

Editing Greek to Latin Translations from the Quattrocento



Soon after the reintroduction of Greek studies at the end of the fourteenth century in Italy a massive translation program got under way. Fostered in the fifteenth century by among others Pope Nicolas V – the founder of the Vatican Library – in about a century most of the classical Greek (both pagan and patristic) legacy was translated into Latin. Some translations were produced by Italian humanists with a varying knowledge of Greek, others by members of the Greek diaspora in the West.

Not only were these Latin versions oftentimes printed long before the Greek originals ever really circulated, but they also continued to find a much more important audience throughout the sixteenth century and eventually even influenced the *constitutio textus* of the Greek source texts themselves.

The at times complex interference of rediscovery and reception of the Greek literature by the first generations of humanists and the prolific transmission of their Latin translations at the crossroads of the manuscript and printing age imply interesting philological issues and editorial challenges. In this laboratory three scholars will present their critical edition of Quattrocento translations of respectively a pagan Greek biography, an apologetic patristic treatise and a late-antique hermetic text.

PROGRAMME

14:00	Opening by Prof. Dr. Jeroen De Keyser (KU Leuven)
14:10	Marianne PADE (Danish Academy at Rome): “ <i>Plutarchi vita Dionis</i> , translated by Guarino Veronese”
15:15	John MONFASANI (State University of New York at Albany): “Peculiarities of the Textual Tradition of George of Trebizond’s Translation of Eusebius of Caesaria’s <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i> ”
16:20	Coffee
16:45	Maurizio CAMPANELLI (Università degli Studi di Roma ‘La Sapienza’): “Scribes and Philosophers: Ficino’s <i>Pimander</i> in the stream of Renaissance Hermetism”
17:50	Conclusions

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Tuesday 10 March 2015, 14:00-18:00h

Venue: Mgr. Sencie Institute MSI 02.18, Erasmusplein 2, 3000 Leuven

Participation is free, but registration is required before 6 March 2015 via lectio@kuleuven.be

Chair: Jeroen De Keyser (KU Leuven)

Organisation : Jeroen De Keyser, Gerd Van Riel, Gert Partoens, Marleen Reynders

ABSTRACTS

Marianne PADE (Danish Academy at Rome)

“Plutarchi vita Dionis, translated by Guarino Veronese”

Guarino of Verona (1374–1460) dedicated much of his philological work to the study of Plutarch, translating all in all thirteen of his *Parallel Lives*. His Latin version of the *Life of Dion* (1414) was dedicated to Francesco Barbaro, the Venetian patrician who was one of Guarino’s favourite pupils and himself a translator of Plutarch. We possess the presentation copy of Guarino’s translation, the autograph MS Bywater 38 of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which also contains a series of interesting annotations by Guarino. Guarino’s *Dion* is exclusively transmitted in manuscripts containing larger or smaller selections of the humanist translations of Plutarch’s *Lives*. It is extant in 40 manuscripts, the latest, now probably lost, dating from about 1511. From 1470 onwards the translation was included in the numerous printed edition of the entire corpus of the Latin lives, but no modern edition of the translation (or of Guarino’s other Plutarchan translations) existed prior to my 2013 edition.

In my presentation I shall discuss the editorial choices I made in my critical edition of Guarino’s translation and present some of the new insights that arose during my work with Guarino’s text.

John MONFASANI (State University of New York at Albany)

“Peculiarities of the Textual Tradition of George of Trebizond’s Translation of Eusebius of Caesaria’s Praeparatio Evangelica”

The translation survives in 51 manuscripts despite being printed in 1470, only twenty-two years after George completed it for Pope Nicholas V, and reprinted six more times by 1501. The most peculiar aspect of the tradition is that though we have two dedication copies corrected by George himself, neither had anything to do with the large manuscript and printed tradition of the text since neither served as the source for any manuscript that I know. A critical edition will offer a text that never circulated in the Renaissance. Furthermore, not only are the two dedication copies independent of each other, but they also seem to derive from different archetypes. George must have had multiple working copies of his translation, starting with his autograph and then one or more good copies into which he made changes and corrections, but not consistently. Another issue is that to a certain extent the chapter organization of the two dedication

copies differ, as do also the non-dedication copies, with the latter actually being superior, though it is not clear whether the better organization derives from George or from some later scribe or reader. Another question is how responsible for the final text Giovanni Tortelli was, the pope's overseer of translations made for him, since the dedication copies contain corrections and additions in his hand.

Maurizio CAMPANELLI (Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza')

"Scribes and Philosophers: Ficino's *Pimander* in the stream of Renaissance Hermetism"

Marsilio Ficino translated the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* into Latin in 1463 for Cosimo de' Medici, making use of the current manuscript Plut. 71.33 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana as soon as it arrived in Florence. Neither the modern Hermetic philosophy nor the myth of Trismegistus philosopher, priest and king – the first one in the chain of the *prisci theologi* who anticipated the theology and the mysteries of Christianity – would have existed without this translation. Almost everyone who from the end of the fifteenth to the eighteenth century read the texts attributed to Trismegistus did in fact read them in Ficino's Latin version, which circulated in numerous manuscripts and printed editions. What did this enormous *fortuna* mean for the history of the text? Can it be argued that the success of a work is inversely proportional to the respect shown for the will of the author? And what happens when the text concerned is not an original creation, but a translation?

The critical edition of Ficino's *Pimander* is a multifaceted ecdotic enterprise, in which manuscript tradition, textual bibliography and authorial philology inevitably have to come to terms with each other.



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