As a student of Greek under Theodorus Gaza and a pupil of the great Latinist Lorenzo Valla, Francesco Griffolini was in a privileged position to take on the task entrusted to him by Pope Pius II: translating the Odyssey into Latin. His was one of several translations of Homer that came to light in the Quattrocento, responding to the demand of many studiosi for translations from Greek, a language mastered by few. Petrarch expresses this feeling quite vividly in his letter to Nicola Sigero, who had offered him a codex of Homer: “Homerus tuus apud me mutus, immo vero ego apud illum surdum sum ... O magne vir, quam cupide te audirem!” (p. 1).

Most suitably, this quotation is the point of departure of Schneider and Meckelnborg’s (S.-M.) volume, which offers a critical edition of Griffolini’s translation of the Odyssey, accompanied by an informative and comprehensive introduction (pp. 1–54), two appendices (pp. 317–22), and a useful “Index Nominum” (pp. 323–30). The first chapter of the introduction (pp. 1–11) is dedicated to the biography of Griffolini and to the issues of authorship and date of composition, after which follows an examination of the style of Griffolini’s translation (pp. 11–19). The study of the transmission of the text forms the bulk of the introduction (pp. 19–53), which ends with a word on the manuscripts that were more useful for establishing the text, orthography, apparatus, and principles of the edition (“Editionsgrundsätze,” pp. 53–54).

Griffolini is a fascinating figure. The author of much more than translations from Greek to Latin, he was acquainted with some of the most distinguished figures of his time. Before studying with Gaza and Valla – whose version of the Iliad he completed (books 17–
Griffolini had attended at Ferrara the school of Guarino Veronese, one of the founders of “Ciceronianismo” (p. 6). Among the dedicatees of his works are Cosimo de’ Medici and Pope Pius II, whom he accompanied on a trip to Mantua.

The first question posed by the Latin version of the Odyssey is that of authorship. S.-M. affirm that, despite the anonymity of three manuscripts and two attributions to Leonardus Aretinus, the attribution of the text to Griffolini should not raise doubts (pp. 7–8). Since Griffolini dedicated the translation of the Odyssey to Pope Pius II, his death in August 1464 provides a terminus ante quem for its composition. Additional considerations suggest a still more precise date. In the prefatory letter the translator says that the Latin Odyssey is the result of one year’s work; considering that Iustinianus Luzagus, the editor of the Iliad, used Valla’s and Griffolini’s translation in Paris in 1462 (under circumstances accurately described at pp. 9–11), Griffolini must have finished his version of the last books of the Iliad at the latest in 1461 and must have completed the Odyssey at around 1462.

The features that characterize the style of Griffolini’s translation are very clearly presented. In this context, the authors highlight the relevance of the prefatory epistle. Griffolini comments on his predecessors who translated Homer, criticizing their lack of elegance – an accusation which, according to S.-M., is directed at Leontius Pilatus, author of a verbum de verbo translation used by Lorenzo Valla in his version of the Iliad. Indeed Griffolini distances himself from that practice. S.-M. claim that, unlike Valla, Griffolini did not use Leontius Pilatus’s translation, a fact that becomes clear from a comparison between Pilatus’s and Griffolini’s versions for the same section of Homeric lines (pp. 13–14). The originality of his work lies in his method – while not translating word by word, he abridges the content and produces an interpretative paraphrase of the Odyssey in Ciceronian style (p. 15). The process is very well illustrated by the first example selected by S.-M.: “Eos of rosy fingers,” one of Homer’s most beautiful images, becomes ilucescente aurora at Od. 9.152.
and simply *mane* at *Od*. 9.170 (pp. 15–16). The tendency to concentrate on factuality becomes more pronounced as the text progresses, so that the last books are even more radically divested of epic elements; the translator was in a hurry to finish his task (p. 19). Thus it seems that Griffolini sacrificed epic language to the aim of producing a Latin text worth of Cicero, exhibiting his mastery of the orator’s language (p. 19).

The next chapter concerns the transmission of the text. S.-M. present the nine manuscripts that completely or in part preserve the *Odyssey* (pp. 19-24), the *editio princeps*, and the second edition (pp. 25–26). A study follows of the traceable connections between the manuscripts and, in one case, between manuscript and *editio princeps* (pp. 26–51). S.-M. distinguish two groups: the first transmits a relatively sound text; the second revises Griffolini's translation with the aim of moving it closer to the Homeric original. To the first group belong manuscripts NSV¹, independent from each other, and BC, which derive from a very corrupted copy and show no traces of the revision that sets the second group apart. The second group consists of manuscripts FLP; FP derive from a common source that was at some point dependent on the same exemplar as L. Finally, Li is related to the *editio princeps*, which was either made from a corrected copy of Li or from a gemellus of Li (pp. 51–52). All manuscripts were relevant for the establishment of the text. The best text is that of N and S, but they do not transmit the whole translation of the *Odyssey*. For the text lacking in NS, the authors considered V to be the best testimony, even though at some points it also has to be supplemented by other manuscripts. S.-M. respect the orthography of NSV, and where the manuscripts diverge, opt for the orthography displayed by the majority of manuscripts. In order to facilitate the comparison of the translation with the Greek original, they indicate the

¹ N =Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V B 40; S = Siena, Biblioteca Comunale, J IX 2; V = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 114 (olim 1447, deinde VIII 114); B = Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 2486; C = Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, 171 (D II 10); F = Forlì, Biblioteca Comunale, VII 7 (olim 273); L = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3299; P = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8177; Li = Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms 0602 (olim Pap. 1276).
verses of Homer at the beginning of each Latin paragraph. S.-M. do not provide a running comparison of translation and original; only exceptional cases are flagged, such as points where, due to the method of translation, the Latin text diverges considerably from Homer, and in passages which seem to suggest that the Homeric text used by Griffolini was not the one we possess.

As they acknowledge in the preface (p. ix), S.-M. pursue a line of inquiry at which they arrived through editing the *Responsio Ulixis ad Penelopen* or “*Odyssea decurtata* of Berlin,” an abbreviation of Homer’s poem in about 500 verses. This edition led the authors, both of whom are experienced editors of medieval and neo-Latin texts, to explore the fascinating world of Latin humanist translations of Homer. In regard to Francesco Griffolini, before this most welcome edition S.-M. had already produced a preliminary study of the style of his *Odyssey*, proposing an analysis of *Od*. 5.1–98. It is worth stressing, with the authors, that the majority of humanist translations of Homer are still lacking modern editions or are available only in manuscripts (p. ix). Further endeavours in this same direction are much needed.

Ana Lóio, University of Lisbon

---
