Domains of Application and ‚Skopos' of the German Cato Translations in the Late Middle Ages

PART I (Michael Baldzuhn)

When we look for evidence of multilingualism in the Middle Ages, we will eventually find the type of source which consists of the translation of Latin classroom texts into various vernaculars. Since the high Middle Ages traditional standard works of grammar - dominantly Latin - were translated frequently into vernaculars. A prominent example are the 'Disticha Catonis'. This late antique work contains about 100 hexameter couplets, which convey a multitude of fundamental rules of life and conduct. A linguistically rather simple work, it was precisely for that reason all the more effective. In it we find rules such as:

- to never stop learning: *animum nec discere cesses*,
- to always think before you speak,
- or to only take on that which you can bring to a satisfactory conclusion: *quod potes id tempta*.

These rules concerning personal and social life were so popular that for centuries they were used to provide linguistic illustration of Latin grammar. The success of the Latin work provided the basis for numerous translations into vernaculars: The work has been translated into Old Provencal, Greek, Middle Dutch, Middle English, Old French, Catalan, Czech, Polish, and many other European languages. Since the 13th century it was translated into German.

[**Transparency 1**] By the 15th century we have more than a dozen German translations, contained in more than 100 manuscripts.

[Transparency 2] It has become obvious, that the Cato translations were widely distributed not just geographically but also through the centuries. It is important to understand the following:

- the Latin Cato was translated into a great number of different vernaculars;
- translations into the vernaculars were repeatedly made over a period of several centuries;
- they were made against the background of a Europe-wide relatively stable Latin source text; and
- they were often made for bilingual school lessons. Being used in school, they reached a wide audience. They therefore represent a more general level of language use than the more demanding translations for literates by literates.

Because of the described characteristics, the medieval Cato translations can give us a lot of very interesting information: firstly, about the contact between the medieval lingua franca Latin and the different vernaculars, and secondly, about the changes, the relationship between the Latin original text and the different vernacular translations underwent in time.

Project A7 looks exclusively at the German Cato translations. We trust, however, that our methods will be applicable to text corpora written in other languages. That's the reason why - in a second working phase of our project - we would like to ask, to what extent recent lingustic theories are applicable to the specific communicative circumstances in the later Middle Ages. - In the first phase of our project we had to build the foundation for this question, among others by compiling the texts. Because research has not yet been able to fully reconstruct the circumstances in which the German translations were made, used, and handed down, I will now - in the first part of this lecture - deal with these text pragmatics. In the second part my colleague GUNTRAM HAAG will give a linguistic analysis of individual translations.

A translation analysis which tries to relate its linguistic analysis to specific functions - using, for instance, Halliday's categories of "tenor", mode" and "function" - will have to answer basic questions For example: How representative are individual results? How much do the texts reflect the way they were used in the classroom - or do they only contain written language? Who exactly used the language - pupils, teachers, authors, and/or copiers? In what ways did the users shape the text? Who were the intended readers? Answers to these questions are necessary in order to illuminate the changing historical ways of dealing with the original Latin text.

[**Transparency 3**] Wulf Oesterreicher has clearly shown that the individual steps of such an analysis require more than a retrospective gathering of contextual information. Oesterreicher emphasizes the different status which written communication had in semi-oral cultures - very unlike today where the technique of writing has become so common. Therefore, linguistic analysis of written sources always needs to consider that the existing documents formerly functiones within a complex interaction with oral communication. This task of "recontextualization" written sources is complex indeed, because the oral part of communication is only partially reflected in the written source; it is not mimetically contained in the written text: we always have consider specific limitations, that result from the process of scripting (the german term is "Verschriftung") and textualization (the german term is "Verschriftlichung"). Moreover, we have to consider historical changes in textualization itself. In many traditions of discourse - take law, for example, or administration, or economics - communication increasingly relied on writing and became more and more textualized. Oesterreicher calls the impact of textualization discourse traditions "centering of text" - an appropriate term, it seems to me, since in the course of this process the status of the written source changes and it plays an increasingly central role in communication.

So much then about the demands placed on a pragmatic analysis of historical texts. I shall now ask some questions about the pragmatics of the German Cato-translations and try to relate my answers to the process of textualization. (And I shall try to outline some methodological consequences for the linguistic micro-analysis of our translations.)

I would first like to investigate the extent to which the translations reflect the oral use of language in the classroom. Are the texts comparable to minutes of the lessons? We have found only one example of an ad-hoc translation; that one was, however, not designed for school use but for preaching purposes. The German Cato-translations which were used in school were neither produced nor written down during the regular school-lesson itself - as our exercisebooks are today: We don't deal with individual ad hoc-translations. Accordingly, the majority of our translations can be categorized in classes of texts: 95 of our copies can be classified into about a dozen textgroups. Any oral quality of our texts therefore consistes only in their being designed for use in the classroom. The translations are written partitures for an interaction between German and Latin - yet their oral usage may have deviated from the text.

Exercisebooks could give us more precise information about the contact between Latin and German in school, but exercisebooks require a greater degree of textualization than was common in the late Middle Ages. They are therefore a post-medieval phenomenon.

[**Transparency 4**] First of all the individual text is characterized by an accepted texttradition rather than by its classroom-use. But could'nt we classify these traditions, for example, according to the lower or higher level of language lessons? For example: Did Latin lessons for beginners use a certain group of texts, and did they use a different kind at the university? The geographic distribution of the Cato translations shows that we cannot safely assume such a high degree of functional differentiation. Each text tradition has its own area of distribution: The Cato by Stephan von Dorpat was copied only in Northern Germany. The Silesian Cato covers Eastern Central Germany. The so-called Rhinenian Cato was used in the Central Rhine area and East and North of that. In the Upper German region the complete translation or "Gesamtübersetzung" was used. (Later on I'll address its overlap with the so-called "Rumpfbearbeitung".) The really important point is that the different areas of distribution hardly overlap. That means: in North Germany only Stephan von Dorpat's Cato was known, in Eastern Central Germany only the so-called Silesian Cato. Today the written teaching material is classified according to individual qualifications, types of schools, and didactic theories, and the translation aids are adapted to the original text in a variety of ways. On the contrary, in the 15th century one and the same Cato translation had to cover a much broader spectrum. The Silesian Cato, for example, was probably designed for a bilingual "primer". A London manuscript shows that the same text - now accompanied by a detailed Latin commentary - was used at the university. Therefore analysis of the written text needs to consider this: We may assume that either the texts were made for a general audience, or they were made for a specific audience, but would occasionally be modified to meet the needs of other audiences. If such an oral modification was generally used, the design of the written source can tell us little about the specific circumstances, a single copie was used.

[**Transparency 5**] Cato manuscripts often contain both, the latin source together with the german translation. There ought to be a difference between a text which was meant to be used with its Latin source and one meant to be used without it. In the first case the translation can be compared to the original text. However, when the original text and the translation were used separately, they could only be compared orally or from memory. In these cases, the

translation could even be meant to replace the original text entirely. The german Cato-manuscripts reveal three different relationships between German and Latin. They first type contains only the German text. **[Transparency 6]** In the second type, the German text alternates with the Latin one: each Latin hexameter couplet is followed by four German verses. **[Transparency 7]** The third type varies the second one: in addition it contains a Latin commentary following the hexameters an the german rhyme-couplets. It is important to see, that each text tradition is tied to a certain layout and therefore to a certain relationship to the Latin text. The Silesian Cato, for example, is laid out as in number 2. The "Rumpfbearbeitung" follows type 1. The Lower Rhine Cato follows type 2. A subgroup of the "Gesamtübersetzung" called textclass A is the only one to follow type 3. Obviously each translation always was copied together with its traditional layout. And since the Latin text was part of the layout, it was always directly involved: The sourcemanuscript which was copied by the scribe determines whether the Latin text is copied or not. Ergo a functional interpretation of linguistic data refering to the relationship between Latin and German in a single manuscript always needs to take into account elements, which go beyond the written status of the text - in our case conventions and necessities of producing a manuscript.

[Transparency 8] Finally I would like to talk about the differences between two manuscript-copies of a single translation. The classical philological view on text-variances would assume that each variant constituted something like a new kind of translation - produced in respect to changed needs of text-use. Yet possibly the variants merely used the freedom of style and phrasing which existed at the time. We haven't yet analyzed the available material in detail. - Nevertheless we should consider this second position. After all it seems, that Cato-translations could be adapted to new contexts in a surprisingly simple way. This becomes very obvious when we look at the wide distribution of the 14th century Northern Rhine Cato. In Cologne that text was transformed during the course of two centuries from a Latin-German "primer" into a general reading matter for the layman who did not know Latin. In 1482 this Cato was printed for the first time as a "primer", containing the original Latin text and the Latin-German Facetus 'Cum nihil utilius'. (This Facetus often accompanied the Cato-lessons in school.) But a second print dated 1498 deleted the Facetus. Four Cologne prints made between 1500 and 1530 deleted the Latin Cato as well. In three out of these four prints the text was preceded by wood engravings which addressed the layman specifically. Essentially - and that is the point - he was still being offered an old school

translation of the 14th century.

[**Transparency 9**] Adaption by means of reduction rather than production: if this is confirmed by further analysis, the Rhinenian Cato in Cologne would still not be the only translation, that underwent this process. Two and a half centuries ago the "Rumpfbearbeitung" is the result of that same kind of adaption. This most successful german Cato appeares from its beginning without the Latin text. And from the beginning on it was copied together with texts not belonging to the canon of Latin lessons, but which hinted at the literary interests and needs of the layman: entertaining novellas, epic poetry, songs, medical advice and so on. This Cato was again made on the basis of an older Latin-German school-Cato. The most successful German Cato thus illustrates what is generally true for all German literature in the Middle Ages: wherever it was written down, it made contact with Latin as thee written language. The important point about a detailed analysis of this translation is the simplicity of its to the world of the layman. It consists for one of the use of an extisting school translation, and secondly, of the principles applied in modifying the text. According to the research done, the editing comprised abridging and rearrangement of verses of the original text rather than profound re-phrasing. Once again the principle of reduction rather than production was applied.

To sum it up: In the reception of the texts, we have seen many indications of a flexible and open use of the German Cato translations. We still need to find out, to what extent the German texts conceptually contain the prerequisites for this flexible use. If my observations about the handing down of the translations can be adequately explained by the restricted use of writing in the late Middle Ages, then we should be able to find clear indications in the texts themselves.

PART II (Guntram Haag)

There are groups of translations, which vary according to region. Each of these groups could be used for several different purposes. This means at the same time, that each of these groups of translations had to be suitable for various purposes. Do the translations fulfil the variety of purposes, and - if so - how do they? Let's have a look at two of the extant translations to find an answer to that question. The translations we've chosen belong to different

types: We're going to deal with the oldest extant manuscript of the so-called 'Gesamtübersetzung', the manuscript from the monastic library in Zwettl, and with the oldest complete 'Rumpfbearbeitung' from the collegiate library in Melk. (The Latin text will be cited according to the edition of Boas)

At the centre of the Latin and the German 'Cato' is the informative-operative skopos (purpose), i.e. to convey to the addressee counsel and instructions on how to deal with life. Translations which maintain such a primary skopos (purpose), are called "adequate" according to the skopos theory by Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiß. An additional function of the Latin 'Cato' is its didactic use at school. Additionally, the translations are a document of an ever-increasing independence of the target culture. So there is no total functional equivalence of source text and target version, even more so because of another influential factor, the partially extant linguistic orientation of translations to the source language.

Now the question is, if and how these possible purposes can be linked to textual elements. The analysis of textual elements according to their functional specific appropriateness is, however, rather complex, because the form of the text is also influenced by the metre and the rhyme, factors, which cannot be directly related to purposes of application, but function as a text-transcending signal of the genre. However, at the same time the metre and the rhyme restrict the possibilities of the form of each part of the text. In addition, the influence of monolingual restrictions should be taken into account. Considering all these factors, it goes without saying, that textual elements related to specific purposes are only partially distributed throughout the text. Therefore a skopos theory is not really suitable for texts like the 'Cato'-translations, because it is based on the correspondance between a hierarchy of purposes and linguistic means. Only one distinguishing mark is distributed throughout the source-text and the translations: the appellative action established by repeated directive speech acts.

1. Directives:

Both in the Latin text and in the German translations in every verse unit occurs at least one directive utterance addressed to a singular addressee. The illocutionary force of a directive is marked by the following linguistic means: **[Transparency 10]**.

Rodie Risselada investigated "Imperatives and other directive expressions in Latin" in the comedies of Plautus, in the corrispondence of Cicero and Plinius. She also analysed legal texts

and instructional texts, but unfortunately not the 'Disticha Catonis'. According to Risselada, the markers of directives are used as follows: **[Transparency 11]**.

All these characteristics cannot be proven to exist in the Disticha Catonis. The variation of directives obviously seems to follow mainly the dictates of metre and rhyme. In the German translations the directive act is realized in this way: **[Transparency 12]**.

With these forms directives in the Latin text and in the translations are marked. There are no significant differences between single translations with regard to the use of specific directive forms. However, none of the distichons consists only of directives, but these directives are connected for example with causal explanations. Therefore we should next address the question, whether textual means related to specific purposes can be found in the context that is linked with each directive.

2. Linguistic context of directives:

Each distichon represents only one turn of a possible interaction. Usually, it doesn't consist only of a directive action, but also of a context of the directive. It includes also, what Jochen Rehbein and Konrad Ehlich call a "Sollen-Begründung", which adds to the directive experiences, that give reason for a directive, its purpose or the consequences of compliance with the exhortations and advices or desribes situations, to which the directives refer: **[Transparency 13]**. An example: **[Transparency 14]**.

In spite of the above-mentioned presumable inadequacy of a skopos theory, it should, however, be verified, whether such reasons and premises connected with directives but still fit specific purposes of application. As one of many aspects, I will now concentrate on the relation to the text-internal addressee which was at the centre of the above analysis. Two questions, that come to mind, are the following:

- Fictitious persons related to the addressee: How many and what type of third persons are related text-internally to the addressee?
- Relation between the speaker/author and the addressee: Are premises and reasons explicitly directed (only) to a 2nd sg. just like the directives themselves (pronominal and/or by suffix)?

Fictitious persons related to the addressee: From the data capture follows, that there are clearly distinguishable types of relation. Some of the persons related to the addressee belong to the close sphere

of family and friendship, others belong to a social or religious sphere, some are named by a qualitative property (e.g. 'die guten') some by a quantitative property (z.B. 'manche'). A particular feature of the German translation according to the data capture is a greater number of personal relations. An example: **[Transparency 15]**.

Let's assume the fictitious result that this surplus was predominantly located in the religious sphere of relations. Perhaps then we could deduce from that a conception of the translation aimed at the christian target-language culture. But the surplus of persons related to the addressee in fact is not at all specific, but almost entirely consists in general denominations. Therefore we should regard it only as an indirectly enhanced orientation towards the text-internal addressee, to whom all additional persons are related.

Personal deixis in premises and reasons: A property that the German translations have in common and that distinguishes them from the Latin text, is a more frequent direct reference to the addressee **[Transparency 16]**. That holds especially for the premises, which are connected with the directive action. Furthermore, the Melk manuscript differs from that of Zwettl in that there is an additional personal reference in the causal elements.

Based on the data capture some questions raise with regard to the data evaluation, e.g.:

- Which disticha cause the statistical surplus of direct reference to the addressee?
- What kind of influences may have caused the surplus of direct reference to the addressee?

First the source text will be compared with the translations and then one translation with the other in order to discuss these questions.

Let's have a quick glance at the distichon I 33 in order to compare the source text with the target language version: **[Transparency 17]**.

"uns": In Latin the personal deixis usually isn't realized by linguistic means, except when special emphasis is placed on it; in German the explication of personal deixis is often preferred to even, if the emphasis is unintended. Therefore the effect that the addressee ist more frequently directly addressed is not caused by intention, but by monolingual linguistic standards.

"du lidest" goes together with a reinforced reference to the addressee in the postponed clause: In the translation the "sorgen"

are explicated by "lidest" whereas the Latin Text keeps on describing the "dies". So in this case the addressee is more directly addressed in the German text for lexical-semantic reasons, but again without any correlating specific purpose of application.

Finally some comments about two differences between the Rumpfbearbeitung of Melk and the Gesamtübersetzung of Zwettl which relate to the layout:

Sometimes in the Rumpfbearbeitung the absence of the Latin text correlates with more liberty in modifying the text. Coherence is enhanced by grouping verses in a new order and by leaving out such of all verses which in the Latin source text are not personalized. Thus the addressee is more directly addressed as a secondary effect of that enhanced coherence. So as to exemplify that, I'm going to compare the German versions of the distichon I 10 and its linguistic context: **[Transparency 18]**.

> I 10 in the Zwettl version: "You shall not argue with an eloquent person; everybody is able to talk, few people are wise."; in the Rumpfbearbeitung of the Melk manuscript: "You shall not argue with an eloquent person". The other two verses are left out. In the Zwettl manuscript I 10 is preceded as in the source text by I 9: "If/When you exhort sb. a lot, who doesn't want to exhort himself, if you like him whatever he does, still exhort him, if it's good." I 11 follows immediately: "Be fond of others to the extent, that you don't forget yourself." In the Melk manuscript I 10 is not at all preceded by I 9, but by the distichon, which originally was I 12: "Shun scandalmonger. Don't be a gossip. Silence never causes damage, chatting highly likely is damaging." The original distichon I 4 follows: "Nor shall you argue at any time with yourself."

We have to notice:

1. the loss of verses: Instead of the verses I 10,3+4 in the Zwettl version, which are not explicitly directed to the addressee, immediately follows distichon I 4 with direct reference to the addressee.

2. the modification of the distichon order:
   a) I 4: Coherence is established by doubling "Du solt" and enhanced by "ouch", I 10 is lexically connected with I 4 by"str(e)it".
   b) I 9: is lexically connected with I 10 by "klaffen", "redelich" etc.

To summarize, we can say that in both German texts the reference to the addressee is reinforced by a larger number of persons, which text-internally are associated with the addressee, as well as by

linguistic means of personalization such as pronouns or personal suffixes. However, there is no proof that there is any strategy pushing to the fore more specific skopoi of certain translations by a continuous distribution of adequate linguistic properties. Thus our two case studies illustrate to us that kind of open text for which we have already found indices on the side of the reception. A reinforced communicative profile characterizes the two German translations. This type of reinforcement of the communicative profile seems to be the effect of a cultural-specific linguistic disposition which emphasizes more strongly the interactive character of texts and is not grasped by the model within the framework of the skopos theory.