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**NORMS AND HABITUS AS PARAMETERS IN THE PRODUCTION OF FOUR GREEK
TRANSLATIONS OF *HAMLET***

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Abstract

During the recent few years, there has been growing interest in the direction of introducing more sociologically minded concerns in Translation Studies. This thesis attempts to engage in the academic debate for the formation of a translatorial sociology, employing Bourdieu's sociology and mainly his notion of *habitus*, which is a system of dispositions embodied in the agents through their social inculcation to a degree that they are not only guided to think in a particular manner, but also to act accordingly.

More concretely, the thesis explores the influence of norms and *habitus* on the translators' choices, norms in Toury's sense being regularities of translation behaviour within a specific socio-linguistic situation. The study includes four Greek translations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that span the greatest part of the 20th century, namely those of Angelos Vlahos (1904), Konstantinos Theotokis (1916), Vassilis Rotas (1937), and Yorgos Himonas (1988). The thesis aspires at contributing in opening the discussion in the direction of the much needed chartering of the translation history of Greece in general and the translation of Shakespeare in particular.

Each translator's chapter comprises a macro- and a microlevel subchapter. The macrolevel analysis attempts to outline the period within which each translation took place, the translators' personal trajectories that account for their personal *habitus* and the reception of their original work as well as their translations. Claims are triangulated by means of reception evidence in the form of editors' notes, the translators' own belief statements, their Prefaces to the play, critical reactions to the translations and their stagings, as well as the number of re-publications or re-stagings they met with.

In the microlevel analysis, causation as to the translators' choices is aimed at, under the light of the previous analytical part, in order to see whether recurrent translational choices can be accounted for by a translator's personal *habitus* instead of being viewed as idiosyncratic stylistic choices. More concretely, the thesis aims to show that the four translators of the case study have many a time opted for translation choices that ran counter to the dominant practices of the time, either retrogressively (Vlahos) or innovatively (Theotokis, Rotas, Himonas) in accordance to what they considered to be the proper way to translate. The hypothesis on which the study is founded is that translators definitely take into consideration the norms of their time, but in effect translate either in accordance with them or flouting them, depending on what their personal *habitus* dictates, in other words, what they consider as appropriate translational practice. It is claimed that norms can account for the horizon of expectations of the receptive end of the process, but cannot determine the translation practice on the productive end. Depending on a series of social, historical, aesthetic parameters, an innovative translational practice (*heterodoxy*) may prove to be felicitous and take up primary position in the norm, as was the case with Rotas and Himonas, or may be sanctioned, as was the case with Vlahos and Theotokis.

More concretely, Angelos Vlahos rendered *Hamlet* in accordance with his neoclassical aesthetic principles and in the purist form of the language (*katharevousa*), both of which had been the norm in the 19th century. In an effort to enrich the language, Konstantinos Theotokis opted for rendering the play in dialect and acculturate it to present it as if it were written by and for his compatriots from his native island of Corfu, which again was outside the norm and led to its not being published for more than sixty years. Contrarily, Vassilis Rotas rendered *Hamlet* almost word-for-word in a more standard, though affected *demotiki*. The need for Shakespeare in *demotiki* for the page and the stage accounted for tremendous success that Rotas' renderings met with, so that they became the most re-published and staged versions for more than half a century. By the late 1980s, when Rotas' translation had become outdated, Himonas challenged Rotas' rendering with his own postmodern translation of *Hamlet*, in which the focus of interest was not the faithfulness to the surface structure, but to what he himself called the *excavation* of the drama's essence, adding in effect his own interpretation and personal style to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Unlike Theotokis, Himonas' innovative motion became tremendously successful from the minute it was written and staged, resulting in a shift in the norm for the translation of Shakespeare.

All in all, the present thesis aims at substantiating the usefulness of the notion of *habitus* for dealing with patterns of translation practice and especially when these patterns deviate from the norm. It is claimed that whereas norms are invaluable tools to account for the fate of the target text (TT) on all levels of its reception, from its commissioning to its distribution, *habitus* can be an illuminating explanatory tool as to the causation behind the translator's choices on the stage of production regardless of the TT's fate on the level of reception. *Habitus* can also be invaluable for accounting for microlevel translation choices which would otherwise be considered random or plain idiosyncratic. Finally, the thesis aspires at making the practicing translator and translator trainer more sensitive to the causation behind microlevel choices, so that future translators may make such choices in a more conscious and consistent manner.