的时间顺序跨越古代、现代和当代，并按照西方翻译理论的发展特征和不同译论家的理论特色分为九大翻译理论流派，即语文学派、语言学派、功能学派、认知学派、描写学派、文化学派、后殖民及女性主义学派、哲学学派和中西比较诗学派。全书基本按照这几大流派的思想背景和发展历程进行整理。

值得注意的是，首先，同一流派中的翻译理论家与另一翻译理论家之间不存在必然的历史和逻辑的联系，但分享某种共同特征。将其纳入同一流派既有价值判断，也有事实描写。其次，本选集对于20世纪西方翻译理论考虑得较多，这种“厚古薄今”的偏好，是由于20世纪是西方翻译理论最活跃、流派最多和最具原创性的一个时期。其中，“哲学翻译学派”和“中西比较诗学派”是本教材编著者的一种不同选编之处，尤其是“中西比较诗学派”以前在西方翻译理论中很少有一席之地，这样编排也算是还它一个公道。各种流派划分是为了帮助学生尽快把握西方翻译理论的概貌，方便读者在不同概念范式下展开研读。从某种意义上说，也体现了本书编著者自己的一些独特思考。

本书编著者在广度上和深度上对西方翻译理论的整体做了一次认真的梳理，既照顾到有代表性的译论译家，也对同一时期理论观点相似的译论译家做了一定的取舍，力图全面反映西方翻译理论发展的总体背景和大致沿革。语文学派过去经常有人提及，但哪些翻译理论家属于语文学派呢？编者也作出了自己的判断。此外，本书试图在保留原典风貌的同时，在每一篇选文之前，用汉语提供介入式导读，起到提纲挈领的作用。导读部分对作者的学术背景、思想特征和基本内容进行了钩玄扼要的介绍，

希望能对广大读者把握其思想内涵有所裨益。另外，本书最后部分还提供了进一步了解此方面的阅读书目。在此基础上，以期帮助读者真正了解西方翻译理论的嬗变、翻译流派之间的相互关系以及翻译理论背后的语言、文学、文化或哲学支撑点。

本书是因应翻译教学需要而设计，在编写过程中得到了海外原著作者及出版社的大力支持，谨此诚表谢意。因为各种原因，在付梓之前仍未能与个别作者取得直接联系。我们会继续努力，也恳请相关版权所有人见刊之后能主动与本书编者或出版社联系。本书的责编谢群英老师在本书的策划和编写过程中给予大力支持，在此表示衷心的感谢。

本教材的对象为翻译专业硕士研究生、英语专业本科生、学术型翻译方向研究生及比较文学、跨文化研究方向的师生。由于编者水平和所掌握的资料有限，本书难免会有错误和疏漏之处，恳请各位专家和广大读者不吝赐教。

刘军平 覃江华

2012年7月1日于武汉大学珞珈山麓

第一章 语文学派 —————	1
圣·奥古斯丁(St. Augustine) / 1	
The Use of Translations / 2	
艾蒂安·多雷(Etienne Dolet) / 10	
The Way to Translate Well from One Language into Another / 10	
约翰·德莱顿(John Dryden) / 14	
The Three Types of Translation / 15	
亚历山大·弗雷泽·泰特勒(Alexander Fraser Tytler) / 23	
The Proper Task of a Translator / 24	
马修·阿诺德(Matthew Arnold) / 30	
The Translator's Tribunal / 31	
弗朗西斯·威廉·纽曼(Francis William Newman) / 41	
The Unlearned Public Is the Rightful Judge of Taste / 42	
第二章 语言学派 —————	46
罗曼·雅各布逊(Roman Jakobson) / 46	
On Linguistic Aspects of Translation / 47	
约翰·坎尼森·卡特福德(John Cunnison Catford) / 54	
Translation Shifts / 55	
尤金·阿尔伯特·奈达(Eugene Albert Nida) / 63	
Principles of Correspondence / 64	
彼得·纽马克(Peter Newmark) / 81	
Communicative and Semantic Translation / 82	
奥伯利奇·纽伯特(Albrecht Neubert) / 101	

Translation, Text, Translation Studies / 102

巴兹尔·哈蒂姆和伊恩·梅森(Basil Hatim & Ian Mason) / 130

Politeness in Screen Translating / 131

第三章 功能学派—— 149

卡特琳娜·赖斯(Katharina Reiss) / 149

Type, Kind and Individuality of Text; Decision-making in Translation / 150

汉斯·约瑟夫·弗米尔(Hans Josef Vermeer) / 163

Skopos and Commission in Translational Action / 164

克里斯蒂安·诺德(Christiane Nord) / 178

A Functional Typology of Translations / 179

第四章 认知学派—— 202

厄恩斯特-奥古斯特·格特(Ernst-August Gutt) / 202

Translation and Relevance / 203

罗杰·贝尔(Roger T. Bell) / 225

Translating, the Model / 226

丹尼·吉尔(Daniel Gile) / 242

The Effort Models in Interpretation / 243

第五章 描写学派—— 268

詹姆斯·斯特拉顿·霍姆斯(James Stratton Holmes) / 268

The Name and Nature of Translation Studies / 269

伊塔玛·埃文-佐哈尔(Itamar Even-Zohar) / 282

The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem / 283

吉迪恩·图里(Gideon Toury) / 289

The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation / 290

莫娜·贝克(Mona Baker) / 306

Narratives in and of Translation / 307

安德鲁·切斯特曼(Andrew Chesterman) / 318

Memes of Translation / 319

西奥·赫曼斯(Theo Hermans) / 332

Translation's Other / 333

第六章 文化学派—— 353

安德烈·勒费弗尔(André Lefevere) / 353

Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a
Theory of Literature / 354

苏珊·巴斯内特(Susan Bassnett) / 375

The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies / 376

劳伦斯·韦努蒂(Lawrence Venuti) / 392

The Formation of Cultural Identities / 393

埃德温·根茨勒(Edwin Gentzler) / 415

Translation, Poststructuralism, and Power / 416

迈克尔·克罗宁(Michael Cronin) / 436

History, Translation, Postcolonialism / 437

霍米·巴巴(Homi Bhabha) / 454

How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space,
Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation / 455

第七章 后殖民及女性主义学派 482

加亚特里·查克拉沃蒂·斯皮瓦克
(Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) / 482

The Politics of Translation / 483

道格拉斯·罗宾逊(Douglas Robinson) / 507

Postcolonial Studies, Translation Studies / 508

玛丽亚·铁木志科(Maria Tymoczko) / 528

Translations of Themselves; the Contours of Postcolonial Fiction / 529

罗莉·张伯伦(Lori Chamberlain) / 543

Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation / 544

露易丝·冯·弗洛托(Luise von Flotow) / 562

Gender and the Practice of Translation / 563

雪莉·西蒙(Sherry Simon) / 582

Taking Gendered Positions in Translation Theory / 583

第八章 哲学学派 610

弗里德里希·施莱尔马赫(Friedrich Schleiermacher) / 610

On the Different Methods of Translating / 611

弗里德里希·威廉·尼采(Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche) / 635

Translation as Conquest / 636

瓦尔特·本雅明(Walter Benjamin) / 638

The Task of the Translator / 639

- 雅克·德里达(Jacques Derrida) / 649
 Des Tours de Babel / 650
 威拉德·冯·奥曼·奎因(Willard Van Orman Quine) / 682
 Meaning and Translation / 683
 汉斯-格奥尔格·伽达默尔(Hans-Georg Gadamer) / 704
 Language as the Medium of Hermeneutic Experience / 705
 乔治·斯坦纳(George Steiner) / 725
 The Hermeneutic Motion / 726
 保罗·利科(Paul Ricoeur) / 732
 The Paradigm of Translation / 733
 安东尼·皮姆(Anthony Pym) / 746
 Translation Studies and Western Philosophy / 747

第九章 中西比较诗学派————— 767

- 刘若愚(James J. Y. Liu) / 767
 The Critic as Translator / 768
 叶维廉(Wai-lim Yip) / 781
 Ezra Pound's *Cathay* / 782
 欧阳桢(Eugene Chen Eoyang) / 807
 "Artifices of Eternity": Audiences for Translations of Chinese Literature / 808
 宇文所安(Stephen Owen) / 822
 A Note on Translation / 823
 厄内斯特·弗朗西斯科·费诺罗萨(Ernest Francisco Fenollosa) / 830
 The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry / 831
 马悦然(Göran Malmqvist) / 851
 On the Role of the Translator / 852
 葛浩文(Howard Goldblatt) / 862
 Why I Hate Arthur Waley? Translating Chinese in a Post-Victorian Era / 863

参考文献————— 875

第一章

语文学派

圣·奥古斯丁 (St. Augustine)

圣·奥古斯丁(354—430),古罗马著名翻译理论家、神学家和哲学家。他生于北非,在迦太基、罗马等地接受教育。早年信奉摩尼教,后转投新柏拉图主义,最后在米兰接受洗礼皈依基督教,并成为奥古斯丁教派的创始人。其名著《上帝之城》、《忏悔录》、《论基督教育》等在西方历史上影响巨大,传诵至今。奥古斯丁的《论基督教育》是一本从神学的角度来讨论语言问题的重要著作,是现代语言学和符号学思想的重要来源。

奥古斯丁在西方翻译理论史上占有重要地位,其有关翻译的论述主要体现在《论基督教育》和《旧约诗篇》的注释以及两封书信之中。奥古斯丁认为:译者必须注意翻译中的风格问题。译文风格是朴素、典雅还是庄严,取决于不同读者群的需求。给普通基督徒阅读的启蒙读物风格要朴素;给受过教育的读者看的或颂扬上帝的译作风格要典雅;而面向所有读者的宗教规劝风格的译作要庄严。无论采取哪种风格,目的只有一个,即将真理传递给受众,让他们理解并付诸行动。

在柏拉图和亚里士多德“符号”论的基础上,奥古斯丁进一步提出,翻译必须考虑“所指”、“能指”和译者的“判断”之间的关系。他区分了人们生活中常见的几种“符号”,并探讨了语言符号、理解和翻译的关系。奥古斯丁认为,人类因建造巴别塔对上帝不敬而受到惩罚,此后人类不仅想法不一致,而且讲不同的语言,彼此难以沟通。即便如此,《圣经》的精神实质还是可以通过翻译传递给渴望得到救赎的人们。造成翻译中理解不畅的原因有两种,要么是因为符号意义模棱两可,要么是因为人们对符号完全不了解。译者要熟悉翻译所涉及的两种语言符号,能区分其本义和引申义,并具备某种校勘能力,能对不同的译本进行比较研究。在他看来,不同的译本总有相似的地方,可以相互诠释和补充,当然,错译误译不在此列。

此外,奥古斯丁对译文读者也提出了要求。有时受译者判断能力的制约,要传达的意义在译文中并不明确。那么,我们就需要参阅原文。如果译者与原作者想表达的意义并不一致,我们就需要增加对源语的了解,或参照字字对译的直译本。若是遇到完全未知的语言符号,读者可以向专家请教,参照上下文,或比较和权衡不同的译本。最后,奥古斯丁还认为《圣经》译者要受到“上帝的感召”。“七十二子”在彼此隔离的情况下

能发出一致的声音,翻译出选词和语序都一致的译本,正是上帝存在和威力的体现。奥古斯丁的语言观和翻译观对后世的语言和翻译研究有着重要的影响,不可不读。

Selected from Douglas Robinson, (eds. & trans.) *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997.

The Use of Translations

From *On Christian Doctrine* (*De doctrina Christiana*, 428)

Translated by D. W. Robertson, Jr.

I

Just as I began, when I was writing about things, by warning that no one should consider them except as they are, without reference to what they signify beyond themselves, now when I am discussing signs I wish it understood that no one should consider them for what they are but rather for their value as signs which signify something else. A sign is a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses. Thus if we see a track, we think of the animal that made the track; if we see smoke, we know that there is a fire which causes it; if we hear the voice of a living being, we attend to the emotion it expresses; and when a trumpet sounds, a soldier should know whether it is necessary to advance or to retreat, or whether the battle demands some other response.

Among signs, some are natural and others are conventional. Those are natural which, without any desire or intention of signifying, make us aware of something beyond themselves, like smoke which signifies fire. It does this without any will to signify, for even when smoke appears alone, observation and memory of experience with things bring a recognition of an underlying fire. The track of a passing animal belongs to this class, and the face of one who is wrathful or sad signifies his emotion even when he does not wish to show that he is wrathful or sad, just as other emotions are signified by the expression even when we do not deliberately set out to show them. But it is not proposed here to discuss signs of this type. Since the class formed a division of my subject, I could not disregard it completely, and this notice of it will suffice.

II

Conventional signs are those which living creatures show to one another for the purpose

of conveying, in so far as they are able, the motion of their spirits or something which they have sensed or understood. Nor is there any other reason for signifying, or for giving signs, except for bringing forth and transferring to another mind the action of the mind in the person who makes the sign. We propose to consider and to discuss this class of signs in so far as men are concerned with it, for even signs given by God and contained in the Holy Scriptures are of this type also, since they were presented to us by the men who wrote them. Animals also have signs which they use among themselves, by means of which they indicate their appetites. For a cock who finds food makes a sign with his voice to the hen so that she runs to him. And the dove calls his mate with a cry or is called by her in turn, and there are many similar examples which may be adduced. Whether these signs, or the expression or cry of a man in pain, express the motion of the spirit without intention of signifying or are truly shown as signs is not in question here and does not pertain to our discussion, and we remove this division of the subject from this work as superfluous.

III

Among the signs by means of which men express their meanings to one another, some pertain to the sense of sight, more to the sense of hearing, and very few to the other senses. For when we nod, we give a sign only to the sight of the person whom we wish by that sign to make a participant in our will. Some signify many things through the motions of their hands, and actors give signs to those who understand with the motions of all their members as if narrating things to their eyes. And banners and military standards visibly indicate the will of the captains. And all of these things are like so many visible words. More signs, as I have said, pertain to the ears, and most of these consist of words. But the trumpet, the flute, and the harp make sounds which are not only pleasing but also significant, although as compared with the number of verbal signs the number of signs of this kind are few. For words have come to be predominant among men for signifying whatever the mind conceives if they wish to communicate it to anyone. However, Our Lord gave a sign with the odor of the ointment with which His feet were anointed [John 12: 3-8]; and the taste of the sacrament of His body and blood signified what He wished [Matthew 26: 28; Luke 22: 19-20]; and when the woman was healed by touching the hem of His garment [Matthew 9: 20-22], something was signified. Nevertheless, a multitude of innumerable signs by means of which men express their thoughts is made up of words. And I could express the meaning of all signs of the type here touched upon in words, but I would not be able at all to make the meanings of words clear by these signs.

IV

But because vibrations in the air soon pass away and remain no longer than they sound,

signs of words have been constructed by means of letters. Thus words are shown to the eyes, not in themselves but through certain signs which stand for them. These signs could not be common to all peoples because of the sin of human dissension which arises when one people seizes the leadership for itself. A sign of this pride is that tower erected in the heavens where impious men deserved that not only their minds but also their voices should be dissonant [Genesis 11: 1-9].

V

Thus it happened that even the Sacred Scripture, by which so many maladies of the human will are cured, was set forth in one language, but so that it could be spread conveniently through all the world it was scattered far and wide in the various languages of translators that it might be known for the salvation of peoples who desired to find in it nothing more than the thoughts and desires of those who wrote it and through these the will of God, according to which we believe those writers spoke...

X

There are two reasons why things written are not understood: they are obscured either by unknown or by ambiguous signs. For signs are either literal or figurative. They are called literal when they are used to designate those things on account of which they were instituted; thus we say *bos* [ox] when we mean an animal of a herd because all men using the Latin language call it by that name just as we do. Figurative signs occur when that thing which we designate by a literal sign is used to signify something else; thus we say “ox” and by that syllable understand the animal which is ordinarily designated by that word, but again by that animal we understand an evangelist, as is signified in the Scripture, according to the interpretation of the Apostle, when it says, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn” [Deuteronomy 25:4].

XI

Against unknown literal signs the sovereign remedy is a knowledge of languages. And Latin-speaking men, whom we have here undertaken to instruct, need two others for a knowledge of the Divine Scriptures. Hebrew and Greek, so that they may turn back to earlier exemplars if the infinite variety of Latin translations gives rise to any doubts. Again, in these books we frequently find untranslated Hebrew words, like *amen*, *alleluia*, *racha*, *hosanna*, and so on, of which some, although they could be translated, have been preserved from antiquity on account of their holier authority, like *amen* and *alleluia*; others, like the other two mentioned above, are said not to be translatable into another language. For there are

some words in some languages which cannot be translated into other languages. And this is especially true of interjections which signify the motion of the spirit rather than any part of a rational concept. And these two belong to this class: *racha* is said to be an expression of indignation and *hosanna* an expression of delight. But a knowledge of these two languages is not necessary for these few things, which are easy to know and to discover, but, as we have said, it is necessary on account of the variety of translations. We can enumerate those who have translated the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, but those who have translated them into Latin are innumerable. In the early times of the faith when anyone found a Greek codex, and he thought that he had some facility in both languages, he attempted to translate it.

XII

This situation would rather help than impede understanding if readers would only avoid negligence. For an inspection of various translations frequently makes obscure passages clear. For example, one translator renders a passage in the prophet Isaiah: "Despise not the family of thy seed"; but another says: "Despise not thy own flesh" [Isaiah 58: 7]. Either confirms the other, for one may be explained by means of the other. Thus the "flesh" may be taken literally, so that one may find himself admonished that no one should despise his own body, and the "family of the seed" may be taken figuratively so that it is understood to mean "Christians" born spiritually from the seed of the Word which produced us. But a collation of the translations makes it probable that the meaning is a literal precept that we should not despise those of our own blood, since when we compare "family of the seed" with "flesh", blood relations come especially to mind. Whence, I think, comes the statement of the Apostle, who said, "If, by any means, I may provoke to emulation them who are my flesh, and may save some of them" [Romans 11: 14], that is, so that, emulating those who had believed, they also might believe. He calls the Jews his "flesh" because of blood relationship. Again, a text of the prophet Isaiah reads: "If you will not believe, you shall not understand", and in another translation: "If you will not believe, you shall not continue" [Isaiah 7: 9]. Which of these is to be followed is uncertain unless the text is read in the original language. But both of them nevertheless contain something of great value for the discerning reader. It is difficult for translators to become so disparate that they do not show a similarity in one area of meaning. Thus, although understanding lies in the sight of the Eternal, faith nourishes as children are nourished with milk in the cradles of temporal things. Now "we walk by faith and not by sight" [2 Corinthians 5: 7]. Unless we walk by faith, we shall not be able to come to that sight which does not fail but continues through a cleansed understanding uniting us with Truth. On account of this principle one said, "If you will not believe, you shall not continue", and the other said, "If you will not believe, you shall not understand".

Many translators are deceived by ambiguity in the original language which they do not understand, so that they transfer the meaning to something completely alien to the writer's intention. Thus some codices have "their feet are sharp to shed blood", for the word *oxús* in Greek means both "sharp" and "swift". But he sees the meaning who translates "their feel swift to shed blood" [Romans 3: 15, from Proverbs 1: 16]; the other, drawn in another direction by an ambiguous sign, erred. And such translations are not obscure; they are false, and when this is the situation the codices are to be emended rather than interpreted. The same situation arises when some, because *móschos* in Greek means "calf", do not know that *moscheúmata* means "transplantings", and have translated it "calves". This error appears in so many texts that one hardly finds anything else written, although the sense is very clear and is supported by the succeeding words. For the expression "bastard slips shall not take deep root" [Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach 4: 3] makes better sense than to speak of "calves", which walk on the earth and do not take root in it. The rest of the context, moreover, supports this translation.

XIII

Since the meaning which many interpreters, according to their ability and judgment, seek to convey is not apparent unless we consult the language being translated, and since many translators err from the sense of the original authors unless they are very learned, we must either seek a knowledge of those languages from which Scripture is translated into Latin or we must consult the translations of those who translate word for word, not because they suffice but because by means of them we may test the truth or falsity of those who have sought to translate meanings as well as words. For often not only single words but whole locutions are translated because they cannot be expressed in Latin if one wishes to adhere to the ancient and customary idiom of the Latin language. These unidiomatic expressions do not impede the understanding, but they offend those who take more delight in things when the signs for them are governed by a certain correctness. For what is called a solecism is nothing else than an arrangement of words which does not conform to the law followed by those who have spoken before us with some authority. Whether one says "among men" by saying *inter homines* or by saying *inter hominibus* does not affect the person considering things rather than signs. In the same way, what else is a barbarism except a word pronounced with letters or sounds different from those which those who spoke Latin before us were accustomed to use? Whether *ignoscere* [to forgive] is spoken with a long or short third syllable makes little difference to a man asking God to forgive his sins, in whatever way he can pronounce the word. What then is integrity of expression except the preservation of the customs of others, confirmed by the authority of ancient speakers?