Cicero’s Translation of Sophocles’ Trachiniae 1046-1102
in Tusc.Disp. 2.VIII.20-IX.22

Cicero, discussing the issue of the poetic quotations insists on the need of studiose uti poetis (Tusc.Disp. 2.XI.26: studiose equidem utor nostris poetis). This particular way of using passages from the Latin poets or Cicero’s own versions from Greek, corresponds to Socrates’ practice of ἐπάγεσθαι τοὺς ποιητὰς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις (Pl. Prot. 347e3-7: οὗς (i.e. the poets) οὕτε ἀνεφέσθαι οἶδ' ὑπὲρ τῶν λέγουσιν, ἐπαγόμενοι τε αὐτῶν οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις οἱ μὲν ταῦτα φασιν τὸν ποιητήν νοεῖν, οἳ δ' ἔτερα, περὶ πράγματος διαλέγομενου δ’ ἀδυνατοῦσι ἐξελέγξαι). Given the fact that “toute citation est en même temps une interprétation” (Lukács) the Sophoclean passage from the Trachiniae seems to have been adapted to the context in which it appears, i.e. the Stoic context of the Tusc.Disp. in special reference to the particular issue of the second book, namely the dolor, the Roman context namely the Roman and Stoic conception of Heracles, and the literary context of the Roman tragic poetry.

21. Αυτὴ τὴν τάση πολιτογράφησις επισημαίνει καὶ ο Τρογλυς, δ.π., σ. 104 αναφορικά με τὴν απόδοσιν του στίχου 1102 απὸ τὸν Κικέρωνα, όπου η αναφορά σε μια πρακτική ἄγνωσιν στοὺς Ρωμαίους (τροπαῖα στήσαι) αντικαθίσταται απὸ μία οικεία στοὺς Ρωμαίους εικόνα.
The Ciceronian version of Sophocles, Trachiniae 1046-1102 perhaps illustrates what in de nat. d. I.41 Cicero calls *accomodare*, namely the well-known Stoic practice of maintaining control over the text.

The results of our comparison of the Ciceronian translation with the original text can be summarized in three theses: 1) there is a reduction in the outlining of the passion (Heraclès' unrestrained emotions are leveled out). This particular technique of censorship has been approved by the stoicism and by the Roman poetic tradition (cf. Tusc. Disp. 2.XXI.48-50 *Pacuvius hoc melius quam Sophocles: The Romans rebuked Sophocles as the exponent of unrestrained emotion which Roman *decorum* forbade). 2) The mistranslations detected in lines 1-2 have special point; in view of Cicero's attachment to the contextual consistency lines 1-2 through significant verbal echoes *[O multa dictu gravia, perpessu aspera, / quae corpore exanclata atque animo pertuli! Cf. Si fortis est in perferendo... (dolor) tristis enim res est sine dubio, aspera, amara, inimicina naturae, ad patiendum tolerandumque difficilis (Tusc. Disp. 2.VII.18) and dolor autem motus asper in corpore alienus a sensibus (Tusc. Disp. 2.XV.35)]* suggest the spiritual (animo) as well as the physical powers (corpore) of endurance and dolor as a complementary virtue of labor. 3) Cicero's version is not so much a translation as an adaptation in which Roman allusions are introduced; words such as *exanclato, vaecors, pestis, abstraho, eviscero* are borrowings from earlier Latin tragic poets. By rendering the periphrasis ἄνοιξις Διός with the expression *Junoīs implacabilis terror* Cicero emphasizes Juno's role as the personal enemy of Heraclès, which is due to the Roman mythological tradition of the hero persecuted by the relentless wrath of harsh Juno.

To summarize: Cicero's translation is undoubtedly a work with many virtues since it preserves some of the poetical diction and the dramatic effect of the original, although widely romanized according to the acceptable criteria for literary translation [*ne quo ornamento in hoc genere disputationis careret Latina oratio (Tusc. Disp. 2.XI.26)*].