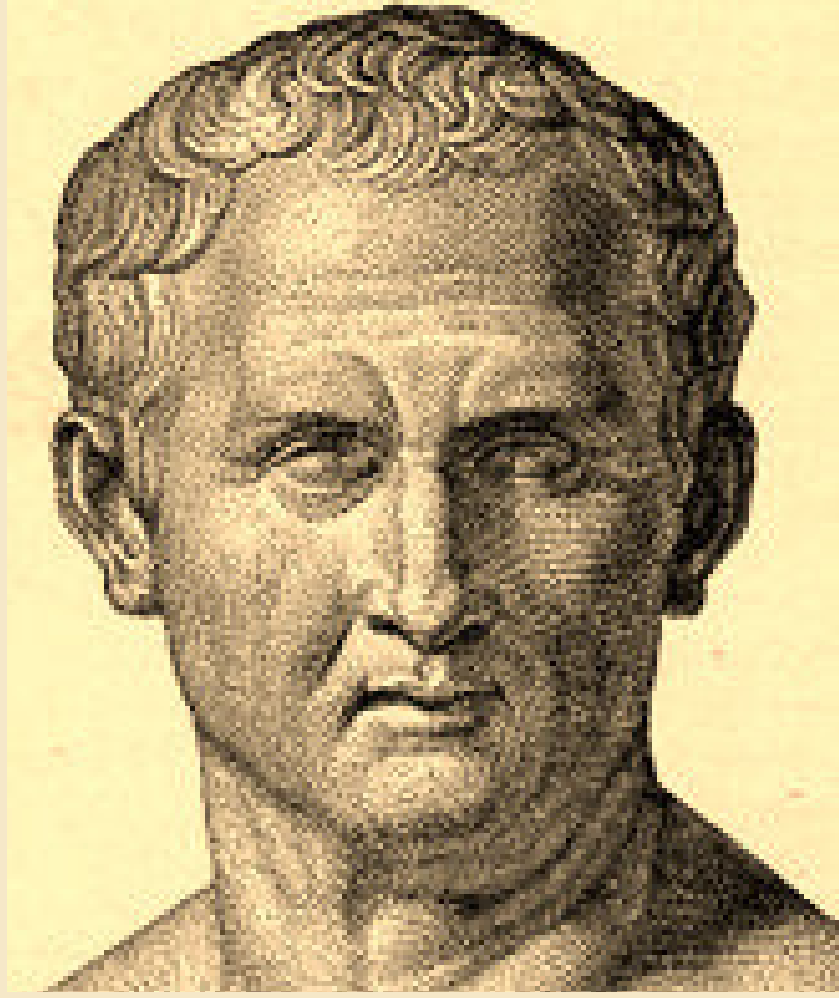


A Roman Statesman, Writer, and Translator: Marcus Tullius Cicero

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)



Marcus Tullius Cicero was a Roman statesman, lawyer, philosopher, and writer. Cicero's philosophical contributions had a significant impact on Western thought. In addition to his own writings, he translated many Greek works into Latin. He played an important role in conveying Greek ideas to the Roman World. Thanks to Rome's vast territory, Cicero's Greek translations and ideas could spread much faster and deeply influenced a variety of societies.

He was highly educated and studied rhetoric and politics leading to a rapid rise in Rome. In his philosophical writings, Cicero focused on the topics of ethics, politics, and law. Cicero was also a translator.

Cicero's earliest literary translation was an astronomical poem "Phaenomena" by Aratus of Soli into Latin hexameters. He also translated Plato's *Protagoras* and *Timaeus* into Latin. These translations were highly regarded and had a significant influence on the development of Latin literature.

Cicero's legacy in translation has never been limited to linguistic boundaries. He portrayed translation as a contribution to the intellectual enrichment of society. His commitment to introducing transcendent intellects like Plato and Aristotle to his fellow countrymen reflects his belief in the societal benefits of translating profound ideas.

As a translator, Cicero created different Latin equivalents for Greek philosophical and rhetorical terms such as *qualitas*, *comprehensio*, and *individuum*. Cicero developed his own style in his translations. Furthermore, he included the justifications for his translations upon encountering complex or unfamiliar terms to Latin readers.

Another aspect of Cicero's translations was to explain Greek ideas to the Roman people as clearly as possible. In this respect, it also resembles today's understanding of translation based on nationalist foundations. In Cicero's eyes, translation has turned into an action done for the people, in the language of the people. The fact that he himself was a public figure and played a role in the Roman state may have supported these ideas of "working for the benefit of society".

Even though he was aware of the challenges posed by the Greek language's advantageous position, he dedicated himself to conveying the message with clarity and natural expression in translation. As another strategy, Cicero implemented code-switching technique as well.

This outstanding aspect of Cicero's translations was his emphasis on conveying the message rather than word-to-word translation. This approach, focusing on "*historiarum cognitio*" rather than a strict verbatim translation, laid the groundwork for what could be considered the early steps in the "free translation" or "semantic translation" tradition.

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