

Introduction

Stridon's Aims – Centring on the marginal

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This new journal, dedicated to the study of translation and interpreting in all forms, takes its name from the birthplace of St Jerome. The choice of the name of St Jerome's hometown and not of his personal name or pseudonym is deliberate: in our opinion the elusiveness and history of this lost town reflects the issues that often represent the very core of translational research.

We know quite a lot about St Jerome, or Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (c. 347-419/20): he was the most praised translator of Late Antiquity in the West, renowned mainly for his translation of the Bible that became the most popular Latin version of the Christian sacred text in the Middle Ages. His slightly revised translation was later known as the Vulgate, the commonly used version, which in the sixteenth century even became the official Latin Bible of the Catholic Church. Because of his translation skills, encyclopaedic learning and thorough knowledge of the related languages and subject matter, Jerome became the patron saint of translators, librarians and encyclopaedists, whose feast on 30 September has also been celebrated as International Translation Day since 2017.

We also know that Jerome had a complex personality: his letters often manifest an irascible temper (for example, on one occasion he called those who dared to criticise his translation “two-legged asses” (Letter 27)), and some of his treatises, like *Adversus Jovinianum* [Against Jovinian], elaborately and at length satirise and ridicule women and marriage. In addition to that, his contemporaries, for example Palladius of Galatia (c. 363-c.420-430), claimed that Jerome treated the women around him badly. When writing in his *Lausiaca History* (ch. 41) about St Paula of Rome, one of the noblest and richest women in the Roman Empire, Palladius notes: “She was hindered by a certain Jerome from Dalmatia. For though she was able to surpass all, having great abilities, he hindered her by his jealousy, having induced her to serve his own plan.” However, people can be biased, and Galatius did not know Paula personally. Other accounts, in particular Jerome's letters, give us an insight into a different man, someone who was able to develop feelings of deep respect towards a woman, in fact, the very same

woman he was accused of exploiting. Paula befriended Jerome when he was in Rome and followed him to Bethlehem, where they both ran a double monastery. When she died, Jerome was heart-broken. In letter 108, which he addressed to Paula's daughter Eustochium, Jerome confesses that when she died he "felt a grief as deep as your own". He describes Paula not only as virtuous, venerable and holy, but praises also her intellectual capacity: this was a woman who on her deathbed spoke Greek and whose Hebrew, according to Jerome, was better than his own: "[S]he could chant the psalms in Hebrew and could speak the language without a trace of the pronunciation peculiar to Latin." These words are particularly valuable coming from someone who was more prone to scolding than to praise, and an ascetic who tended to be harsh on himself and others.

If his letters allow us to have at least a glimpse into Jerome's complex character, we know almost nothing about his birthplace. In his treatise *De viris illustribus* (135.1) Jerome says that he was born in the settlement called Stridon (or maybe Strido, or even Stridonae – the nominative form of the noun escapes us), which was later destroyed by the Goths and was located on the border between the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia (*Hieronymus patre Eusebio natus, oppido Stridonis, quod a Gothis eversum, Dalmatiae quondam Pannoniaeque confinium fuit [...]*). To date there have been no archaeological finds that would prove the exact location of this settlement, and thus there exist numerous and conflicting theories on this issue, with places in today's Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia that are more than 100 kilometres apart suggested as possible sites. It seems, however, that the majority of today's scholars support the theory that it lay between the ancient Aquileia (today in Northern Italy) and Æmona (modern Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia), somewhere in the today's border-region between Croatia and Slovenia. Stridon is thus a name given to a lost and disputed border town that was destroyed and transformed through migration, and that is nowadays populated by migrants who came from the east and mixed their Slavonic genes with the ancient population living in this area. We do not lay claim to this place, on the contrary, we embrace the fact that its exact location is unknown and its history has been marked by migration, conflict, and the encounter of peoples and cultures. In fact, the history, indeterminacy and elusiveness of the birthplace of St Jerome, in our opinion, connect it closely to Translation Studies, which also deals with concepts that are disputed, and practices that are marked by migration, conflict and the encounters of different people and cultures.

The aim of *Stridon – Journal of Studies in Translation and Interpreting* is to advance research in translation- and interpreting-related phenomena, and to publish articles on the theoretical, descriptive and applied research within the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies. Besides established authors, we will also welcome articles by

new voices in the field, focusing not only on translation and interpreting, but also on interdisciplinary translation- and interpreting-related sociological, literary, cultural, historical, educational and contrastive topics.

Stridon's particular aim is to present the research involving peripheral languages and languages of limited distribution, and the research focusing or originating from central or southeastern Europe. Since, traditionally, Translation and Interpreting Studies research has prioritised the focal over the marginal, this journal would like to give voice to the perspective of the Other in Translation Studies. In addition to our attempt to at least partially restore balance, we believe that the periphery has much to offer. In fact, when positioned in the margins, the perspective is slightly askew from the mainstream, and the images may become more imperfectly focused. We believe that this different perspective resulting from centring on the translational activity of the margin might lead to the insights that encourage a shift in perspective and provide stimuli for the entire field to see the investigated phenomena differently. Our hope is that the research in this journal will show that the cultural periphery does not necessarily constitute periphery in Translation Studies, especially when the examples of peripheral translational practice and translatorial behaviour help re-formulate and re-conceptualise the basic tenets of such scholarship, and consequently maybe even challenge some of the conceptualisations and theoretical assumptions of Translation Studies formulated in and by the centre.