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CICERO AND THE ROMAN TRADITION OF TRANSLATION

As far as we know, and as far as our written sources reach back in time, the history of Roman literature started from translations. The first piece of Roman poetry from which we can read at least some small scraps was the *Odyssea* translated by Livius Andronicus into Latin, which was later on transformed into hexameters, and was followed by several other translations of Homer in this metre. At the same time, and initiated by the same person, the *fabula cothurnata* and *palliata* appeared on the Roman stage, stemming mainly from free adaptive translations of classical (sometimes also Hellenistic) Greek tragedy and New Comedy respectively. This was what brought about the fertilizing of the native roots of literature with the genres and forms of a more highly developed literary culture, and also the interiorization of contents of this culture by the Romans, not only by the members of the high society, but, thanks to the theatre, by the masses as well. The *Odyssea*—probably together with the national epics of Naevius and Ennius—came to be part of the elementary education.¹ But, for the age of Cicero, the knowledge of Greek language and literature became also natural, at least in the more literate circles of Roman society. For this reason, poetical translation has lost its role as a bridge (or, more properly, a channel) between the two cultures. Specialized translation continued to be accepted as the way of transplanting useful information into the language of the Romans, but when it came to somewhat less practical topics, like philosophy, there could be raised a completely justified question: what sense does it make to translate Greek authors into Latin, when all those who are interested in them already know Greek, and those who do not know Greek are not expected to be interested in them, either?² By that time, almost the only remaining aspect of non-practical translation that could give

¹ W. ZILLINGER: *Cicero und die altrömischen Dichter*, Würzburg 1911, 11. It is only Livius Andronicus whose presence in Roman elementary education can be proved from classical sources (Hor. Epist. 2,1,69–71: *non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi / esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo / Orbilius dictare...*). As for the *Annales* of Ennius, cf. ZILLINGER op. cit. 26–7: “Wenn wir auch keine direkte Nachricht haben, daß sie in den Schulen in Auswahl auswendig gelernt wurden, so liegt es doch sehr nahe, dies anzunehmen.”

² *Causam autem probabilem tu quidem affers: aut enim Graeca legere malent qui erunt eruditi, aut ne haec quidem qui illa nescient. Sed eam mihi non sane probas; immo vero et haec qui illa non poterunt, et qui Graeca poterunt non contemnent sua. Quid enim causae est cur poetas Latinos Graecis litteris eruditi legant, philosophos non legant? An quia delectat Ennius Pacuvius Accius multi alii, qui non verba sed vim Graecorum expresserunt poetarum—quanto magis philosophi delectabunt, si ut illi Aeschylum Sophoclem Euripidem sic hi Platonem imitentur Aristotelem Theophrastum. Oratores quidem laudari video si qui e nostris Hyperidem sint aut Demosthenem imitati.* (Cic. Acad. post. 1,10)

its *raison d'être* was one present from the beginnings: that is, *aemulatio*, the artistic re-working and improving of a hypotext—which, in this case being a foreign-language text, can also be called the Source Text (ST) of translation.

Cicero himself pretended not to regard poetical translation as a severe intellectual challenge. Apart from his translations of Aratus, made in the years of his youth,³ and some short epigrams,⁴ he did not make translations of whole poetical texts—for example, a whole play or epic —, but only of parts of them that he thought suitable to include in one of his works on philosophy. By the way, the relationship of translations and quotations can be examined only in this genre. In other genres, there is no choice between quoting a well-known passage from a Roman poet or translating one from Greek. In Cicero's letters we can find no translations: in his correspondence with educated penfriends he can indulge in citing or referring to Greek poets in Greek or—much less often—Roman favourites in Latin. In the speeches, where he must gain the benevolence of the audience for the case he makes, he must be extremely careful not to bring any quotation that is not well-known to even the least educated listener. That is why even the quotations from Roman poets are very scarce here. In rhetorical works, quotations usually turn up as stylistical examples, and, from a pedagogical point of view, examples should also be well-known to everyone. So, it is only in philosophical works that Cicero's own translations can find their place—and perhaps, the Greek sources of these works present the challenge for it with their corresponding quotations from Greek poetry. Cicero sometimes creates the fiction of a fresh-made translation,⁵ or reminds his audience that the translation to be quoted comes from his younger years,⁶ or makes the impression that, for him, translating from Greek is a relaxing leisure activity.⁷ But in the *Tusculanae disputationes* (2,26), after quite long quotations from Sophocles and Aeschylus translated by himself, he makes some revelative remarks on this:

'Interea, unde isti versus? Non enim adgnosco.'

'Dicam hercle; etenim recte requiris. Videsne abundare me otio?'

'Quid tum?'

'Fuisti saepe, credo, cum Athenis esses, in scholis philosophorum.'

'Vero, ac libenter quidem.'

'Animadvertebas igitur, etsi tum nemo erat admodum copiosus, verum tamen versus ab is admisceri orationi.'

'Ac multos quidem a Dionysio Stoico.'

'Probe dicis. Sed is quasi dictata, nullo dilectu, nulla elegantia: Philo... et lecta poemata et loco adiungebat. Itaque postquam adamavi hanc quasi senilem declamationem, studiose equidem utor nostris poetis; sed

³ Cic. De nat. deor. 2,104.

⁴ Fr. 49–55 Buechner.

⁵ Cic. De fin. 2,105

⁶ See n. 3.

⁷ Cic. De div. 2,63.

sicubi illi defecerunt—verti enim multa de Graecis, ne quo ornamento in hoc genere disputationis careret Latina oratio.'

To lard a work on philosophy with quotations of poetry has been a tradition since Plato, and Philo, Cicero's master of philosophy practised this with a great talent and predilection. Now we come to know how Cicero, while writing in Latin, follows his teacher. He might have had an anthology of Greek poetry for the use of philosophical works—either made up by himself or found ready in his sources on philosophy—, and a respective anthology in Latin, filled up with his own translations if necessary. This latter must have contained, among others, parts from the Latin adaptations of Greek tragedies by Pacuvius, Accius and Ennius, some *palliata*, and also some Roman poetry with no Greek equivalent. He makes it explicit that he translates only if he does not find a suitable Roman quotation ready—but he probably restricted the range of quotable poetry to the relatively well-known works, for example, *cothurnatae* that were on stage in his time.

When establishing the *raison d'être* of Latin works of philosophy based on the Greek—and created with a method of adaptive translation, contamination and reshaping similar to *fabula cothurnata* and *palliata*—, Cicero refers to an idea connected with Roman national self-consciousness. It sounds like this: Even if you have the chance to read the Greek original, you should nonetheless be familiar with the Roman version as well, however unenjoyable it were. As he puts it in the *De fin.* 1,4–5: *Quis enim tam inimicus paene nomini Romano est, qui Ennii Medeam aut Antiopam Pacuvii spernat aut reiciat, quod se isdem Euripidis fabulis delectari dicat, Latinas litteras oderit?*—and, later on: *cum Sophocles vel optime scripserit Electram, tamen male conversam Atilii mihi legendum putem*, not necessarily instead of Sophocles, but at least beside him. What is more, the simple fact that you can read a masterpiece of Greek literature in Latin is a source of intellectual enjoyment.⁸ Taking his stand so, Cicero is obliged to recur to Roman poets in every case when it is possible, and he can only give way to his own talents in case of emergency.

In the light of Cicero's remarks cited above, the absence of Livius Andronicus from among the poets quoted is quite conspicuous. When Cicero quotes Homer in Latin, he always makes a translation of his own, and never uses existing translations, neither the *Odyssea* of Andronicus in *versus Saturnius* nor the *Iliad* of Cn. Matius or Ninnius Crassus in hexameters. The tragedies of Andronicus are also missing from among the *cothurnatae* cited. As for Naevius, by comparison, no quotation from the *Bellum Poenicum* occurs in the works of Cicero, and his plays are also cited only six times (5 quotations from tragedies, 1 from a comedy). This is significant compared to the overwhelming mass of the quotations from Ennius, from the *Annales* as much as from his plays (the total of quotations of Ennius is above 150). This cannot be satisfactorily explained by stating that Andronicus and Naevius were not very much present then in the common knowledge of Rome. Although we do not know of any *grammatici* dealing with Andronicus severely in that time, there is an indirect proof that some plays of both authors turned up on the Roman stage. In the *De*

⁸ *Atque hoc loco me intuens "Utar—inquit—carminibus Arateis, quae a te admodum adulescentulo conversa ita me delectant quia Latina sunt, ut multa ex is memoria teneam."* (Cic. *De nat. deor.* 2,104)

legibus Cicero makes some statements on the music of the plays of Andronicus and Naevius, as opposed to modern music.⁹ It is reasonable to suspect that his opinion was based on personal auditive experience. So, supposing that neither of the three school poets were by then forgotten, it is worth examining Cicero's opinion about each of them. His predilection for Ennius is obvious: not to say more, this poet gets the title *summus poeta* three times.¹⁰ About Livius Andronicus and Naevius Cicero reveals his opinion in his *Brutus*.¹¹ Comparing the beginnings of Roman literature to the evolving of Greek painting and sculpture, he puts the great poets of the Roman past into a line of progress. Livius Andronicus gets the role of the *inventor* of Roman epic and drama—by which Cicero makes it impossible for him to be held for a good poet standing the ordeal of time, for, as he says, *nihil est simul et inventum et perfectum*. He underlines this by comparing Andronicus to Daedalus, the great *inventor* of manual arts. As Zillinger (1911) has pointed out,¹² this must be understood in the light of a passage of Plato:¹³ if Daedalus came back to life in Socrates' time, and made that kind of works of art by which his name became famous, he would only deserve laughter. Similar is Cicero's opinion about the plays of Andronicus: *Livianae fabulae non satis dignae quae iterum legantur*. By this, he puts them on the level of Atilius' *Electra*: a Roman intellectual with the proper national conscience must read them with respect, because their role in literary history and their being in Latin represent a value on its own, but there is no reason to read them more than once.

We can suspect that he would not have thought else about the ancient heroic songs referred to by Cato, the loss of which he regrets so much, notwithstanding that they must have been in much closer connection with the glorious Roman past than the majority of the works of Andronicus. This we can conclude from his treatment of Naevius: although he mentions him in a very polite way, comparing the *Bellum Poenicum* to the statues of Myron, which are not yet perfectly lifelike but can be said to be beautiful—in spite of all this, he never quotes it. We may not miss the point very much if we explain this with

⁹ Cic. De leg. 2,39.

¹⁰ Cic. Or. 1,198, Pro Balbo 51, De prov. cons. 20; see also De opt. gen. orat. 2.

¹¹ *Quis enim eorum qui haec minora animadvertunt non intellegit Canachi signa rigidiora esse quam ut imitentur veritatem? Calamidis dura illa quidem, sed tamen molliora quam Canachi; nondum Myronis satis ad veritatem adducta, iam tamen quae non dubites pulchra dicere; pulchriora Polycliti et iam plane perfecta, ut mihi quidem videri solent. ... Et nescio an reliquis in rebus omnibus idem eveniat: nihil est enim simul et inventum et perfectum ... Nam et Odyssia Latina est sic tamquam opus aliquod Daedali et Livianae fabulae non satis dignae quae iterum legantur. ... Atque utinam exstarent illa carmina, quae multis saeculis ante suam aetatem in epulis esse cantitata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus in Originibus scriptum reliquit Cato. Tamen illius, quem in vestibus et Faunis adnumerat Ennius, bellum Punicum quasi Myronis opus delectat. Sit Ennius sane, ut est certe, perfectior: qui si illum, ut simulat, contemneret, non omnia bella persequens primum illud Punicum acerrimum bellum reliquisset. Sed ipse dicit cur id faciat. 'Scripsere' inquit 'alii rem vor-sibus'; et luculente quidem scripserunt, etiam si minus quam tu polite. (Cic. Brut. 70–6)*

¹² ZILLINGER op. cit. (n. 1), 46–7.

¹³ Plat. Hipp. Maior 281d,9–282a,3: ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν Δαίδαλὸν φασιν οἱ ἀνδριαντοποιοί, νῦν γενόμενος τοιαῦτ' ἐργάζοιτο οἷα ἦν ἀφ' ὧν τοῦνομ' ἔσχεν, καταγέλαστον ἂν εἶναι.

Cicero's well-disguised abhorrence from the *versus Saturnius*,¹⁴ of which no example can be found in any of his works. His relationship to Naevius is similar to that of his admired predecessor, Ennius: he gives him the obligatory reverence, but nothing more.

As to the other translators of Homer, the work of Ninnius Crassus has completely disappeared apart from one and a half line quoted by late grammarians, but Matrius must have been known in the time of Cicero, for he is quoted by Varro several times¹⁵—all in vain. The hexameter reworking of the *Odyssea*, which already bears on itself the impact of Ennius, is subject to the same treatment—or, more exactly, non-treatment—on the side of Cicero. Unfortunately, the fragments of these translations are too scarce for us to be able to find the reason why Cicero rejected them—maybe some archaic features of their language or of their form. But, for the same reason, we cannot even decide whether Cicero rejected them totally or practised some *aemulatio* with them in his translations. By the time of Cicero, some important changes had taken (or were taking) place in Latin hexameter—for example, the treatment of -s on the end of a word as a consonant of full value —, and this could incite a poet to contend with his predecessors for the glory using these new weapons.

All in all, in spite of the apparent neglect of Livius Andronicus, we can be sure that no translator could make himself independent from his influence. The bare fact that any noble Roman child studied the *Odyssea* in Latin school, then the *Odyssea* with his Greek tutor, so he was supposed to know both by heart, must have led to the abstraction of some principles of translation methodology in one's brain, on which the rhetorical education could build its similar exercises.¹⁶ In the fragments of Livius Andronicus all kinds of lexical transformations can be found that are applied by Cicero, and also by modern translators. In the table below we can see examples of lexical transformations¹⁷ from Andronicus and from a part of the Iliad translated by Cicero in the *De divinatione*.

Table: Lexical transformations in Livius Andronicus and Cicero

	Livius Andronicus	Cicero (De div. 2,63 = fr. 23 Buechner)
Concretization of meaning	ἡὲ Πύλουδ' ἐλθῶν ἢ αὐτοῦ τῶδ' ἐνὶ δῆμῳ <i>in Pylum deveniens aut ibidem ommentans</i> (Od. 2,317—fr. 9 Buechner)	λάαν γάρ μιν ἔθηκε <i>duro formavit tegmine saxi</i> (Il. 2,319—Cic. 19)
Generalization of meaning	τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων; <i>mea puera, quid verbi ex tuo ore supra fugit?</i> (Od. 1,64—fr. 3 Buechner)	αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ τέκνα φάγε στρουθοῖο καὶ αὐτήν <i>ubi tam teneros volucris matremque peremit</i> (Il. 2,317—Cic. 17)
Contraction of meaning	ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον <i>tuque mihi narrato omnia disertim</i> (Od. 1,169—fr. 7 Buechner)	ἀμφὶ περὶ κρήνην <i>circum latices gelidos</i> (Il. 2,305—Cic. 8)

¹⁴ Pace ZILLINGER op. cit. (n. 1), 21.

¹⁵ Varro LL 7. 95–6.

¹⁶ Cf. e. g. Suet. De gramm. et rhet. 25,8.

¹⁷ The system of lexical transformations used by me is taken from KLAUDY K.: *A fordítás elmélete és gyakorlata* (with summary in English), Budapest 1997³, 116–64, 417.

Splitting / division of meaning	πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν γε δάμεν, πολλοὶ δὲ λίποντο <i>partim errant, nequinoſ Graeciam redire</i> (Od. 4,495—fr. 11 Buechner)	κακὰ Πριάμῳ καὶ Τρωσὶ φέρουσαι <i>quae Priamo cladem et Troiae pestem quae ferebant</i> (Il. 2,304—Cic. 7)
Lexical omission	ἢ γούνων λίσσοιτο λαβῶν εὐώπιδα κούρην <i>utrum genua amplotens virginem oraret</i> (Od. 6,142—fr. 14 Buechner)	τὸν ῥ' αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος ἦκε φώσδε, βῶ- μου ὑπαίξας πρὸς ῥα πλατάνιστον ὄρουσεν <i>Iovis ut pulsu penetraret ab ara</i> (Il. 2,309—10—Cic. 12)
Lexical addition	ἔνθα καθεζόμενος μείναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ κεν ἡμεῖς ἄστυδε ἔλθωμεν καὶ ἰκώμεθα δώματα πατρός. <i>ibi manens sedeto donicum videbis me carpeno vehementem domum venisse</i> (Od. 6,295—6—fr. 15 Buechner)	... ὄφρα σαῶμεν, ἢ ἔτεδν Κάλχας μαντεύ- εται ἦε καὶ οὐκί <i>auguris ut nostri Calchantis fata queamus scire ratosne habeant an vanos pectoris orsus</i> (Il. 2,299—300—Cic. 2—3)
Transposition of meaning	οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο θαλάσσης ἄνδρα γε συγχεῖναι, εἰ καὶ μάλα καρτερός εἶη. <i>namque nullum peius macerat humanum quamde mare saevom: vires cui sunt magnae, topper confringent importunae undae</i> (Od. 8,138—9—fr. 18 Buechner)	ἔνθ' ὃ γε τοὺς ἔλειπειν ἀκατήσθι τετρι- γῶτας μήτηρ δ' ἀμφεποτάτο ὄδυρομένη φίλα τέκνα ... <i>quos cum consumeret octo, nona super tremulo genitrix clangore volabat</i> (Il. 2,314—5—Cic. 14—5)
Substitution of meaning	Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον <i>Virum mihi, Camena, insece versutum</i> (Od. 1. 1—fr. 1 Buechner)	ἔρδομεν ἀθανάτοισι τελέσσας ἑκατόμβας <i>aurigeris divom placantes numina tauris</i> (Il. 2. 306—Cic. 9)
Antonymous translation	ἄνδρες δ' ἄψ' ἐγένοντο νεώτεροι ἢ πάρος ἦσαν <i>topper facit homines ut prius fuerunt</i> (Od. 10,395—fr. 25 Buechner)	τῷ δεκάτῳ δὲ πόλιν αἰρήσομεν εὐρύαγιαν <i>quae decumo cadet et poena satiabit A- chivos</i> (Il. 2,329—Cic. 28)
Total transformation of meaning	ἔνθα δὲ Πάτροκλος θεοφῖν μῆστωρ ἀτάλαντος <i>ibidemque vir summus adprimus Pa- troclus</i> (Od. 3,110—fr. 10 Buechner)	τὴν δ' ἐλελιξάμενος πτέρυγος λάβεν ἀμφι- αχῦϊαν <i>cui ferus inmani laniavit viscera morsu</i> (Il. 2,316—Cic. 16)
Compensation for losses in translation	τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόν- των; <i>mea puera, quid verbi ex tuo ore supra fugit?</i> (Od. 1,64—fr. 3 Buechner)	ἔρδομεν ἀθανάτοισι τελέσσας ἑκατόμβας <i>aurigeris divom placantes numina tau- ris</i> (Il. 2,306—Cic. 9)

Concretization of meaning, in which a lexical item of the ST is translated with a lexical item having a narrower meaning or one describing the given notion more exactly, can be observed in the case of ἐλθῶν and *deveniens* in Andronicus, ἔθηκε and *formavit* in Cicero—a more exact description of the direction and the act, respectively, in the TTs. The opposite process, generalization of meaning, is shown by *ore*, Andronicus' translation for the famous Homeric image ἕρκος ὀδόντων, and Cicero's *peremit* for κατέφαγε, a simple destroying with no notion of devouring.

Contraction of meaning, when more lexical items of the ST are unified in a TT equivalent, is exemplified by the contraction of εἰπέ and κατάλεξον into *narrato* in Andronicus, on the one hand, and that of ἀμφὶ περί into a single *circum* in Cicero, on the other

hand. The opposite process, splitting or division of meaning—that is, when several aspects of a ST lexical item are expressed separately in the TT —, can be seen in the evolving of λῖποντο into *errant, nequinqnt Graeciam redire* in Andronicus, and κακά split into *cladem pestemque* in Cicero.

An example for lexical omission is the epithet εὐώπιδα missing from Andronicus' text, and φώσδε, ὑπαίξας and πρὸς πλατάνιστον omitted by Cicero from his strongly shortened translation of the Homeric line. The opposite process, lexical addition, is shown by *videbis* and *carpento vehentem* in Andronicus, and the gloss *auguris nostri* in Cicero.

Transposition of meaning, when the TT equivalent of a ST item occurs at a place different from that of the ST one, can be observed in Andronicus in *confringent*, an equivalent of συγχεῦναι, that is placed in an additional clause, and in Cicero, in *tremulo clangore* as the equivalent of ἐλεεινὰ τετριγῶτας, which refers to the mother bird instead of her young.

Substitution of meaning, a special way of treating *Realien*¹⁸—that is, substituting an element of TL culture for an untranslatable, culture-dependent element of the ST¹⁹—was one of the most decisive features of the work of Livius Andronicus, having given to the Homeric epic a kind of *interpretatio Romana*. A famous example for it is the first line of the epic, with *Camena*, an old Roman source-goddess traditionally connected with *carmen*, substituted for Μοῦσα.²⁰ The process is also observable in Cicero, mainly in the field of religion: for example, instead of ἀθανάτοισι, reflecting a more personal image of the gods, he puts another aspect of divine power, *divom numina*, into the foreground, which is rather impersonalized and so nearer to Roman thought.

Antonymous translation, that is, grasping a SL idea from a different or the opposite point of view, is shown by the opposition of action and happening: ἐγένοντο and *facit* in Andronicus, αἰρήσομεν and *cadet* in Cicero.

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Total transformation of meaning, as a rule, occurs quite often, thanks to the aemulative character of poetical translations. This is sometimes justified, for example, in Andronicus' translating θεόφλυ μῆστωρ ἀτάλαντος with *vir summus adprimus*, keeping a great

¹⁸ Cf. A. TRAINA: *Vortit barbare. Le traduzioni poetiche da Livio Andronico a Cicerone*, Roma, 13–5.

¹⁹ This is a point where I differ from the system of KLAUDY (op. cit. [n. 17]). The kind of operation which I name “substitution” is mentioned by KLAUDY (op. cit. [n. 17]) in the category of total transformation, while she uses the word “substitution” for a series of transformations between SL and TL lexical items being in “cause-process-effect” connection with each other.

²⁰ For the Romans of Andronicus' age, the identity of the two religious concepts must not have been so natural as it is for us—note that only Ennius takes the decisive and grammatical step of using the Greek loan-word *Musae* in the beginning of his epic. Cf. U. KNOCHÉ: *Über die Aneignung griechischer Poesie im älteren Rom*, Gymnasium 65 (1958) 329.

distance between man and god according to Roman thought.²¹ But it can also be without reason, like Cicero's transforming the low-key description of the mother bird's death by Homer into a gruesome scene of bloodshed.

Compensation for losses in translation, that is, an experiment to give back something of the untranslatable or untranslated original, can be shown by the insertion of *supra* into the translation of the above-mentioned ἔρκος ὀδόντων in Andronicus, and that of *aurigeris* in Cicero, in recompense for the Greek *couleur locale*, lost together with the non-translated ἑκατόμβας.²²

We can summarize Cicero's relationship with Livius Andronicus in three components. The first one is an original positive attitude, that is due to the role of the great predecessor as an *inventor* of Roman literature, on the one hand, and the appreciation deserved by any translation of Greek classics into Latin, on the other hand. But this attitude was somewhat overshadowed by the several generations wide gap between their language, poetical resources and literary taste, and, perhaps, by some not very pleasant school experiences. The third component must have been a relationship of master and disciple, probably unconscious, but reaching through generations.

²¹ Cf. S. MARIOTTI: *Livio Andronico e la traduzione artistica*, Urbino 1986², 34. n. 49.

²² Cf. TRAINA op. cit. (n. 18), 73-4.