Normally, when I start to read an English text I am aware of whether I am reading a translation or not. Pyongyang, a mostly-nonfiction graphic novel by Canadian author Guy Delisle, was the exception. I read it all once and was a third of the way through a second, more careful, reading before certain little context phrases, which were not at all awkward renderings, began to jump out at me. This led me to have some doubts as to whether this was an original English text. Sure enough, on the title page, in small print, was a statement that it had been translated from French. The author is from Quebec. What a great job by the translator, Helge Dascher!

New Queries

(English>Armenian 1-13.1) If a response is given, this will be the first time on my watch that the column has contained Armenian. In petroleum engineering, “trenching” seems to be the sticking point in a text that reads: “The trenching will be performed from the ice road established above the pipeline route. A slot following the pipeline route will be cut through the ice. The slot will be wide enough for the machine’s tools to pass through and reach down to the pipeline.”

(English>Swedish 1-13.2) A physics text made a very compressed, cryptic reference to three conditions, the second of which caused problems. These conditions were “Max shear stress,” “Plane Stress-Hooke,” and “Mohr’s Circ-Stress.” In the middle instance, is it plane stress that obeys the well-known Hooke’s law? And if so, what is proper Swedish for this?

(French>English 1-13.3) The subject was plastics, and the whole problem centers around the verb perduer, “to last or to continue.” How does it make any sense in the following paragraph? Le procédé IML permet de fusionner l’étiquette surmoulée (image graphique de haute qualité) et le plastique en une seule étape: lors du moulage de votre contenant ou de votre pièce de plastique. Votre image (marque) est protégée de façon permanente par les propriétés robustes du plastique et perdure en post-consommation. What is going on here?

(English>Armenian 1-13.3) What would be good French for the term węzłów sieciowo-serwerowych. Elementy te będą wykorzystywać proponowaną sieć teletransmisyjną, wydajne serwery oraz pamięci masowe doakwizycji, przechowywania i przetwarzania danych na potrzeby podsystemów sterowania, zarządzania monitoringu oraz bezpieczeństwa opianych w niniejszym dokumencie.

(English>Armenian 1-13.3) Normally, if you are able, to provide good English for the words in bold print: Todas as condições apresentadas para a formação deste Contrato e para a mensuração do risco foram calculadas com base nas informações apresentadas pelo ESTIPULANTE, e aquelas que já eram de conhecimento da SEGURADORA.

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Replies to Old Queries

(Danish>English 8-12.1) (andet punktum): This most likely is the second sentence in a short section, writes Peter Christensen, and the term means the “second item” in the section. Helen Hasselriis defines it as “Point Two.”

(Dutch>English 10-12.1) (fiscaal tehuising): Dan Lufkin calls this a “fiscal shelter.” For instance, “XXX thereby agrees to furnish the advisory office with the necessary information with a view to setting up the tax returns and, particularly, the total income received by the fiscal shelter.” Also, thanks to Dan for correcting bijzonder to bijzonder.

(German>Italian [English] 7-12.5) (Stadterhebung): In English, says Ilse Andrews, this means “incorporation” as a town or city. Apparently the Italian is incorporazione. Katya Howard prefers “gaining town status.”

(German>Russian [English] 8-12.7) (Vollstreckungshilfeverkehr): Cheryl Fain likes “assistant by enforcement” for this. The entire sentence reads: “Assistance by enforcement under the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons of March 21, 1983.” Roland Greifer clarifies that Vollstreckungshilfe is “assistance in the execution of a (foreign) judgment.”

The text is requesting a prisoner transfer in accordance with the above treaty. The underlying law is the Transferübereinkommens-Ausführungsgetz, which inevitably has its own initialism, TransfÜbkAG.

(Greek>English 9-12.4) (εκπαύσις δικαιοσύνης): Lefteris Kafatos says this simply means “transfer of legal rights.”

(Italian>English 9-12.5) (ossitaggio): This is “oxycutting,” says Jacopo Madaro, referring to a metal-cutting technique using an oxyacetylene torch.

(Italian>English 9-12.6) (strappi in progressione): Lorraine Axelson offers “successive spurts” for this, and expands the phrase: “(an ascent comprising) three successive spurts [equal] both for their length and their steepness.” Jacopo Madaro renders it as “a set of three sprints, one after the other,” and the location is the Monte delle Sante Marie. Peter Christensen provided a response I have not seen in my nearly two decades of umpiring this column. He sent in a digital picture of such strappi or sections showing the Muro (synonymous with strappo) di Sormano. I wish I could reproduce it here, because, as an active bicyclist, I find it to be the kind of outrageous hairpin-turn-plus-upgrade that I really never want to see, not even in a bad dream.

(ITalian>Spanish [English] 9-12.7) (bacino): One possible solution to this is “pelvic area,” and again Lorraine Axelson provides the entire phrase: “a jersey top [sweater] with two tucks [darts] at the neck, thus making it a boat neck, and then wide at the bottom across the pelvic area.” Alessandra Levine defines it as “wider in the pelvis (hip) area.” For Jacopo Madaro, it is cintura in Spanish (Alessandra Corazza agrees), and by expanding the phrase a bit, we get y una cintura más ancha.

(Spanish>English 9-12.8) (el apéndice obligatorio proveniente de los descuentos efectuados): For this, Maria Bilbao provides: “the mandatory contribution from withholdings made from paychecks to all the workers in the country.” These withholdings were imposed to support (what else?) social programs.

(Spanish>English 10-12.8) (chinar:tear). Basically, says Sheldon Shaffer, this verb is a Spanglish concoction for the crude English synonym of “to defecate.” And here all along the Translation Inquirer thought that cagar sufficed to convey this meaning.

The Translation Inquirer wishes to express his thanks to Per Dohler, who has faithfully proofread this column for a number of years. Thanks again to everybody who contributed, and a Happy New Year!

Replies to Old Queries