PART I

Original Essays

CHAPTER 1

Translating Roman Republican Political Culture

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German has always been one of the languages of classical scholarship, and its importance for us looks set to continue even as other disciplines in the humanities become increasingly monoglot. In Roman Republican history, authors from Theodor Mommsen to Christian Meier laid the foundations of the field and have long been indispensable parts of anglophone scholars' bibliographies. More recently, a group of scholars in Germany led by Egon Flaig, Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Martin Jehne have developed and refined an influential new approach to political culture as a key lens through which to see Republican political history. Their interventions rest on the argument that Roman Republican political history must be understood as more than institutional history. Rome's various magistracies and assemblies did not exist in a vacuum, but were inextricably intertwined with memory, topography, art, performance, religion, and more besides. Unwritten norms were at least as important as written laws. Despite the importance placed on participatory voting and interacting with the people, we must also consider how social capital could be used to maintain and reproduce power. The result has been a remarkable broadening of political history, in which art and architecture, poetry and performance get their due, and our understanding of the development of the Republic and the shift to empire has been greatly enriched.

Yet contemporary anglophone publications have not always engaged as thoroughly with this body of scholarship as they might have done, despite its vitality. Partly, the explanation is simple: even scholars of Roman Republican history prefer to read work written in their native language. This volume explores as well as provides a partial remedy for this problem.

German-language scholarship of recent decades on the Republic has had broad and deep implications, and two new essays written for this volume, one by Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and one by Harriet Flower, explore its history, influence, and potential for the future. Our choice of theme for the volume, then, does not require much more explanation here, though

section 3 of this Introduction explores how we as editors have understood its importance and details some of the choices we have made. More controversial, perhaps, to some readers will be our choice to publish the essays in English translation. Is this an imperialist move to position English as the only appropriate language of scholarship? Or a surrender to the dumbing-down of the anglophone student body?

This introduction falls into three parts, asking why, how, and what to translate. The reader interested in the practicalities of how to read this book should skip to section 2b, a glossary of how we have approached various untranslatable German concepts, and section 3, a brief discussion of the chapters.

1 Why Translate?

Academia has always been an international game, and links beyond one's own country and language community are even more important in small fields like ancient history, where the number of researchers interested in some niche topic within a single geographical area may be tiny. Such interaction necessarily involves working across languages. We may imagine that in the distant past the community of scholars communicated without difficulty in the shared academic language of Latin, but in fact the truth is more complex. The Enlightenment community of scholars based on exchanges of correspondence across Europe and the Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that came to be known as the Republic of Letters wrote in a number of languages, and the printed journals that emerged from these links began in French.[1] Many of the Republic's members were explicitly concerned with projects of translation, reprinting articles from one journal to another in new languages.[2] In our own time, globalization has brought more interaction across borders than ever before. But this time in many fields the result has been a loss of linguistic diversity: in the sciences, researchers from Addis Ababa to Zhuhai talk to each other and publish in English.

Scholars in multiple fields have explored the causes and consequences, as well as the advantages and disadvantages, of this trend towards monoglot

[1] Discussion in Goodman 1994, 21–2. Rubel 2019, 194–5 notes that there was resistance at the time, with some scholars claiming that the need to learn multiple modern languages took time away from studying science itself; but as Goodman shows there was also contemporary enthusiasm for the project of moving learning into the vernacular.
[2] E.g. Fransen 2017, esp. 4–5.

publishing.[3] For classics, a sprawling field of multiple specialist presses and journals that owe allegiance to no one central indexing authority or preprint archive, it is not easy to find hard data for any loss of linguistic diversity, but what quantitative research has been done occasionally proposes surprisingly positive conclusions. Charlene Kellsey and Jennifer Knievel, two American scholars with expertise in library science, ran statistics comparing the citation practice of English-language articles in different humanities journals, and classics (as represented by the *American Journal of Philology*) came out well: between 1964 and 2002, the average number of citations of non-English-language works in Classics articles actually went up rather than down.[4] Other statistical reviews by Gregory Crawford and Gregory Crane specific to German are not so optimistic: in journals including *Transactions of the American Philological Association* and *Classical Quarterly*, the rates of citation of German-language scholarship have indeed declined markedly.[5] Meanwhile, the German sociolinguist Ulrich Ammon, in a book published in German in 2015 and then (perhaps ironically, depending on one's perspective) translated into English in 2020, uses a variety of metrics to identify *Altertumswissenschaft* (roughly, Ancient World Studies, including Ancient History), Classical Archaeology, and Classical Philology, as niche disciplines in which German is still an important language of scholarship.[6]

Among scholars in Classics the perception of linguistic decline is clear and persistent, and the statistics do not exactly prove them wrong. Ammon's work demonstrates that publications in German exist and make their way into libraries worldwide, but cannot show that scholars actually read them. The same, one might complain, is true for Kellsey and Knievel's citation data as well: how carefully do we all read everything we cite?[7] Reading in one's third or fourth language just takes longer, and I for

[3] E.g. Ammon 2001; Wood 2001; Tardy 2004; Alastrué and Pérez-Llantada 2015; for classics, Crane 2015; Rubel 2019; Montanari 2022.
[4] Kellsey and Knievel 2004.
[5] Crawford 2013, for *TAPA*; Crane 2015, 10–14 considers a range of journals.
[6] Ammon 2014, 603–23; Ammon 2020.
[7] Kellsey and Knievel 2004. The statistics can be read to suggest that we do not. Though the average number of citations of foreign-language publications went up (from about 7.7 per *AJPh* article in 1962 to about 8.2 per *AJPh* article in 2002), that change comes in the context of a general ballooning of citation: authors now cite far more items overall. By percentage, the position of non-English-language research looks much less promising. In 1962 about 45% of citations were to non-English-language works; in 2002, the figure was only about 21%. Crane 2015: 14 shows that the German-language scholarship that is cited tends to be older, presumably representing the 'classics' that everyone has to know but few actually read. A cynic might suggest that we have become trained to skim and cite everything we can as part of an academic performance of erudition, and that actual engagement with foreign-language scholarship has decreased.

one have to budget my time amidst all the other things that are required of me as a university employee. It is very tempting to get the gist and move on, or to read the first chapter but not the second, or to delve into only one of the five articles in which a given scholar wrestles with a theme, or to trust a review to tell me that a certain book is perhaps not so relevant to my questions. The larger problem is not whether anglophone researchers are aware of German publications, but how deeply they engage with them.

In conference corridors and scattered footnotes it is possible to discern two different talking points, which may or may not be at odds depending on one's point of view. One is that anglophone scholars no longer read and cite work in German.[8] As we have seen, this may or may not be quantitatively true, and on the qualitative level it is difficult to be an objective judge of whether any single item's absence from a bibliography is an indictment of the anglophone author or of the German book.[9] But it is right to fear that whole bodies of excellent scholarship are missing from, or only tangentially present in, the anglophone conversation. They certainly go unread by undergraduates, and often also by graduate students; nor do they necessarily make it into the English-language textbooks and overviews on which those students rely. The discipline suffers; and individual scholars suffer, too, when they see their research go uncited and thus, in the eyes of their administrations, devalued.[10]

The second opinion I hear expressed is that the number of languages a scholar of Ancient History needs to read is expanding rather than contracting.[11] The Faculty of Classics at Oxford University considers the 'principal languages of scholarship' in Ancient History to be French, Italian, and German, and offers courses in those languages to its postgraduate students.[12] Franco Montanari, surely not alone, adds Spanish to this long-standing canon.[13] The *Digital Classicist* website, perhaps representative of a younger generation, takes a broader approach: it seeks to build a community 'regardless . . . of language of contribution'. At the time of

[8] For a selection of trenchant statements of this perspective, see n. 5 in Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp's new essay, Chapter 2 in this volume.

[9] It is worth thinking a little about what citation is *for*; sometimes, it is to trace the history of an idea, and some level of completeness is presumably valuable, but at other times it is to give the reader a basic overview of a related idea or a starting point for further reading. For this second type of citation, it is hardly surprising that anglophone authors cite undergraduate-level overviews in English, German-speaking authors cite German, Italians cite Italian, and so on. See n. 15 for the importance of multiple local literatures.

[10] Rubel 2019; cf. Kancewicz-Hoffman and Pölönen 2020.

[11] E.g. Konstan 2020, 21.

[12] www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-greek-andor-roman-history (accessed 28 November 2022).

[13] Montanari 2015: 207.

writing, the languages represented are German, Modern Greek, French, Croatian, Italian, Dutch, and Finnish.[14] The fact that these lists are composed entirely of European languages is not unrelated to the mainly European geographical focus of our discipline, but it is also unquestionably a relic of the age of European imperialism and the Eurocentric world it created. Expanding even further the range of languages we read and cite might be a positive, and even decolonizing, effort. Yet it would place huge burdens on the individual scholar. My own proposal to fix this problem is collaboration: in large group projects, many languages could be represented without requiring any individual to control them all. Yet this more distributed model of research is a distant goal in the present-day humanities, and would require a far larger set of shifts in institutions, funding, and mindsets to achieve; it would doubtless also have its own downsides.

Perhaps it would be good to live in a world where all ancient historians whose primary language is English also read German. But we do not live in that world, nor is there any easy way to get there. More importantly, in my opinion, our reaction to the fact that not all ancient historians, and particularly not all aspiring ancient historians, read German cannot be simply to tell them that they are insufficient scholars and reject them from the discipline. To do so would be to ignore the conditions in which we live and work in the twenty-first century. In the countries that make up the Anglosphere, we can no longer assume that everyone learns foreign languages (much less German in particular) at school. We may regret that fact; we may try to change it. But complaints about the unpreparedness of fresh undergraduates these days risk crossing over into more dangerous territory. Do we *want* to feel nostalgia for a time when all our incoming students went to the kind of schools that gave them precisely the training that the ancient history degrees of the 1950s assumed? That educational system was strongly stratified by race, gender, class, and wealth. Nowadays our students arrive via a number of different routes and qualifications, and that is a good thing. It is also good that we are gradually expanding the chronological, geographical, and methodological boundaries of what we do as ancient historians. But the result is that students have far more to learn. It is unconscionable to tell a new PhD student who has spent the last four years learning Greek and Latin from scratch as well as gaining expertise in, say, archaeological theory and the tools of digital humanities, or maybe Akkadian or Syriac, that her research is futile because she does not also know German, Italian, and French (and possibly Spanish and Modern

[14] www.digitalclassicist.org/ (accessed 28 November 2022).

Greek; but her fluent Igbo, Japanese, Latvian or Urdu are entirely beside the point). I exaggerate, I hope; and yet graduate students have told me that they feel this sense of exclusion.

Despite my worries about the unfair burdens we place on ourselves and our students, it would be a huge loss if we were to foreclose traditions of scholarship not in English. Indeed, we should promote and multiply them, not just for the equivalent students starting to get interested in ancient Mediterranean history in non-anglophone contexts, including those far beyond Europe, but also for the vital task of diversifying and decolonizing research on Mediterranean antiquity.[15] Both English-speakers and German-speakers have great, though unequal, linguistic privilege. How pointless must this debate over English or German look to someone whose first language is neither?

I have argued for less language learning but more language diversity. A paradox? Perhaps in the near future, with ever-improving AI, it will not be – though I am sceptical that machine translation can ever reach the level required, for reasons I explore in the final section of this introduction. In the short term, however, I am convinced that the answer is more diversity but also more collaboration, including more translation, in every direction.

2 How to Translate?

2a The Problems of Translation

Both increasing the number of language communities working on the ancient Mediterranean world and increasing the amount of translation of scholarship aim at making our discipline more accessible. But they also bring problems of communication. My fear is not that these new scholarly communities will become more siloed, because although student textbooks do not keep up with cutting-edge research, cutting-edge research itself is by its nature international. I am more concerned about the process and philosophy of translation itself, which is a challenge but also an opportunity. To what extent is it even possible to translate a thought from one language to another?[16] Linguistic determinism, popularly known via the (misnamed) Sapir–Whorf hypothesis that the structure of a language determines the thought process of its speakers, is mostly discredited; but

[15] On the importance of multilingualism for local accessibility see Kulczycki et al. 2020; Liu 2022; on the importance of non-European and non-anglophone perspectives on the cultures we study, see Everyday Orientalism 2021.

[16] Translation studies is an academic field in itself; Bermann and Porter 2014 offer an overview.

the idea that language influences how we construct and express our thoughts and arguments remains powerful.[17] Anyone who has struggled through an article in an unfamiliar language understands that some terms and phrases are difficult to translate; indeed, some thoughts are almost impossible to express, at least without long circumlocution. Given that we who study ancient Rome do not (and never did) write all our scholarship in Latin, we have already accepted both the possibility and the benefits of moving between languages. If different languages prompt different structures of thought, then the more languages in which we think about the Roman Republic, or anything else, the richer our conceptual world will be.

The chapters in this volume were translated by a professional translator, Kathrin Lüddecke, whose first language is German. Standard practice is that a translator should be a native speaker of the target language, but we prioritized familiarity with academic German. Amy Russell and Hans Beck, one English and one German ancient historian, then corrected and commented on historical and academic matters; finally, Zara Chadha, an English classicist and copy-editor, re-edited the entire text for idiom and readability. Since one of our primary audiences is students, we wanted to come up with something readable and enjoyable, and we prioritized that goal over reproducing the structures and cadences of the German. Nevertheless, the chapters still retain some sense of their original style, and some are more complex and technical than others.

Our collaborative translation process gave rise to a number of debates ranging from the grammatical to the conceptual. In section 2b, I summarize a few of the words and phrases we found most challenging. For readers of both languages, I thoroughly recommend the exercise of comparing our translations with the originals, not only to check our work but also to see the differences the process necessarily creates. Let me give an example, not from the present volume but from an earlier published translation.

The political culture of the Roman Republic was performed and reproduced in public, with institutions such as the *contio*, the triumph, and the theatrical *ludi* providing a place for the people to interact with the elite. But what do we mean by 'in public'? In my own research, I have given significant thought to this question – which, in fact, first led me to the work of the scholars whose articles are translated in the present volume.[18] But their writing, naturally, focuses not on the English word 'public', but the German *Öffentlichkeit*.

[17] Štrkalj Despot 2021 and see pp. 84–6 in this volume for further examples. [18] Russell 2016.

In German, *Öffentlichkeit* is an abstract and a remarkably adaptable word. It can cover semantic territory that in English we must denote by 'the public sphere'; it also means 'the public', in the sense of what is public or even in the sense of the group of people who form the public audience. At its root, though, it means 'publicness', a certain conception of what it is to be public. English translators of German have no single word equivalent to the abstract German *Öffentlichkeit*, and often resort to a more concrete metaphor: 'publicity', 'public realm' or 'public space'.[19] In English, these nouns are formed from the adjective 'public', itself defined primarily by opposition to 'private'. We can talk of 'the public realm'; 'the public', as a group of people, or even 'publicity', but none of these capture the full range of meaning or resonance of the German *Öffentlichkeit*. What is more, in English, 'the public' and 'publicity' are two different things.

Each form of expression has benefits and pitfalls. In conceptual terms, they have different relationships with a public/private divide, or with the state – the English 'public' is often assimilated to something like 'civic', while the German usually represents a third sphere, perhaps coinciding with but conceptually distinct from the state. But even in more purely linguistic terms, the fact that English lacks a single abstract noun correlated with 'public' means it can more easily draw distinctions between 'the public' in the sense of the audience and something like 'publicity'. German can more easily denote the commonalities, the abstract notions which lie behind these particular varieties of what is public.

These distinctions are not merely technical. Let us compare the German and the English of a key passage in Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp's *Rekonstruktionen einer Republik*, published in English (translated by Henry Heitmann-Gordon) as *Reconstructing the Roman Republic*.[20] (Table 1.1) It is important to note that the English version is not a direct translation but an updated and expanded version; still, the differences between the two passages are noteworthy. In each, Hölkeskamp introduces a concept and then gives three examples of how it functions. I number the examples for clarity.

In this section, in which he explains how occasions of public oratory must be understood as part of a political culture which institutionalized hierarchy as well as the role of the crowd, Hölkeskamp in his German text

[19] Sometimes we sidestep the problem entirely: Jörg Rüpke's *Kalender und Öffentlichkeit* (which is 740 pages long, in small print) appeared in English as *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*. It is 226 pages long, in large print, with theoretical sections on the role of the calendar in the definition of *Öffentlichkeit* entirely removed.

[20] Hölkeskamp 2004, 70–1; Hölkeskamp 2010, 72–3.

introduces a *permanent präsente 'Öffentlichkeit'* ('permanently present public-ness'), and goes on to explore three ways in which it was institutionalized. The English version, 'permanently present public audience', must choose to emphasize only some of the many overtones of the word *Öffentlichkeit*. As the German text goes on to show, Hölkeskamp does not here mean only that the public audience was institutionalized; rather, he refers to a whole institutionalized notion of what publicness is.

The German and the English text both go on to identify three different modalities of institutionalization of *Öffentlichkeit* (in German) and the public audience (in English); interestingly, however, they are placed in a different order. In German we read that:

1. all political activity is visible to all participants;
2. *Öffentlichkeit* itself appears in the public assemblies;
3. *Öffentlichkeit* is equated with the citizenry, the *populus*, and indeed the *res publica* itself.

In the second of these points, *Öffentlichkeit* again looks like a concept of publicness, one which is at work in the public assemblies. But the biggest and trickiest move is the last, where *Öffentlichkeit* is made most distinctly concrete as a particular group of people.

The English version does things differently: as the table above shows, points 2 and 3 are reversed:

1. all political activity is visible to all participants (with some extra text here about how);
2. the institutionalized public audience is equated with the citizenry, the *populus*, and indeed the *res publica* itself;
3. that this institutionalized public materializes in the public assemblies.

The opening claim is already that a specific audience is given the form of an institution, rather than that publicness itself is institutionalized. After this, point 1, that political activity is visible, is the same; then we read – and this time it comes as no surprise – that the political audience Hölkeskamp identifies is institutionally equated with the *populus*, and thus with the state itself. But this time the most difficult move is one which was much less fraught in the German: the point now given third, that this 'public', which until now has been a group of people, is to be equated with the institution – and not just, I think, the audience – of the *comitia* and *contiones*.

The German argument moves from the abstract to the concrete; the English from the concrete to the abstract. Perhaps the difference reflects