PHILOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE ARMENIAN TRANSLATION OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S *LETTER TO THEODORE*

ANDREA SCALA
silvasc@tin.it

In 1966, after a long examination of the Greek textual tradition, J. Dumortier produced a critical edition of John Chrysostom's *Letter to Theodore* and of its old Latin translation.[1] The rich and detailed philological studies of Dumortier about the text of the *Letter*[2] seem however to ignore the existence of an old Armenian translation which, because of its antiquity, can be considered a very interesting source for the history of the Greek text. The Armenian text of the *Letter* was published in 1861 in Venice by the printing press of S. Lazzaro. The edition does not contain the name of the editor.[3]

The Armenian translation is preserved in six manuscripts: Matenadaran (Mat.) 989 (1198 A.D.), the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of St. James, in Jerusalem (Jerus.) 972 (1714 A.D.), Mat. 9787 (1735 A.D.), Jerus. 62 (1849 A.D.), the Mekhitarist Monastic Library of Venice-San Lazzaro (S. Lazzaro) 71 (1846 A.D.) and the Mekhitarist Monastic Library of Vienna 232 (1851 A.D.). On the base of personal investigations, I can assert that the manuscript Mat. 989 is the *archetypus* of all other known manuscripts, which have been copied directly or indirectly from it.[4]

In the following pages I will present some philological evidence of a comparative analysis of the Armenian text with the Greek manuscript tradition in order to show the philological position of the Armenian translation as regards the Greek manuscripts.

1. THE GREEK MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

As it is well known, John Chrysostom (ca 345-407) was bishop of Constantinople (397-403) and a writer of exquisite eloquence. He ended his days in exile at the feet of the Caucasus. His works (especially the exegetical writings, the treaties on the ascetic life and the homilies) were well known during the whole of the Greek Middle Age, and many of them were translated into other languages (Syriac, Armenian, Latin, Arabic, Georgian) not long after his death. Also his *Letter* seems to have been highly regarded during the Greek Middle Age. Dumortier has been able to find the following 28 codices prior to the XV century[5]:

A *Parisinus graecus* 814 (XI saec.)
B *Basileensis* B II 15 gr. 39 (IX saec.)
C *Parisinus graecus* 801 (XI saec.)
D *Laurentianus* IX 35 (XI saec.)
E *Stavronikita* 25 (XI saec.)
F *Berolinensis* gr. 35 *Phill.* 1439 (XI-XII saec.)
G *Berolinensis* gr. 94 *Phill.* 1442 (XII-XIII saec.)
H *Taurinensis Bibl. nat.* 89 (X-XI saec.)
I *Marcianus* 565 (XI saec.)
K *Marcianus App. gr.* II 27 (XI saec.)
L *Laurentianus IX 22* (X saec.)
M *Vaticanus graecus* 565 (XI saec.)
N *Vaticanus graecus* 566 (XI saec.)
O *Vaticanus graecus* 568 (XI saec.)
P *Parisinus graecus Coislin* 245 (XI saec.)
R *Panteleimon* 768 (XIII saec.)
S *Vaticanus graecus* 1628 (XI saec.)
T *Vaticanus graecus* 1629 (XI saec.)
V *Vaticanus graecus* 1639 (XI saec.)
W *Moscoviensis Bibl. synod. III* (X saec.)
d *Vatopedinus* (Mons Athos) 336 (XII-XIII saec.)
h *Marcianus* 108 (XIV saec.)
m *Vaticanus graecus* 567 (XIV saec.)
o *Vaticanus graecus* 571 (XIV saec.)
p *Palatinus* (*vat. gr.*) 228 (XIII-XIV saec.)
r *Parisinus graecus* 816 (XIV saec.)

v *Vaticanus graecus* 1645 (XI saec.)
w *Vatopedinus* 116 (XIV saec.)

The meticulous studies of Dumortier have permitted him to individuate three families of manuscripts, whose definitions are based on common errors and common lacunas. Here are the three families individuated by Dumortier:[6]

fam. *x*	codd. B I N S V m p v
fam. *y*	codd. A C D E F G K L M P R W d o w
fam. *z*	codd. H O T h r

2. THE PHILOLOGICAL POSITION OF THE ARMENIAN TRANSLATION

The systematic comparative examination of the Armenian translation with the Greek text permits us, through a work of interlinguistic hermeneutics,[7] to define in a sufficiently clear way the position of the translation as regards the Greek manuscript tradition.

In a high number of conflict cases among the Greek manuscripts, it is possible to establish with precision which reading is postulated by the Armenian translation. In a small number of other cases, it is not possible to determine it with a high degree of certitude.

The computation of the concordances between the Armenian translation and each Greek codex has been made in two ways: 1) a computation with inclusion of the common omissions, whose independence is always possible, but not very likely; 2) a computation with exclusion of the common omissions. These two computations do not give very different results.

In a not negligible number of cases, the Armenian translation presupposes a text which does not find correspondences in any known Greek manuscript and can not be explained by misreading or special choices of the translator.

Here are the detailed results of the systematic comparison between the Armenian translation and Greek manuscripts:[8]

The Armenian translation agrees:

with B 195 cases	with A 169 cases	with H 156 cases
with I 174 cases	with C 145 cases	with O 156 cases
with N 172 cases	with D 170 cases	with T 169 cases
with S 184 cases	with E 173 cases	with h 157 cases

with V 172 cases	with F 180 cases	with r 157 cases
with m 174 cases	with G 172 cases	
with p 172 cases	with K 171 cases	
with v 177 cases	with L 171 cases	
	with M 163 cases	
	with P 165 cases	
	with R 173 cases	
	with W 174 cases	
	with d 115 cases	
	with o 173 cases	
	with w 173 cases	
fam. *x* average	fam. *y* average	fam. *z* average
177,5 cases	171,30 cases[9]	159 cases
62.50 %	60.31 %	55.95 %

with exclusion of the common omissions:

with B 143 cases	with A 120 cases	with H 120 cases
with I 120 cases	with C 104 cases	with O 121 cases
with N 133 cases	with D 121 cases	with T 124 cases
with S 130 cases	with E 125 cases	with h 125 cases
with V 133 cases	with F 130 cases	with r 122 cases
with m 130 cases	with G 123 cases	
with p 128 cases	with K 130 cases	
with v 123 cases	with L 122 cases	
	with M 114 cases	
	with P 118 cases	
	with R 132 cases	
	with W 124 cases	
	with d 82 cases	
	with o 124 cases	
	with w 124 cases	
fam. *x* average	fam. *y* average	fam. *z* average
130 cases	123,61 cases[10]	122,4 cases
62.80 %	59.71 %	59.13 %

According to this evidence, the Armenian translation seems to have a moderate preference for the readings of fam. *x* and, among the codices of

that family, especially for B, with which the highest number of cases agree (195 cases, 68.66% with inclusion of the common omissions, 143 cases 69.08% with exclusion of the common omissions).

Obviously it is not correct to state *tout court* that the Armenian translation has sprung from an unknown codex of fam. *x*, because it is possible to document some cases in which the translation agrees exclusively with fam. *z* or with only one codex of that family: cfr. arm. զիւր պատիւն (20,8) = τὴν οἰκεῖαν ἀξίαν (3,13) 'his own honor': h only conserves this variant. The textual sequence զի իւրաքանչիւր ոք առնու մարմնով զգործեցեալսն երբ բարի եւ երբ չար (19,3-4) supposes ἵνα ἕκαστος κομίσηται τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξε εἴτε ἀγαθόν, εἴτε κακόν 'in order that everyone obtains the actions made with the body, both good actions and bad actions' which is present only in HOhr.

The preference of the translation for B is based on 13 cases of exclusive concordance with this manuscript, but it is possible to find 14 cases in which the Armenian translation agrees with all manuscripts, except B: τῶν κόπων (2,48) '...of the efforts, of the works' is present in all manuscripts except B, which has τῶν κακῶν '...of the evils'. The translation with աշխատութեանց (19,24) '... of the works' rejects the variant of B.

The philological evidence seems to show the eclecticism of the Armenian translation, which does not reflect the image of any known Greek manuscript and seems to be based on a codex not very far from B and from fam. *x*, but which had 91 cases unknown to B and 10 unknown to fam. *x*.

The tradition on which the Armenian translation is based looks more ancient than the formation of the three families identified by Dumortier. Therefore, the Armenian translation conserves a textual phase not attested in the Greek manuscripts.

An interesting example, in order to illustrate what we are saying, could be the following: in the first chapter of the *Letter* (1,29) we find that the Greek manuscripts are divided between the two variants ἐξέβης and ἐξῆλθες, two verbal forms having the same meaning, 'you (2nd sing.) went out'. The Armenian translation with արտաքսեալ մերժեցար (17,31) "you (2nd sing.) were thrown out" does not agree with any of the two Greek variants and supposes the reading ἐξεβλήθης "you were thrown out". In

fact, the Greek form postulated by the Armenian translation could be considered as an archetypical form of the two variants ἐξέβης and ἐξῆλθες. It is possible to consider ἐξέβης and ἐξῆλθες corruptions of an older reading ἐξεβλήθης, but it is not plausible to think the contrary. Indeed, the reading ἐξεβλήθης is *lectio difficilior* than ἐξέβης and ἐξῆλθες. Here the Armenian translation conserves a phase of the Greek tradition which is not attested in the surviving Greek manuscripts, but which is credible as the source of the two variants which are testified by the Greek codices.

The independence from the different families of the Greek manuscript tradition is incontestable in those cases in which the Armenian translation conserves some textual reductions unknown to all Greek manuscripts. Here are two examples: Arm. զերկրորդ նաւարկութիւն սստանայ (17,17-18) 'he obtains the second navigation' supposes τὸν δεύτερον ἀνακταται πλοῦν; the Greek manuscripts, with very small variants, have τὸν πρότερον ἀνακτᾶται πλοῦτον (1,15-16) 'he obtains the former wealth'. Only B knows the nearer variant τὸν πρότερον ἀνακτᾶται πλοῦν 'he obtains the former navigation'; Arm. ի վերայ իրերաց (24,27) 'one on another' postules ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις instead of the not very clear ὑφάλοις (5,31), in the textual sequence τοὺς δὲ ὑφάλοις προσαράσσοντας (5,31).

3. THE PHILOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE ARMENIAN TRANSLATION

The philological analysis of the Armenian translation of John Chrysostom's *Letter to Theodore* allows us to find concrete elements to substantiate the antiquity of the translation. Those elements can be useful in discussing and confuting the information of two identical colophons (Mat. 9787, XVIII century and Jerus. 972, XVIII century,[11] but the probably common *antigraphus* was much more ancient), which attribute the translation of the *Letter* to Nersēs Lambronac'i (XII century). Nersēs was probably just the buyer of the ms. Mat. 989, the *archetypus* of all known Armenian manuscripts containing the *Letter*.

Since the 1960s, the importance and the philological value of the old Armenian translations for the investigations regarding the history of the Greek texts has been demonstrated. In this case, too, the Armenian translation of John Chrysostom's *Letter to Theodore*, because of its

antiquity and especially because of its independence from the different families of conserved Greek manuscripts, can make a noteworthy contribution to the study of the Greek text and of its history. Among the many interesting examples of philological evidence which the Armenian translation contains, of special value are some readings conserved by the Armenian text but lost in the whole known Greek manuscript tradition.

ENDNOTES

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[1] Jean Chrysostome, *A Théodore*, introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par J. Dumortier, Sources Chrétiennes 117, Éd. du Cerf, Paris 1966.

[2] J. Dumortier, "De Quelques Principes d'Ecdotique Concernant Les Traités De Saint Jean Chrysostome," *Mélanges De Science Religieuse*, IX (1952), pp. 63-72; Idem, "La Tradition Manuscrite Des Traités A Théodore," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LII (1959), pp. 265-275; Idem, "L'Ancienne Traduction Latine De l'Ad Theodorum," *Studia Patristica* vol. VII, Berlin 1966, pp. 178-183.

[3] *Յովհաննու Ոսկեբերանի Կոստանդնուպօլսի Եպիսկոպոսապետի, Ճառք, Ի Վենետիկ Ի վանս Սրբոյն Ղազարու* 1861, pp. 17-26.

[4] A. Scala, "L'Antica Traduzione Armena Della Lettera A Teodoro Di Giovanni Crisostomo," *Ricerche Linguistiche E Filologiche*, Alessandria 2005, chapter 2.

[5] Cfr. J. Dumortier, "La Tradition Manuscrite," pp. 265-275 and especially Chrysostome, *A Théodore*, p. 29. Interesting for general considerations about the critical editions of John Chrysostom's works: Dumortier, "De Quelques Principes."

[6] Chrysostome, *A Théodore*, p. 29.

[7] For methodological references cfr.: G. Bolognesi, "La Traduzione Armena Dei "Progymnasmata" Di Elio Teone," *Rendiconti Dell' Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei*, Classe Di Scienze Morali, Storiche E Filologiche, 1962, serie VIII, vol. XVII, pp. 86-125 e pp. 211-257; Idem, "Traduzioni Armene Di Testi Greci," *Studia Classica Et Orientalia Antonino Pagliaro Oblata*, Roma 1969, I, pp. 219-291; Idem, "Note Sulla Traduzione Armena Delle "Leggi" Di Platone," *Chaiers Ferdinand De Saussurre*, XXXI (1977), pp. 47-56; Idem, "Grecismi Velati Da Apparenze Armena," *Scritti In Onore Di Alberto Grilli*, in *Paideia*, XLV (1990), pp. 23-30; B. Coulie, "Style E Traduction: Réflexions Sur Les Versions Arméniennes De Textes Grecs," *Revue Des Etudes Arméniennes*, n. s. XXV (1994-1995), pp. 43-62; G. Fermeglia, "Studi Sul Testo Delle Due Versioni (Slava E Armena) Dello "Hexaemeron" Di Giorgio Pisida," *Memorie Dell' Istituto Lombardo*, Accademia di Scienze e Lettere, Classe di Lettere, XXVIII (1964), pp. 227-333; R. B. Finazzi, "La Versione Armena Del Minosse," *Rendiconti Dell'Istituto Lombardo*, Classe di Lettere, Scienze morali e storiche, CXI (1977), pp. 27-34; Idem, "Una Traduzione Armena Di Platone," *Autori Classici In Lingue Del Vicino E Medio Oriente*, Atti del III, IV e V seminario sul tema: "Recupero Di Testi Classici Attraverso Recezioni In Lingue Del Vicino E Medio Oriente," Roma 1990, pp. 65-75. The most important studies of prof. G. Bolognesi about the Armenian translations of Greek texts have now been collected in: G. Bolognesi, *Studi E Ricerche Sulle Antiche Traduzioni Armene Di Testi Greci*, Alessandria 2000.

[8] There are 284 useful cases (207 with exclusion of the common omissions).
[9] Mss. Cd have been not included in the computation, because they are fragmentary.
[10] Mss. Cd have been not included in the computation, because they are fragmentary.
[11] *Մայր Ցուցակ Ձեռագրաց Սրբոց Յակոբեանց*, հատոր Գ, *Երուսաղէմ*, 1968, pp. 548-556.

ԲԱՆԱՍԻՐԱԿԱՆ ՆԿԱՏԱՌՈՒՄՆԵՐ՝ ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆԷՍ ՈՍԿԵԲԵՐԱՆԻ ԹՈՒՂԹ ԱՌ ԹԷՈԴՈՐՈՍԻՒ ՀԱՅԵՐԷՆ ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ

(*Ամփոփում*)

ԱՆՏՐԷԱ ՍՔԱԼԱ

Այս յօդուածին մէջ Անտրէա Սքալա ի յայտ կը բերէ բանասիրական կարգ մը տուեալներ՝ հաստատելու համար հայերէն թարգմանութեանց տեղը՝ յունական բնօրինակներուն դիմաց։

Այս ծիրին մէջ, Սքալա կը հաւաստէ թէ պահպանուած են Յովհաննէս Ոսկեբերանի Թուղթ Առ Թէոդորոսիի հայերէն վեց ձեռագիր թարգմանութիւններ, որոնց հնագոյնը Մատենադարանի 1198 թուականի ձեռագիրն է։

Հեղինակը այս պարագային եւս բնագրային բաղդատութեան դնելով Ոսկեբերա-նի Թուղթ Առ Թէոդորոսիի հայերէն թարգմանութիւնները յունարէն բնօրինակներու հետ, կ՝ապացուցէ որ հայերէն թարգմանութիւնը կրնայ յաւելեալ նպաստ մը բերել յունական բնագրի ուսումնասիրութեան եւ անոր պատմութեան։