

URTH: It ain't finished....

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 Dec 1998

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Kevin J. Maroney — 03 Dec 1998, 11:15

At 10:56 AM 12/3/98 -0500, Rostrum wrote:

Rather argue that since the English "It is finished" can mean "It is over," "It is the end," and "It is completed," "It is finished" is both a possible translation for "Terminus Est" and the common English translation of Christ's last words.

Actually, my point was quite different from that. I have the feeling that, in Latin, "Terminus" does **not** have the connotation of "finished" any more than does the English phrase which is its best translation, "dividing line". However, my Latin is certainly not strong enough to bolster this argument, whereas I suspect Wolfe's is pretty strong.

Part of my position in this discussion is informed by a note I once read about the opening sentence of Kafka's *The Trial*. One common English translation of this sentence is: "Someone must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning." The note pointed out that some English-speaking critics had made much of the connotative meanings of the word "arrested", including "being stopped"--the course of Joseph K's life is "arrested" at the same time he is. But, the note continued, the German word used in the sentence simply **does not** have that connotation; it simply means "taken into police custody".

Similarly, while I think that translating "Terminus Est" as "It is finished" is a very clever observation which does actually fit the book well, I fear that it might not be a valid translation, and thus is an overinterpretation.

Now, if anyone can tell me that it **is** a fair translation, I will withdraw all my hesitation and embrace the observation as well-founded and completely clever.

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