The Wrong Direction. Early Modern Translations into Latin
International Conference, April 13-15 2023, at the Philological Institute of
Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
Organization: Julia Heideklang, Prof. Dr. Anja Wolkenhauer
DFG Project "Versio Latina" (https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/231683)

Proceedings

1   Approach and Aims

The early modern period is marked by its widespread and broad use of the Latin language in international communications, science, education, and ecclesiastic contexts, which correlates with the preeminence of Latin works in print well into the 18th century. Its functions as *the* language for communication and scientific exchange have been frequently described (Ijsewijn/Sacrè 1999; Leonhart 2009 e.g.). Nonetheless, at first glance, it may seem irritating, even illogical, that in the early modern period, vernacular texts on such a large scale have been translated into Latin. What are their functions? Who translated and for what kind of readership; which expectations were placed on these translations by translators, editors, and printer-publishers? Were they successful, reprinted, or overruled by rival products, or was their efficiency augmented by being intermediary versions for translations into other languages?

Based on the research in the context of the DFG project *Versio latina* by Prof. Anja Wolkenhauer at Universität Tübingen (https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/231683), we aimed to decidedly change our perspective and to focus particularly on early modern Latin translations, looking, as Peter Burke once articulated ‚into the wrong direction' (Burke 2007). Hereby, we applied a broad understanding of the term translation, which considers and analyzes the deeply interwoven linguistic, cultural, medial, and material processes of translation contexts (Toepfer/Burschel/Wesche 2020). Key questions were the following: What role did the Latin translators envision for themselves, and against which other actors did they try to delimitate themselves? To what extent and how were women and people of color involved? By which means, strategies, forms, and pictorial programs were translation processes reflected in theoretical debate and practical application? Which texts and

documents can be considered landmarks for certain periods or networks in the early modern period (Bruni, *De interpretation recta* e.g.)?

2 Program and Abstracts

04/13/2023

1.15 p.m **Julia Heideklang/Anja Wolkenhauer (Tübingen)** Welcoming and Introduction

2 p.m. **Andreas Gipper (Mainz-Germersheim)** Lateinische Wissenschaftsübersetzungen in der frühen Neuzeit im Spannungsverhältnis von Vernakularisierung und Horizontalisierung

3 p.m. **Sara Miglietti / Marco Spreafico (London)** Writing Bilingually, 1465-1700: A New Project on Early Modern Self-Translation

4.30 p.m. **Lucia Bertolini (Novedrate)** Il bilinguismo "integrale" di Leon Battista Alberti: il caso delle latinizzazioni

5.30 p.m. **Marianne Pade (Aarhus)** The Heroic Age: Translation into Latin in Fifteenth-Century Italy

04/14/2023

9 a.m. **Raphael Schwitter (Bonn/Zürich)** *Non quidem per omnia felicissime redditum* — Reformatorischer Anspruch und translatorische Praxis in der Publizistik Heinrich Bullingers (1504-1575)

10.30 a.m. **Stefan Rhein (Lutherstadt Wittenberg)** Lutherus Latinus

11.30 a.m. **Julia Frick (Zürich)** *Proverbia latina*: Literarische Räume und Reichweiten deutsch-lateinischer Interaktion in der Frühen Neuzeit

1.30 p.m. **Bernhard Söllradl (Salzburg)** *Historie* and *historia*: Latein und die Volkssprache im historiographischen Werk John Lesleys

2.30 p.m. **Giuseppe Eugenio Rallo (St. Andrews)** TranslatingAdapting Characters, Models, Languages, Plays, and Cultures: Giambattista della Porta's *La Sorella* and Samuel Brooke's *Adelphe*

4 p.m. **Andrew Laird (Providence, USA)** Legitimation, Representation, Canonization, Elucidation: Four Modes of 'Translating' Nahuatl Texts from 16th-Century Mexico into Latin

5 p.m. **Reinhold F. Glei (Bochum)** In die richtige Richtung: Die epilinguistische Übersetzung ins Lateinische

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9 a.m. **Nathaniel Hess (Cambridge)** Malign *malle*ts and Melting Snow: Transalpine Responses to Poliziano's Callimachus

10.30 a.m. **Vittoria Vairo (Neapel)** Imperfect Translations, Failed Translations: The Case of Pausanias' *versio latina* between the 15th and the 16th Century

11.30 a.m. **Fabio Zinelli (Paris)** "Dressing in Latin" from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period: A Research Project Review

1.15 p.m. **Julia Heideklang/Anja Wolkenhauer (Tübingen)** Concluding Discussions and Summary

All abstracts are presented bilingually on our project and conference website and are available for download: https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/238848.

3   Results and Outlook

30 scientists, including 15 speakers from Europe and the US, came together in Tübingen to discuss Latin as the target language in various early modern contexts, translation processes, and networks at the conference organized by Julia Heideklang and Prof. Dr. Anja Wolkenhauer.

During the conference, the **sheer number and variety of translation processes** became evident, emphasizing Latin with its various functions within early modern multilingualism and its many ‚language biotopes' (*Sprachbiotope*). Some of the key observations made due to the conference's contributions and discussions are summarized in the following:

Actors strategically used and evaluated the frequently **invoked continuity of the Latin language and its literature** quite differently (e.g., as semantic surplus, as an indicator of status or importance, or as a means to internalize regional issues). Hereby, the concept of continuity can be observed as fluctuating and mutable. The cases discussed demonstrate how this continuity can be construed, or even fabricated, to situate a translation within the literary tradition of the Latin language and thus make it worthy of scholarly commentary. At the same time, the invoked continuities are often challenged or even declared obsolete.

The clear difference between translation functions into vernacular languages and translations into Latin assumed in previous research cannot be affirmed. For both translation directions, various constructions of an anticipated readership, author-figures,

and intended impact can be found that go beyond a mere **duality** (similar to the findings on the general interplay between Neo-Latin and vernacular literature, see Deneire [2014]).

Even aspects that had not yet received much attention, albeit from well-known historical contexts, were discussed anew, for instance, the fascinating number and importance of translations into Latin produced from Luther's writings or the writings of H. Bullinger. It became apparent that the reformation, albeit a movement inherently oriented towards the vernacular languages, also enforced contemporary translation processes into Latin. In this context, similar questions arose regarding translations of writings by others or self-translation and the apt use of the Latin language.

Finally, the conference outlined a few **worthwhile tasks for future research**: **Self-translations and collective writing/authorship** were, without a doubt, significant phenomena but will need further discussions. Against first assumptions, self-translation seems to point towards a central and quantitatively significant form of translation from vernacular languages into Latin. Aside from the various functions of translating into Latin, single contexts emerged when Latin was explicitly not perceived as the adequate target language, for instance, in the context of the emergence of modern translations of scientific texts and the translation of science journals in the 17th century. This raises once more the question of whether translating into Latin can be categorized as 'wrong' or 'right direction', which needs to be considered methodologically in more depth. **The metaphor of direction** needs to be discussed against the background of language hierarchies (e.g., horizontal and vertical translation); this also concerns the difficulty of determining the relationship between **pretext and translation**, which occurs frequently. Partly there are multiple pretexts or a notably multidirectional interplay between pretexts and translations. Should, therefore, translations be categorized in pairs? Is the metaphor of 'direction' originally chosen for this conference's concept the most apt, or should another metaphor be chosen instead (e.g., a network or chain)? The precise relation of **Latin, Greek, and other ancient languages** within the early modern multilingual language system must be mapped out in more detail.

A more detailed and in-depth analysis of **geographical patterns, spaces, and networks** is another task that emerged from the discussions. This long-time goal will build

upon the database and catalog work currently undertaken by various projects (as in the project *Versio latina* among others).

Overall, the conference's contributions were based to a large extent on the analysis of **paratexts** included in the print works. A more detailed systematization of those observations made for different case studies seems necessary. Particularly the process of positioning and presenting translations within **the space of early modern books** and the **(in)visibility of actors involved** in making translations awaits more detailed analyses. With this, a change of perspective might be a logical next step: While the contributions mainly focused on authorial conceptions of the position and self-fashioning of the translator as well as translating into Latin, it may be a worthwhile complementary step to ask for the anticipated readership and actual users of these translations, **to contrast *Rezeptionssteuerung* with actual reception**. In this context, it might be surprising to see the extent and various ways in which translations become independent from the originally intended context or purpose (e.g., different geographical regions, failed reception).

Bringing together the international projects and their catalogs will prove an excellent first step in supporting single in-depth case studies with an extensive **quantitative registration**, contextualizing them within larger trends and amidst different shifts (see for instance H. Brown/ R. Toepfer / J. Wesche (eds), *Early Modern Translation and the Digital Humanities,* (Early Modern Translation Cultures) [forthcoming]). DFG project *Versio latina* aims to present an overview of current databases on translations into Latin on its website (https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/231695) in the coming months, to make current and prior research accessible in a more centralized manner.

The results of this conference will be published as a collected volume that will be augmented by additional contributions on early modern translations into Latin. It is scheduled to be published by the end of 2024.

Report: Julia Heideklang