Homophonic Translation in Early Latin and Spanish Comedy
Plautus and Torres Naharro

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Résumé : Depuis les origines de la littérature occidentale, la traduction homophonique a joué un rôle considérable, notamment dans des textes comiques et parodiques. À partir de deux langues différentes, l'homophonie crée un ressort comique en exploitant la similitude phonétique entre certains vocables ou segments. Ce chapitre propose un parcours à travers un ensemble de traductions homophoniques ayant la langue latine comme langue source ou cible. En étudiant des passages de Plaute (254-184 av. J. C.) et de Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (env. 1485-1530 apr. J. C.), il s'agit d'illustrer les mécanismes linguistiques et culturels qui interviennent dans ce phénomène, tout en contribuant à la recherche sur ses origines littéraires et sa transmission historique.

1 Introduction

Since the very origins of the comic genre, playwrights have been fond of rhetorical devices based on sound. One only needs to recall the amusing onomatopoeias and alliterations produced by Aristophanes' *Birds* (414 BC), mimicked sounds that were creatively integrated into the Greek metrical and semantic context.

This chapter will specifically focus on resources dealing with 'parophony' or 'homophony' in comic texts: the use—for humorous purposes—of similar sounding segments (words, but also smaller and bigger units) which usually have different and even contrasting meanings. In most cases, as in lyrical poetry, the author seeks to create dynamic tension between *signum* (the signifier) and *signatum* (the meaning) [1],

1. Jakobson's terminology. *Cf.* Jakobson, Roman, "On linguistic aspects of translation", *in On Translation,* ed. Reuben Arthur Brower, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959, p. 232-239.

resulting in a polyphonic and polysemic text with multiple resonances that hardly admit a single reading or, for that matter, translation. [2]

I have selected passages from two founding fathers of Latin and Spanish comedy, Titus Maccius Plautus (254-184 BC) and Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (ca. 1485-1530 AD), respectively. The connection is not only justified by the fact that Naharro pioneered the introduction and adaptation of Latin (and Italian) procedures into Spanish comedy, but—as we shall see—because the 'homophonic translation' passages benefit from a close comparison. By 'translation' I mean the actual transfer between two languages (be it Latin-Punic or Latin-Spanish). In addition, I have included a section on intralingual transposition (between ecclesiastical Latin and an illiterate, parodic version of it), which equally plays on homophony and indeed acts as a bridge between registers, not to say cultural backgrounds.

2 Plautus' *Poenulus*: the first homophonic translation ever?

Our first text has also something to do with birds. Apart from branding Carthaginians as archetypically "perfidious" (Livy would refer to Hannibal's "perfidia plus quam Punica" [3]), the freedom provided by ancient comedy allowed Romans to portray enemies as animals ("avis", thus "bird", says Milphio of Hanno), because they dressed and behaved strangely to their eyes. [4] This is the impression of otherness caused by Hanno, an elderly Carthaginian who arrives in Etolia (where, according to *palliata* conventions, Latin is spoken [5]) in order to locate the whereabouts of his nephew and his two daughters, who were kidnapped when they were young. It is here that, for the first time, as highlighted by Maurizio Bettini, [6] a translation (or rather an interpretation) problem is portrayed on the stage. However, as one would expect, it is not an ordinary ('deontological', we would say in contemporary terms) conveyance of meaning, for the cunning slave Milphio undertakes the task of translating Punic without really knowing the language: he is able to grasp little more than greetings. He would have been an excellent personification of Quevedo's satirical advice: "If you want to know all languages, make sure to speak them among those who don't understand them" [7]. Indeed, it is the slave who proposes himself as an interpreter, not knowing, as spectators do, that in fact Hanno knows all languages ("omnis linguas scit"):

> Mil. quid ais tu? Agor. quid vis? Mil. Vin appellem hunc Punice?
> Agor. An scis? Mil. Nullus me est hodie Poenus Poenior. [...]

2. For the relation between translation of poetry and humour, see Antoine, F., "L'humoriste et le traducteur *ou* quand la traduction s'en mêle ... ", 2001, quoted in Santana López, Belén, *Wie wird das Komische übersetzt?,* Berlin, Frank & Timme, 2006, p. 29.

3. *Ab urbe condita,* 21.4.9.

4. For an anthropological discussion see Bettini, Maurizio, *Vertere, Un'antropologia della traduzione nella cultura antica,* Torino, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 2012, p. 3-31.

5. According to Dwora Gilula, the fact that actors speaking in Latin played the role of Greek characters reinforced the fictitious side of the theatrical experience. This contrasts with Naharro's aim for veracity. *Cf.* Gilula, Dwora, "El teatro griego en Roma: algunos aspectos de la transposición cultural", *in* Scolnicov, Hanna, Holland, Peter (Eds.), *La obra de teatro fuera de contexto: el traslado de obras de una cultura a otra*, Madrid, Siglo veintiuno editores, 1991, p. 135.

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

7. Quevedo, Francisco de, "Para saber todas las ciencias y artes mecánicas y liberales en un día", *in Prosa festiva completa,* ed. Celsa Carmen García-Valdés, Madrid, Cátedra, 2007, p. 430.

Han. Avo. Mil. Salutat. Han. Donni. Mil. Doni volt tibi
dare hic nescio quid. audin pollicitarier?
Agor. Saluta hunc rursus Punice verbis meis.
Mil. Avo donni inquit hic tibi verbis suis.
Han. Me har bocca. Mil. Istuc tibi sit potius quam mihi.
Agor. Quid ait? Mil. Miseram esse praedicat buccam sibi.
fortasse medicos nos esse arbitrarier. (Act 5, scene 2, v. 30-44) [8]

Milphio. How say you?
Agorastocles. What do you want?
Milphio. Should you like me to address this person in the Punic tongue?
Agorastocles. Do you understand it?
Milphio. No Punic man this day is a better Punic than I. [...]
Han. Avo!
Mil. He salutes us.
Hanno. Donni.
Milphio. He intends to present you with some "donation" out of this; what, I don't know. Don't you hear him promise?
Agorastocles. Salute him again in Punic, in my name.
Milphio. *To Hanno.* "Avo donni!" he tells me *to say* to you in his name. *Pointing to Agorastocles.*
Hanno. Mehar bocca!
Milphio. Be that for yourself rather than me!
Agorastocles. What does he say?
Milphio. He declares that his "box" for his teeth is painful. Perhaps he takes us to be doctors [9].

The most marvellous coincidence has put the audience, including scholars, in Milphio's shoes, since the Punic passages in the play have become almost indecipherable nowadays. It is commonly agreed that "avo" means 'hello' (close to Latin 'ave'), and "donni" means 'Sir'; together they would be equal to something like 'Good morning, Sir!'. From then on, the Punic fragments are so enigmatic that critical editors do not even agree on word separation. We realise that Riley gives "mehar" instead of "me har", and some prefer to confront the reader with *scriptio continua*: "meharbocca" (see the Ambrosian palimpsest, where we find "MEPHARBUA"). Maurice Sznycer [10] reviews all scholarly efforts to disentangle the meaning: for "meharbocca", Schröder guesses a manifestation of gratitude ("qui me remercie par toi?"), Gray thinks Hanno is returning the greeting ("le matin avec toi!"), whereas Sznycer himself remains cautious and is not able to decide whether "mehar" refers to 'merchandise' or to 'having made the acquaintance of someone'.

8. For the Latin text, I follow Friedrich Leo's edition, *T. Maccius Plautus, Plauti Comoediae,* Berlin, Weidmann, 1895.

9. Translation by Henry Thomas Riley, *The comedies of Plautus; literally translated into English prose, with notes,* London, G. Bell and Sons, 1912. Note the indication "literally translated".

10. Sznycer, Maurice, *Les passages puniques en transcription latine dans le "Poenulus" de Plaute,* Paris, Klincksieck, 1967, p. 141.

Be that as it may, what is obvious is that Milphio is performing homophonic translation from Punic into Latin, since his search is not for accuracy of meaning, but for the most similar-sounding signifiers. He takes "donni" for the genitive case of Latin 'donum', which means 'gift' or 'present' (genitive 'doni', complementing the pronoun 'quid'), which could fit well into the context of hospitality during a first meeting. However, when his master asks him to return the greeting, he uses "avo donni" correctly. The reader may be at first somehow astonished: is Milphio a bad interpreter out of malevolence, and not only out of ignorance? The following remark seems to confirm both suspicions: thinking that Hanno complains about a "misera bucca", a 'wretched mouth' (a close phonic rendering, we assume, of "mehar bocca"), he launches a sort of apotropaic curse to turn away evil. Not being sure that his translation is sufficiently convincing, he supplies an explanatory context: "perhaps he takes us to be doctors".

Milphio proceeds in a similar way for more than twenty lines, although his instinct—after the first greetings—is to remain silent, as if aware that any Latin speaker, unless hearing-impaired, would be able to do what he is doing. At Agorastocles' insistence on having the foreigner's words translated, Milphio protests: "audin tu?", "don't you hear?". We have finally come to the point! Only a deaf person would fail to produce a homophonic translation like his: one only has to pay attention to the 'surface' of sounds, to the phonic layer, without going deeper (the term *Oberflächenübersetzung*[11] seems to be here most appropriate). Therefore, not knowing a language is assimilated to deafness (physical metaphor), and, as a matter of fact, misinterpretation caused by faulty hearing is also a common trick of intralingual humour. One example of this is from a sketch by the celebrated Spanish comedian Miguel Gila (1919-2001), whose characters (especially grannies) had a hard time understanding what came through a first-generation phone: "¡Abuela! ¿Tú has visto mi violín? Que si has visto mi violín. Que si has visto mi violín. Que si le llaman de Berlín, dice. Abuela, Abuela ... Dice No soy Manuela, y ha colgado"[12]. Here the quasi-homophones are "violín" and "Berlín", "abuela" and "Manuela"; more precisely, the old lady seems to be playing with rhyming cadences, a figure we will find in some of Naharro's texts.

Coming back to Plautus, I would like to underline his mastery in using homophony not just as an isolated device, but as a resource for building up the whole scene. Despite his reluctance to translate when the discourse becomes intricate after the initial greetings, Milphio is incredibly fast at finding convenient signifiers in Latin that, moreover, match the profile of a Carthaginian on a business trip that the interpreter has made up out of the blue:

> Han. Lech lachanna nilimniictho. Agor. Quid nunc ait?
> Mil. Ligulas, canalis ait se advexisse et nuces:
> nunc orat, operam ut des sibi, ut ea veneant.
> Agor. Mercator credo est. Han. Assam. Mil. Arvinam quidem.
> Han. Palu mirga detha. Agor. Milphio, quid nunc ait?
> Mil. Palas vendundas sibi ait et mergas datas,

11. See the foreword to this volume.

12. Gila's monologues were broadcasted on television. A transcription of "Violinista sin violín" can be found in the blog www.miguelgila.com.

ad messim credo, nisi quid tu aliud sapis,
ut hortum fodiat atque ut frumentum metat (Act 5, scene 2, v. 53-60).

HANNO. Lalech lachananim liminichot.
AGORASTOCLES. What does he say now?
MILPHIO. He says he has brought latchets, water-channels, and nuts; he's now begging that you'll lend him your assistance in having them sold.
AGORASTOCLES. He is a merchant, I suppose?
HANNO. Is amar binam.
AGORASTOCLES. What is it *he says*?
HANNO. Palum erga dectha.
AGORASTOCLES. Milphio, what is he saying now?
MILPHIO. He says that he has got spades and forks given him for sale, for digging the garden and reaping the corn. [13]

This passage shows, by the way, the difficulty of maintaining the Plautinian "charade" effect [14] in a modern translation. Many of the translations I have checked (including Pierre Grimal's, Joseph Naudet's and, to a lesser extent, Paul Nixon's [15]) resemble Riley's, in that they maintain the Punic words and translate Milphio's Latin creations literally. In these translations, the homophonic pun is obviously lost, but we cannot tell whether it is due to a lack of awareness. Paul Nixon succeeds partially in preserving the homophonic impression: for instance, "paraphernalia" for "palu mirga detha" and "latchets, channels and nuts" for "lech lachanna nilimniictho". Georg Gustav Samuel Köpfe [16] reaches a compensation by funnily giving in brackets a hypothetical 'real' meaning of Hanno's words, multiplying the reasons for laughter: "Leche Lachananim limnuchot" (in German: "Zu den Teufeln in die Hölle geht"). And José Román Bravo [17] superbly intervenes in the Punic fragments in order to make them match the Spanish translation: "palu horc illa" (mimicking word separation and orthographic oddness) for "palas y horquillas". Equally courageous is Johann Traugott Leberecht Danz [18] in replacing Punic with Hebrew for the sake of exoticism.

The slave's trick is finally found out when the Carthaginian presumably orders Agorastocles —against his self-preservation instinct—"to place him beneath a hurdle and to heap many stones upon it, so as to put him to death". Hanno then reveals that he speaks Latin, incurring the wrath of the slave, who returns to the offensive animal similes, now emphasising the 'perfidy' of having "two tongues" ("bisulci lingua", literally, "a forked tongue") and having hidden it:

13. Riley's translation, *op. cit.*
14. This fragment has "an almost enigmatic character, closer to a charade than to a theatre dialogue", Bettini, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
15. Joseph Naudet (Paris, Lèfrevre, 1845), Pierre Grimal (Paris, Gallimard, 1971), Paul Nixon (Cambridge, Mass., Loeb, 1980).
16. Köpfe, Georg Gustav Samuel, *Lustspiele: in alten Sylbenmaassen deutsch wiedergegeben*, Berlin, Nauck, 1820.
17. Bravo, José Román, Plauto, *Comedias II,* Madrid, Cátedra, 1995.
18. Danz, Johann Traugott Leberecht, *Marcus Accius Plautus, lateinisch und deutsch*, vol. 4, Leipzig, Schwickert, 1811.

> HANNO. *Speaking in their own language.* But that you may know, now from this moment henceforth will I speak Latin. *To Milphio.* Upon my faith, you must be a worthless and bad servant, to be laughing at a person, a foreigner and a stranger.
>
> MILPHIO. But, i' faith, at yourself a person that's both a swindler and a cheat, who have come here to take us in, you half-and-half Lybian [*migdilix*], you double-tongue [*bisulci lingua*], just like a crawling reptile.

3 Bartolomé de Torres Naharro

3.1 Liturgical Latin into rustic Spanish

In his study on *The influence of Plautus in Spain before Lope de Vega*[19], Grismer underlines that "no single influence was so great as that of the plays of Plautus, Terence, and other writers of Latin comedy" for 16th-century theatre: "Plots, characters, stage settings, and dramatic devices were freely borrowed and adapted to the changing demands of the new theatre of Southern Europe". In Spain, this influence was channelled through authors that visited or resided in Italy, such as Juan del Encina and Torres Naharro, both living between the 15th and 16th century. The *Poenulus* was certainly not on the list of the most favourite Plautinian comedies, but its rediscovery in 1426, thanks to a manuscript found in Germany, together with another eleven comedies, may have attracted the attention of erudites like Naharro. We know, for instance, that the *Poenulus* was presented at the Court of Ferrara in 1499.[20]

Nevertheless, Torres Naharro, who declared his intention to imitate and surpass Roman comedy,[21] had powerful indigenous resources at hand. Among them, we must mention the long tradition of *contrafacta* that populated Latin and vernacular literature in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The musical term *contrafactum*, when applied to literature, refers to a profane imitation of biblical or liturgical texts (or 'hypotexts') in which intertextual quotations are resemanticised in order to provoke a comical effect. Typical recontextualisations are erotic love, Goliardic life, eating, and drinking or gambling. During the Middle Ages, monolingual *contrafacta* in Latin were the norm (Paul Lehmann[22] offers many examples of them, including a "Drinkers' Mass", *Missa potatorum,* that mimics the *Pater Noster:* "potus noster, qui es in cypho ... "). But since the late Middle Ages bilingualism (for our purposes, Latin-Spanish) was perceived as a poetic resource that could enhance ambiguity and contrast, Latin being more solemn and Spanish more emotional and expressive.[23] Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, exploited the possibilities offered by glosses and farced texts in his early *Libro de Buen Amor* (ca. 1343), both with ludic and edifying intentions (see, for instance, his "Ave María de Santa María"), and so did all great poets

19. Grismer, R. L. *The influence of Plautus in Spain before Lope de Vega,* New York, Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1944, p. 7.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

21. A discussion of this dramatic theory can be found in Ruiz Ramón, Francisco, *Historia del teatro español desde sus orígenes hasta mil novecientos,* Madrid, Alianza, 1967, p. 73 *sq.*

22. Lehmann, Paul, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter,* Stuttgart, Anton Hiersemann, 1963.

23. Gernert, F. (Ed.), *Parodia y "Contrafacta" en la literatura románica medieval y renacentista. Historia, teoría y textos,* San Millán de la Cogolla, Cilengua, 2009, vol. I, p. 24.

and dramatists after him, including the aforementioned Juan del Encina and Torres Naharro.

Naharro's plays are, more than bilingual, multilingual. His characters speak in Latin, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, German, Spanish (with its different dialects). As Pabst observes, "languages were chosen as a sculptor opts for a certain material, deciding among marble, bronze or wood"[24]. No wonder that translation scenes would emerge from such a prolific juxtaposition of languages. The most probable systematic one appears in *Adición del Diálogo,* an annex to the *Diálogo del nacimiento* (ca. 1507). This subversive Christmas play focuses the spotlight on the theological debate between two pilgrims in Rome, a convert (Patrispano) and an Old Christian (Betiseo). [25] In the annex, two *pastores-bobos*[26]*,* the rude shepherds of the Spanish tradition, join them and hurl *pullas* (offensive comments). The text culminates in a *contrafactum* of the hymn *Ave maris stella,* from the Liturgy of the Hours. Patrispano, the learned *converso*, sings in Latin, whereas the rustic Herrando accepts the *tour de force* of translating all verses into Spanish. His peculiar rendering pays attention not only to phonetics, but also to the resemantisation into the materialistic, outright blasphemous, mental frame of the *pastores*:

> Patrispano. Ora, pues
> qu'esta noche santa es
> quiero decir yo un cantar:
> respondedme todos tres
> y a palmas, por más holgar:
> *Celorum via*
> *nobilis est Maria.*
> Herr, Garr. *Celorum via,*
> *nobilis est Maria.*
> Patrispano. *Ave maris stella,*
> *Dei mater alma*
> *atque semper virgo,*
> *felix celi porta.*
> Herr, Garr. *Celorum via.*
> Betiseo. En fin, fin
> cante el padre por latín,
> dejáme a mí por romance.
> Garrapata. Puto sea y hi de ruin
> quien no acetare ese lance.
> Patrispano. *Celorum via,*
> *nobilis est Maria.*

24. Quoted in *ibid.*

25. For a commentary on religious aspects, see Weinerth, N. , "Bartolomé de Torres Naharro's *Diálogo del Nascimiento:* A *Converso* Christmas Play", *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* (Puerto Rico) IX, 1982, p. 249-54.

26. As John Brotherton explains (p. ix), the term *pastor-bobo* gathers the two most prominent features of these characters, their rusticity and their foolishness, among other attributes such as laziness, greed, ignorance, superstitiousness, boorishness, obscenity, and indifference. *Cf.* Brotherton, John, *The "Pastor-bobo" in the Spanish Theatre, Before the Time of Lope de Vega,* London, Tamesis books, 1975.

HERRANDO. Zagales bía,
qu'en Nápoles es María.
PATRISPANO. *Sumens illud ave.*
HERRANDO. Soncas como sabe.
PATRISPANO. *Gabrielis ore.*
HERRANDO. La miel y el arrope.
PATRISPANO. *Funda nos in pace.*
HERRANDO. Damos buena parte.
PATRISPANO. *Mutans Eve nomen.*
HERRANDO. Mil huevos por hombre,
celorum via.
PATRISPANO. *Monstra te esse matrem.*
HERRANDO. Moscas que te maten.
PATRISPANO. *Sumat per te preces.*
HERRANDO. Zúmante los peces [27].
PATRISPANO. *Qui pro nobis natus.*
HERRANDO. Que perros y gatos.
PATRISPANO. *Tullit ese tuus.*
HERRANDO. Royan huesos tuyos,
celorum via.
PATRISPANO. *Virgo singularis.*
HERRANDO. Vinos singulares.
PATRISPANO. *Inter omnes mitis*
HERRANDO. Entre hijos míos.
PATRISPANO. *Nos culpis solutos.*
HERRANDO. Vayan para putos.
PATRISPANO. *Mites fac et castos.*
HERRANDO. Esos abadazos,
celorum via.

(*Adición* [28], v. 1062-1111).

"Celorum *via* / nobilis est Maria" [29] is an addition by Torres Naharro that was intended as the *villancico*'s refrain, to be accompanied by hand-clapping ("palmas"), before the Christmas song turns into a dialogue at Betiseo's suggestion. As for the *Ave maris stella,* four out of seven stanzas are selected, of which only three (nos. 2, 4 and 5) are reformulated in the shepherd's mouth. Their literal meaning is as follows:

No. 2: Receiving that Ave from the mouth of Gabriel,
establish us in peace, changing the name of Eve.

No. 4: Show thyself a mother may he hear thy prayers
Who, born for us, was willing to be thy Son.

27. In its article "Ensaladilla para Navidad" (16 December 1977, p. 19), the newspaper *La Vanguardia* published the variant "cómante los peces".

28. Torres Naharro, Bartolomé de, *Teatro completo,* ed. Julio Vélez-Sainz, Madrid, Cátedra, 2013.

29. *Cf.* Trapero, Maximiano, "La música en el antiguo teatro de Navidad", *Revista de musicología,* vol. X, 2, 1987, p. 415-458.

No. 5: Virgin above all others, meeker than all,
make us free from sin, meek and pure. [30]

Herrando's contribution in *romance* amounts—in contemporary standard English—more or less to:

Come on, young shepherds,
For Mary is in Naples.
How much he knows!
Honey and grape syrup,
We give a good portion,
One thousand eggs per man.
May flies kill you.
May fishes eat you.
May cats and dogs
Gnaw your bones.
Extraordinary wines
For my children.
To hell with
Those big abbots.

The polemical Christmas play ends with this equally burlesque Christmas song. What initially seems an innocent and generous shepherds' offering (honey, grape syrup, and eggs) to a Virgin physically located in Naples rather than in heaven, or to her new-born son, becomes a *pulla* directed towards an unspecified 'tú', that could be interpreted in an outrageously blasphemous way: again the Virgin or the infant Jesus. The shepherds wish good wine for their children and round off with an overt offence to the monastic community: the "abadazos" (big or even fat abbots) should go to hell, or, more specifically, become the object of more "pullas", since—as Martín Alonso explains—'puto' is, in the 15th century, "a person who is abused by the dissolute" [31].

Coming to the actual linguistic formulation, it can be conjectured that not only Herrando's Spanish is 'corrupted': he conventionally speaks *sayagués*, a dialect originally from Zamora that became synonymous with rustic language ('soncas', for example, is one of its typical interjections). Also Patisprano's Latin seems to record the evolution of the Spanish pronunciation ('caelum' [kaelum] > [tsielo] > [θielo] [32]), since 'celorum' is assimilated to 'zagales'.

As was the case with Plautus, the lack of competence in the source language forces the improvised translator to stick to the phonic surface, but transpositions are hardly predictable. Sometimes vowels are changed and consonants maintained, such as "Nápoles" for "nobilis", except for the voiceless 'p' (with the same point of articulation, though). More often than not, however, the shepherd focuses on vowels and

30. Translation by St. Cecilia's Abbey, UK (`www.stceciliasabbey.org.uk`).

31. "Puto (de *puta*). m. s. XV. Sujeto de quien abusan los libertinos", Martín Alonso Pedraz, *Diccionario medieval español, Desde las Glosas Emilianenses y Silenses (s. X) hasta el siglo XV,* Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1986.

32. *Cf.* Bassols de Climent, Mariano, *Fonética latina,* Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992, p. 175.

transforms or drops certain consonants: "monstra" > "moscas", "matrem" > "maten", "preces" > "peces", "virgo" > "vinos". There is a certain degree of echolalia ("singularis" becomes simply "singulares") and similar cadences ("solutos" > "putos"), as well as a series of erroneous segmentations ("Ga|brielis" > "la miel"). As occurs with translated songs, we find that rhythm is closely imitated, but here to the detriment of sense. As a general rule, Herrando brings spiritual and abstract concepts round to his own material point of view: Gabriel's Annunciation becomes honey and wine, as does the Virgin; Eve's name amounts to a certain number of eggs; prayers become fishes and the mystery of Incarnation, cats and dogs.

No doubt, the type of the *pastor-bobo* is perfectly crafted in this dialogue. He is boastful, blasphemous, and vulgar. This has led Nora Weinerth, among others, to regard the *Adición* as a means to ridicule the *villano*: "Disdain for the *villano* is typical of the *converso* sensibility, and the *Adición* amounts to an orgy of *desprecio.* [...] It is in the *Adición* that la venganza de un converso, as Dr. Villalobos puts it, takes place"[33].

The parody of the false religion can hardly be called into question, but it is the rustic who makes this hilarious scene possible. As we can see from other passages, the language of the illiterate (both in their mother tongue and when they dare to speak 'Latin') causes a sort of fascination among learned authors and their audience. Naharro is absolutely aware of the possibilities it offers. We have just seen homophonic (interlingual) translation, now we will consider a second type of homophony: the intralingual.

3.2 Liturgical Latin into garbled Latin

In the 16th century, the large number of illiterate adults, who had no access to the written Bible, were frequently exposed to Latin, for liturgical ceremonies were carried out in Latin and preachers used to mix Latin and Spanish during mass. This must have been so widespread that there were reactions even from inside the clergy. Ángel Rosenblat mentions several of them:

> The first *Rhetórica en lengua castellana,* published in 1541 by a friar from the order of Saint Jerome (probably Fray Miguel de Salinas) criticises preachers who "speak one word in *romance* and one word in Latin, so that the result is neither Latin nor Spanish"; and Fray Diego de Estella, in his *Modus concionandi* (1576), advises against using long Latin sentences, which annoy both those who do not understand Latin and those who do, because they have to hear them twice, first in Latin and again in Spanish.[34]

In his theoretical reflexion about comedy, Torres Naharro[35] highlights the importance of the *decus* or *decorum,* that is to say, of portraying characters according to their real position and behaviour in society. This is particularly relevant in the use of language,

33. *Op. cit,* p. 254.
34. Rosenblat, Ángel, *La lengua del Quijote,* Madrid, Gredos, 1978, p. 18.
35. *Cf.* Ruiz Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

as we have seen in the previous section with Herrando's Spanish register. And how did Latin prayers really sound in the mouth of uneducated but vivid shepherds? Here is a brief compilation of Naharro's imitations, with reference to their standard Latin hypotext:

Dominus vobiscum.[36] | Benedicta tu (in mulieribus):[37]

> Y an si d'igreja querrán,
> también sé, como d'aprisco,
> hin al Dominos obisco
> d'avangello de San Juan.
>
> *Comedia Serafina.* Introito (v. 105-108).

> Herrando. ... que sé pullas a barrisco,
> más de mil en una riza,
> para el dóminos bovisco
> y para el ju benediza.
>
> *Adición del diálogo* (v. 973-976).

> Garrapata. ¿Que has pensado
> decir al beneficiado
> para el dóminos obisco?
>
> *Adición del diálogo* (v. 1017-1019).

> Garrapata. Pues, verás,
> ¿al capellán qué dirás
> para el juba benediza?
>
> *Adición del diálogo* (v. 1027-1029).

In nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen:[38]

> Mingo Oveja. Nomeli Patris en Fillo
> del Esprito sancto, amén.
>
> *Comedia Trofea* (v. 1745-1746).

Per omnia saecula saeculorum:[39]

> Garrapata. ¡Hi del moro!
> Y al peroña secoloro,

36. Eucharistic prayer.
37. Luke 1:28.
38. Sign of the Cross formula.
39. Conclusion of prayers like the *Gloria Patri* (also: *in* saecula saeculorum). These would be the most plausible source for shepherds. Furthermore, it appears several times in the Book of Revelation (1:7; 1:18, etc.).

¿qué dirás, si lo dirán?

Adición del diálogo (v. 977-979).

Kyrie eleison.[40] | Pater noster, qui es in caelis (...) et ne nos inducas in tentationem:[41]

Galterio. Crialisón del paternostra
Qui's in celis lo dinos
tentaciones vita nostra.

Comedia Aquilana (v. 1694-1696).

Juan Tomillo. Mas di la crialaisón.

Comedia Trofea (v. 646).

Salve Regina.[42]

Deus, in adjutorium meum intende. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.[43]

Dominus meus et deus meus.[44]

Anima Christi.[45]

Judica me, Deus ... quare me repulisti:[46]

Ya yo sabría cantar
bien aína
toda la salva regina,
por el son de mi villorio,
hin al Dios menajotorio
d'aljobando ma festina.
Ya sé también qué decrina
lugo arreo
dominos dominos meo
con la *media alima christe,*
y el cara m'arrebolliste
de la jódicame deo.

Comedia Trofea. Introito (v. 29-40).

Gomecio. 'D aniuvandum me festina.

Comedia Serafina (v. 1787).

40. Transliteration of the Greek "Lord, have mercy", liturgical prayer.
41. The prayer par excellence: *Our Father*.
42. Well-known Marian antiphon.
43. Psalm 69:1.
44. The shepherd probably refers to this aspiration, used to invoke assistance, extracted from John 20:28.
45. This prayer was said as thanksgiving after receiving communion.
46. Psalm 42:1.

¡Dios mal juba me festina!

Comedia Aquilana. Introito (v. 73).

Abrenuntio: [47]

Paje. ¡Abrenuncio Satané!

Comedia Trofea (v. 913). [48]

These cases reveal considerable divergences with respect to the passage from the *Adición*. First of all, there is no mention of the 'correct' Latin prayers: we assume that characters heard them at mass and memorized a version of them. Second, they tend to combine fragments of different prayers that do not belong together (here there is no native speaker—Plautus—or competent person—*Adición*—to take the lead). Third, there is no real intent to produce a translation into Spanish: shepherds and servants think, and sometimes boast, that they know Latin ("también sé, como d'aprisco"; "ya yo sabría cantar bien aína"). Most of the time, we see them trying to decode the Latin string of sounds, as if they possessed what Saenger calls "phonetic literacy", that is to say, "the ability to decode texts syllable by syllable and to pronounce them orally" [49]. Naturally, they fail, producing as a result a mostly non-existent phonic sequence, where, however, some Spanish signifiers slip through, this being the only language they can use as a reference. Sometimes they are lucky ("tentationem" > "tentaciones"), at other times the effect is absolutely funny: the interrogative "quare" ('why') becomes "cara" ('face'); "benedicta tu" becomes "juba benediza", 'juba' being a Moorish garment; and "ab-renuntio" ("I renounce") would certainly be pronounced "abre-nuncio" ('abre' being the imperative form of 'abrir', 'to open').

Naharro's *Propalladia* (1517), a collection of his comedies, would surely delight attentive readers, for they could note—with more calm than allowed by the actual performance—the delicious *variatio* of the garbled prayers of rustics. For example, "dominus vobiscum" or "ad adjuvandum me festina" are transcribed differently for each of the speakers (also the Greek *Kyrie eleison*). A modern comparison would be the humming of English songs by people with little or no knowledge of the language, whose transcription would produce a similar effect. There seems to be a universal tendency to mimic the sounds of an unknown language. [50] In fact, the *contrafacta* of Latin prayers were also a common feature in other Romance languages and literatures. Gian Luigi Beccaria has studied this phenomenon in Italy, and his reflexions about the enigmatic character of the ecclesiastical language and the need for resemantisation are in consonance with Naharro's method:

> The delivery or arbitrary segmentation of the liturgical Latin string generates an alteration in which the expressive effect is due not so much to

47. Baptismal formula.

48. I follow again Vélez-Sainz's edition, *op. cit.*.

49. Saenger, Paul, "Books of hours and the reading habits of the Later Middle Ages", *in* Chartier, Roger (Ed.), *The culture of print, Power and the uses of print in early modern Europe*, Cambridge, Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 141-173.

50. On this topic, see the foreword and Charles Bernstein's opening essay in this volume.

> the parodic manipulation of the code, but to the allusions, false equivalents and creation of a new enigmatic string of unrecognised sounds. A phonic string that is re-invented and re-motivated by the popular speaker. [...] It is realism and not only artifice. An unknown language, which the speaker is not able to analyse, leads to the creation of new conglomerates: a complex and misunderstood structure forms a new compact block, and the sound form is forced in order to adapt it to a new motivation. [51]

The systematic use of garbled Latin by Naharro, together with other related but differently motivated registers, such as macaronic Latin or the so-called sacristy's Latin (not to be confused with the mangling of the absolute ignorant [52]), tells us of a documentation effort or, what is more, a pure anthropological interest in all facets of society. It is more than a parody of religion, or a denunciation of the Old Christians who only practised religion outwardly. [53] Given that the comic genre can be a *mundus inversus*, we sometimes get the impression that the lower social strata take revenge for the daily distress of listening to, and trying to reproduce, a language they do not understand. What would Naharro's aristocratic public make out of "hin al Dios menajotorio / d'aljobando ma festina"? If they listened carefully, they would probably recognise the quotation, but they would at first be puzzled: in fact, it is the last word, "festina", the only one in Latin, which provides a clue. And with the recognition of the device they would certainly feel—as modern readers do—some affection for the genuine, witty, countrymen.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to contribute to the origins of homophonic translation in a specific genre, comedy, focusing on texts that, due to their early date, can be considered foundational for Latin and Spanish literature. Authors like Lope de Vega and our 'Prince of Wits', Cervantes (both 16th-17th century), borrowed many tested resources from them. Sancho Panza's garbled Latin (e.g. "quien ha infierno, nula es retencio") certainly rings a bell.

The motivation behind Plautus and Torres Naharro was to prompt laughter by portraying the shortcomings of wannabe interpreters (slaves, shepherds, and servants) that, through a process of inversion, become heroes on the stage. Both authors mas-

51. Beccaria, Gian Luigi, *Sicuterat. Il latino di chi non lo sa: Bibbia e liturgia nell'italiano e nei dialetti,* Milano, Garzanti, 2002, p. 33 *sq.*

52. Beccaria explains the difference in *ibid.* p. 21: "as a parody of classical Latin, macaronic Latin tends to create a hybrid language by applying Latin metrical and morphological laws to the dialect's lexical substratum; it latinizes the vernacular language only superficially, or uses an Italian ending for a Latin word". The most important difference lies in the fact that it is a voluntary interference typical of people with a good knowledge of Latin. "It is a learned procedure, not a popular one. It is the work of men of letters, of Goliards, it is born in the school or in the Church". We find several examples in Naharro's *Comedia Serafina,* where Gomecio, defined as a "letrado necio", produces lines like these: "maneo solus in boscorum, / sicut mulus sine albarda; / mortis mea non se tarda / propter meus peccatorum" (v. 377-380). In contrast, Teodoro, the hermit, speaks in a seemingly correct, but not classical, Latin, closer to the so-called 'sacristy's Latin'. However, as Márquez Villanueva points out, Naharro writes before the publication of Folengo's *Maccheronee,* and his mock Latin is slightly different, closer to the Spanish tradition (*cf. Fuentes literarias cervantinas,* Madrid, Gredos, 1973, p. 272).

53. Ana Cecilia Prenz, in her thesis *Contigüidades culturales en las "composiciones romanas" de Bartolomé de Torres Naharro,* La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2007, mentions the farced hymn of the *Adición* as a clear dichotomy between what prayer should be and what it really is (p. 147).

tered languages other than their own, and were ready to provide a ludic counterpart to texts that treated bilingualism seriously.

The same multilingual background and literary competence is shared by members of contemporary groups like *Outranspo*, "a motley group of multilingual translators, writers, researchers and musicians, who joyously devote themselves to creative approaches to translation". [54] They could be seen, to some extent, as the new goliards of our time, or maybe they would prefer to consider their leisure activities as "otium cum dignitate". In any case, the need to play with words remains—luckily—a salutary constant.

> La comedia es acabada:
> Valete et plaudite agora,
> Y ficai tudos en bora.
>
> *Comedia Trofea* (v. 1823-1825). [55]

54. See also Outranspo's contribution to this book.
55. Vélez-Sainz's edition, *op. cit.*