

## TRANSLATIONS IN THESES POLICY

Many SCD research students will inevitably discuss the biblical texts in their original languages or, alternatively, analyse the non-biblical primary sources of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean world as backdrop to the biblical narratives. Unless students have foundational skills in semantics and philology, including the scholarly conventions and methodologies associated with these disciplines, they will be unlikely to succeed in higher degree studies.

Similar issues pertain to theses that investigate secondary sources in a range of languages. Eminent modern scholars who write in languages other than English may well require translation, either in part or whole, in SCD theses engaging with the writings of these scholars. Moreover, in order to achieve a fair and transparent result in an examination, at least one examiner conversant with the original language of the thinker's writings would be beneficial in the examination process.

In what follows, both language contexts, ancient and modern, will be discussed, with a view to establishing SCD policy regarding translations in theses and how their examination should be conducted.

### 1. Ancient /Ecclesiastical Languages and Primary Textual Evidence

With the decline of ancient language studies in universities, it is important that the SCD ensures that the language skills of theological students in their thesis work reflects as accurately as possible the original meaning of the primary texts they are discussing. Further, they should employ the correct citation, critical apparatus and abbreviation conventions of the academic discipline in which they are working.

The SCD proposes the following procedures so that the translations of ancient primary are handled with integrity.

1. The SCD Research Committee needs to determine, at the time of a student's admission to the degree, that the thesis writer's level of competence in the ancient language is more than sufficient for translating the primary evidence.
2. Ancient literary and documentary texts, where cited in the original, must have the correct accents.
3. Ancient literary texts, where cited in English translation,
  - a. must have, as a footnote at the end of the Introduction, a brief statement stipulating the English translation series used throughout the thesis (e.g. Loeb Classical Library);
  - b. must use accurately the textual citation system of the English translation series employed.
4. Ancient documentary texts (papyri, inscriptions, ostraka, gems etc.), where cited in English translation,
  - a. should cite the source of the translation in a footnote. E.g. Translated by R.K. Sherk (ed. and tr.), *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988);
  - b. should carefully reproduce the critical apparatus and editorial conventions of the discipline (e.g. papyri, inscriptions) as appropriate for the translation.
5. Reputable academic translations should be used and checked against the ancient language original where necessary for the argument of the thesis.

6. Correct referencing of the ancient literary and documentary texts themselves should be employed, using the abbreviation conventions of
  - a. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996);
  - b. P.H. Alexander (*et al.*, ed.), *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999);
  - c. J.F. Oates (*et al.*, ed.), *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*. For the web edition, see <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>;
  - d. G.H.R. Horsley and J.A. Lee. 'A Preliminary Checklist of Abbreviations of Greek Epigraphic Volumes', *Epigraphica* 66 (1994): 129-170;
  - e. Further abbreviations can be found in *L'Année philologique* (journals), LSJ (epigraphic and ancient author conventions), BAGD and Lampe (biblical and patristic works).
7. Where a student diverges at any point from a published translation of an ancient literary or documentary text, this ought to be indicated in a footnote. E.g. (translation adapted). If the adaptation is substantial, then a brief explanation of the reason for the change should be offered.
8. Where a student provides her/his translation of the literary or documentary text in the main text or a footnote, this should be indicated in a footnote. E.g. (my translation).
9. Where a student provides an extensive translation of an ancient text (with a commentary, for example, or placed in an Appendix), both the English translation and original text should be provided.
10. At least one or two of the thesis markers should have a strong competence in the ancient language translated in the thesis so that they can assess the accuracy of the translation in their examination of the text. It is also assumed that the Primary Supervisor and Associate Supervisor have also checked carefully the candidate's translation before submission of the thesis.

## 2. Modern Language Translations of Primary Textual Evidence

In some theses, there will be occasions where students use primary textual evidence that is found in modern languages other than English for their thesis. Normally this will not be an issue where the language is well known in the world of international scholarship (e.g. French, German, or Italian), but there will be modern languages translated by students that are less well known. It is imperative to ensure that the student translations are accurate reflections of the original. The SCD proposes the following procedures so that the translations of primary textual evidence in modern languages other than English are handled with integrity.

1. The SCD Research Committee needs to determine, at the time of a student's admission to the degree, that the thesis writer's level of competence in the modern language is more than sufficient for translating the primary evidence for the thesis.
2. When it evaluates a proposal by a candidate for HDR admission, Research Committee will take into account the skills that the candidate and all prospective supervisors have in the ancient and/or modern languages needed for satisfactory completion of the project.
3. Where a student provides an extensive translation of a modern language text other than English (with a commentary, for example, or placed in an Appendix), both the English translation and the original text should be provided.
4. Correct referencing, academic conventions and critical apparatus appropriate to the modern language text should be employed where required by the student.

5. At least one or two of the thesis markers should have a strong competence in the modern language translated in the thesis so that they can assess the accuracy of the translation in their examination of the text.

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<b>Last Approval (Date)</b>	Academic Board (7 April 2014)
<b>Date for Review</b>	April 2019
<b>Previous Approval(s)</b>	
<b>Minor Amendments from 1 January 2017</b>	