

# Legal Translation and the Bilingual Publication of Roman Imperial Constitutions

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## Abstract

The present paper aims at investigating translation techniques and publication methods of Roman imperial constitutions published in Greek in the eastern provinces of the empire, where the official Latin was not well-established. Language, being a tool for normative communication must be comprehensible to the addressees of the norm, therefore publication of a normative text in a multilingual society brings along difficulties related in particular to the translatability of legal terminology. Language problems appear, however, not only in the level of communication, but also in those of implementation and interpretation of norms. Linguistic diversity, which currently afflicts legislators in the EU, has already been a challenge for the legislators in the Roman Empire. Major difficulty was the necessity of expressing Roman legal concepts in Greek language. Centralized translation system and consequent use of terminology helped to adapt Greek for the purposes of Roman legislator creating new technical vocabulary.

## 1. Introduction

The present paper focuses on the publication of Roman imperial constitutions in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire in the first three centuries A.D. It aims in particular at analyzing translation techniques, focusing on the problem of terminology employed for typically Roman legal institutions, and publication methods, because the language choice seems to be determined by the target group of the constitution.

Although next to the official Latin and frequent Greek numerous other languages were in use in the Roman empire such as Gaulish, Oscan, Etruscan, Hebrew, Aramaic, Coptic, Libyan and Punic, (MacMullen 1966; Adams 2003) the present paper deals exclusively with Greek and Latin bilingualism. It is because the so called barbaric languages had minor importance for legal purposes and the information about any official normative communication in these languages is very scarce.

The phenomenon of bilingualism in the Roman Empire has been object of detailed studies from linguistic and historical perspective. The bilingual documents containing Greek and Latin versions of the same text were studied at the beginning of the XX century by Franciscus Zilken (1909). In the thirties, Henrik Zilliacus (1935) presented in his doctoral dissertation linguistic history of the late Empire as *Sprachenkampf* between two antagonistic cultures: Roman and Hellenistic. The attitudes of Romans toward the Greek

language were studied later by Zilliacus' pupil Jorma Kaimio (1979), whereas the diffusion of Latin in the Hellenistic world was analyzed by Bruno Rochette (1997). More recently James N. Adams (2003) presented a systematic study of the bilingualism in the Roman Empire.

Nevertheless studies dedicated to the bilingualism in the legal language are scarce. General works date back to the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX century and tackle the topic from linguistic perspective only (Paulus Viereck 1888 and David Magie 1905). More recently the Roman multilingualism and its legal implications were studied by Andreas Wacke (1993) and Alfons Bürge (1999).

The object of analysis in the present paper are the constitutions of early Roman Emperors released between the I and the III century A.D. This span of time, which roughly corresponds to the period of the principate, allows to capture changes in law and legal terminology while Rome was a multilingual and multicultural Empire. On the one hand is excluded the period of the Republic to avoid complex picture of the change in the political system and the system of legal sources. It has to be underlined, however, that there can be seen a certain level of linguistic continuity especially in the terminology and translation methods between republican and imperial documents. On the other hand, including the entire III century allows to capture the relevant change concerning the status of provincial languages, which was the grant of citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire by the *Constitutio Antoniniana* issued by Caracalla in the year 212 A.D. From this moment onwards all formal legal acts of the Roman *ius civile* became accessible for masses of new citizens, in major part unable to speak or write Latin: the official language of the Empire. In the third century can also be observed an increased interest of lawyers for the language related problems.

Curiously enough Greek was used for official purposes in Egypt, Syria and Macedonia that is provinces where it was only the language of the Hellenized elite. Bilingual Latin and Greek inscriptions are found also in the province of Judea already from the times of Caesar. It demonstrates that Romans used Greek to communicate with the entire Orient. Inscriptions with pronouncements of Roman authorities, found in the whole eastern part of the Empire, are redacted in *koiné* with the consequent use of the same legal terminology, notwithstanding the fact that different dialects were spoken in this territory. Therefore it has been already stated by Theodor Mommsen (1953, 1212-1216), and confirmed by documents discovered subsequently that the constitutions were arriving in provinces already in translated version.

Despite the privileged position of Greek, Latin remained the primary language of the legislation deep into the late Empire as Theodosian Code and Justinian's *Corpus Iuris* clearly demonstrate. The use of Greek for communication with the eastern provinces has to be considered an exception rather than a rule. In general the correspondence between the Emperor and Roman magistrates was in Latin even if replying to a Greek petition.

In the city of Rome Greek inscriptions constitute only a small part of all inscriptions, in particular the official texts were published mostly in Latin (Kaimio, 67). Similarly in the Western Mediterranean the official inscriptions are usually in Latin, apart of communities that were Greek speaking before they became part of the Empire (Kaimio, 1979, 68). Mommsen has noticed that in Sicily official inscriptions before Augustus were in Greek,

whereas later were in major part redacted in Latin (CIL, vol. X, p. 713). Exception was Naples, which preserved Greek as official language until the Flavian Age (CIL, vol. X, p. 711). Also in the Eastern part of the Empire the majority of official documents was published in Greek or in bilingual form, even if they were originally composed in Latin.

## 2. Publication of Roman imperial constitutions

Notwithstanding the dominant position of Latin as the official language of the Roman legislation there has been collected abundant material regarding Greek constitutions of early Roman Emperors. Surprisingly, the Justinian's code transmits only one such document of the Emperors prior to Diocletian. It is the constitution of Septimius Severus and Caracalla issued in A.D. 207 and directed to Metrodorus (C.4.24.1). Furthermore there are 14 references to the Greek constitutions in the Digest, but they don't report the enactments entirely (Dell'Oro, 1972). Most of material is provided by papyri and inscriptions. At the beginning of the XX century 84 constitutions from Augustus to Constantine were published by Léon Lafoscade (1902). More recently around three hundred documents from the years 27 BC–A.D. 285 were published by James Henry Oliver (1989). Earlier official Roman documents, from the Republic up to the times of Augustus, were collected and studied by Robert Sherck (1969).

To better define the scope of the paper it is necessary to describe types of Roman imperial constitutions, their addressees and matters they regulated. There were four main kinds of such enactments: edicts, mandates, decreets and rescripts. Their forms were rooted in the practices of republican institutions, lawyers and magistrates.

The main issues of general importance were regulated by the edicts (*edicta*), which had validity in the whole territory of the empire, initially probably restricted in time to the life of the editing Emperor, later valid also after his death. The text of the edict was sent to the provincial governor by the central government with a request of publication. Important regulations were translated and published in Greek or in both Greek and Latin versions as for example the edict of Diocletian regulating maximal prices of goods and services, issued in A.D. 301.

Mandates (*mandata*), mostly of administrative character, were instructions sent to the imperial magistrates in the provinces to guide the execution of their administrative tasks. A Greek summary of such documents (*liber mandatorum*) enacted by several Emperors from Augustus to Antoninus Pius was found in Teadelfia in Fayum. The document, entitled "Gnomon of the Idios Logos", was intended for the financial administration of Egypt.

Decreeets (*decreta*) were the judgments issued by the Emperor in the cases put forward for his consideration in the first instance or in appeal outside the ordinary rules of the justice administration (*extra ordinem*). In issuing decrees the Emperor was availing himself of the *consilium principis* (later called *auditorium*), a consulting entity formed mostly of lawyers. The imperial sentences had the value of the precedent for future cases.

Rescripts (*rescripta*) were replies of the Emperor to legal questions put forward by judges and magistrates (*epistulae*) or private individuals (*subscriptiones*) concerning legal

problems the petitioner was facing. The imperial rescripts were issued almost exclusively in Latin, although some papyrus documents show different practice (Nörr, 1981, 13, nr 98). The petitions of judges and magistrates were dealt with by an imperial office divided, probably already in the times of Claudius, into two departments, *ab epistulis latinis* and *ab epistulis graecis*, a fact which substantiates the administrative and political importance of provincial cases. Replies to private petitions, which constituted by far the majority, were redacted by the office *a libellis*. The opinions of the office constituted legal decisions given under the condition that the petitioner proves the facts alleged by him, which the office itself was not examining. On the basis of imperial authority such decisions had also legal effect on identical or analogous cases. How numerous was the production of the rescripts we can presume by the estimations made for the times of Septimius Severus, who issued between 370 (Honoré, 1994, 187-189) and 446 (Coriat, 1997, 130) rescripts in 18 years of his reign.

Since every kind of imperial constitutions was directed to a different target group their publication methods were different. The decision about the language choice was often made by the imperial chancellery, and the official translation was furnished together with the Latin text.

The edicts were sent from Rome to the local authorities in form of a letter with a copy to be published locally by the provincial authorities. In spite of the fact that often it was the receiver of the official text to decide upon the carving, prescriptions for the publication were sometimes sent together or even included in the law itself. For example an edict of Claudius to the Jews, quoted by Flavius Josephus (*Antiquitates* 19,291), states “I desire magistrates of the cities, colonies and municipalities, both in Italy and outside it and kings and rulers ... to have my edict inscribed and displayed for not less than thirty days, in a place where it can be clearly read by a man at ground level” (translation of Frederiksen, 1965, 184). At the same time the original texts of the dispositions were either exposed in Rome or available for the consultation in the archives.

The text of an inscription was produced in two phases, firstly, in Rome took place the drafting of the text, subsequently, the carving of inscription was executed in the publication place. The original drafter usually had no impact on the inscribing process. Moreover, the local engraver was not always following strictly the text of the disposition, written often with many abbreviations. What is more, sometimes only excerpts from constitutions were published on local initiative (Frederiksen, 1965, 195).

Another passage of Flavius Josephus (*Antiquitates* 14,319) informs that Roman Emperors were also availing themselves of the Greek publication system, including their edicts, in both linguistic versions, in the written records called *demosia grammata*.

The edicts were published in the Eastern part of the Empire in Greek. An interesting example is provided by five edicts of Augustus to the Cyrenians, dating back to the years 7-4 B.C. Documents were discovered in 1926 engraved in a marble pillar at the agora of Cyrenes. The Greek inscription reports edicts issued in different years. Although published together they regard various topics, such as the judgments and judges in the capital cases, in particular about the procedure for their election. One of the edicts is related to the criminal cases against Aulus Stlaccius Maximus accused of having removed statues from public places. Others include dispositions about the immunities for the inhabitants with Roman

citizenship. In the last enactment Emperor makes present to the Cyrenians the *senatus consultum Calvisianum* on *pecuniis repetundis* regarding responsibility of provincial magistrates for abuses. All edicts were entirely written in Greek and demonstrate the interest of Augustus for the relation between the local inhabitants and the power center.

Another example of a Greek edict is the disposition of Augustus establishing penalties for the violation of burial places. The inscription on a marble slab with the heading *Διάταγμα Καίσαρος* is most probably coming from Nazareth in Galilee (Zulueta, 1932, 196). The language of the text suggests that the original document was redacted in Latin, whereas the Greek inscription is a translation. It is particularly evident looking at the legal terminology used in the document where the expression *dolo malo* was translated as *δὸλῳ πονηρῶ* (line 10) and *capitis iudicio* as *κεφαλῆς κατὰκριτον* (line 11). It was suggested in the literature that the author of the Greek translation was the historian and philosopher Nicolaus of Damascus who was close both to Augustus and to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee (Markowski, 1935, 73).

Even if originally written in Latin edicts were published in the language of the community to which they were directed.

The two kinds of imperial rescripts, *epistulae* and *subscriptiones*, not only have different form and publication method but also the language preference for both is different. The *epistulae* could have been published by the receiver, if he was a magistrate, or must have been published by him if it was ordered by the Emperor. The division of two departments for Greek letters on the one hand and for the Latin letters on the other hand suggests that *epistulae* directed to the Greek speaking addressees would be also written in this language and indeed we find plenty of epistles written in Greek. Many documents demonstrate, however, that this was not always the case.

An interesting example is the rescript of Hadrian on the Epicurean School in Athens from 121 A.D. in which the Emperor gives a privilege to the president of the School, Poppilius Theotimus, to write in Greek the provisions of his last will regarding his succession at the presidency of the school and the right to name successor from the foreigners. The rescript written and published in Latin constitutes a last segment of a bilingual inscription composed of 4 parts. The first text, not preserved, was certainly written in Greek, second was the letter of Plotina, to the Emperor Hadrian written in Latin, containing invocation of privileges in the name of the Epicurean School, subsequently the letter of Plotina, written in Greek to the Athenian School followed by the Latin rescript.

Similarly, the same Emperor, in a letter (*epistula*) from August 119 A.D. (published in FIRA, vol. I, p. 428), has granted inheritance right (*bonorum possessio as cognati*) to the sons of the soldiers and veterans that were born during their military service, for it was not allowed for the soldiers to conclude valid marriages during their military service. In the first line of the document it is mentioned that the Greek version is a copy translated from the Latin original. Such habit is confirmed by Eusebius of Cesarea, who mentions in his *Historia ecclesiastica* (IV 8-9) a Latin rescript of Hadrian directed to Minucius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia, in a reaction to an *epistula* written by the governor Serennius Granianus in the name of the Christians. The rescript, confirming the rule that no one should be condemned without the previous trial, was translated into Greek only later by Eusebius for

the purpose of publication.

It seems however that Greek could have been exceptionally, used also as the original language of the rescript. As attested by the second century jurist Volusius Maecianus, Emperor Antoninus Pius in a Greek constitution has received into the Roman legal system the Rhodian law of maritime jettison (D.8.3.16 Call. 3 de cogn.; D.14.2.9 Maec. ex l. Rhod). Maecianus, an advisor of Antoninus Antoninus Pius and prefect of Egypt in the last years of this Emperors reign, is referring to the reply of the Emperor to a claim of Eudaimonos from Nicomedeia. The latter has suffered damages as consequence of the shipwreck in Italy. Together with his companions Eudaimonos was a victim of a robbery committed by the public servants from Cycladic islands. The text so far is inconsistent, for it is difficult to imagine how could the shipwreck in Italy be robbed by the public servants from Cycladic islands. Important is however the reply of the Emperor stating that on the sea rules the Rhodian law on jettison and the case should be judged according to it. He mentions that a similar reply was already given in analogous case by Augustus.

The case of Eudaimonos is rather a robbery of the goods from a shipwreck and not a maritime jettison, therefore according to Stanisław Płodzień (1961, 31) it should be related to another Latin rescript of Antoninus Pius regarding robbery of a shipwreck reported by Paulus in his *libri ad edictum* (D.47.9.4.1). In such case the Emperor would be again replying in Latin to a Greek petition.

This documents suggest that notwithstanding the publication of some epistulae in Greek and the existence of the department *ab epistulis Graecis* still a majority of rescripts directed to the Greek speaking parties in the East were written in Latin. There was however a possibility to get the official Greek translation.

The other kind of imperial rescripts, subscriptiones, contains replies written under a formal petition (*libellus*) which was to be delivered personally by the petitioner or by his delegate to the hands of the magistrate. It can be presumed from the circumstance that, differently from epistulae, they don't have the address at the backside. The written answer was sealed with Emperors seal and handed directly to the petitioner or his delegate.

In Egypt the petitions were handed down to the praefect of the province and through him to the Emperor, when they were returning with the reply they were glued together in one roll, called in Greek *συνκολλήσιμον*, collecting and numbering *libelli* from the entire year. The collections were published together by the praefectus in Alexandria. Hadrian introduced the publication through a publicly posted notice *propositio* (Wilcken, 1920, 12). A private copy from such collections of published rescripts (*ex libro libellorum rescriptorum et propositorum*) could have been obtained, as was for example in the case of the petition of the Skaptoparenians to Gordian from the year 238 (published by G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, vol. IV, Sofia, 1966, n. 2236).

Also in case of subscriptions there are examples of replies in Latin to petitions written in Greek. Such a bilingual correspondence took place between the collegium *paenistarum* of Rome and the Emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla concerning permission for the restoration of a building (IGUR 35). The *libelli* of the *paenistae* are written in Greek, while the Emperor's subscriptions are in Latin. It might be due to the fact that the petitions belonged to the Western part of the Empire, but there are also examples of the Latin

subscriptions from the East. For example the rescript of Antoninus Pius on games from the year 139 is a reply in Latin to a Greek request coming from Smyrna (CIL III 411). The petitioner could however obtain a Greek translation of the Latin Subscriptions. An example of it can be found in a papyrus from circa 150 (P.Harr 67) in which it is mentioned at the column II line 11 that the Greek subscription is a translation from Latin.

Notwithstanding the fact that probably the subscriptions were mostly written Latin, which corresponds to the fact that there was no department *libellis Graecis* to match the department *ab epistulis Graecis*, we find also in the documents numerous Greek subscriptions. Callistratus, a jurist of the severian times, mentions in his book *de cognitionibus* (D.50.6.6.2) a Greek rescript of Publius Helvius Pertinax directed to Silvius Candidus, in which the latter is freed from some taxes and duties as privilege for having 17 sons.

Most of known Greek subscriptions are related to the presence of Severus and Caracalla in Alexandria in A.D. 200. The copies of rescripts posted on the 14 of March 200 in the Stoa of the Gymnasium of Alexandria preserved on the papyrus (P.Col. 123) carry the date indicated according to the Egyptian calendar. Since the imperial office would use rather dating by consuls, according to the Roman calendar, Wilcken (1920, 21) has argued that the documents constitute copies translated from Latin originals for the publication in Alexandria and the date included is the publication date. This would mean that the language of the subscriptions was Latin, but only in case of the publication in Alexandria or a request of a copy a Greek translation would be made.

Looking at the material at our disposal there cannot be identified a fixed pattern for the language choice. It seems that, although questions and petitions to the authorities could have been formulated in Greek, for drafting different types of the constitutions Latin was the most commonly used language. Such a hypothesis is corroborated by the circumstance that a major part of the preserved Greek documents constitute the translations. According to Fergus Millar (1992, 242) the Greek letters were sent only to Greek cities and provincial assemblies, but not to individuals.

On the one hand it can be observed that Greek translations were provided for publication of constitutions directed to communities where Latin was not commonly known, if the initiative of communicating was at the side of the imperial chancellery. On the other hand the replies to individuals, were usually given in Latin even if the petition was in Greek, whereas the translation could have been obtained on the request of the interested party.

### 3. Translation techniques

The tradition of bilingual correspondence of Roman offices with provincial governors started already in the Republic. The language of these translations, formed already during the II century B.C., remained unchanged until the times of the Empire. The translation technique was called word for word (*verbum e verbo*) as distinct from that of *sensum de sensu* and consisted in giving for each word of the original text exactly one corresponding

word in the translation. Moreover, different terms have been translated differently. The accurate correspondence of both texts sometimes made the Greek version incomprehensible, particularly if the Latin idiomatic expressions were translated (Sherk, 1969, 7). In spite of the criticisms of this translation technique by authors like Cicero (*De finibus* 3.15) and Horace (*Ars poetica* 133) it was broadly used in official correspondence and for didactic purposes. It has to be noticed that consequent use of this translation technique in the official documents constitutes a difference with private bilingual inscriptions where the Greek text does not always correspond to the Latin (Zilken, 1909).

Furthermore, all official Roman texts were redacted in koinhé and characterized by a high degree of fidelity to the Latin text. Sometimes technical Latin terms are not translated, but simply transliterated (Fritz Schulz, 1961, 416). The comparison of different bilingual documents demonstrates great uniformity of Greek translations in phraseology and vocabulary, in spite of the fact that the texts span a period of over two hundred years and were found in different parts of Greece, Asia Minor and Italy (Sherk, 1969, 13). Their uniformity despite such a geographical variety indicates that the translations were all made in the same place. This stylistic uniformity could have been achieved only if the translation of official texts was made by a central agency. It is most probable that such an agency was not operating in Greece, because the translations contain many expressions extraneous to the Greek language. They were probably translated in Rome, by the native speakers of Latin. Regarding the propagandistic document of the Augustean period *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Kaibel concluded in his detailed analysis that its Greek version was written by a native speaker of Latin (Mommsen, 1883a). Another example confirming such practices for the late republican period is the bilingual *senatus consultum*, from the 78 B.C., granting privileges to the captains of Greek ships Asclepiades Clazomenius and his partners Polystratus et Meniscus for help given Rome in the times of the Social War. The text was found in two versions, Latin and Greek, at the Capitol in Rome. Also, the effort to preserve the original Latin construction of the phrase proves that the translations are owed to official scribes.

Taking into account vast production of imperial constitutions and the fact that the drafting language was Latin, it has to be stated that only a small part of imperial enactments was translated into Greek. However the task to explain Roman legal institutions and administrative system in foreign language was difficult, as affirms the later classical jurist Modestinus in the preface of his Greek treatise *de excusationibus* (D.27.1.1.1). There was no terminology in Greek to describe all institutions of Roman public and private law. There were three ways individualized already by Paulus Viereck (1888) and David Magie (1905) in which Greek terms for Roman institutions were created:

1. The method *per comparationem* was based on the use of the Greek legal terminology and consisted in giving to a new Roman institution a name of corresponding Greek one for example *quaestor* = *ταμίης*. A consequent use of the term was fixing its new technical meaning. In the Republic almost all Latin terms were translated into Greek through comparison with Greek institutions. So for example in all documents *populus* was translated as *δῆμος*. But it was used in a Greek way, so that we never see the exact translation of Latin expression *populus Romanus* which would be *ὁ δῆμος Ῥωμαῖος*, but always *ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ῥωμαίων* or *ὁ δῆμος τῶν Ῥωμαίων*. Similarly the Latin word *senatum*

was not translated as ἡ βουλή which indicates the highest council in most of Greek poleis, but always as ἡ σύγκλητος. This term was probably copied by Romans from Magna Graecia, where it was used to indicate the senate. So that if in one text is mentioned the Roman senate and the senates of other nations the first one would be consequently indicated as σύγκλητος whereas other as βουλή.

2. The method *per translationem* consisted in explaining Latin terms by a descriptive Greek word of similar meaning. For the Roman institutions that didn't have any correspondent Greek one there was a necessity to explain their meaning with descriptive terms which after a long use created a strict terminology referring to Roman institutions, for example: *interrex* = μεσοβασιλεύς; *quaestor* = ζητητής. In this way the indication of  *censor* as τιμητής was created because the Latin verb *censere* corresponds to Greek τιμᾶν. Similarly for the Roman *praefectus* was created the Greek term ἑπαρχος, even if there was no Greek magistrate with this name, because the verb *praesidere* corresponds to the verb ἐπάρχειν.

3. The method *per transcriptionem* consisted in transcribing Latin words in Greek characters. It was used if there was no possibility to use one of the former two methods, or the author didn't know corresponding Greek word, for example: *augur* = αὐγούρ; *dictator* = δικτάτωρ; *quaestor* = κυαίστωρ; *praetor urbanus* = πραιτώρ οὐρβανός; *praetor tutelarius* = πραιτώρ τουτελάριος.

These three ways of translating Latin legal terms into Greek are known already in the official documents of the II century B.C. The terminology elaborated in the republican times was consistently in use through the Empire.

## 4. Conclusions

Creating new terminology, in particular through transliteration, could not lead to the achievement of the desired level of communication. New legal terms, even if written in Greek characters, could not be understood by the addressees of the norm not familiar with Roman law. However consequent use of the centrally created terminology over centuries has built a Greek phraseology relative to Roman legal and administrative institutes.

The Greek versions of imperial constitutions were redacted by a central agency probably in order to prevent misleading or divergent translations, which was certainly essential with regard to the constitutions addressed to communities. Moreover the fact that the number of known Greek constitutions is rather decreasing with time than increasing reflects, according to some scholars (Dell'Oro, 1972, 755) the necessity of stressing the unity of the Empire through linguistic uniformity. This would have been a reaction to separatist tendencies, which had not yet made themselves felt during the Antonine age, most open to the Greek language legislation (Bürge, 1995, 729).

The growing linguistic and cultural dualism was seen as a threat to the unity of the empire. The tendencies to fight against it are seen mostly in the times of *dominat*, with the increasing centralisation of power. It is to be observed in the language of the constitutions of Diocletian (Zilliaccus, 1935, 22). Still Constantine for official purposes was using

exclusively Latin, which is attested by Eusebius of Cesarea (*Vita Constantini* 3.13; 2.23; 2.32), who reports that during the council of Nice the Emperor would address the Church fathers exclusively in Latin.

Roman authorities did not have any particularly efficient system of normative communication in the multilingual empire. Vast equality of different languages was seen as a threat for the political uniformity and therefore Latin remained not only the official language, but also the language of legislation. Greek, the language of the educated elites, was used for legal communication mainly in case of general regulations. The aim of the translation was to reach broader audience. It has to be underlined, however, that a normative communication in Greek was inhibited not only by the difficulties in translating Latin legal terminology, but also by the level of alphabetization. The target group of the constitutions published in Greek were the educated provincial elites.

Centrally organised translation system helped to prevent abuses of the provincial authorities, which otherwise could manipulate the translation. A clear example gives one of the augustean edicts to the Cireneans summarising in Greek a *senatus consultum* regulating the responsibility of magistrates in case of abuses committed against the provincials.

Translation techniques were not perfect, but the centralised translation system and consequent use of terminology over centuries helped to adapt Greek language for the purposes of Roman legislator creating new technical vocabulary.

## 5. References

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