Coherence of Translation Programs and the Contexts of Translation Movements, ca. 1000–1700 AD

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Why did pre-modern translators produce their translated texts? *What* societal, scholarly, and historical *factors* influenced their activities? How did such factors together create a *coherent set of triggers* behind translation efforts and the goals translators pursued? This Special Issue aims to explore the complex historical, literary, and material backgrounds that fostered the production of translations between an array of source and target languages, including Greek, Latin, Armenian, and various vernaculars. The essays span a broad timeframe, from the Middle Ages to the end of the Renaissance. The volume investigates the motivations and enabling factors that facilitated the creation of translations and their reception by different audiences. The variety of source and target languages establishes a comparative framework that enriches our understanding of the translation process as a multifaceted historical phenomenon.

Péter Bara explores translations from Greek into Latin between 1050 and 1350. Instead of focusing on a specific translator or group of translators, the essay adopts a programmatic approach to the period in question. Bara seeks to explain how translations were produced against the backdrop of specific historical contexts and the defining characteristics of the epoch. Additionally, Bara emphasizes the societal dimension of translating texts from Greek into Latin. The essay conceptualizes translation as a decision-making process in which translators, scholars, and patrons acted as key agents. The model he proposes takes into account the influence of audiences on the translation process. To this end, the essay identifies four hypotheses, each corresponding to a distinct research area.

Hiram Kümper studies the *Fecunda ratis*, an eleventh-century Latin didactic poem. The essay highlights several historical and cultural contexts that decisively shaped the poem's content and generated new knowledge through their interaction. Egbert of Liège, the author, composed the poem for an audience at the cathedral school of Liège. The poem survives in a single manuscript, which shows signs of extensive use. It served to prepare students for proper, exemplary Christian conduct and for later specialization in theology. Accordingly, the

second book contains versified passages from the Bible and the Church Fathers. By contrast, the first book is a collection of popular wisdom sayings translated from the vernacular into Latin verse. Kümper closely examines how vernacular sayings entered Latin thought, using contemporary theoretical literature as an analytical framework. He develops a typology of transmission and traces how popular proverbs were transformed into high-register, classicizing Latin. Kümper demonstrates that Egbert used these sayings as case studies for ethical dilemmas–personal relationships, familial obligations, and individual responsibilities–that could be memorized. The essay concludes by situating the *Fecunda ratis* within the broader context of eleventh-century Western pedagogical culture.

Gohar Muradyan investigates the influence of Greek and Latin models on fourteenth-century Armenian grammatical theory. Her paper demonstrates how the arrival of Catholic missionaries in late medieval Armenia created new conditions for knowledge transfer. The essay centers on the figure of Yovhannēs Kʻṛnetsʻi and his grammatical treatise *On Grammar*. Kʻṛnetsʻi belonged to a group of Armenians known as the *fratres unitores*, who accepted the Catholic faith and maintained close ties with Dominican missionaries. Muradyan underscores the importance of their literary work as translators and original authors and provides a list of published works produced by the *unitores*. She shows that Kʻṛnetsʻi based his grammar on Greek and Latin grammatical theory. After reviewing previous scholarly contributions, Muradyan examines numerous newly identified passages in Kʻṛnetsʻi's grammar, arguing that the influence of the Latin grammarian Priscian and his commentator Petrus Helias is more substantial than earlier scholars had assumed.

Daniel Vaucher investigates the intricate transmission and transformation of the *Prayer of Cyprian*. This apotropaic prayer was traditionally attributed to Cyprian of Antioch, who was revered both as a magician and as a Christian martyr. Originally composed in Greek, the prayer crossed geographical and linguistic boundaries, appearing in Latin and multiple European vernaculars by the Renaissance. Vaucher argues that despite regional adaptations and ecclesiastical scrutiny, the prayer's core structure and mythic framework remain rooted in Byzantine spiritual and ritual traditions. The essay proceeds in five stages. First, Vaucher shows that despite its Christian orientation, the prayer functioned both as an exorcism and a talisman, thereby blurring the line between liturgy and magic. The second section examines the Greek manuscript tradition, identifying ten extant copies from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These are divided into two functional categories: scholarly anthologies and practical

ritual handbooks. Vaucher highlights manuscripts from southern Italy, Crete, and Cyprus, emphasizing their role in the transmission of Byzantine magical-exorcistic literature to Western Europe. The third section analyzes the Western vernacular translations–Latin, Spanish, Italian, and Catalan versions that began to appear in the fifteenth century. These often took the form of small-format manuals intended for popular or private use. In the fourth section, Vaucher offers a comparative philological analysis of corresponding passages in the Greek, Latin, Spanish, and Catalan versions. These reveal strong textual parallels, especially in key motifs such as demonic control over nature, binding spells, and divine liberation. The final section addresses the growing concern of the Inquisition with the *Prayer of Cyprian*. Despite efforts to suppress it, the prayer continued to circulate and evolve. Vaucher concludes that the *Prayer of Cyprian* exemplifies the long-term, translingual, and transcultural transmission of ritual literature.

Alessandro Orengo provides a detailed analysis of Oskan vardapet Erewancʻi (1614–1674), the influential Armenian printer, scholar, and translator. Erewancʻi's biography illustrates how geographical movement shaped translators' accomplishments. Born in New Julfa, he traveled across Armenia and Poland before eventually settling in Amsterdam. Educated in part by the Dominican missionary Paolo Piromalli, Oskan translated and abridged the first two books of Tommaso Campanella's *Grammaticalia*. His Armenian versions–one surviving in manuscript, the other as a printed abridgement–demonstrate both fidelity to Latin grammatical structures and critical adaptation to the Armenian linguistic system. He frequently points out where Latin grammatical categories, such as gender or the superlative, do not apply to Armenian. Oskan also translated an abridged version of Koriwn's *Life of Mesrop* into Latin, dictating it to François Pétis de la Croix. While the translation is largely faithful, it contains minor interpretive errors, likely due to oral transmission. Oskan's work exemplifies the seventeenth-century phenomenon of grammatization, in which Latin served as a universal linguistic model. His translations not only bridged cultural divides but also contributed to the modernization of Armenian grammatical scholarship, balancing inherited traditions with evolving European linguistic frameworks.