

# Mediating culture through language

## Contact-induced phenomena in the early translations of the Gospels

Silvia Luraghi and Pierluigi Cuzzolin

The paper aims to show how translation can transfer certain culture-specific concepts into a different culture, possibly modifying it. It concentrates on the translation of the Greek preposition *epí* into Latin, Gothic and Old Church Slavonic in Luke's Gospel. We argue that, to various extents, translators incorporated results of theological discussion into their language (obviously, this is most clear for Latin, where constructions such as *confido in* 'trust in' and *fleo super* 'cry over' were created, that did not exist in Classical Latin and still survive in the Romance languages). Through careful analysis of the various translations found, we show that even in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages cultural contact was a privileged vehicle for linguistic contact.

### Introduction

The present paper aims to show how translation can transfer certain culture-specific concepts into a different culture, into which they may be integrated, and which they may possibly modify. Our case study concerns translations of Luke's Gospel into Latin, Gothic and Old Church Slavonic. We will concentrate especially on the translation of the preposition *epí*.

As shown by Jerome's *Letter on Translation* (Nergaard 1993, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1975; Valgiglio 1985; Vineis 1988; Traina 1989; 101–102), ancient translation theories were based on word rather than text (*verbum de verbo* 'word from word') (see further Brock 1979). In the case of prepositions, this means that the translator tried to establish a (couple of) translation equivalent(s), and use them as extensively as possible. It also means that a translation involving another preposition appeared preferable to a translation involving a case-marked noun phrase without preposition. As we will show in the course of the paper, the translations of *epí* are interesting in several respects.

In the first place, while it can be remarked that the three target languages had one (or two) preferred prepositions that translated *epí*, it is also clear that the strategy

of establishing a unique translation equivalent left out a number of occurrences, that had to be translated in some other way. However, the tendency to keep the same number of words as the original, i.e. not to translate a prepositional phrase by means of a noun phrase, thus leaving out the preposition, was strong in all translations, especially Latin. Besides, some usages of *epí* in Luke's Gospel (and in general in New Testament Greek as well as in the *Septuagint*) were not attested in Classical Greek (Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf 2001: 186–188; Regard 1919: 417–466). Some of these new usages occur in expressions that reflect the religious thought expressed in the text.

## 1. Luke's Gospel and its early translations

### 1.1 The Greek text

Luke's Gospel was written in Greek, presumably in the 1st century CE, by a speaker of L2 Greek living in Palestine, whose mother tongue must have been Aramaic, a Semitic language related to, but for some features rather different from, Biblical Hebrew. Greek as L2 was commonly spoken by literate people in this area. In general, the authors of the New Testament, considered one of the most important documents of *koiné* Greek (i.e. in spite of possible Semitic influence), had a good knowledge of the language, and apparently wrote in a variety that was close to the spoken Greek of the time. As for their literary models, an important role must have been played by the Greek version of the Bible, the *Septuagint*, which they must have known and mastered on account of their cultural and religious background. In the field of prepositions, certain features of New Testament Greek, such as the instrumental meaning of *en*,<sup>1</sup> can also be found in the Old Testament. This means that, besides the possible influence of their mother tongue, the writers of the New Testament could also be influenced by their knowledge of Biblical Greek.

### 1.2 Latin translations

#### 1.2.1 *The Vetus Latina*

The name *Vetus Latina* does not refer to a single Latin translation, but to a collection of several different versions, mostly written in the 2nd century CE, containing both the Old and the New Testament. An often quoted passage by Augustin attests to an extremely large number of Latin translations, at least of the Old Testament

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1. On the instrumental usage of *en* as typical of New Testament Greek, see Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf (2001: 178) and Regard (1919: 328–329). However, the latter correctly points out that the frequency of *en* was also decreasing (1919: 326): indeed, as we will see in the course of this paper, the extent to which the instrumental usage of *in* developed in Christian Latin is unmatched in Greek.

(but there is no reason to doubt that the number of translations of the New Testament was comparably high). The numerous manuscripts that have reached us are variously grouped, in an attempt to reconstruct different regional traditions, the most important being the *Vetus Itala*, used in Italy (but the name, again taken from Augustin, is sometimes used as a quasi-synonym of *Vetus Latina*); there are also attempts to reconstruct a *Vetus Hispana*, while an important group of manuscripts attests to a separate tradition from North Africa, the so – called *Afra*.

Problems arising from relations among different translations lie outside the scope of the present paper; the early Latin versions of the New Testament are relevant here only insofar as they may have influenced Jerome's new Latin translation (the *Vulgate*) and Wulfila's Gothic translation of Luke's Gospel. Indeed, as we will see below, there are passages in which Wulfila's translation does not correspond to the Greek text, but has a correspondent in one or another of the pre-Jerome Latin translations. As for the *Vulgate*, Jerome, too, knew and used the available Latin translations. In the field of prepositions, his choices do not coincide with the choices of any specific manuscript; however, it is remarkable that in almost every case he does not find new solutions, but rather chooses a translation that had already been used before: the novelty lies in the overall combination all possible translations, rather than in the search for new ones.

### 1.2.2 *The Vulgate*

As we pointed out in the previous section, when Jerome embarked on the translation of the Old and New Testament in the early 5th century CE, several Latin translations were available. These translations were highly unsatisfactory because translators, in an attempt to avoid introducing changes to the original meaning, often came up with grammatically incorrect and in some cases barely comprehensible Latin. With respect to the Old Testament, the poor quality of Latin translations (which were based on the *Septuagint*) was partly due to either textual problems in the Greek text, or problems inherent to the Greek translation. Therefore Jerome understood that a new translation, written in a language that could easily be understood by Latin speakers, had to be based on the Hebrew original. A cursory glance through the Old Testament shows that Jerome's translation, though taking the translation found in the *Septuagint* into account, is often independent of it. This means that when Jerome tackled the translation of the Gospels he already had an idea of how Greek prepositions were used (or misused) in the *Septuagint*, and that peculiarities in his use of Latin prepositions were partly based on his own translation of the Hebrew Bible.

Jerome's Latin was hardly comparable to the language of classical prose writers (or contemporary patristic literature), but still it was a language that could look back to a long written tradition. Besides, as remarked in § 1.2.1, Jerome relied on several centuries of translation practice for both the Old and the New Testament. This makes the Latin translation radically different to the Gothic and Slavonic ones.

### 1.3 Gothic

The Gothic translation of Luke's Gospel was part of a complete translation from the Greek of the Old and New Testament by Wulfila in the 4th century CE. Most of the translation of the Old Testament is now lost, as are parts of the translation of the New Testament: in particular, as regards Luke's Gospel, we have only books 1 through 10 and 14 through 20.

Like most cultured people of his time, Wulfila could speak Greek, and his translation shows a good understanding of the original text (which, as is well known, does not exactly correspond to any of the Greek texts that have reached us). Living in a multilingual environment, Wulfila also made limited use of the early Latin translations of the New Testament (*Vetus Latina*). Unlike Jerome, he could not rely on a literary tradition for his translation, because Gothic had never been a written language. As a consequence, his effort to create a written standard was all the greater, and it is more difficult for us to gauge the extent of Greek influence on his language (Keidan 2001).

### 1.4 Old Church Slavonic

“Old Church Slavonic is the language extrapolated from a small corpus of probably late tenth-century copies, mainly of translations made about a century earlier of Greek ecclesiastical texts. These Slavonic texts contain mainly Balkan dialectal features, have an admixture of Moravianisms, since the first translations were used for missionary activity in Greater Moravia, where further translations and copies were made, beginning from about 863.” (Huntley 1993: 125). Like Gothic, Old Church Slavonic did not rely on any previous written tradition. Moreover, extant texts are not amenable to a single translation or at least to a single tradition, but result from a mixture incorporating different dialectal features, giving birth to a rather artificial language. A linguistic evaluation of the material grouped under the label Old Church Slavonic is still an open issue in the field of Slavistics. Since the majority of manuscripts transmitting the different ecclesiastical texts started being copied in various centres in Croatia, Bulgaria and Macedonia, linguistic features of local varieties crept into the different traditions, thus giving rise to several branches in the philological tradition: Czecho-Moravian, Bulgaro-Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian (Taseva & Vos 2005; Ziffer 2005). Strikingly enough, monks who translated the Greek text were often apparently unable to understand it correctly and consequently provided many completely mistaken and misleading translations (all examples collected in *Staroslavjanskij slovar' (po rukopisjam X-XI vekov)*), which makes it even more difficult to provide a consistent picture of Old Church Slavonic.

The text on which the present investigation is based is preserved in the *Codex Zographensis*, a manuscript in Glagolitic, a script devised by Constantine

and Methodius and used in the earliest Slavonic texts, written around the late 10th and early 11th century CE, containing the four Gospels.<sup>2</sup> The text of Luke's Gospel is missing at three points: 4.5–27, 12.28–14.2 (10 verses), and 24.30–44.

It is difficult to identify the exact location where the manuscript was written, but the most likely is Bulgaria or Macedonia. In any case, the manuscript displays many linguistic features that are indisputably South-Western, even though the linguistic and cultural environments where these texts were first transmitted are frequently uncertain.

## 2. The meaning of *epí* in Luke's Gospel and in New Testament Greek

The preposition *epí* is fairly frequent in the New Testament, and it is the only one which is well attested with all three cases, even if the accusative is by far more frequent than the genitive and the dative (see Regard 1919).<sup>3</sup> Its spatial meaning is 'on', 'over', and, limited to the accusative, 'towards', 'against'. When denoting spatial relations located on the vertical axis, *epí* often signals contact, as opposed to *hupér*, which never does. With the accusative, *epí* often denotes relations that are located on the horizontal axis; in such cases it often signals lack of contact ('towards', rather than 'into'), but see 12.11, discussed below as example (33). Temporal usage of *epí* is limited, but attested with all cases, and essentially denotes location in time. On the abstract plane, *epí* can denote metaphorical location ('over'); it may express cause or reason with verbs of emotion (with the dative, as pointed out in Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf (2001: 188: "Am häufigsten bezeichnet ἐπί den Grund"), and in a case it denotes means (again with the dative, see 4.4 in example (13)). The genitive mostly denotes a static relation, and occurs with the verb 'be' or other verbs of rest; the dative is also attested with verbs of rest, but it most often occurs in abstract contexts.

The accusative often occurs with motion verbs, but verbs of rest are not infrequent. In a few occurrences, one has the feeling that, in spatial expressions, the difference between the dative and the accusative was not completely clear to the author, because the two cases occur in identical expressions, in:

- (1) 12.53–54 *diameristhésontai, patèr epí huiòì kai huiòs epí patrí, mētēr epí thugatéra kai thugatēr epí tèn mētéra, pentherà epí tèn nýmphēn autēs kai nýmphē epí tèn pentherán*

2. For a description of the *Codex Zographensis* see Jagić (1954: V-XXXVI; CC: 13–14); for related editorial and linguistic problems, see the fundamental contribution by Garzaniti (2001: 306–310).

3. The description in this paragraph is based on Luke's Gospel. For the meaning and use of *epí* in Classical Greek, see Luraghi (2003: 298–313), for other parts of the New Testament, see the references given in § 0.

‘they will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’

The accusative also occurs in a few other passages where one would expect the genitive or the dative, as in the expression *eph' hō katékeito* ‘that which he was laying on’ in 5.25, or where it depends on the verb ‘be’. Note however, that the extension of the accusative with this preposition is not remarkable, and the relative frequency of cases is similar to what one can find in Attic prose writers.

Apart from the occurrences mentioned above, the spatial meaning of *epí* in New Testament Greek does not display major differences with respect to Classical Greek, and similarly, the few occurrences of *epí* in time expressions have correspondences in the classical language. On the contrary, abstract usage of *epí* with the dative, and to a limited extent with the accusative (cause or reason), is an innovation; we will come back to it in the next section. Besides, two expressions that we can regard as typical idioms of the New Testament deserve to be mentioned, i.e. *ep'alētheías* ‘of a truth’, with the genitive, and *epì tōi onómati (tinós)* ‘in the name (of ...)', with the dative.

The preposition *epí* occurs 159 times in Luke’s Gospel, 25 with the genitive, 34 with the dative, and 100 with the accusative. Before discussing individual translations, we provide correspondences in the four languages. We do not include the *Vetus Latina*, which is not a text but a collection of texts with numerous variants.

*Table 1.* Translations of *epí* in Latin

LATIN	genitive	dative	accusative
<i>in</i> abl.	12	22	7
<i>in</i> acc.		2	32
<i>ad</i>	1		21
<i>super</i> abl.		4	
<i>super</i> acc.	4	4	25
<i>supra</i>	3	1	6
<i>sub</i> abl.	2		
<i>per</i>			1
<i>secus</i>	1		
<i>ab</i>	1		
<i>adversus</i>			1
<i>contra</i>			1
ablative		1	1
accusative			1
dative			3
adverb	1		1

Note that the number of occurrences in Gothic is considerably smaller than the number of occurrences in the other languages, because the text is incomplete (see above, § 1.3).

*Table 2.* Translations of *epi* in Gothic

GOTHIC	genitive	dative	accusative
<i>ana</i> dat.	10	6	16
<i>ana</i> acc.	1		19
<i>uf</i> dat.	1		
<i>at</i> dat.	1		1
<i>bi</i> dat.	1	1 (?)	
<i>bi</i> acc.		4	2
<i>in</i> dat.	2		
<i>in</i> gen.	3		
<i>du</i> dat.		2	6
<i>afar</i> dat.		2	1
<i>ufar</i> dat.			4
<i>ufaro</i> dat.			1
accusative			3
dative			1
genitive		1 (?)	
adverb		1	3
not translated			1

*Table 3.* Translations of *epi* in Old Church Slavonic (OCS)

OCS	accusative	dative	genitive
<i>na</i> + acc.	39	5	1
<i>na</i> + loc.	12	1	14
<i>kŭ</i> + dat.	11		
<i>vŭ</i> + acc.	3	3	2
<i>vŭ</i> + loc.	3		
<i>nadŭ</i> + str.	3	3	1
<i>o</i> + loc.	3	12	
<i>po</i> + loc.	1	1	
<i>otŭ</i> + gen.			1
<i>pri</i> + loc.			2
<i>u</i> + gen.	1		
dative	1		
accusative		1	
instrumental		1	
adverb	2		
not translated	1		

### 3. The translation of *epí* in Latin

#### 3.1 *The Vulgate*<sup>4</sup>

As remarked in § 2, Greek featured an opposition between contact and lack of contact when denoting spatial relations holding on the vertical axis. Latin did not feature this distinction: in principle, the preposition *super* can denote both contact or lack of contact, even if the latter case was perhaps more frequent. In cases in which contact is the most relevant feature of the spatial relation, the closest correspondent of *epí* is *in*. Accordingly, Latin occurrences are divided into two main groups, one that contains *in* (41 occurrences with the ablative and 34 with the accusative), and another one with *super* or the related adverb *supra* (33 occurrences with the accusative, 4 with the ablative, and 10 of *supra*). Another significant group of occurrences contains *ad*, used almost exclusively as a translation of *epí* with the accusative in cases in which *epí* denotes motion (or less frequently, location) towards or in the vicinity of an entity. Below are some examples:

- (2) 2.14 gen. *kai epí gêsairénē* / *et in terra pax*  
'and on earth peace'
- (3) 21.6 dat. *ouk aphethésetai líthos epí líthōi* / *non relinquetur lapis super lapidem*  
'there will not be left one stone on another'
- (4) 5.12 acc. *pesón epí prósopon* / *procidens in faciem*  
'falling on his face'
- (5) 10.6 acc. *eph'humâs anakámpsei* / *ad vos revertetur*  
'it will return to you'

Clearly, there is no single preposition in Latin that can translate the Greek *epí*; judging the relative frequency, it appears that Jerome chose *in* as the closest correspondent. Even in the domain of spatial relations, this choice is not always devoid of problems: often, especially in the case of *epí* with the accusative, Jerome comes up with a type of usage that either is far from the norm of classical prose writers, or does not entirely reflect the meaning of the original text. The latter problem can also be created by the use of *ad*. Consider, for example:

- (6) 10.9 *éggike eph'humâs hē basileía tou theou*  
*appropinquavit in vos regnum dei*  
'the Kingdom of God has come near to you'

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4. We discuss the *Vulgate* before earlier Latin translations for two reasons. In the first place, as we remarked earlier, the *Vetus Latina* is not a single text, but rather a collection of several translations based on different traditions; in the second place, after it was written, the *Vulgate* remained the only Latin translation officially in use.



- (7) 22.52 *hōs epì lēistén exēlthate metà makhairôn kai xúlōn;*  
*quasi ad latronem existis cum gladiis et fustibus?*  
 ‘have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?’

Following the classical usage, one would rather expect the opposite translation, i.e. *ad* in Example (6) (‘towards’), and *in* in Example (7) (‘against’).

Things become more complicated when one moves on to an analysis of abstract contexts. In the first place, there are occurrences which look quite similar in Greek, where Jerome chooses quite different Latin translations, thus opting for different meanings:

- (8) 2.25 *kai pneûma ên hágion ep’ autón / et Spiritus Sanctus erat in eo*  
 ‘and the Holy Spirit was on him’  
 2.40 *kai kháris Theoû ên ep’ autó / et gratia Dei erat in illo*  
 ‘and the grace of God was upon him’
- (9) 4.18 *pneûma Kuríou ep’ emé / Spiritus Domini super me*  
 ‘the Spirit of the Lord is upon me’

Whatever the Greek text may be taken to mean, the Latin translation in (9) says something different from what is said in (8). Note that *epì* with the accusative did not normally occur with the verb ‘be’ (or in nominal sentences) in Classical Greek; so Jerome had no pattern to follow from Classical Greek.<sup>5</sup>

The same happens in a much more striking way when we turn to occurrences of *epì* with the dative, which mostly denote abstract relations. Here, Jerome mostly uses *in*, but occasionally also *super*, in a way that is unparalleled in classical Latin prose. Let us consider some examples:

- (10) 1.14 *kai polloì epì têi genései autoû kharésontai*  
*et multi in nativitate eius gaudebunt*  
 ‘and many shall rejoice at his birth’
- (11) 2.47 *exístanto dè pántes hoi akoúsantes autoû epì têi sunései kai taís apokrísesin autoû*  
*stupebant autem omnes qui eum audiebant super prudentia et responsis eius*  
 ‘and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers’
- (12) 9.43 *pántōn dè thaumazóntōn epì pâsin hoís epoíei*  
*omnibusque mirantibus in omnibus quae faciebat*  
 ‘while they all wondered at all things which he did’

In passages such as the above, *epì* denotes reason or cause. In Classical Greek, verbs such as *khárein* ‘rejoice’ and *thaumázein* ‘wonder’ would have taken an

5. As we will see below, § 3.2, the difference between the two passages in (8) and the one in (9) was partly established in the pre-Jerome tradition of Latin translations: while *epì* is translated with various prepositions (including *in*, *super*, and *cum* in (8), all translations agree on *super* in (9)).

instrumental dative. As is well known, the instrumental dative was becoming obsolete in the *koiné*, and was being substituted by various prepositional phrases. In Classical Latin, one could have used the instrumental ablative, or, with a verb such as *miror* ‘wonder’, some other type of prepositional phrase. Here, Jerome (as well as other Latin translators; see § 3.2) is confronted with several problems. In the first place, he had to translate a non-classical usage of *epí*; in the second place, he tried to conform to the original as far as the number of words was concerned, which prevented him from using a plain case instead of a prepositional phrase. He chose to extend the meaning of the two Latin prepositions *in* and *super* to the same abstract relations denoted by *epí*, based on the consideration that *in* and *super* were the closest correspondent of *epí* in the domain of spatial relations. However, he did not follow this procedure to the same extent for both prepositions: *super* occurs only three times in passages comparable to Example (11) (moreover, the same verb is also attested with *in*); elsewhere it either occurs in concrete spatial expressions (see Example (3) above), or in passages in which the occurrence of the verb ‘be’ renders the spatial metaphor more readily accessible.

Let us now turn to another passage that deserves to be mentioned, again with *epí* plus the dative:

- (13) 4.4 *ouk ep' ártōi mónōi zēsetai* [*all' en pantí rémati Theoû*]  
*non in pane solo vivet homo sed in omni verbo Dei*  
 ‘man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God’

Example (13) is of particular interest, because it shows how the same Latin preposition, *in*, was used for two Greek prepositions, *epí* and *en*.<sup>6</sup> Neither preposition would have been appropriate in Classical Greek, where one would have found *apó* in both cases. As already remarked in relation to Example (10), the passage in (13), too, would have contained an instrumental ablative in Classical Latin. Jerome did not depend on the original for the translation of prepositions, and was able to use expressions that he found more appropriate to Latin; however, he consistently tried to avoid leaving out a word from his translation. Indeed, this could have been a problem with many of the examples discussed in this section, had he used the plain ablative. Limiting the observation to the New Testament, for which he had only the Greek text, Jerome was also confronted with another problem: the use of *epí* was not clearly attested in the literary language in similar contexts. Consequently, he tried to be innovative in much the same way as he felt the Greek text was, as we have

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6. It also points to an inconsistency in the use of these prepositions in Biblical Greek: i.e. both *epí* and *en* could translate two different Hebrew prepositions, i.e. ‘*al*, ‘over’, and *b* ‘in’, ‘with’. The passage in (13), a quotation from the Old Testament, contains two occurrences of ‘*al* in Hebrew. The Greek text of the New Testament contains only the first part of the quotation (the part given here in square brackets is omitted).

remarked above. It must be mentioned, as we will see in more detail below, § 3.2, that *in* was the translation that had already been used for both *epí* and *en* in this passage by all earlier Latin translators of the Gospel. So Jerome's choice was not directly based on evidence of the same preposition, 'al, occurring in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He may have found that current Latin translations were confirmed by the Hebrew original, and consequently, were better than the Greek translation.

Note that the effect of Jerome's decision to use *in* as most frequent translation of *epí*, especially in abstract contexts, made the instrumental meaning of this preposition far more relevant, which is considered a peculiar feature of Christian Latin, and is commonly associated with the influence of Hebrew *b*, a preposition that could mean both 'in' (location) and 'with' (instrument). As Example (13) shows, the matter is not irrelevant, given the fact that *in* corresponds to Hebrew 'al in this passage.

With the accusative, *epí* also denotes cause with the verb 'cry'. In Luke's Gospel this construction occurs in two passages, one of which is quoted below, as Example (42). The other occurrence is

- (14) 19.41 *idón tèn pólin éklausen ep' autén*  
*videns civitatem flevit super illam*  
 'he beheld the city, and wept over it'

The verb *klaíein* 'cry' did not take *epí* in Classical Greek (with this verb, cause was expressed with *diá* and the accusative, as expected). However, this Greek construction was already attested in the *Septuagint*. If one examines the Hebrew text, it can be seen that the verb 'cry' occurs with the preposition 'el 'to' 'towards', which, in its concrete spatial meaning, corresponds to Greek *eis* or *epí* plus the accusative. Jerome also used *super* in similar contexts in the translation of the Old Testament. In this case, his use of *super* seems to be influenced by the Greek translation: Jerome opts to extend the meaning of *super* to the same abstract contexts to which the meaning of *epí* had been extended in the *Septuagint*. Far from being his own choice, though, the usage of *super* with *fleo* 'cry' was already established in the Christian tradition, as we will see in § 3.2.

Finally, a few particular cases are worth mentioning because they contain meanings of *epí* that could not be rendered by means of the most frequent prepositions used in Latin translations. For example, temporal usage, as in *epí tēn aúrion, altera die* in 10.35, representing one of the few cases in which Jerome translates with a plain ablative (see further 4.25), thus omitting a word, and:

- (15) 3.2 *epí arkhieréōs Ánna kai Kaiápha*  
*sub principibus sacerdotum Anna et Caiapha*  
 'Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests'

(see further 4.27; this usage of *epí* is translated with the ablative absolute in the *Afra*).

We would also like to mention the passages in (16) and (17). In the first, Jerome used the infrequent preposition *secus*, a translation which also occurs in the so-

called manuscript *aureum* of the *Vetus Latina*, while in the second he uses *ad*, a translation that does not correspond to earlier versions (*in* is also attested in some manuscripts of the *Vulgate*, as it is in the *Vetus Latina*):

- (16) 20.37 *Mōūsēs eménusen epì tēs bátou*  
*Moses ostendit secus rubum*  
 ‘Moses showed at the bush’
- (17) 9.62 *oudeis epibalōn tēn kheira autoū ep’ árotron*  
*nemo mittens manum suam in aratrum*  
 ‘no man, having put his hand to the plow’

### 3.2 Earlier translations

One can only give a general overview of the tendencies found in earlier Latin manuscripts containing the translation of Luke’s Gospel. They are obviously not homogeneous and reflect different choices. In general, *super* is used for the translation of *epí* with the genitive and the dative more frequently than by Jerome; however, when Jerome uses *in*, the same preposition also occurs in at least one other manuscript. The manuscript that most often has *super* in such occurrences is *e*, the principal manuscript of the *Afra*. The relative frequency of *super* is higher than in the *Vulgate* both in cases in which the preposition denotes a spatial relation, and in cases in which the meaning is abstract: for example, in 2.14 (Example (2) above) several manuscripts have *super*, either with the accusative or with the ablative, while very few others have *in*.<sup>7</sup> In 1.14 (quoted in Example (10)) most manuscripts have *in* as the *Vulgate*, but *super* is also attested, as in other passages in which *epí* denotes cause or reason. As a general remark, it can be stated that, even if Jerome’s translations can almost always be found in earlier manuscripts, it was he who decided to use *in* to denote cause or reason much more frequently than *super*.

In this context, it is remarkable that there are passages in which all the manuscripts agree on the translation *in*. In such passages the preposition does not refer to a spatial relation. They are:

- a. 20.21, which contains the phrase *ep’alētheías* ‘of a truth’,<sup>8</sup>
- b. 4.4 quoted above as Example (13),

7. The use of cases with prepositions is much less accurate in earlier translations than it is in the *Vulgate*, which usually conforms to the classical norm.

8. Two other passages contain this expression in Luke’s Gospel; in the first (4.25), all manuscripts have *in* except *f* and *e*, that have *veritatem* (*dico vobis*) ‘the truth (I tell you)’ and *Amen* respectively; in the second (22.59) the *Vulgate* has *vere* ‘truly’, as do the majority of other Latin translations, while only *d* has *in*.

- c. all occurrences of *epi tônónomati* ‘in the name’, and
- d. 11.22, that we will discuss below.

Occurrences in (a)–(c) contain a special use of *in*, that constitutes a peculiar feature of the language of the New Testament: in particular, (a) and (c) are idiomatic expressions of Christian religious discourse,<sup>9</sup> while (b), discussed here at length in § 3.1, is a passage in which Greek has both *epi* and *en*, while Latin translators decided to unify their version using *in*.

Let us now examine the passage mentioned above under (d):

- (18) 11.22 *tēn panoplīān autoū aírei eph' hēi epepoíthei*  
*universa arma eius aufert in quibus confidebat*  
 ‘he takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted’

This is a typical example of the tendency already noted above, related to passages that should have contained a dative (and a noun phrase without preposition in Latin): *peíthein epi* in the sense of ‘rely on’, ‘trust’, is first attested in the New Testament; in much the same way, *confido* ‘trust’ did not occur with *in* in Classical Latin. Here all Latin translators agree against using *super*, which most likely would have been unclear. Note that this construction remains in the Romance languages, as do those in (a) and (c) above.<sup>10</sup> Here again it is worth noticing what verb and what type(s) of construction correspond to *confido in* in the Old Testament. The Hebrew verb *btḥ*, whose meaning is glossed as “firmæ spei plaenus fuit”, “be full of firm hope” in Zorell’s lexicon, is translated into Greek with either *peíthein* ‘trust’ or *elpízein* ‘hope’, and into Latin with either *confido* ‘trust’ or *spero* ‘hope’ (the choice of either verb in Latin does not always correspond to Greek, and in general *confido* seems more frequent than *peíthein*). In Hebrew, it may take *b*, ‘al, or ‘el, while Jerome generally uses *in*.<sup>11</sup> In this case, Latin displays a tendency toward unifying various

9. The religious relevance of the expression *in nomine* ‘in the name’ in Latin is also demonstrated by the fact that another occurrence of *epi tônónomati* (1.59), in which the expression has a different meaning (*ekáloun autò epi tônónomati toû patròs autoû* “and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father”) is translated with the plain ablative by Jerome: this is one of the few cases where Jerome chooses to leave out a word, and he does so in order to avoid using a religiously meaningful expression in the wrong context.

10. The verb *confido* ‘trust’ also occurs in 18.9 with the reflexive pronoun; in this passage, the *Vulgate* has *in*, as does manuscript *f* of the *Vetus Latina*, but the majority of other translations have *sibi*, following the classical usage. In this case, too, Jerome makes use of an already existing translation in a way that gives greater unity to his own grammatical usage.

11. An analysis of the Greek translation of the Old Testament goes far beyond the scope of the present paper. At least in the New Testament, Latin *in* with *confido* ‘trust’ corresponds to *epi*, *eis*, and *en* in Greek.

possible prepositions in a single consistent usage, which constituted an innovation with respect to the classical norm. Note that neither Greek nor Latin offered a precise and always satisfying equivalent of the Hebrew verb, so both the meanings of the verbs used for translation and the meanings of the prepositions are extended under the influence of the original.

Let us now turn to the translation of *epí* with the accusative in the *Vetus Latina*. Again, we find variation, but the most frequent translations are still *in*, *super/supra*, and *ad*, with a distribution that resembles that of the *Vulgate* more closely than the distribution of possible translations for *epí* with the genitive and the dative. Most cases in which all translations agree contain spatial expressions; some interesting passages are 4.18, quoted above as Example (9) (see further fn. 5), and:

- (19) 6.35 *hóti autòs khrēstós estin epì tou̅s akharístous kai̅ ponēroús*  
*quia ipse benignus est super ingratos et malos*  
 ‘for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil’

In this passage, *in* would have been hardly understandable, given the fact that it usually means ‘against’ with nouns with human referents. The Greek adjective *khrēstós* ‘kind’ occurs with *epí* only in the New Testament: again, the Latin translators are confronted with the problem of translating an expression for which they have no classical models, and again they decide to keep the same number of words and create a new expression in Latin, too, extending the meaning of the Latin preposition to the same abstract meaning to which Greek *epí* had been extended (*benignus* occurs with the dative and with *erga* in classical authors).

Another case in which all translations agree is 19.41, quoted above as Example (14), that contains the expression *flere super* ‘cry over’ plus accusative. As in the case of *confido* ‘trust’, here, too, we find a new construction of a verb, already common in Christian Latin before Jerome, which spread to the spoken languages, as evidenced by the fact that it remains in the Romance languages (and has spread to English, too).

#### 4. The translation of *epí* in Gothic

Wulfila was a cultured man, living in a multilingual society, who, as contemporary sources tell us, could preach in Gothic as well as in Greek and in Latin. Even if his translation is based on the original Greek text of the Gospel, it is likely that he also consulted available Latin translations. Indeed, in a couple of passages in which his translation does not correspond to the Greek text, one can find the exact correspondence in some Latin manuscripts. As an example, consider the following:

- (20) 1.29 *hē dē epì tōi lōgōi dietarákhthē*  
*iþ si gasaiþandei gaþlahsnoda bi innatgahtai*  
 ‘she was troubled at his saying’

A number of Latin manuscripts have *turbata est in introitu eius* “she was troubled at his coming in”, which corresponds to *bi innatgahtai*.<sup>12</sup> This may either mean that Wulfila and some of the Latin translators used a Greek text that is now lost, or it may indicate that Wulfila preferred to follow a Latin translation.<sup>13</sup> However, as we will see below, little Latin influence is detectable in the translation of prepositions.

The most frequent preposition used by Wulfila to translate *epí* is *ana*. Besides, when denoting space, *epí* with the accusative signalling motion toward an entity can be translated with *du*; in some occurrences we also find *ufar*, but this is infrequent: in fact, spatial meaning of *ana* must have been similar to that of *epí* in the feature of implying contact, while *ufar* should have been more similar to *hupér* (these remarks are partly based on the existence of pairs of prepositions such as *on/over* and *an/über* in other Germanic languages).

In general, *ana* seems to offer a better equivalent of Greek *epí* than any other Latin preposition. In expressions denoting space, both concrete or abstract, Wulfila’s use of *ana* is more consistent than Jerome’s use of either *in* or *super*, as shown by passages in 2.25, 2.40, and 4.18 (see Examples (8) and (9) discussed above, § 3.1), all containing *ana* with the dative (apparently, any differences that may have been detected by Latin translators were not relevant to Wulfila).

Outside spatial expressions, Wulfila sometimes seems more dependent on the Greek text than Jerome, while other times he seems to depart more from Greek. Consider the following examples:

- (21) 9.48 *hòs eàn déxētai toúto tò paidíon epì tòì onómátí mou,*  
*quicumque susceperit puerum istum in nomine meo me recipit*  
*saßazuh saei andnimip̃ þata barn ana namin meinamma, mik*  
*andnimip̃*  
 ‘whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me’
- (22) 4.25 *ep’ alētheías dè légō humín*  
*in veritate dico vobis*  
*bi sunjai qiþa izwis*  
 ‘but I tell you of a truth’

12. See also 19.23, where Greek has *édókás mou tò argúriion epì trápezan?* “wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank?” and Jerome translates *ad mensam* ‘to the table’, while the Gothic translation *du skattjam* ‘to the bankers’ rather corresponds to *nummolariis* ‘to the bankers’ in manuscripts *f* and *e* of the pre-Jerome translations.

13. Note further that the Greek text given here does not contain an equivalent of *gasaißandei* either. The *Vulgate* contains the clause *Quae cum audisset* “as she heard those things”, but some other manuscripts contain the verb ‘see’, as does Gothic.

Example (21) contains the expression *epi tōi onómati* ‘in the name’, which is apparently equivalent to the much more frequent *en (tōi) onómati*.<sup>14</sup> Jerome translates both expressions using *in*. As we have seen in § 3.2, this translation was not his own, but followed an already established norm, according to which Latin always had *in* with *nomine*. Wulfila uses *ana* here, while he normally uses *in namin* for *en tōi onómati*. It is not clear why he chose to make this difference, whether he reproduced equivalent spatial metaphors for the two prepositions in an attempt to avoid changing the meaning of the source text, or whether he wanted to convey different meanings in the translation. Again, one must remember that the difference between Wulfila and Jerome was that the former was translating into Gothic (and indeed using a written variety of Gothic) for the first time, while the *Vulgate* was part of an already rich tradition of Latin translations. Similar to Gothic, the Slavonic translation, too, has two different prepositions corresponding to Greek *epí* and *en* with the word ‘name’. We will come back to this point below, § 5.

Example (22) contains a specular situation. The expression *ep’ alētheías* ‘of a truth’ in the Gospels seems to be equivalent to the (again much more frequent) *alēthōs* ‘truly’. Jerome uses the adverb *vere* ‘truly’ for the latter, while he prefers to use a prepositional phrase in this and most cases of *ep’ alētheías*, thus preserving the same number of words as the source text (there are few exceptions, one of which is mentioned above in fn. 8). On the other hand, Wulfila usually translates both expressions with the prepositional phrase *bi sunjai*. Again, this situation overlaps with the Slavonic one.

As for the translation of 4.4 discussed above as Example (13), in Gothic we find:

- (13’) *ni bi hlaib ainana libaid manna, ak bi all waurde gudis*  
 ‘man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God’

The preposition *bi* with the accusative in its abstract meaning is glossed as ‘inbetreff, um, über’ by Streitberg: in this case, Wulfila did not try to keep the same spatial metaphor used in Greek to express means (remember further that Greek had two different prepositions here, *epí* and *en*). In this connection, it is interesting to observe further that *bi* is also used to express cause with the verb ‘cry’, that we have discussed above in § 3.1. and 3.2: so in 19.41 (Example (14) above) we find:

- (14’) *gasaißands þo baurg gaignot bi þo*  
 ‘he beheld the city, and wept over it’

Here, Wulfila chooses to translate on the basis of the function of *epí*, rather than extending the meaning of some preposition that corresponded to *epí* in the domain of spatial relations.

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14. This phrase has its origin in Biblical Hebrew (from *bisem*: Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf 2001: 168).



In general, the translation of *epí* with the dative denoting abstract relations is problematic for Wulfila, who makes use of various prepositions. With verbs of emotion, we find *in* with the dative once (1.14), *du* with the dative twice (1.47, 7.13), *ana* with the dative twice (2.33, 18.7), and *bi* with the accusative three times (4.22, 4.32, 9.43). With the same verbs, Latin has only two possible prepositions, either *in* or *super*.<sup>15</sup> Below are some examples:

- (10') 1.14 *jah managai in gabaurþai is faginond*  
 'and many shall rejoice at his birth'
- (23) 1.47 *kai ēgallāsen tò pneūmá mou epí tòi Theōi tòi sotēri mou*  
*et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo*  
*jah swegneid ahma meins du guda nasjand meinamma*  
 'and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior'
- (24) 2.33 *thaumázontes epí toís lalouménōis*  
*mirantes super his quae dicebantur*  
*sildaleikjandona ana þaim þoei rodida wesun*  
 'they marvelled at those things which were spoken of him'
- (25) 4.22 *kai ethaúmazon epí toís lógois*  
*et mirabantur in verbis*  
*jah sildaleikidedun bi þo waurda*  
 'and they wondered at the words'

Comparing the Gothic and the Latin translation, we can note two things: (a) the usage of *in* as a translation for the abstract meaning of *epí* was much better established in Jerome than the usage of any unique or quasi-unique equivalent in Wulfila; (b) Latin sometimes made use of a metaphor based on vertical orientation, as shown by the use of *super* in (19) and similar occurrences, while Gothic did not.<sup>16</sup> Both remarks can further be developed in the light of what we said in § 3.1 and 3.2. As we have repeatedly shown above, the usage of *in* and *super* in specific contexts corresponding to Greek *epí* was a typical feature of Latin translations of the Gospels already before Jerome: we may assume that it had become a typical feature of Christian Latin outside translation as well. Consequently Jerome, who was writing his translation three centuries after the earlier ones, could extend its usage, presumably following an established norm of his time. As for the spatial metaphor, we have remarked that Jerome (partly following the earlier translators) decided to extend the meaning of *in* and *super* to the same non-spatial meanings of Greek *epí*.

15. Two other passages (1.29 and 20.26) cannot be used, because they apparently translate a Greek text which does not correspond to ours, see above the discussion of Example (20).

16. The Gothic translation of 6.35 quoted in Example (19) has the plain dative, rather than a prepositional phrase.

Let us now turn to the two verbs for which Latin translators had devised special constructions, i.e. *confido* ‘trust’ and *fleo* ‘cry’. In the case of *peíthei epí* ‘trust in’, the passage quoted in Example (18) is lost in Gothic; in 18.9 we find the reflexive pronoun without prepositions:

- (26) 18.9 *eípen dè kai prós tinas toùs pepoithótas eph’ heautoîs*  
*dixit autem et ad quosdam qui in se confidebant*  
*qap þan du sumaim, þaiei silbans trauaidedun*  
 ‘and he said this unto certain which trusted in themselves’

As we have mentioned in § 3.2, fn. 10, some of the earlier Latin translations also had *sibi*, the reflexive pronoun in the dative. Since in all other occurrences of *peíthei epí* ‘trust in’, including another one with a reflexive pronoun, Wulfila has *du*, the absence of preposition here might be connected with his knowledge of the Latin text (although it may well have been his own decision not to use a preposition). In the case of *klaíein epí* ‘cry over’, we have already remarked that Gothic did not extend the meaning of *ana* or *ufar* in a way similar to what Latin translators did with *super*. In this case, Wulfila’s translation seems to be independent of the form displayed by both Greek and Latin, while rather it conforms to the meaning of the source text.

## 5. The translation of *epí* in Old Church Slavonic

Looking at Table 3 in comparison with Table 2, it is clear that Old Church Slavonic displays a broader range of possible translations for the Greek preposition *epí* than Gothic, not to mention Latin. In addition, the preposition is translated mainly according to the case accompanying it in the original. This means that *epí* plus accusative most frequently corresponds to *na* plus accusative (39 times out of 80), *epí* plus dative is mainly translated by *o* plus locative (12 times out of 27) and *epí* plus genitive mainly by *na* plus locative (14 times out of 21). However, even though some choices in rendering the preposition occur more frequently than others, an automatic rule can hardly be found: very often, in fact, similar, or even almost identical examples, are translated by means of different prepositions. This seems to reflect the situation already occurring in Greek, where the preposition does not always display clear-cut meaning differences.

As already mentioned above, *epí* plus genitive is usually employed to express location, preferably with contact. *Na* plus locative is the most frequent choice to translate *epí* plus genitive:

- (2′) 2.14 *i na zemi mirŭ vŭ čel’ověxŭ blagovolenie*  
 ‘and on earth peace, good will toward men’

Many occurrences exhibit a local and static meaning: 5.18 *epi klínēs / in lecto / na odrě* ‘on the bed’; 6.17 *epi tōpou pedinoū / in loco campestri / na městě ravíně* ‘in the plain’; 12.3 *epi tōn domátōn / in tectis / na krověxū* ‘on the roof’; in some cases also depending on verbs which involve movement, as in:

- (27) 8.16 *epi lykhniás títhēsīn*  
*supra candelabrum ponit*  
*na svěščtīnikū vūzlagetū*  
 ‘setteth it on a candlestick’

In 3.2, where *epí* plus genitive has a temporal meaning, it is translated with *pri* plus locative, the usual way of rendering temporal expressions:

- (15’) 3.2 *pri arxierei Annē i Kaiěfě*  
 ‘Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests’

The same preposition *pri* seems to have a quite exceptional spatial meaning in Example (28). As remarked above, § 3.1., *secus* is rather infrequent in Latin and the translator seems to employ an unusual preposition in order to match the unusual lexical choice of the source text:

- (28) 20.37 *epi tēs bātou / secus rubum / pri kōpině*  
 ‘at the bush’

In this case Matthew’s Gospel deserves a mention: the preposition *secus* also occurs in Matth. 13.48 in the phrase *secus litus* ‘by a stone’, translated into Old Church Slavonic as *na krai*.

In Luke’s Gospel, most occurrences of *epí* plus dative express cause or reason and are translated by means of *o* plus locative:

- (29) 1.29 *epi tōi lōgōi diatarákhthē*  
*turbata est in sermone eius*  
*sūmęte sę o slovesi ego*  
 ‘she was troubled at his saying’

In five occurrences the spatial value of *epí* plus dative is rendered by *na* plus locative and twice by *nadū* plus instrumental, as in 23.38:

- (30) 23.38 *ēn dē kai epigraphē ep’ autōi*  
*erat autem et superscriptio scripta super eum*  
*bě že i napsaníe napisano nadū nimū*  
 ‘and a superscription also was written over him in’

As already observed above, *na* plus accusative is the most frequent choice to translate *epí* plus accusative, even though the fluctuation between the accusative and the locative mirrors the situation of Greek (partly already present in Homeric and Classical Greek, in which a few verbs, such as *títhēmi* ‘put’, could take *epí* with either

the accusative or the genitive). The preposition usually indicates a movement towards somebody or something, as in 10.9, quoted above in Example (6), in which we find *na* *vy* ‘over us’ (accusative) as a translation of *eph*’*humâs*. Motion can also be abstract:

- (31) 1.17 *Epistrépsai kardías patérōn epí tékna*  
*Ut convertat corda patrum in filios*  
*Obratiti srdīca ocmū na čęda*  
 ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children’
- (32) 1.35 *pneûma hágion epeléusetai epí sé*  
*Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te*  
*Douxū svęnty naidetū na tę*  
 ‘the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee’

However, albeit infrequently, *epí* can also have the meaning of ‘into’, as is clear from the following example:

- (33) 12.11 *hótan dē eisphērōsin humâs epí tās sunagōgās kai tās arkhās kai tās exousías*  
*cum autem inducent vos in synagogas et ad magistratus et potestates*  
*ęda že privedqtū vy na sūnūmišta i vlasti i vladychīstviě*  
 ‘and when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers’

This usage of *epí* is not found in Classical Greek, where *eis*, rather than *epí*, has the meaning ‘into’. In the Liddell-Scott Lexicon, similar examples are quoted, but this is the only one that clearly means not only ‘towards’ but ‘into’ (even in the Gospels). Interestingly, cases employed with the preposition *na* reflect such a difference: the word *sūnūmišta* ‘synagogues’ is in the accusative, while *vlasti* ‘magistrates’ and *vladychīstviě* ‘powers’ are in the locative case. In Example (33), Greek makes no distinction between the meanings ‘towards’ and ‘into’, whereas Latin explicitly makes such a distinction by using two different prepositions, *in* with the accusative and *ad*, and Old Church Slavonic uses the same preposition, as Greek does, but with two different cases, i.e. the accusative for the meaning ‘into’ and the locative for ‘towards’.

Frequently, *epí* signals final contact with something after a movement. This happens, for instance, with verbs of locating or falling (in 6.48 quoted below, *na* takes the locative case):

- (34) 6.48 *éthēken themélion epí tēn pétran*  
*posuit fundamentum super petram*  
*položī osnovanie na kamene*  
 ‘aid the foundation on a rock’

In such cases, too, movement can be abstract:

- (35) 1.12 *kai phóbos epépesen ep’ autón*  
*et timor irruit super eum*  
*i straxū napade na nī*  
 ‘and fear fell upon him’

In two occurrences (5.12 quoted in Example (4) and 17.16, below) the expression *píptein epì prósopon* ‘to fall on one’s face’ is rendered by the adverb *ničǐ* ‘down’:

- (36) 17.16 *kai épesen epì prósopon parà toùs pódas autoû*  
*et cecidit in faciem ante pedes eius*  
*i pade ničǐ na nogou ego*  
 ‘and fell down on his face at his feet’

It is remarkable that in this example Slavonic, while translating the phrase *epì prósopon* ‘on his face’ by means of an adverb of space, uses the preposition *na* plus locative (in the dual number) to translate *parà toùs pódas* ‘at his feet’, turning out to be less precise in providing spatial information than both Greek and Latin.

An example similar to (35), in which the Greek verb *egéneto* ‘come into being’ is translated with the verb ‘be’ in Slavonic, that does not imply any movement, also exhibits *na* plus locative:

- (37) 1.65 *kai egéneto epì pántas phóbos*  
*et factus est timor super omnes*  
*i by na vsexǔ straxǔ*  
 ‘and fear came on all’

Contact after movement is also involved in the following example, where Latin translates with *ad*:

- (38) 5.11 *katagóntes tà ploía epì tèn gén*  
*et subductis ad terram navibus*  
*i izvezǔšče korabǐ na souxo*  
 ‘and when they had brought their ships to land’

It is also noteworthy that in Example (38) the Greek phrase *epì tèn gén* ‘to land’, almost automatically translated by *na zemli* in the Gospel, regardless of whether the expression involves movement or not, is rendered through a non-literal, less frequent expression.

However, if movement towards an entity does not imply final contact, a possible solution is *kǔ* plus dative, frequent with persons, with the meaning ‘in(to) the presence of’, often corresponding to Latin *ad*:

- (39) 23.1 *égagon autòn epì tòn Piláton*  
*duxerunt eum ad Pilatum*  
*privedose i kǔ Pilatu*  
 ‘they led him unto Pilate’
- (40) 24.12 *édrame epì tò mnēmeíon*  
*cucurrit ad monumentum*

*teče kŭ grobu*  
 ‘he ran unto the sepulcher’

With the accusative, *epí* can also have a causal meaning as in Example (41): in this case it is usually translated by *o* plus locative and it regularly occurs with the verb ‘cry’ (see above, § 3.1 and 4, Examples (14) and (14’) with discussion), even though this verb can also take other prepositions such as *za* or plain cases like the genitive in other manuscripts:

- (14”) 19.41 *viděvŭ gradŭ plaka sę o nemŭ*  
 ‘he beheld the city, and wept over it’  
 (41) 23.28 *mĕ klaíete ep’ emé*  
*nolite flere super me*  
*ne plačite sę o mně*  
 ‘do not weep for me’

*O* plus locative is also used to translate the equivalent of the verb ‘live on’, as in the following example (see above Example (13) and discussion); unfortunately, the rest of the text is missing:

- (13”) 4.4 *ěko ne o xlěbě edinomŭ živŭ bŭ †...†*  
 ‘shall not live by bread alone’

In the case in which the event takes place within a delimited space, *epí* plus accusative is rendered by *po* plus dative:

- (42) 23.44 *skótos egéneto eph’ hólĕn tĕn gĕn*  
*tenebrae factae sunt in universam terram*  
*tŭma by po vsei zemli*  
 ‘there was a darkness over all the earth’

A major problem concerning Old Church Slavonic is the difficulty in identifying the linguistic model on which it depends. One of the basic assumptions in the history of Slavistics was that Old Church Slavonic was rigidly dependent on its Greek model. However, the results of numerous detailed investigations show that linguistic features typical of the areas where the manuscripts were written or proper to the variety spoken by copyists crept into the manuscripts. Besides, given the strong influence exerted by the Roman Church, the idea that monks translated exclusively from Greek models has to be reassessed.

Below, we analyze some passages from the Zographensis that deserve special discussion. In part, they may seem independent of the text they translate and rather show that specific linguistic patterns were spreading among languages because of their prestige; some occurrences are connected with grammatical peculiarities of

the linguistic systems involved. For convenience, such passages are divided into three categories:

a. the Slavonic translation does not correspond to the original Greek word by word: in general new words are added but in some infrequent cases words are left out. In the following example:

- (20') 1.29 *epi tōi lōgōi dietarákhthē*  
*turbata est in sermone eius*  
*sŭmęte sę o slovesi ego*  
 'she was troubled at his saying'

the pronoun in the genitive case *ego* 'his' is added to the noun *slovesi* 'words'. In this case, Slavonic and Latin agree (see also the discussion about Gothic above, § 4), but this does not necessarily imply that they derive from a common source, even if this possibility cannot be ruled out *a priori*. The tendency to add a genitive or a possessive adjective in such a context is common among languages, and could be ascribed to the grammatical system the two target languages;

b. Slavonic and Latin agree in a very particular reading: in such cases, it is more difficult to think of independent innovations in the two target languages, than to assume that Latin itself was the source of the Slavonic translation (see on this yet unsolved problem Garzaniti 2001). A very interesting example is represented by the verse 12.54:

- (43) 12.54 *hótan idēte nephélēn anatéllousan epì dysmôn*  
*cum videritis nubem orientem ab occasu*  
*egda uzřite oblakŭ vŭsxodęštř otŭ zapadŭ*  
 'when ye see a cloud rise out of the west'

where most likely the expression *epì dysmôn* 'on the west', not even attested in Classical Greek (where the equivalent expression is *pros dysmôn* / *pros dysmaís* 'from the west'), probably unclear to the translator, was replaced by the translation provided by the Latin text, which perfectly corresponds to the Slavonic text.<sup>17</sup>

c. the third group consists of the expressions *ep'alēthéias* 'of a truth', and *epi tōi onómati* 'in the name', that we have discussed in the preceding paragraphs. In the case of *ep'alēthéias*, Gothic and Slavonic agree in using a prepositional phrase (*vŭ* plus accusative in Slavonic: *vŭ istinŭ*) both for the prepositional phrase and for the adverb *alēthōs* 'truly' (while Latin often has *vere*). In the case of *epi tōionómati*,

17. The fact that the Greek expression was unclear is also evidenced by various attempts to render it in different ways by pre-Jerome Latin translators.

which, as we have seen, alternates with *en tōi onómati*, Slavonic again agrees with Gothic in using two different prepositions, as shown in the following examples:

(44) 21.8 *epì tōi onómati mou / in nomine meo / vū imę moe*

(45) 10.7 *en tōi onómati sou / in nomine tuo / o imeni tvoemī*

In this case, too, Slavonic and Gothic do not agree with Latin, in which we find the preposition *in* with the ablative for both types of occurrence, both in the *Vulgate* and in the earlier translations.

## 6. Conclusions

In our paper, we have focussed on the translation of the Greek preposition *epí* in three different languages: Latin, Gothic, and Old Church Slavonic. Among them, only Latin could rely on a well known earlier literary tradition; besides, Latin continued in the Romance languages, while Old Church Slavonic did not directly give rise to any language, but exerted a strong influence on the literary tradition of many (especially South-Eastern) Slavonic languages. Since Gothic died out, its influence is hardly detectable in any language.

In Luke's Gospel, occurrences that prove interesting from the point of view of translation involve usages of *epí* that were not attested in Classical Greek, and most often occur in contexts relevant for religious thought. In such occurrences, Latin differs from the other two languages, because the translation of the New (and Old) Testament was a much more widespread practice, that had already generated several grammatical usages which became unique to Christian Latin. Among them we discussed the instrumental usage of *in*, and constructions of the verbs *confido in* 'trust in' and *fleo super* 'cry over'. These latter constructions, that did not exist in Classical Latin, still survive in the Romance languages. They depend on the Greek model to a limited extent: in part they go back to Biblical Hebrew (or some other Semitic language),<sup>18</sup> but to some extent, they are also an independent creation of Latin translators (possibly taking into account prevailing theological discussion).

In the same occurrence, Gothic and Slavonic display a larger number of different translations for *epí*. This points to an expectedly low degree of theological culture.<sup>19</sup>

18. See further the case of *gloria* as discussed in Sznajder (in print).

19. However, when Gothic and Slavonic exhibit corresponding translations, it is impossible to assess any influence of Gothic on Slavonic, because there is no positive evidence that Slavic translators knew the Gothic text. In addition, given the theological authoritativeness of the Greek (and Latin) text, and since Goths were Arians, it is methodologically more accurate to suppose that only Greek and possibly Latin were the sources of the Slavonic translation.



Limited refinement of linguistic means is arguably in the way in which an adverb such as *alēthōs* ‘truly’ is translated. As we have shown in § 4 and 5, both Gothic and Slavonic could apparently only make use of a prepositional phrase. Indeed, adverbs are a comparatively complex category, which is likely to develop late.

Our paper shows that even in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages cultural contact was a privileged vehicle for linguistic contact.

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