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## **Translation as a Winged Magic Horse: Reflections on “Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte”**

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**Abstract:** The fairy tale “Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” was collected from the folklore in the 19th century by Petre Ispirescu, the Romanian equivalent of the brothers Grimm. It has since been translated into English and other languages several times, and it narrates the adventures of a prince whose quest is to find eternal youth and everlasting life. Prince Handsome is guided by a winged magic horse, at the same time his advisor and means of transportation. I examine aspects of the interaction between the two characters in the original and two English translations of the story and argue that the horse is a psychopomp and translator of sorts, who assists his human companion in crossing boundaries and undergoing transformation.

**Keywords:** translation, animal, transportation, horse, fairy tale, magic, Petre Ispirescu, Romanian

**Résumé :** « Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte » est un conte de fées recueilli du folklore au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle par Petre Ispirescu, l'équivalent roumain des frères Grimm. Il a été traduit en anglais et autres langues à plusieurs reprises et présente les aventures d'un prince à la recherche de la jeunesse éternelle et de la vie sans fin. Prince Charmant est guidé par un cheval magique ailé, qui est à la fois son conseiller et son moyen de transport. Dans cette contribution, je tâche de mettre en évidence un certain nombre d'aspects de l'interaction entre les deux personnages dans le texte en langue d'origine ainsi que deux de ses traductions vers l'anglais, et avance l'hypothèse que le cheval est un psychopompe et traducteur transportant son compagnon humain à travers des frontières et l'aidant à se transformer.

**Mots clés :** traduction, animal, transport, cheval, conte de fées, magie, Petre Ispirescu, roumain

### **Introduction**

In this paper, I propose to combine a reflection about the nature of translation with considerations about the way in which a Romanian fairy tale about a prince and his horse—or perhaps a horse and his prince—has been translated into English. In the original language, the title of this fairy tale is “Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” [Youth without old age and life without death], and the text was collected from oral folklore in the 19th century by Petre Ispirescu, the Romanian equivalent of the brothers Grimm. Several translations exist in English and other languages, but I focus on two attempts, namely the translation by Ana Cartianu and published in 1979 under the title “Youth Everlasting and Life without End”, targeting a child audience, and the 2000 retranslation by Adrian Solomon entitled “Eternal Life and Everlasting Youth”, which appeared in *Plural*, the journal of the Romanian Cultural Foundation.

Non-human animals are a prominent presence in this fairy tale and they are all endowed with supernatural powers, with one possible exception: the hare whose pursuit causes the prince to inadvertently cross the boundary separating eternal youth and life back into the real world by accessing memories of his past and, especially, of his parents, in other words of his origins. Most humans in the story have no such abilities, except for the fairy sisters who welcome the prince and the horse to their castle, where the prince seems to have found what he had been looking for. It is not within the scope of my contribution to examine definitions of magic and the supernatural. Suffice it to say it seems plausible that perceptions of something, or someone, as magic, may be linked to difficulties to explain a phenomenon in terms which make sense to the person or community, in view

of the framework of interpretation they are able to apply. Also, the question of difference, of otherness, is likely to play a part.

In “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte”, then, the main (non-magic) human, Prince Handsome, needs a non-human animal presented as pertaining to the realm of magic, the horse, if he is to stand a chance to succeed in his quest. And succeed he does—while he listens to the horse. Should he have, could he have, continued to remain in that partnership?

The horse is not named in the story, and nor is the prince, considering that ‘Prince Handsome’ of ‘Prince Charming’ (*Fat-Frumos*, in Romanian) is not truly anyone’s name but helps situate the character in a line of fairy tale princes and orients the expectations of the audience. The fact that the horse is winged situates him as well (I will return to the question of the pronoun) in a lineage of flying horses of which the most famous one, in Western civilisation, is Pegasus. Pegasus, who in Greek mythology is the son of the god Poseidon and of the gorgon Medusa, is usually represented as pure white, and so is the horse in “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte”, although his colour is not mentioned in the fairy tale, only the fact that he has four wings. The pronoun used in the Romanian is masculine, but this does not necessarily mean the horse is a stallion rather than a mare: in the original language, the word for ‘horse’, *cal*, is masculine.

The horse in Ispirescu’s fairy tale is able to use human language and has wisdom and experience, acting as an advisor and guide to the prince. He takes the prince to a place where there is only life and youth (at the cost of amnesia); upon the young man insistence, he transports the latter back to where the journey first started in terms of space but not of time—which entails death. In a way, the flying horse is a psychopomp who, after guiding the human character through a major transition in his life, i.e. between adolescence (Prince Handsome is fifteen when they first meet) and adulthood, now reluctantly but competently escorts him into old age and death. In the terms of analytical psychology, the horse can be seen as assisting the prince in the process of accessing his own unconscious. Importantly, in Greek mythology the role of conducting souls to the underworld is ascribed to Hermes, divine messenger, god of communication and of commerce, go-between, quick-witted trickster and god of thieves, mediator between the human and the divine realms, guide of the sleeping to the realm of dreams, god of travellers—and of translators and interpreters. Translators also have a patron saint, Hieronymus of Stridon, most commonly known as Saint Jerome, translator of the Old and New Testaments into Latin. Jerome is almost invariably represented with an animal, a lion.

## **Translation, transportation, afterlife**

Translation is omnipresent, we are literally surrounded by it, although part of the time we may not even realise its presence since, as has been pointed out time and again, invisibility (the term is not without connotations of magic) seems to be a precondition for successful translation. Moreover, translation and communication are so intricately intertwined that it makes sense to claim that every act of translation is an act of (interpersonal) communication and that, conversely, every act of communication has a form of translation at its core. But defining what translation is and does can never be a straightforward task. The Latin etymology of the word suggests an association with travel: *translatio* is, quite literally, carrying or bearing across. In other words, translation is a journey and, at times a quest. The imagery of roads, paths, ways, border crossings and of building bridges for the benefit of others is part of how we conceptualise translation, and so is the vocabulary of fidelity, trustworthiness, loyalty. Of movement as well: witness to this is Friedrich Schleiermacher’s famous metaphor (1813), i.e. bringing the reader to the author or the reverse, although, as Malmkjær (2015) pointed out, this particular metaphor of movement, which is also a dichotomy, is problematic at least in the sense that it suggests it is only possible to move one or the other of the parties involved but not both, making them meet in the middle.

Translation renews the life of the translated works, making them available across time, space, languages and cultures to audiences which would not have otherwise had access to the texts in their languages of origin (there is a limit to the number of languages even the most talented learner is able to read it, within one lifespan). In “The Task of the Translator” ([1923] 1996), Walter Benjamin used the word *Fortleben*—survival or, more precisely, continued life. Prolonged life and, indeed, eternal life, is the object of the prince’s pursuit in “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte”, along with

the promise of youth which, besides being one of humanity's oldest quests, entails a refusal to conform to the natural order of things: everything that is born must die. There is a noble, tragic dimension in the prince's inability to accept his human condition and decision to go beyond the prescribed limits; at the same time, since youth and everlasting life are presented in this story as petrified states of being, there is something profoundly disturbing about one's desire to make time stop, to refuse the transformation it brings.

Petre Ispirescu's fairy tale is characterised by a peculiar treatment of the theme of the Hero and of the Hero's Journey. According to Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* ([1949] 2008), the Hero is usually expected to leave the known world for the unknown, to endure hardship and to fight for a just cause, be transformed, and finally attain the object of his or her quest. In this story, Prince Handsome does find what he was looking for, but loses it, and finally dies a lonely, seemingly meaningless death.

The main character in the fairy tale is likely to be identified as the prince, but it could also be horse: the two always appear together once the quest has started, except at the very end, when Prince Handsome chooses not to listen to the horse's advice. Throughout their journey together, the winged horse has been the prince's means of transportation—of trans-lation—as well as his advisor and only friend.



**Illustration 1:** Prince Handsome and the horse.

Writing down stories collected from the folklore involves a process of re-writing which is in a sense a translation act in itself. This is why it seems plausible to claim that, before undergoing translation from Romanian into English (and other languages), “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” was first trans-lated from oral to written text, from one context to another within its country or origin, and also between very different audiences. Petre Ispirescu lived in the 19th century, which makes him a contemporary of Hans Christian Andersen and a near contemporary of the brothers Grimm. Born into a modest family, he started working early and was not in a position to complete his education. He rose from type-setter to director of a printing house. In 1862, Ispirescu published a collection of six fairy tales collected from the Romanian folklore, among which “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără moarte”; ten years later he published a second volume of folk tales. His most important work, *Legende*

*sau basmele românilor* [Legends or the tales of the Romanians] appeared in 1882 and subsequently went through numerous reprints.

“Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” is a striking traditional fairy tale in that it flouts genre conventions (e.g. the expected happy ending, the neat distinction between good and of evil) and leaves the reader wondering—as perhaps he or she really should—about the meaning of it all. In the story, a childless imperial couple struggles to conceive and they do, but are warned the boy—Prince Handsome—will not bring them joy (although, in the first years of his life, he does). The birth is difficult because the baby cries in his mother’s womb and the empress cannot give birth. The desperate future father, now in imminent danger of remaining without an heir and losing his wife as well, starts promising the unborn child all the wonders in the world, everything he can think of that is in his power to provide, but to no avail. Eventually, he promises eternal youth and everlasting life; the prince stops crying and comes into the world. He is clever and handsome but increasingly melancholic; the emperor may have forgotten the promise he had made but his son certainly did not. Upon the father’s admission that he is unable to fulfil his pledge, the young man undertakes a quest nobody else believes in—more precisely, no other human character in the story. It is not the prince’s ability as such that his own parents and courtiers and the entire kingdom question, but the very existence or possibility of what he is looking for. After a perilous journey he would clearly not have been able to make without the horse, Prince Charming reaches a castle surrounded by forests and guarded by ferocious beasts. It is in that remote, secluded place that he finds youth without old age and life without death. Three fairies live there, and the prince marries one of them. Centuries go by, but he doesn’t know that. One day, while he is hunting, he inadvertently crosses a forbidden boundary the fairies had warned him about. Still unaware of the lapse of time since his arrival at the castle, the prince remembers his parents and longs to see them again. Unable to contain his yearning or to understand it can never be fulfilled—the emperor and the empress are long dead—he secures the horse’s agreement to take him back to his parents’ palace, which he finds in ruins and empty, except for one presence: his own death, waiting for him.

The first of the two English translations which make the object of this study was published in 1979: the large-size format of the book and the numerous illustrations suggest that Ana Cartianu targeted a child audience. Over twenty years later, in 2000, the Romanian Cultural Foundation in Bucharest published a special issue of its English-language journal *Plural* which included fairy tales and other stories from the Romanian folklore, accompanied by brief scholarly introductions. Two stories by Petre Ispirescu featured in this volume, one of them “Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” in a new translation by Adrian Solomon.

References to non-human animals as well as to insects appear already in the opening paragraph of the fairy tale: bears, wolves, lambs, flies and fleas, as can be seen in bold in Excerpt 1 (the abbreviation ST stands for ‘source text’; TT1 is ‘target text 1’, Cartianu’s 1979 translation; TT2 means ‘target text 2’, the 2000 translation by Solomon).

**EXCERPT 1:** The incipit.

**ST:** *A fost odată ca niciodată; că de n-ar fi, nu s-ar mai povesti; de când făcea ploșorul pere și răchita micșunele; de când se băteau **urșii** în coade; de când se luau de gât **lupii** cu **mieii** de se sărutau, înfrățindu-se; de când se potcovea **puricele** la un picior cu nouăzeci și nouă de oca de fier și s-aranca în slava cerului de ne aducea povești;*

*De când se scria **musca** pe perete.*

*Mai mincinos cine nu crede.*

**TT1:** This story happened—once upon a time—in the days when the poplar tree bore pears and the willow tree flowered into violets. **Bears** fought each other twisting their long tails in tight knots, and **wolves** and **lambs** would frolic in the spring sunshine. A **flea** would shoe one tiny foot with ninety nine iron weights of three pounds each and soar up to the skies to bring us fairy tales.

The **fly** would write on the wall.

The bigger liar is he who doesn’t trust me at all.

**TT2:** Once upon a time, in the olden clays, when two Sundays came together and **bears** fought with their tails; when **wolves** and **lambs** hugged and kissed each other like brothers; when **fleas** wore iron horseshoes a dozen stone each and leapt high in the sky to

bring people tales therefrom; when **flies** would write on the walls; he who doubts our story is the biggest among liars!

The richness of the excerpt above is such that it could easily, in itself, supply material for a lengthy discussion of linguistic and cultural transfer in translation, as well as the vexed question of the difference (if any) between translation proper and adaptation. For our purposes, however, suffice it to say that the bears, wolves, lambs, fleas and flies behave in an unusual way: the story takes place at an indefinite time, in an unknown realm where anything is possible—except for humans to possess magical powers, or to live forever young.

### **The prince, the horse, the journey**

Differences or ‘shifts’ between an initial text and its translations are inevitable—after all, a translation is *not* the source text, although it is generally seen as equivalent. A large number of considerations shape decisions about how to translate (and whether to translate at all), and some of the factors involved may not even be conscious. Clearly, translating is not photocopying a text from one language into another but a subjective process of selecting among a set of alternatives which seem possible, plausible, appropriate. In view of the translator’s restricted but nevertheless real freedom, occurrences in texts become relevant by virtue of other choices which could have been made but were discarded, or perhaps not considered. In Şerban (2007) I examined some of the ways in which the two translators, Ana Cartianu and Adrian Solomon, accommodate different audiences, including through translation strategies such as foreignisation, domestication, normalisation, explicitation. Here, I revisit the fairy tale and its two translations in an attempt to reveal aspects of the relationship between the main human and the most important non-human animal in the story. The examples which follow are representative of their interaction at key moments in the narrative.

The prince in “Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte” secures the horse’s assistance through an initial act of unquestioning obedience, as can be seen below.

**EXCERPT 2:** The first encounter.

**ST:** *Apoi, Făt-Frumos se duse în grajdurile împărătești unde erau cei mai frumoși armăsari din toată împărăția, ca să-și aleagă unul; dar, cum punea mâna și apuca pe câte unul de coadă, îi trântea, și astfel toți caii căzură. În sfârșit, tocmai când era să iasă, își mai aruncă ochii o dată prin grajd și, zărind într-un colț un cal răpciugos și bubos și slab, se duce și la dânsul; iar când puse mâna pe coada lui, el își întoarse capul și zise: [...] Ca să ajungi la dorința ta, trebuie să ceri de la tată-tău paloșul, sulița, arcul, tolba cu săgețile și hainele ce le purta el când era flăcău; iar pe mine să mă îngrijești cu însuși mâna ta șase săptămâni și orzul să mi-l dai fiert în lapte.*

**TT1:** Prince Handsome went to the royal stables to choose a **fine horse** for his travels. First one, then another was brought out for him to see, but as soon as he grabbed one by the reins, **it would fall down**. Soon all the horses lay on the ground and the stables appeared empty. Glancing around, Prince Handsome saw an **old horse** in the corner. It was **very thin, full of sores and looked a mere bag of bones**, but, when he took **it** by the mane, the horse turned **his** head and said, [...] “In order to gain your quest, you must ask your father to give you the sword, lance, bow, quiver and the arrows – not forgetting the armour – he used as a young man. **For six weeks you must tend to me yourself, giving me barley which you have boiled in milk.**”

**TT2:** Prince Charming went to the royal stables to see **the finest stallions in the kingdom** and pick one for himself; but as soon as he gripped one by the tail, **the horse would fall to the ground**, and this happened to all of them, down to the last one. Eventually, when he was about to leave, he cast a final glance around the stable, and in a corner he saw a **jaded, glanderous horse full of swellings**; he went to check that horse too, and when he grabbed **his** tail, the horse turned **his** head and said: [...] “To fulfil your wish, you’ll have to ask your father first to give you the sword, the spear, the bow, the arrow quiver, and the clothes he used to wear as a young man; **as for me, six weeks from**

**now on you will have to look after me all by yourself, and feed me on barley boiled in milk.”**

Finding of a means of transportation is presented as a selection process (the horses' strength is tested by Prince Handsome) which becomes an act of recognition, an epiphany of sorts, made possible by the prince's willingness to envisage the sick horse as a possible road companion. The horse immediately shows his ability to speak to humans, as well as a knowledge of how the prince needs to prepare for the journey. There is also something he asks for himself, and the young man complies (although it is the horse who calls him *stăpâne* [master], and explicitly acknowledges his right to give orders); the prospect of starting his quest with this particular horse defies all logic, in view of the animal's problematic health. The horse then reveals more of his magic.

**EXCERPT 3:** The transformation.

**ST:** *Când auzi calul de la Făt-Frumos că hainele și armele sunt bine curățate și pregătite, odată se scutură și el, și toate bubele și răpciuga căzură de pe dânsul și rămase întocmai cum îl fătase mă-sa, un cal gras, trupeș și cu patru aripi; văzându-l Făt-Frumos astfel, îi zise:*

— *De azi în trei zile plecăm.*

— *Să trăiești, stăpâne; sunt gata chiar azi, de poruncești, îi răspunse calul.*

**TT1: Prince Handsome told the horse** he could begin his travel.

The old horse shook himself, raised his head and gave a fine neigh, at the same time all the sores fell from his sides and he appeared a strong shapely horse with four wings.

“In three days we are off,” said Prince Handsome **looking at him with admiration** as he groomed the glossy coat.

“Bless you, master,” said the horse, “I am ready now if you want to go.”

**TT2: When Prince Charming told the horse** that the arms and the clothes were well cleaned and at the ready, the horse shook off all the carbuncles and swellings in a jiffy, and emerged like his mother had foaled him: a fleshy, sturdy, four-winged stallion. Prince Charming **looked at him in awe**, then said:

“Three days from now we're leaving.”

“God give you long life, my lord! I'm ready to go right away, if you so wish,” the horse replied.

In the original text, the emphasis is on the horse hearing from the prince that everything is ready for the journey, rather than on the prince communicating this information. The difference may be small, but it gives more prominence to the prince's role which, in this story, is remarkably passive by comparison with that of the horse.

There are in the fairy tale numerous instances of the horse warning the prince of imminent danger and telling him what to do (“*Să știi, stăpâne, că aici suntem pe moșia unei Gheonoaie dară să nu te sperii, ci să fii gata cu arcul ca să o săgetezi, iar paloșul și sulița să le ții la îndemână, ca să te slujești cu dânsele când va fi de trebuință*”; “*Ține-te, stăpâne, gata, că iată se apropie Gheonoaia*”; “*Să ne odihnim puțin, stăpâne, și mâine dis-de-dimineată să fim gata*”; “*Fii gata, stăpâne, că iată se apropie zgripsoroaica de Scorpie*”). At times, the prince asks questions, which the horse never fails to answer (“*Atunci el întrebă pe cal: — De ce este iarba pârlită? Și calul îi răspunse [...]*”). The harmonious, successful partnership between the two is described several times: “*Se deteră spre odihnă; dar pânda când unul când altul*”; “*iar calul se urcă ca vântul până cam dasupra ei și Făt-Frumos îi luă un picior cu săgeata*”; “*se duseră, se duseră și iară se mai duseră*”; “*Aicea stătură ei să se odihnească*”; “*După ce se odihniră vreo două zile, se pregătiră iarăși*”. But, essentially, the horse is portrayed as far superior in terms of wisdom, experience and initiative.

**EXCERPT 4:** The horse as advisor and guide.

**ST:** *Trecurăm cum trecurăm până aci, stăpâne; mai avem un hop: avem să dăm peste o primejdie mare; și, dacă ne-o ajuta Dumnezeu să scăpăm și de dânsa, apoi suntem voinici. Mai-nainte de aci este palatul unde locuiește Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte. Această casă este înconjurată cu o pădure deasă și înaltă, unde stau toate*

*fiarele cele mai sălbatice din lume; ziua și noaptea păzesc cu neadormire și sunt multe foarte; cu dânsele nu este chip de a te bate; și ca să trecem prin pădure e peste poate; noi însă să ne silim, dac-om putea, să sărim pe deasupra.*

**TT1:** “Master,” said the horse, “we have done well so far, but there is one more trouble ahead. Great danger lies before us, but, with God’s help, we shall win through.”

“What is this danger?” asked the prince.

“A little way ahead there is a castle where lives youth everlasting and life without end—your quest. The place is surrounded by a thick tall forest, full of **the most savage beasts ever found in the whole world**. Day and night they watch, never sleeping one wink, and their number is great. Fighting them is out of the question and **crossing the forest is more than man can accomplish**. The best plan is to take a big jump over the forest.”

**TT2:** So far so good, my lord; there is only one hurdle left; great danger lies ahead; God willing, we’re going to overcome it, and prevail. Before us is the palace of Eternal Life and Everlasting Youth. That edifice is surrounded by a thick, tall wood harboring **the wildest beasts in the whole world**; they are countless, and they watch sleeplessly, night and day; there is no way you can fight them, and **going across the wood is beyond our powers**; on the contrary, we must try to fly over it.

Having almost reached his destination, the prince is informed by his horse—and it is only at this point the topic is brought up in the story—that youth everlasting and life without end can be found in a castle surrounded by thick forest whose trees are tall, and that the most savage beasts or, in other words, animals, stand guard. Crossing these woods on foot is out of the question, *peste poate* [beyond possible], in Solomon’s translation “beyond our powers”, whereas in Cartianu’s translation the task is “more than man can accomplish” which, again, gives priority to the young man’s otherwise relatively modest role (for a discussion of the normalisation of Prince Handsome’s image, see Șerban 2007). After all, even some of the other characters in the fairy tale and, most notably, the enemies the team have prevailed over, acknowledge the obvious fact that, without his horse, Prince Handsome would stand no chance (“*Să-ți trăiască calul, Făt-Frumos, îi mai zise ea, ca un năzdrăvan ce este, căci de nu era el, te mâncam fript*”; “*Cu calul care îl ai și cu vitejia ta, crez că ai să izbutești*”).

The dangers the two travellers have faced up to this point come from beasts (*Gheonoaia* and *Scorpia*) who were formerly human but changed their nature because of a curse they appear to have deserved; the third obstacle is also represented by animals: the wild inhabitants of the forest who are not, however, a danger to the mistresses of the place, whom they appear to serve.

**EXCERPT 5:** The animals guarding the castle.

**ST:** *Stăpâne, mai zise calul, acum e timpul când se dă de mâncare fiarălor pădurei și sunt adunate toate în curte; să trecem.*

**TT1:** “Master, now is the time when the **beasts of the forest** are being fed and they are being fed and they are all gathered in the courtyard. Let us go through.”

**TT2:** “My lord,” the horse added, “now is the time when they feed all the **animals in the yard**. Let’s go!”

The horse knows the road but also, as can be seen in Excerpt 5, the place. The fact that he suggests they fly over the forest (see Excerpt 4 and also Excerpt 6 below) rather than guide the prince through it raises questions about the nature of this third test which should not be confronted but, rather, circumvented; it is also puzzling to consider that, for a winged horse, even flying over this particular forest—or transporting his human companion?—should be problematic. At any rate, Prince Charming approves, as he invariably does when the horse speaks; he also invokes God’s help.

**EXCERPT 6:** The crossing.

**ST:** *Stăpâne, strânge chinga cât poți de mult, și, încălecând, să te ții bine și în scări, și de coama mea; picioarele să le ții lipite pe lângă suptioara mea, ca să nu mă zăticnești în zborul meu.*



**TT1:** Make the saddle-girth as tight as you can, master. Once in the saddle, hold fast, your feet in your stirrups, cling to my mane and keep your legs close to mine, **out of the way when I soar upwards.**

**TT2:** My lord, tighten the girth as fast as you can, and when you mount, hold on steady in the stirrups, and cling firmly to my mane; and keep your legs close to my flanks, **so you won't hamper my flight.**

The prince's role is to make sure he stays in the saddle and that he does not hinder the horse's attempt. In the original, the horse rehearses the flight (“*Se urcă, făcu probă, și într-un minut fu aproape de pădure*”); the three verbs [went up, made, was] are in the singular. There is no rehearsal in Cartianu's translation, whereas Solomon preserves it but uses a plural (“they made a trial”). The horse was right to say this was the time of the day when the animals in the forest were fed, but the immediate implication is that they are all gathered outside the castle. The bond between the fairy feeding them—in Romanian, *pui* means ‘chicken’ but is also used as a term of endearment, in the sense of ‘little one’, ‘darling’—is made explicit, as is the fact that the otherwise ferocious beasts obey her. In the Romanian text, the lady of the castle (one of three sisters) saves Prince Handsome's life by sending the savage beasts back into the woods, which is something Cartianu glosses over, in her translation. It certainly is most unusual for a young and beautiful woman to rescue the hero rather than the other way round, in a traditional fairy tale.

**EXCERPT 7:** The arrival.

**ST:** *Se urcară în sus și văzură palatul strălucind astfel, de la soare te puteai uita, dar la dânsul ba. Trecură pe dasupra pădurii și, tocmai când erau să se lase în jos la scara palatului, d-abia, d-abia atinse cu piciorul vârful unui copac și dodată toată pădurea se puse în mișcare; urlau **dobitoacele**, de și se făcea părul măciucă pe cap. Se grăbiră de se lăsară în jos; și de nu era doamna palatului afară, dând demâncare **puiilor ei** (căci așa numea ea **lighioanele** din pădure), **îi prăpădea negreșit.***

**TT1:** Over the forest they flew, and, just as they were about to descend on the steps of the castle, the horse scarcely touched the top of a tree, when the whole forest burst into life: **the beasts howled and growled** so that our heroes' hair stood on end. Quickly the two travellers landed in the courtyard where the lady of the castle was feeding **her chickens**. Seeing them, she sent the **beasts** back to the forest and welcomed the visitors.

**TT2:** They flew high and saw the palace: it shone brighter than the sun. They soared above the wood, and just when they were about to touch down by the palace front stairs, he barely brushed the top of a tree with his foot, and hell broke loose: all **the beasts in the wood were howling so ferociously** that it would make one's hair stand on end. They hurried down, and **indeed they would have met with their death**, hadn't the lady of the palace been in the yard, feeding **her cubs**—for that was what she called **the wild beasts** in the wood.

“*Opri pe dobitoace, le îmblânzi și le trimise la locul lor*” [She stopped the animals, tamed them and sent them to their place] is what the fairy does in Petre Ispirescu's tale, but what should the reader understand by “their place”? The forest, perhaps, or should this be understood in terms of the conventional hierarchy between human and non-human animals?

After their arrival at the castle, “[*c*]alului îi dete drumul să pască pe unde va voi dânsul; pe urmă îi făcură cunoscuți tuturor lighioanelor, de puteau umbla în tihnă prin pădure”: the prince lets the horse free to graze wherever he want to, and the fairies introduce both of them to the animals. At this point, in her translation, Cartianu introduces one of her many additions which raise the question of whether her rendering can be called a ‘translation’: the beasts “were brought to be stroked, and Prince Handsome was amazed at their gentleness. Could they be the same?”

The partnership between the prince and the horse dissolves because the reason for which it was formed no longer exists; this is not stated explicitly in the narrative, but is implied in more ways than one. Thus, he is on his own the day he unintentionally crosses into *Valea Plângerii*, the Valley of Weeping.

**EXCERPT 8:** The transgression.

**ST:** *Ieșea adesea la vânătoare; dar, într-o zi, se luă după un iepure, dete o săgeată, dete două și nu-l nimeri; supărat, alergă după el și dete și cu a treia săgeată, cu care îl și nimeri; dară nefericitul, în învălmășeală, nu băgase de seamă că, alergând după iepure, trecuse în Valea Plângerii.*

**TT1:** Sometimes he would go shooting and one day he was after a hare. He shot an arrow which missed, so he tried another and another. Angry now, he shot a fourth arrow which hit the hare. In his excitement the prince had not noticed that he had followed the hare into the Vale of Tears.

**TT2:** He would often go hunting; but one day, as he was chasing a wild hare, he shot one arrow, and missed it; he shot a second arrow, and missed again; he chased the hare angrily, and shot a third arrow, which hit it; but, in the thrill of the chase, the poor prince didn't notice that he had crossed into The Wailing Valley.

It is not the violence of hunting which is presented as problematic in “Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte”, but the crossing of the forbidden, invisible border. Nevertheless, it was the pursuit of an animal that brought it about. Tormented by his newly recovered ability to feel longing for his parents, Prince Handsome wants to go back and no one can convince him otherwise, just like, when he undertook the quest for eternal youth and everlasting life, nobody succeeded in preventing his departure. The horse now sides with the three fairies, not with the prince: “*Toate rugăciunile celor trei femei, precum și ale calului, n-au fost în stare să-i potolească dorul părinților*” [All the prayers of the three women, as well as of the horse, were unable to quench the yearning for his parents]. In Cartianu's translation, only the fairies do the entreating: “But all the pleadings of his wife and her sisters could not persuade Prince Handsome to stay and he determined to go home”. But this he cannot do without the horse.

**EXCERPT 9:** The negotiation.

**ST:** *În cele mai de pe urmă, calul îi zise:*

— *Dacă nu vrei să mă ascuți, stăpâne, orice ți se va întâmpla, să știi că numai tu ești de vină. Am să-ți spui o vorbă și, dacă vei primi tocmeala mea, te duc înapoi.*

— *Primesc, zise el cu toată mulțumirea, spune-o!*

— *Cum vom ajunge la palatul tatălui tău, să te las jos și eu să mă întorc, de vei voi să rămâi măcar un ceas.*

— *Așa să fie, zise el.*

**TT1:** At last the horse said, “If you will not listen to me, master, you must take the blame, no matter what happens to you. Let me say one thing before I take you home.”

“Very well,” said Prince Handsome, “what is it?”

“As soon as we reach your father's palace, I shall put you down. **May I be free to return**, should you wish to stay there, if only for an hour?”

“Certainly,” said the prince.

**TT2:** At length, the horse told him:

“If you will not listen to me, my lord, come what may, it will be your fault alone. I am going to tell you just one thing, and if you agree with me, I shall take you back.”

“I agree,” the thankful prince said. “Name it.”

“As soon as we get to your father's palace, I shall lay you down, and if you mean to linger as little as one hour, **I'm gone**.”

“So be it,” the prince answered.

Why does the horse, who understands the consequence for the prince, accept to transport him *înapoi* [back]? Of course, the question can be reversed: why should he not do that, and indeed can he refuse, once it has become clear Prince Handsome is unable to continue his current life. After all, the prince's unfailing determination is what set in motion the events surrounding the departure from his parents' palace and the empire he was heir to, and the same irrepressible urge now propels him in the opposite direction. Solomon's translation is “back”, but Cartianu writes “home”. Does the old young man yearn

to go home, to go back—or both, in which case home (his only true home, or his home at this stage in his life?) is his mortal, human nature his imperial parents bequeathed him?

In the Romanian text, the horse imposes his conditions and the prince accepts them. Cartianu reframes the interaction as a question/permission the horse asks. She later rewrites the text along similar lines to give the prince a semblance of choice in the hour of his death. One last, time, the prince and the horse prepare for departure (“[s]e pregătiră de plecare”). Only one will return.

**EXCERPT 10:** The journey back.

**ST:** *Ajunseră în locurile unde era moșia Scorpiei; acolo găsiră orașe; pădurile se schimbaseră în câmpii; întrebă pre unii și pre alții despre Scorpie și locuința ei; dar îi răspunseră că bunii lor auziseră de la străbunii lor povestindu-se de asemenea fleacuri.*

**TT1:** **They reached** the lands that had been the Scorpion’s and **found** towns, the forests had been turned into fields. When **the prince asked** what had happened to the Scorpion, he was told their great-grandparents had believed in such foolishness.

**TT2:** **They reached** the Shrew’s former estate; there **they found** cities; the woods had changed into pastures; **he asked** every person he met about the Shrew and her abode; but they answered that their grandparents had heard their great-grandparents talking such nonsense.

Notice how, in Excerpt 10 above, the plural (*ajunseră, găsiră* [they reached, they found]) transforms into singular. Only the prince needs to ask questions; the horse knows the answers, but it is not towards him that Prince Handsome turns, as he once used to. Instead, it is his fellow humans he interrogates, and the information they are able to supply, from their limited point of view, increases the prince’s confusion (“*Nu se putea domiri el*” [He could not understand]). The singular is also used to narrate the arrival: “*În cele mai de pe urmă, ajunse la palaturile în care se născuse*” [At long last, **he reached** the palaces where he had been born]. The prince can still opt to travel back, but chooses to linger among the ruins. As he says goodbye to the horse, he expresses the irrational hope he might be able to follow him soon, back to the fairies’ castle.

**EXCERPT 11:** The farewell.

**ST:** *Cum se dete jos, calul îi sărută mâna și îi zise:*

— *Rămâi sănătos, stăpâne, că eu mă întorc de unde am plecat. Dacă poștești să mergi și d-ta, încalecă îndată și aidem!*

— *Du-te sănătos, că și eu nădăjduiesc să mă întorc peste curând.*

*Calul plecă ca săgeata de iute.*

**TT1:** As soon as he dismounted, the horse nuzzled him and said, “Farewell, master, for I am going back to whence I came. If you will come, just vault into the saddle and let us go!”

“Nay, farewell, my old friend,” said Prince Handsome, “I hope to return home soon.”

Swift as an arrow, the horse was gone.

**TT2:** As he dismounted, his horse kissed his hand and said:

“Farewell, my lord, I’m going back where I came from. If you wish to come along, get up on me, and let us be gone.”

“Fare thee well! I hope I shall be back soon myself.”

The horse sped off like the wind.

The prince’s death (the word carries a capital in the Romanian text, “*Moartea lui*” [his Death]) is presented as a being endowed with a voice (“*Bine ai venit, că de mai întârzi ai, și eu mă prăpădeam*” [Welcome, for had you delayed I myself would have lost my life]) and a hand with which death slaps him, and he immediately turns to dust. As I explain in Șerban (2007), although Cartianu who, perhaps in a bid to adjust her translation to the child audience she clearly targets, intervenes in many places in the narrative, she does not go to the length of providing a traditional happy ending. Nevertheless, she gives the prince a measure of dignity in the form of a few moments in which to realise what is happening to him and to acquiesce.

## Coda

Travelling, transportation, permanent youth, everlasting life—these are some of the keywords in Petre Ispirescu's "Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte", a fairy tale situated under the sign of the journey, of the quest, and, I contend, of translation. In my contribution, I have examined aspects of the interaction between the main characters in the Romanian original and two of its English translations, one of them human and the other a non-human, magic animal.

Animals are present throughout the narrative; they are virtually without exception presented as having magic powers and their roles are numerous, in the economy of the story. The most prominent is the horse who, I have attempted to reveal, is a psychopomp and a translator serving his companion in the latter's endeavour to attain prolonged life. This involves taking the prince away from his country of origin and from his parents' home and carrying him across borders which challenge his determination to travel while at the same time raising questions about the nature of the quest. What is eternal youth? Perhaps the ability to transform, to embrace growth, rather than an aspiration to preserve something by freezing it and putting it on a shelf protected by glass? Translation can show the way, combining as it does the imperative of loyal service, of guiding others, with the art of transformation, of renewal.

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