

Heidegger and the Problem of Translating the Greek Beginning

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Abstract This article addresses the problem of translation in Heidegger based on the concept of beginning. Depending on how the beginning is thought of, the meaning of translation changes decisively. Thus, starting with a clarification of the concept of beginning within 'being-historical thinking', which is often absent from the debate on translation in Heidegger, the groundlessness of a Greek beginning understood as a pure, extra-historical and unspeakable origin, which would therefore determine translation as an inevitable failure, is shown. From the 'spatio-temporal structure of the beginning' opened up by translation – thus from Heidegger's premises – a downgrading of the priority of the Greeks is also suggested, regaining the possibility of a 'Latin beginning'.

Keywords Heidegger. Translation. Anfang. Time-Space. Beiträge.

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Edizioni
Ca' Foscari

Peer review

Submitted 2022-11-05
Accepted 2022-09-01
Published 2023-01-22

Open access

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Citation Cavazza, M. (2022). "Heidegger and the Problem of Translating the Greek Beginning". *JoLMA. The Journal for the Philosophy of Language, Mind and the Arts*, 3(2), 181-212.

DOI [10.30687/JoLma/2723-9640/2022/02/003](https://doi.org/10.30687/JoLma/2723-9640/2022/02/003)

1 Reframing the Problem of Translation in Heidegger's Thinking

The translation is perhaps one of the most heated topics in contemporary Heidegger research. Therefore, given the liveliness of the debate still ongoing, the intention here is not to take stock of translation studies in Heidegger, but rather to deepen a point that has perhaps remained in the shadows in this debate, however important it is: the meaning of the Greek beginning in Heidegger's thinking. The inescapable connection between translation and beginning will be shown, and on this basis, the thesis of the inevitable failure of translation for Heidegger – recently made a comeback – will be both scaled-down and a new way of looking at Heidegger's translation will be proposed, one that can also translate Heidegger himself and open him up to other perspectives.

From the occurrences of the theme of translation in Heidegger's works,¹ we know that the topic is dealt with primarily about the (im)possibility of translating Greek thought, and then concerns the meaning and possibility of translation in general. It seems that it is Heidegger's harsh judgement of Latin translations of Greek that points to the impossibility of translation (cf. Chiereghin 1993, 102-3). One need only think of the controversial rendition of *energeia* with *actus*, just to cite the most emblematic and even 'epochal' example. The Latin translation of *energeia* marked a profound discontinuity in the history of thought, as Heidegger emphatically states: "with one blow the Greek world was toppled [*verschüttet*]" (Heidegger 1976, 286; Eng. transl. 218). According to Heidegger, *actus* is the word of a thought, the Roman one, rooted in an experience fundamentally different from the Greek one. *Energieia*, "standing-in-the-work in the sense of presencing into the appearance", refers to the unveiling movement that, according to Heidegger, characterises *physis* and *aletheia* too, whereas *actus* severed the link with this dimension, referring rather to action and effects.²

The profound rupture between the Greek and Roman worlds thus depicts a panorama in which cultures are separated by abysmally different fundamental experiences, of which there is apparently no translation. Heidegger himself declares that "all translations are poor, only more or less so" (Heidegger 1979, 45; Eng. transl. 38) and "one can no more translate thought than one can translate a poem. At

¹ Heidegger's best-known passages on translation are collected and commented on by Giometti 1995 and Nardelli 2021.

² For the importance of the notion of *energeia* in Heidegger's thought and its specificity within the Greek experience of being, see Volpi 1990. Note that the translation of *energeia* here cited is by Heidegger.

best, one can paraphrase it" (Heidegger 2000a, 680; Eng. transl. 63). Already here it is possible to detect the beginning/translation nexus. Greek is in fact beginning both in the sense of a source text from which one translates and in the sense of the beginning of a story within which those who come after are situated in the wake of those who come before. If this beginning is then thought of as irreducible, its translation/transmission can only be imperfect, if not impossible. But is this how Heidegger thinks of the beginning - and thus, its translation?

It must be acknowledged that Heidegger himself engages in more than one translation from Greek, and this is not at all for a merely auxiliary purpose. Consider, for instance, the role played by his translations of Aristotle against Aristotelian Thomism (cf. Nardelli 2021, 46). What then distinguishes Heidegger's translations from the Latin ones? Is it perhaps a more faithful adherence to the Greek text? Forcing the issue a bit, one could say that, if this were the case, Heidegger's translations would be 'truer' than the Latin ones insofar as they are more in keeping with their subject matter. They would thus be 'adequate' translations.

However, those familiar with Heidegger would rule out this option from the outset, given Heidegger's long-standing polemic both with the (Latin!) concept of truth in the sense of *adaequatio* and, more generally, with the idea of a "historiographical" (*historisch*) reconstruction as a guarantor of the truth of philosophical discourse.³ How, moreover, outside of metaphor, are we to understand the 'encrustations' that Heidegger's translations remove from the Aristotelian text? Are they perhaps the waste products of a nefarious process, i.e. translation?

In addition to this problem, there is a second, more complex one. Indeed, Heidegger repeatedly emphasises the initial role of the Greeks: with them not only does the history of philosophy begin, but that of the entire West. From this point of view, translation not only traces an insurmountable furrow between the Greek beginning and the Roman world but can go so far as to connote Western history itself as an overall translation of its Greek root. If, moreover, translations are claimed to be impossible and betray the original Greek experience, then the whole history risks being considered "the history of an error" (Heidegger 2009, 139; Eng. transl. 119). But is this the meaning of Heidegger's "oblivion of being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*)?

3 According to Heidegger, reasoning in historiographic terms, e.g. according to the law of cause and effect, is legitimate and correct; the point is that philosophy should not remain confined to the dimension of correctness, because this is not an original dimension. For there to be correctness, there must in fact first be something to which one can measure oneself, and it is precisely to this dimension that Heidegger looks.

Does Heidegger implicitly believe that time, and history, are the site of a progressive corruption of an otherwise perfect beginning – the Greek one? If so, it might then be a good thing for the Greek world to be sheltered from a threatening translation.

What is proposed here is to address these questions precisely from this particular link between translation and the Heideggerian concept of beginning. This approach will make it possible not only to avoid certain inaccuracies, such as the idea of a Greek beginning subsequently corrupted by translation but also to appreciate the specificity of the Heideggerian concept of translation, which, far from being considered simply impossible, is valorised precisely in its initiating capacity. In anticipation, it can be said that Heidegger negatively evaluates only a certain type of translation, namely those that claim to achieve perfect identity with the source text by simply changing the linguistic guise of meanings that are supposed to be in themselves valid and unchangeable. Rather than identity, Heidegger's translation is that which allows for the experience of difference, and it is precisely in the Heideggerian concept of the beginning that the different elements are held together, thus becoming experienceable as such. As will be seen, translation is beginning, both in the sense that translation is the translation of the beginning and in the sense that the beginning is such in translation.

Hitherto, the concept of the beginning has played a marginal role in the debate on translation in Heidegger. By focussing on the Greek character of the expression "Greek beginning", perhaps by emphasising its irreducibility, the properly initiating trait has receded into the background. In this sense, the beginning ends up becoming a mere 'first', the source text of a translation that cannot but accentuate its isolation – an impossible translation. Nevertheless, Heidegger's beginning is far more complex than being a mere first. Moreover, understanding the status that the Greek beginning has in Heidegger's thought is indispensable for deducing the meaning of the translation itself. If it were, for example, a beginning that is radically separated from the course of history, the hypothesis of translation as that which contributes to this caesura would then be supported. If, on the other hand – and this is the case – the beginning emphasises the full historicity of the origin, then one must be particularly cautious in interpreting those passages of Heidegger in which he may seem to seek a dimension beyond translation, somehow pure. Above all, if there is an essential link between the beginning and the translation, then the translation can only be seen as that which brings the origin closer rather than distancing it. It will therefore be a matter of clarifying the meaning of Heidegger's beginning and consequently reading the meaning assumed by the translation of the Greek experience of being. This will make it possible also to shed new light on what is understood as a source text.

One possible reason to explain the lack of attention to the translation/beginning nexus can be found in the fact that while Heidegger mainly discusses translation in his university courses, the concept of beginning belongs to what Heidegger calls “Being-historical thinking” (*seynsgeschichtliches Denken*). As is well known, this thinking has been reserved by Heidegger in the third section of the collection of his works, which include the “unpublished treatises” (*unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen*) on the *Ereignis*. These texts do not explicitly deal with translation, and thus have so far played an ancillary role in the debate on translation in Heidegger. Although there is no common agreement among Heidegger scholars in considering the texts on the history of being as fundamental texts,⁴ in the light of which all others should be read, the very issue of translation can serve as a paradigmatic example of their indispensability.

The question of the translation of the Greek beginning is in fact a case where an issue (translation) is mentioned by Heidegger in a public context (e.g. lectures: cf. Heidegger 1984, 74-6; Eng. transl. 61-3) and always in passing (however dense and valuable these occurrences are), only to be thought again in a different, more collected, and experimental context. The Greeks, the beginning, history, language, identity, difference: these are central themes in the great texts of being-historical thinking, and only by confronting them can we have an appropriate understanding of what the translation of Greek thought means for Heidegger. Furthermore, in these texts the question of translation takes on a deeper nuance than in Heidegger’s lectures, insofar as the question of translation also becomes the one used by Heidegger within his own language, German. In fact, Heidegger does not simply invent new words, nor does he just resort to obsolete ones: his is a real work of translation, where words such as ‘being’, ‘God’, and ‘time’ are kept recognisable and at the same time become foreign words. This type of work on one’s own language, which has been called “intralingual translation” (cf. Schalow 2011), is further evidence of how, in the texts of being-historical thinking, the question of translation is not just a topic, but constantly and capillary part of the experience of thought attempted there. The methodological choice of approaching the problem of translation from the perspective of the beginning, and thus from the texts on the history of being, thus allows access to a deeper level of the question, which cannot be investigated further here but which is a harbinger of many lines of research.⁵

⁴ The debate is recalled for example by Gregorio 2021, 155 and Kovacs 2011, 193. An excellent overview of the update debate, including publications after *Contributions*, is offered by Ardovino, Cesarone 2020.

⁵ Consider, for example, the important section on the lexicon of *Ereignis*, which is particularly interesting considering Heidegger’s aversion to dictionaries (Heidegger 2009, 147-78; Eng. transl. 127-50).

Based on these premises, the second section of this text will briefly clarify what Heidegger means by beginning. Although this is known, it is worth reiterating that for Heidegger the beginning is not a condition of perfection before a decay, as is often understood, even recently. Excluding this conception is crucial to framing the true meaning of Heidegger's translation, because if there is no posthumous corruption of the beginning, one cannot understand translation as one of the main causes of the supposed deterioration of Greek thought.

In the third section, the meaning of Heidegger's beginning will be further explored by discussing two other hypotheses that could undermine the possibility of interpretation. By demonstrating that the beginning Heidegger is talking about is neither extra-historical nor extra-linguistic, the conception of a translation that is impossible because it is addressed to an unattainable dimension will consequently also be rejected. What is impossible is only that translation which claims to coincide with the source text. Therefore, it will be proven that the fruitfulness of the hypothesis of reading translation about the concept of the beginning also and above all consists in being able to place Heidegger's negative statements on translation within the right framework.

In the fourth and final section, an original hypothesis will be attempted. Indeed, the analysis of Heidegger's translation of certain words of the Greek beginning – *physis*, *ousia*, *eon* – brought to light a structure related to how the beginning unfolds and happens. This structure, called "space-time" by Heidegger, can also be applied to Latin terms, such as *veritas* and *ratio*. In this way, it will be proven that the beginning is not necessarily exclusively Greek. Precisely because the beginning is translation and translation is beginning, the beginning is also always in translation, and therefore it is not the specificity of a culture – Greekness – that is essential to it, but rather the space-time structure in which the translation moves. To recognise this is to translate Heidegger's thinking.

2 The Greek Beginning: Dawn or Dusk?

In *Contributions to Philosophy*, the text inaugurating being-historical thinking, the Greek beginning is called "first beginning". The first beginning does not coincide with the history of metaphysics at all, which, in *Contributions* – not without approximations – goes from Plato to Nietzsche (cf. Heidegger 1989, 127; Eng. transl. 89). And yet, the first beginning sums up the fundamental motif of metaphysics, which Heidegger declines in various ways: 1) the experience of being as *physis* (195; 136); 2) the question of "the truth of beings" (die *Wahrheit des Seienden*) (179; 125); 3) the consequent interpretation

of the “being of beings” (*Sein des Seienden*) as “constant presence” (*beständige Anwesenheit*) (191-3; 134-5) based on thought, taken as a leitmotif for the “guiding question” (198; 138-9).

Together these elements constitute that Greek experience of being that would have remained inaccessible to Latin translations. However, it is precisely these fundamental traits that radiate from the beginning to the entire metaphysics, which can thus be summarized in formulas such as “*Übersteigerung des Seienden zur Seiendheit* /surpassing of beings to being-ness” (172; 121). It goes without saying that the Greek beginning does not seem so abysmally separated from metaphysics, and thus from the Latin world as well. Indeed, it is already clear from here how the concept of the beginning is decisive in setting the question of translation: if the beginning contains metaphysics in itself (but we shall see that this is not quite the case), either *Romanitas* is outside metaphysics or their translations are not a betrayal of Greekness, but rather an explication of it.

Perhaps then the boundary between beginning and metaphysics falls within Greekness itself, whereby thinkers such as Parmenides and Heraclitus are characterised by a fundamentally different experience of being from that of Plato and Aristotle. If this is the case, then the translation of the beginning would take place in two stages: an intralingual translation, played out entirely within the Greek language (e.g. from Parmenides to Plato), and an interlingual one, between Greek and Latin.

Indeed, Heidegger seems to lean in this direction from the 1940s onwards, but in some passages from *Contributions* Heidegger even traces the first beginning back to Anaximander, leaving no margin for a Greekness all within the history of metaphysics (232, 424; 164, 299). In this respect, *Contributions* is a rather radical text. In other passages from *Contribution*, *physis* itself is indeed claimed to be *techne* in its essential unfolding (190-1; 133-4) and *aletheia* as well is not presented as something original. *Aletheia* is but “erste Aufleuchten/ the first shining forth” (344; 241), therefore it cannot be confused with Heidegger’s *Lichtung*. In the first beginning, Being (*Seyn*) is thought “als Anwesenheit aus der Anwesenung, die das erste Aufleuchten einer Wesung des Seyns darstellt/as presence from within a presencing which manifests the first flashing of *the one* essential swaying be-ing” (31; 22), whereas *Lichtung* refers directly to *Wesung*, of which it could be said that *Anwesenung* is only a part, a declination. And since *Wesung* is the “*Verweigerung/refusal*” of being (244; 172), Heidegger speaks of “*Lichtung für das Sichverbergen/clearing for self-concealing*”. Here there is nothing to do with the *Entbergung* expressed e.g. in the allegory of the cave and by *aletheia* (cf. Heidegger 1988, 145; Eng. transl. 103), because it is not a question of removing the latent aspect within the experience of truth, but rather of thinking unveiling and concealment together (cf. Zarader 1986, 67).

The question of *aletheia* touches on the fundamental point. If Heidegger decides to translate it with *Unverborgenheit*, ‘unconcealness’, it is not to restore an initial meaning that was lost with the Latin translation into *veritas*. Indeed, if the issue were to somehow return to the *aletheia*, it would be incomprehensible why Heidegger in the *Beiträge* contrasts *aletheia* with the *Lichtung*. The translation of *aletheia* with *Unverborgenheit* serves primarily to distance oneself from the Greeks, rather than to return to them (cf. Zarader 1986, 259). Or, said differently, it may even serve to return to them, where, however, the sense of this return is the one indicated by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*: not recomposing a broken identity, but a “replication” (*Erwiderung*) of possibilities already undertaken (cf. Giometti 1995, 71). Just as *Dasein* opens its “tradition” (*Überlieferung*) to the “quiet force of the possible” (Heidegger 1977a, 521; Eng. transl. 446), translation does not simply restore a meaning, as can be the meaning of *aletheia*, lost with *veritas* and found again with *Unverborgenheit*, but opens up the space of a divergence. In this space, for there to be an actual divergence, the elements of divergence, i.e. *aletheia* and *Unverborgenheit*, are somehow related because one refers to (translates) the other. Yet, this relationship does not resolve itself into a static identity, in which the sense of the Greek word is maintained and perfectly converted into the German one. For if *Unverborgenheit* is to be understood as a replication of *aletheia*, then their relationship becomes the place where it is possible to experience otherness, an alternative. What is this space of divergence that opens up in translation and what does this alternative consist of?

Consider the translation of *ousia*, another keyword of the Greek beginning, with *Anwesenheit*:⁶ by this, Heidegger certainly does not intend to restore the sense of being according to *Anwesenheit*, since it is precisely from the conception of being as presence that Heidegger criticises metaphysics. Nor, still, less, is Heidegger accusing the whole history of metaphysics of failing to think of being in temporal terms: on the contrary, *Contributions* shows that presence – a temporal category – has been fundamental in the interpretation of beingness. By making the tradition say that the meaning of being resides in presence, however, Heidegger then intends to raise the

6 Curiously, Heidegger justifies the translation of *ousia* with *Anwesenheit* on the basis that *ousia* meant, before Aristotle’s technical usage, ‘good’ in the sense in which it is said of a property (in English, the connection sounds rather between ‘reality’ and ‘real estate’). In this sense, *Anwesen* indicates in German the estate (“Bauern- und Hofgut”, Heidegger 1983a, 65; Eng. transl. 64). Beyond the specific issue, it is interesting to note how a translation that could be described as ‘philosophical’ is justified by resorting to the common use of a language: this is unusual for Heidegger who, except dialect, is wary of the everyday dimension of language. Furthermore, the *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* traces the etymology of *Anwesen* back to the German translation of the Latin *adesse*, in the ninth century.

question: why only presence? Similarly, in *aletheia*, why only unconcealment? The sense of replying to the Greek words, made possible by Heidegger's translations, then becomes that of thinking more deeply about those words, that is, of discerning a somewhat broader dimension within which those words are rooted. Specifically, this broader dimension concerns, as far as *aletheia* is concerned, the aforementioned concealment, while as far as *ousia* is concerned, it is a matter of considering the entire horizon of temporality and not just presence.

Without delving further into Heidegger's interpretation of truth and presence, here it is important to focus on the movement of translation and the nature of the space of divergence it opens up. It is about the space of the beginning itself. If the translation of *aletheia* with *Unverborgenheit* conveys with it the possible question of *Verborgenheit*, as its fundamental replication, and if it, therefore, opens up a dimension that is at once broader than the initially Greek one, since it shifts the focus beyond mere unveiling, then the sphere opened up by the translation is an original, initial sphere. Indeed, not only does the unveiling turn out to be something partial concerning the broader chiaro-scuro dynamic of *Lichtung*, but it is Heidegger himself who sees in veiling the original moment of unveiling.

On closer inspection, the replication made possible by the translation contains a complex movement. *Aletheia* is rendered with *Unverborgenheit*, and from their divergence comes *Lichtung* as the origin of both, namely as that which concerns both veiling and unveiling. Therefore, the original dimension is not found at first, as if it coincided with the *aletheia*, but rather at the end, and, precisely, at the end of the process that inevitably passes through translation. It now becomes understandable in what sense Heidegger thinks of the subtle difference between metaphysics and its beginning: the first beginning lies at the end of metaphysics, both because it is only in its final configuration that metaphysics allows itself to be seen in its essence, and because from this perspective its limits are highlighted, allowing a beginning beyond the end of metaphysics.

If then, the beginning lies at the end of metaphysics, there is no Greek beginning that must be restored and preserved from the threat of what happens next. Therefore, translation cannot even be a movement of corruption of Greek words, nor can it be its mere antidote, in the sense of something that removes an iniquity.⁷ From this point of

⁷ In his important volume, Raspitos 2013 clearly rules out the fact that translation for Heidegger has nothing to do with the equivalence of meaning (17). Therefore, the Latin translations of Aristotle cannot be considered deficient because they have nothing to do with Greek experience (23). However, this does not lead him to reconsider the meaning of translation assumed in Heidegger's thought, but rather to exclude the question of translation (25), precisely because it is not a question of translation if there has

view, the caesura does not seem to fall so much between Greekness and Latinity, but rather between the first beginning and what Heidegger calls the other beginning, i.e. the replication granted by the translations of the words of metaphysics (cf. Cattaneo 2017, 33). Although Heidegger does not mention translation referring to the relationship between the two beginnings, we have seen how it plays a fundamental role in opening up a more original dimension of thought. Here, translation has thus not ceased to have the same purpose as when the young Heidegger was translating Aristotle, namely, to enable a deeper and more critical relationship with what is being translated. However, within the framework of being-historical thinking, this original dimension now embraces the whole of Greekness and is defined as the beginning of Western history.

The alternative that translation opens up is thus not a mere variation on the theme, because, as Heidegger says, the other beginning restores its truth to the first (cf. Heidegger 1989, 187; Eng. transl. 131; Chiereghin 1993, 95). But what does this mean? Why, in other words, does *Unverborgenheit* not simply replace *aletheia*, but translate it, i.e. establishes an *Auseinandersetzung* with it, like a reply? Why are *aletheia*, *Unverborgenheit*, and *Lichtung* not simply different words, but divergent words? Is there an analogy between them? This would mean that there is then a further, fundamental meaning. Is it perhaps *Wahrheit*? A first solution might be to simply understand the truth that the other beginning returns to the first in the sense of *Lichtung*: as we have seen, *Lichtung* is in fact more original than *Unverborgenheit*. But to understand why these words are held together, despite being apart and discordant, one must further insist on the sense assumed by the translation: it is in fact this alone that holds them together, thus excluding any kind of analogy.

What kind of movement is there then between *aletheia* and *Lichtung*? If it is not a question of recomposing an identity of meaning, it is not even a question of a simple displacement. Heidegger's *Übersetzung* is not a simple 'translation' (*Übertragung*) into the other beginning, because the passage to the first beginning (*aletheia* → *Unverborgenheit*) prepares for 'a leap', highlighting the traits of metaphysics from which one must jump, to reach the other beginning (*Unverborgenheit* → *Lichtung*). Heidegger seems to argue this passage by looking at the word *Ursprung*, origin, which contains *Sprung*, leap. The

been a progressive emptying of meaning of Greek experience (39). Here, on the other hand, it is not simply a matter of excluding translation in the sense of equivalence, but rather of identifying a new sense of translation and including it in the dynamic of the beginning, which cannot therefore be considered an alienating process. As will be discussed in the fourth section, the point is not Latins' adequate translation of the Greeks, but whether the Latins were talking about the same thing as the Greeks, namely not *physis*, but the beginning and its spatio-temporal structure.

origin/beginning, reached at the culmination of metaphysics through translation, is then what one jumps from, not something to which one returns. It is also for this reason that Heidegger continues to speak of being, rather than abandoning the word 'being' (cf. Fink, Heidegger 1986, 20; Eng. transl. 8) or proposing a new translation of it, as he did for *logos*, *physis*, and *noein* (cf. Gregorio 2021, 135): being is the word that best circumscribes the history from which one must jump (cf. Heidegger 1985a, 103-4; Eng. transl. 19-20).

One can take this consideration by Heidegger on the meaning of origin and articulate it further. The German word *Anfang* already expresses the overall problem of translation in Heidegger because it does not simply mean the beginning of something, in the sense of the first term of a series, nor the act of initiating (cf. Heidegger 1989, 179, 198; Eng. transl. 126, 138; Heidegger 2009, 147; Eng. transl. 127). *Anfang* contains the verb *fangen*, meaning to capture, to trap; the descent of *Anfang* from *fangen* dates back to the ninth century, when the verb *anfangen*, in Old High German *anafāhan*, arose from *fāhan*, the ancient form of *fangen*, attested a century earlier. If the experience of beginning thus refers somehow to that of 'taking', how can we not think of the Latin *principium*, whose *coepere* refers to *cāpere*?⁸ In this vein, 'inception' seems to be a more faithful translation for *Anfang* than 'beginning'. However, in the grasp, there is also the sense of the trap. Is there then a danger, in the beginning, thought of as inception, or is it rather the general idea of the beginning to be dangerous? After all, the idea of a beginning is far more Latin-Christian than Greek.⁹ Perhaps the beginning is a trap, as Latin? Is the Greek beginning already captured by Latin?

This ambiguity is constitutive of the beginning; after all, the function of the first beginning is precisely to indicate the trap of metaphysical thinking. It is definitely not desirable to return to the origin: the origin "consumes" (Heidegger 1984, 156-70; Eng. transl. 125-40; Heidegger 2000b, 146). Therefore, it is out of place to speak of Heidegger's nostalgia for the origin, in which one could have a pure and immediate experience of things (cf. Nardelli 2021, 228).¹⁰ If one returns to it, it is therefore only to skip it. Heidegger expresses this intuition in different ways, which can be summarized in the motto "Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft" (Heidegger 1985a, 91; Eng.

⁸ While in some Latin languages the connection between taking and beginning can be felt in expressions such as the Italian 'prendere inizio', in English a counterpart can be found in 'taking off'.

⁹ Magris 2020, 306 indeed shows how only in Christ is the beginning also *principium*.

¹⁰ Paltrinieri 2020, 371 effectively emphasises how Heidegger is by no means a thinker animated by a nostalgia for the impossible, referring to the specific meaning that repetition takes on in his thought, namely the opening up of possibilities rather than the restoration of the same.

transl. 10), taking up in a being-historical key what he had already noted in *Being and Time*, namely that the past is opened up by the future (cf. Heidegger 1977a, 431; Eng. transl. 373).

To understand why the Greek beginning consummates, one must look at the translation of another word from the first beginning, i.e. *physis*. Heidegger translates it with *Aufgang*, “unfolding” (cf. Heidegger 1989, 171; Eng. transl. 120), which, just like *Unverborgenheit* and *Anwesenheit*, allows us to perceive a wider dimension: that of closure, of the ‘fold’. Where something opens, something else closes. For instance, the sprouting plant rests on the closure of the earth, which surrounds and guards its roots (cf. Heidegger 1976, 254; Eng. transl. 195). Metaphors aside, Heidegger understands *physis* as the manifestation of things, their opening to the light of *aletheia* and thus shining in their presence. However, by translating *physis* with *Aufgang* it becomes legitimate to question the origin of this unfolding movement. Moreover, this translation makes available the root *-Gang*, from which Heidegger thinks of the whole movement of the beginning, as it is disclosed by the translation. *Physis* is indeed the beginning itself, i.e. the beginning of metaphysics, while *Aufgang* is its reply from the first beginning: they both are held together by translation. The dual structure of the beginning, a sign of the aforementioned ambiguity of the beginning, also contains the movement of the leap into the other beginning: besides *Aufgang* there is *Untergang*, literally ‘going under’ (cf. Heidegger 2009, 148; Eng. transl. 128). The unfolding movement of things refers at the same time to the dimension from which the unfolding/opening takes place. This dimension ‘lies beneath’ in the sense that it is covered by the pre-eminence assumed by the stable presence in the history of metaphysics. With the arising of *physis*, in fact, that experience of being which will culminate in the fulfilment of metaphysics begins, and at the same time the possibility of another beginning “sets” (*geht unter*).

This might give the impression that there is a ‘decline of the West’, in the sense of a move away from the Greeks. Yet, the dimension in which withdrawal occurs is not in itself negative (cf. Heidegger 1985a, 38-9; Eng. transl. 164). Translation in fact allows the question about *Untergang* to be asked, which is therefore not (and should not be) removed from the history of metaphysics, but is preserved in it, awaiting replication. Exactly as with *aletheia*, it is a matter of turning our gaze to the dimension of *Verborgenheit*, which contains a *Bergung*, i.e. a custodianship, and not a mere deprivation. The origin only consumes if there is no sunset in it, that is, only if this custody is lacking.

Heidegger’s Greek beginning is thus neither dusk nor dawn: it is the inseparable union of both (cf. Heraclitus, fragment B57; Fink, Heidegger 1986, 76; Eng. transl. 44). Since the moment of sunset can be seen only at the end of the day, the Greek beginning is only such at the end of metaphysics. This also picks up another motif from *Being*

and Time, namely the opening that occurs at the moment of closure and death. The “disappearing” in the Greeks’ word invoked by Heidegger (Heidegger 1976, 245; Eng. transl. 188) is not a matter of embracing a conclusion, a perfect word that finally exhausts, or would like to exhaust, an unsaturated and needy openness, but of opening up the most proper possibility, i.e. finiteness.

The friction between *Aufgang* and *Untergang* is part of a broader Heidegger’s discourse inherent in the *Scheidung* proper to Being (*Seyn*). This cleavage indeed addresses the “separation” (*Unterscheidung*) of being and beings, which allows Being to be thought of as such, that is, not to be confused with beings. Moreover, this *Unterscheidung* also involves the “parting” (*Abschied*) from this distinction. Indeed, it has already been mentioned how in *Contributions* Heidegger thinks of metaphysics as the transition from beings to their beingness. Metaphysics, therefore, extends within the space of this separation, so that the passage to the other beginning is at the same time the leave-taking from it. In this sense, when Heidegger thinks of the sunset, he does not only mean the moment of custody, but also the moment of departure from the *Aufgang*. Metaphysics unfolds until it reaches its end/beginning, after which it folds back. The beginning is thus dismissing: that is why Heidegger seeks it because it is capable of distancing, that is, of opening up a distance. That which sets are “the ones to come” (*die Zukünftigen*), that is, those who sacrifice themselves to make room for what is to come, i.e. no longer the coming to the fore of *physis*, but “the last God” (cf. Heidegger 1989, 397; Eng. transl. 278). “Dieser Untergang ist erstester Anfang / This going-under is the very first of the first beginning” (397; 278).

The sunset is then both the inauguration of the space of metaphysics, with the prevailing of the unfolding over the hidden dimension, and at the same time a departure from it, in view of another rising. Therefore, it is worth noting that Heidegger’s Being does not lie under the ruins of an unfortunate tradition, which must simply be removed. Being’s lying underneath is an integral part of its beginning: it must be understood in the sense of its sowing, rather than its burial. The Greek dawn is thus a beginning in the specific sense of Heidegger’s thought not because it comes before the darkness of night (Latinity?) nor a moment of the freshness of thought before the encumbrance of tradition. Not even – and this is the decisive aspect – because it contains the faint light of an even more remote origin, which would be located in some kind of inaccessible dimension – something not very phenomenological. Heidegger recalls in this regard the *Dämmerung* is also present in the morning, namely that moment when the sun has not yet risen, and which is therefore indistinguishable from sunset (cf. Heidegger 1985a, 38, 246; Eng. transl. 164, 127). It should therefore be noted that the dawning aspect of the Greek beginning, its ‘solar’ moment, is that which insists on the moment of the *Aufgang*, of the unfolding, which is

the unfolding of the entity, its coming into presence. Therefore, to insist on this is to preclude what is instead the truly inaugural aspect for Heidegger, namely the moment of sunset. In the particular language of *Contributions*, Heidegger indeed claims that the other beginning “does not somehow just enter the light of the day”, and yet, while the first beginning conceals “seiner Verschlossenheit im unerbrochenen Ursprung / its enclosedness in the unerupted origin”, the other beginning “bleibt in der eigenen Tiefe verborgen / remains sheltered in its own depth”, “in der Klarheit eines schweren Dunkles der sich Selbst wissenden, in der Besinnung erstandenen Tiefe / in the clarity of a severe darkness of a depth that knows itself and has arisen into mindfulness” (Heidegger 1989, 431; Eng. transl. 304). The thought of the beginning and its truth, therefore, reside in this twilight dimension. The very beginning inherent in the beginning is not limited to the rising but encompasses the opening of the space from dawn to dusk.

Finding the sunset in the rising: Heidegger expresses something similar when commenting on Hölderlin’s famous letter to Böhlerdorf of 4 December 1801, about the passage for the stranger in the experience of one’s own (cf. Heidegger 1980, 290-1; Eng. transl. 264). Again, this is not an unfair situation to be remedied by a return home (more or less possible), but a matter of making the stranger hospitable, finding oneself at home in not feeling at home. *Heimischwerden* does not mean coinciding with oneself (cf. Nardelli 2021, 137) nor being inured to one’s own language (cf. Giometti 1995, 20), but rather inhabiting the strangeness of existence, which is impossible (fortunately) to resolve, since it constitutes an essential trait of *Dasein*, its “Nicht-zuhause-sein” (Heidegger 1977a, 250; Eng. transl. 233). “From an existential-ontological point of view, the ‘not-at-home’ must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon” (252; 234); “human beings are initially, and for a long time, and sometimes forever, not at home [*nicht heimisch*]” (Heidegger 1984, 60; Eng. transl. 49).¹¹ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger accurately showed the domesticating and numbing character of being at home and *Vertrautheit*; to this is added the recovery of Hölderlin’s insight that homeland is *untergehende* (cf. Heidegger 1980, 122; Eng. transl. 110): one returns home setting, rather than residing and abiding. Any form of nostalgia for an original dimension of domestic peace must therefore be excluded. The experience of the origin, in the sense of the *Heimat*, does not occur in the *Heimkehr*, precisely because the return to the beginning coincides with the moment of departure from it (cf. Heidegger 1981, 117; Eng. transl. 140).

11 Capobianco 2010, 65 argued how, from the mid-1950s onwards, the *unheimlich* character of the human being is rather attributed by Heidegger to today’s age, dominated by calculative thinking. According to this view, Heidegger’s attitude towards being at home would change over the years.

Hence, when Heidegger expresses the importance of returning to the Greeks, it must be acknowledged that, at least in the years of *Contributions* and the courses on Hölderlin ('35-'42), when he developed his thoughts about the beginning, the goal is not to think 'Greekly', but to think one's own based on the foreign. What therefore passes for a critique of Heidegger, namely the appropriation of Greek texts (cf. Gregorio 2021, 122, 129), is in fact the declared intent of his thought.

3 The 'Purity' of the Beginning: An Extralinguistic Question?

Having clarified the complex structure of the beginning, the hypothesis of a translation in the sense of a more or less faithful return to the Greeks has been ruled out. Rather, to translate is to open the space of a distance, from which a replication to the source text can arise. It is now a question of assessing the possibility of this operation, concerning Heidegger's recalled statements on the impossibility of translation. Is the beginning perhaps untranslatable? Is it by any chance a set of extra-historical and extra-linguistic meanings, the existence of which decides the possibility or otherwise of translation?

In a well-known passage from *Parmenides*, Heidegger rules out words having anything like a "pure fundamental meaning" (Heidegger 1982, 31-2; Eng. transl. 21). The idea of a pure basic meaning, which is supposed to serve as a criterion for translations, is merely an erroneous assumption of logic – and of vocabularies (cf. Cattaneo 2017, 24). To it, Heidegger instead opposes a *Grundbedeutung der Wörter*, a fundamental meaning of words, concerning which is "their beginning" (*ihr Anfängliches*). Moreover, this fundamental meaning "does not appear at first, but at last" – confirming our analysis of the beginning – and "holds sway in a veiled manner" (*waltet verhüllt*) in words.

Even though Heidegger explicitly rules out the existence of unchanging meanings concerning changing languages, it is equally not ruled out whether the fundamental meaning of words is found in an extra-historical dimension, an unattainable origin. The sunset case inherent in the translation of *physis* with *Aufgang* should suggest that this "veiled manner" is to be understood as something lying beneath ordinary meanings without, however, thus making it a substance or a noumenon that is phenomenologically inaccessible. Nevertheless, it has been argued for a kind of cleavage between the original dimension of being and that of history and language (cf. Hrnjez, Illetterati 2021, 14-15).¹² The matter emerges with particular clarity

¹² Von Herrmann 2011, 221 thinks something similar when he claims that the "clearing lights up at a given time in the enowning forth-throw of a *historical* way of cleared-

within the translation debate: Heidegger would have thought that Being has something like an extra-historical residue, so any attempt to say Being is but a failed translation, i.e. an approximation. From this perspective, the inverse can also apply to every translation, insofar as the translation is itself an experience of distance and 'linguisticity', and thus it only distances Being into a dimension that can never be grasped. The remote character of the origin thus averts the possibility of translation, and at the same time, Heidegger's aforementioned sentences on the failure of translation merely 'place' (*setzen*) the origin in a 'beyond' (*über*).

However, this gives Heidegger's Being an extra-historical character that the very thought of the history of being - the great outsider in the translation debate - already denies by name alone. Furthermore, one evaluates the translation Heidegger speaks of based on a model of translation that Heidegger openly disagrees with, namely a change of linguistic guise concerning the content that knows how to stand in its pure nakedness (cf. Caramelli 2022, 3). For if one makes Heidegger say that this pure content does not exist, or it is inaccessible, nevertheless in this perspective one continues to consider translation as a supplement, which 1) fails insofar as it cannot find a body to cover and 2) yearns for this impossible operation, since that is what a dress is for. On the contrary, the genuine appreciation for Heideggerian thought of translation lies precisely in the rejection of this ancillary conception of translation, and language in general. Only according to logic can there be such a thing as a coincidence of linguistical horizons, yet from the impossibility of this Heidegger does not deduce the impossibility of translation, precisely because the sense of impossibility that his thought enforces is not that of logical impossibility. The impossibility of translation, therefore, refers only to a certain kind of translation, one that claims to be commensurate with the source text. If Heidegger's translation is related to error and impossibility, it is so in an entirely specific sense (cf. Heidegger 1989, 188; Eng. transl. 131). The same sense of error, like the more general sense of negation, has an ontological status that does not allow itself to be evaluated under the banner of lack and deficiency: they are rather *Holzwege*, that is, they make way for and inaugurate, rather than close. Consequently, the very impossibility of the other beginning actually opens up its innermost possibility. It may therefore be that when Heidegger speaks of the "shipwreck" (*Schiffbruch*) of translation (Heidegger 1979, 45; Eng. transl. 38), this presupposes the idea of a safe harbour, but this one must be in turn read

ness. So we have to distinguish between the lightening-clearing of being and the *Da* as the happening of a way of clearedness happening at a given time. The lightening-clearing itself *does not exhaust itself* in the historicity of the *Da* of *Da-sein* at a given time".

in the sense of the flat familiarity already condemned in *Being and Time*. Ultimately, to say that there are no correct translations is not to admit that there is an ideal of the correctness of the translation, but that correctness and goodness are not the criteria by which to evaluate a translation.

Therefore, from Heidegger's statements toward translation, one cannot infer a Greek concept of beginning in the sense of an unattainable, extra-historical origin. Rather, these statements should be understood as invitations to rethink the meaning of translation, and precisely from the concept of beginning, and thus entirely within the history of being, as shown here. The question now is whether, at any rate, the Greek beginning does not instead have an extra-linguistic character (cf. Nardelli 2021, 103). If so, even in this case the translation would end up being understood as an indispensable approximation, unable to cover the gap from an unspeakable origin.

Certainly, Heidegger repeatedly points out the difficulty of saying being, of "describing" it (cf. Heidegger 1989, 321; Eng. transl. 226; Nardelli 2021, 112), without directly mistaking it for an entity. As Nardelli has recently shown in an important work (Nardelli 2021), this difficulty, if not impossibility, decisively influences Heidegger's conception of translation, at the same time marking his distance from Derrida (64-9). However, this is a delicate point. It is indeed impossible for what Heidegger calls "representational thinking" to speak of being, since this is immediately hypostatized into a representation, i.e. captured and reduced to presence. Notwithstanding that, Heidegger does not believe that so-called "representational thinking" exhausts all of how human beings relate to being, so much so that in *Being and Time*, *Dasein* already understands its own being without thematising it. It is, however, above all in the texts on the *Ereignis* that, so to speak, the game is played. Indeed, *Ereignis* does not indicate the 'constant subtraction' of being, but rather just the opposite, namely that it is precisely in subtraction that the human being is called by being. The grand attempt of a text such as *Contributions* consists precisely in 'letting oneself be thought of by being', rather than turning one's thoughts to it: this is the meaning of the subtitle "Vom Ereignis". Therefore, Heidegger does not intend to exclude any relationship to the beginning, placing it who knows where.

This essentially transforms or should transform according to Heidegger, the meaning of thinking and saying, as well as that of translation. Saying never really disappears, not even during the transition between beginnings (cf. Heidegger 1989, 229; Eng. transl. 162), and this is because philosophy "is obligated to point out precisely through saying" (Fink, Heidegger 1986, 34; Eng. transl. 17). The fact that being is maintained about saying, shaping Heidegger's original conception of language and poetry, is fundamental to the question of translation. First, another argument in favour of the sup-

posed untranslatability of the Greek beginning is removed, namely the supposed extra-linguistic residue of being. Second, how being reveals its linguisticity provides further guidance for thinking about the beginning-translation nexus. In the *Ereignis* perspective, where thought thinks from being and the experience of belonging to it, speaking is no longer the performance of a subject but becomes the listening of a “naming” (*Nennung*, cf. Heidegger 1983b, 52-3; Eng. transl. 70-1). In *On the way to language*, the text where this new conception of language is explored, Heidegger writes that “naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word” (Heidegger 1985b, 18; Eng. transl. 198). The passage from *Parmenides* on the fundamental meaning of words thus acquires new light: the *Grundbedeutung* does not lie hidden somewhere but dominates words to the extent that it calls them to itself. In the case of the words of the beginning, this call is all the more evident if we understand it according to the dual movement of dawn and dusk. The one who is called returns and draws near, just as that which was previously manifested and opened returns to its initial dimension. The words of the beginning thus open Greekness and give it its beginning, but they must also be understood as a call, i.e. as something that repeats differently and to which they belong.

The beginning is thus fully linguistic; it claims words for itself in the sense of replication and sunset indicated above. Again, in *On the way to language*, Heidegger speaks of a “rein Gesprochenes” (1985a, 14; Eng. transl. 194), to which belongs an inceptual “completion” (*Vollendung*). It seems that this fullness is a richness of meaning, a “polysemous saying” in itself ordered and structured (cf. Fink, Heidegger 1986, 12; Eng. transl. 4). In this case, a translation could be what intervenes to unravel and make explicit these otherwise compressed meanings (cf. Growth 2017, 123-4).

To test this hypothesis, consider Heidegger’s interpretation of fragments III and VIII (vv. 34-41) of *Parmenides’* poem, especially concerning the relationship between being and thought (cf. Heidegger 2000c). The common belonging of being and thought is due neither to the fact that thought is also an entity (Heidegger 2000c, 239; Eng. transl. 81), nor to the fact that being, in the sense of objectivity, is constituted through representational thought (240; 82), nor to the non-sensible being of both (243; 84-5). Heidegger excludes these interpretative options, which have historically occurred as specific philosophies, based on his particular translation of *eon* as “duality” (*Zwiefalt*)¹³ (245; 86) of being (*Sein*) and beings (*Seiende*), and

13 The word ‘Zwiefalt’ is not used in current German. ‘Duality’ better translates *Zweiheit*, which does not refer to the verb *entfalten*, to unfold, as the word *Zwie-falt* does. A better translation might be ‘twofold’ (in current German *zweifach*), where the duality

noein as “apprehending which gathers” (*versammelnde Vernehmen*) (242; 84), “taking heed of” (*in-die-Acht-Nehmen*) (247; 88). *Noein* is further approached as “saying” (*sagen*) in the sense of “bring forward into view” (*zum Vorschein bringen*), based on the *noein/logos* relationship expressed by the *pephatismenon* (VIII, 34) (249; 90). *Legein* and *noein* are thus translated as “letting what is a present lie before in the light of presencing” (*lassen Anwesendes im Licht von Anwesen vor-liegen*) (255; 96 slightly modified). Thus, according to Heidegger, the ‘equivalence’ of being and thought should actually be re-translated as an unfolding of *Sein* and *Seiende* distinction held together by the participle ‘seiend’ (cf. Zarader 1986, 133).¹⁴ In the gathering of the participle, there is the gathering proper to the *logos*, which thus gives *noein* that to which it can pay attention (cf. Heidegger 2000c, 250; Eng. transl. 90).

This brief example too shows how the dimension of origin is not played out on an extralinguistic level: on the contrary, the very presence of *logos* demonstrates the opposite. Indeed, the wealth of meanings of the *rein Gesprochenes* is that “original reunification” (Gregorio 2021, 148) that characterises the collection of *logos*. A word like ‘*noein*’ holds within it a great complexity of meanings: thought, representation, apprehension (*Vernhemnung*), but also *phàsis* (cf. Heidegger 2000c, 252; Eng. transl. 93), and *doxa* (258; 99). Therefore, *noein* can be considered in its own right as a perfect example of a *rein Gesprochenes*, whose progressive unravelling of the meanings is not to be understood as a progressive impoverishment and exhaustion: “in philosophy no word or concept is overused” (Fink, Heidegger 1986, 128; Eng. transl. 76). However, how can there not be an impoverishment if the translation intervenes to unravel the dense web of meanings of the words of the Greek beginning? It is clear that translation cannot act as a comb, as something that untangles, since it is precisely the knot of meanings that makes the initial words, because, as we have seen, there is a beginning where there is the dual movement of sunrise and sunset, which in turn makes use of translation, in a sense that remains to be discovered.

Along with the saying, there is surely something that remains obscure (cf. Nardelli 2021, 139). Nevertheless, even if one were to understand it as an “unsaid”, as Heidegger does, this is in no way to be

that is named must be seen in the light of the fold that divides the two elements, and which in Heidegger’s interpretation of Parmenides’ fragment III is *to auto*. The English translators also follow this solution. Moreover, Heidegger (1977a, 345; Eng. transl. 260) believes that the entire history of the West rests on the translation of *eon*.

14 *Seiend* is another translation of *eon*; we could then claim that *seiend* is the translation occurring on the way of dawn, as it is the German translation of the Latin *ens*, whereas *Zwiefalt* moves on the way of dusk, in that it implicitly goes back to the origin of the division underlying ontological difference thinking.

understood as “saying nothing”: “there is a saying to which the unsaid belongs, but not the unsayable. The unsaid, however, is no lack and no barrier for saying” (Fink, Heidegger 1986, 89; Eng. transl. 52). Indeed, the unsaid remains within the realm of saying, and it is precisely translation that underlines its linguisticity since it is in translation that the obscure and hidden element emerges. How?

It may be that the translation intervenes to make explicit, rather than divide, the meanings of the words of the Greek beginning already implicitly present in them. We can discard this hypothesis by looking again at Heidegger’s interpretation of Parmenides’ fragments. By translating *eon* with *Zwiefalt*, Heidegger claims that what unfolds (*Entfaltende*) remains hidden (245-6; 86-7). In the opening of the twofold to *noein*, *noein* is turned away from the *Entfaltende* (255; 96): it is not thought that sets out towards unfolding being, for rather it is a matter of ‘letting oneself be appropriated’ by being – again, *vom Ereignis*. This is not surprising: *Zwiefalt* is the opening up of ontological difference, which leaves its root unseen and sets up space for metaphysics. Furthermore, just as *ousia* and *aletheia*, the translation of *eon* also raises the question about a broader and deeper dimension, which in this case is the belonging of beings and being underlying the unfolding. The epochal and destinal sense of concealment revealed by the translation of *eon* is further accentuated by the presence of *Moirai* in fragment VIII: it is *Moirai* who has granted the twofold for *noein* (256-7; 97-8),¹⁵ and it is presumably *Moirai* who is concealed in the *to auto* of fragment III, read by Heidegger as a subject splitting into *noein* and *einai* (254; 95). However, the concealment of the origin of unfolding is not, on closer inspection, something made explicit by the translation. *Zwiefalt* translates *eon*, but this is at the level of the first beginning: it is instead the other beginning that is charged with the question of the origin of unfolding. Moreover, if the concealment was always implicit in the *eon* and the translation merely makes it explicit, then one would have to ask whether the *eon* also implicitly contains its replication. However, this is an absurdity, because in this case, the reply would not be such, since it would not diverge from the meaning of the *eon*: it would rather be part of it.

Even the meaning of ‘being implied’ is something unclear. Heidegger’s translation does not simply bring to the surface something that has remained covered. If this were the case, the meaning of his translation would be the same as Hegel’s translation of Parmenides’ *noein* with ‘thinking’ (cf. Heidegger 2000c, 241; Eng. transl. 82-3). In doing so, Hegel completes something only sketched out by the Greeks, while Heidegger explicitly distances himself from the mean-

15 According to Heidegger, if *noein* is directed to that which is unfolded, it cannot be directed also to that which unfolds.

ing of Hegel's translation. Stepping into the wake of a pre-existing but still implicit and interrupted meaning does not lead to that sunset in Heidegger's particular sense, but only to a viewpoint that is "later" (Heidegger 2000c, 244; Eng. transl. 85).

Only in a beginning that comes first, rather than at the end, can meanings be implied and be made explicit by the translation. However, Heidegger's beginning invokes a different theoretical framework, where the translation is called upon to play a far more important role than mere explication. Indeed, if it is not a matter of discovering something already present in the Greek words, then the meanings and replications that translation allows are somehow to be considered the fruit of a creative operation. 'Creation' here certainly does not mean 'introduction of something new', because, as we have seen, the meanings opened up by translation are not arbitrary, insofar as they allow for replication. Translated words are bound to the original text, that is, they are the first, initial step towards its other. The source text thus becomes such, that is, an initial text, only as a result of the operation of translation. It is then the translation that makes the beginning, and is itself the beginning, as creation.

4 Questioning the Greek Primacy: The Time-space of Translation

Once the structure of the beginning has been clarified and the hypotheses of its extra-historicity and extra-linguisticity have been ruled out, it is now a question of further investigating the creative movement of translation, underlying its being inceptual.

We have already seen how this movement is not of the type of trans-lating, i.e. trans-*ducere/über-tragen*, because this can only result in a paraphrase, i.e. a simple trans-position of what is said - which is never the *rein Gesprochenes* - into another linguistic guise. It has also been seen how the translation of the Greek beginning moves between *Aufgang*, the opening of *physis*, and *Untergang*, its closure/custody. The interstice between these two moments is the space of divergence that constitutes the *Scheidung* of Being, and in it is constituted the *Übergang*, i.e. the passage to the other beginning, as a reply to metaphysics. In the German word *Übersetzung*, Heidegger emphasises above all the *Über-*, rather than the moment of "position" (*Setzung*), because it is precisely this arc between sunrise and sunset that characterises both the translation and the beginning (cf. Heidegger 1979, 44-5; Eng. transl. 37-8).

Certainly, the "in-between" (*Inzwischen*) characterizing translation indicates the difference between the source text and translating language. This means that a good translation makes the specificity of one's own language felt in its confrontation with the other. In light

of the aforementioned adage “learning one’s own through the stranger”, to translate is always to translate oneself (cf. Nardelli 2021, 163). However, it is not just about this: by translating *eon* with *Zwiefalt*, Heidegger is not simply re-appropriating his own language but is at the same time marking a distance, and not from pure Greek experience, but from what is sundered in it. Indeed, it is not just a matter of removing from oblivion the space of difference that characterises the whole of metaphysics, but rather of asking the question about its origin. The in-between space of translation is thus as much a movement of approaching as it is of distancing, a return to one’s own language that passes through the foreign language and from which one regains distance. Distancing itself from the unfolding of the beginning, the homeland/the origin is given a future.

In *Contributions*, both the conjunction of these movements (Heidegger 1989, 237; Eng. transl. 168) and the dimension of the in-between (63, 223, 263; 44, 156, 185-6) is called “time-space”. The presence of space-time is a further confirmation of the historical and linguistic character of the beginning. In fact, if the initial dimension is spatio-temporal, this means that the beginning is not relegated to some transcendence or unattainable dimension, but is precisely in space and time, just like us: that is why it can grasp us and touch us. Moreover, Heidegger states that the particular saying addressed to the truth of being moves precisely in the fragment of the chiaroscuro dimension of *Lichtung*. Indeed, the experience of being called takes place between the distance of the called and the closeness of the caller, which has been seen to be the naming of the words of the beginning in their belonging to the *Grundbedeutung*. This structure of proximity and distance, beginning and end, light and dark, sunrise and sunset, is central to Heidegger, and thus also characterises the movement proper to translation.

The connection between space-time and translation becomes clear through the image of the river, as Heidegger speaks of it in his lectures on Hölderlin. Indeed, translation opens up an interstice between the source text and the translated one just like rivers both separate and hold together two banks (cf. Heidegger 1984, 46; Eng. transl. 39). This interstice is not only spatial: Hölderlin’s rivers make turns and go upstream in the direction of the source, theirs is thus a movement that also extends in time (cf. Nardelli 2021, 139). After all, a good translation brings one closer to the source text, perhaps otherwise unattainable, but also allows one to appreciate its distance, which in the case of the words of the Greek beginning is also and above all a temporal distance. Taking up another suggestion by Heidegger, the land that the river embraces, i.e. the space-time as the in-between of translation, is the dimension of dwelling, that intermediate dimension between the consuming source and the flat familiarity. Time-space, with its “crests” and “abysses” is precisely what

breaks the dimension of flatness and levelling (cf. Heidegger 1989, 236; Eng. transl. 167). In time-space, time and space interpenetrate each other, forming a “crossroads” (*Überkreuzung*) (Heidegger 1989, 192; Eng. transl. 135) that, according to Heidegger, is at once the intersection of the proper and the alien in Hölderlin (cf. Heidegger 2000b, 346). Therefore, translation is also intertwined with the question of dwelling, insofar as it helps to undermine the familiarity of the everyday dimension. Indeed, everyday familiarity is not the dimension proper to the human being, insofar as it is often able to be opaque concerning the dynamism of existence. However, translation is capable of revealing in what is most familiar to us, such as our own language, a foreign dimension, which breaks the obtuse certainty of everyday relations and invites us to come to terms with the otherness that crosses them, to dwell on the meanings of words in common use, where these bear traces of foreign languages and their experiences.

The reference to time-space may sound very abstract, far removed from the practice of translation. However, this is not the case: think of the space between words, the pauses and restarts that generate the rhythm of a line, and the echo of sounds that the poet emphasizes. This time-space juncture is directly involved in translation and indeed is sometimes its emblem. Where the words are betrayed by a dubious translation, which is nevertheless able to preserve the underlying rhythm, perhaps making it resonate in another key, then somehow the translation has succeeded or, to say it better, the translation can restore the divergence between the source text and the translated one. Otherwise, when there is a perfect correspondence between the words and yet the rhythm is completely absent, the translation may have not failed, but only if it is reduced to mere transposition of words.

In what sense, however, is a translation successful, according to the premises of Heideggerian discourse? That is, how is a translation able to be initial, i.e. to articulate that complex dynamic of proximity and distance that constitutes the possibility of replication? The reference to metre and rhythm reveals a decisive aspect, valid in general and not only for the translation of poetry. Indeed, what is decisive is the broader spatio-temporal structure, which marks the rhythm of a poem and makes the more general dynamics of Heidegger’s translation possible. The movement of the beginning back onto itself opens up another beginning, the fragment placed between the extremes of this dynamic, in which a broader dimension is opened up to investigate words such as *aletheia*, *ousia*, and *eon*: all of this is nothing other than the same structure, which we call space-time here based on what has been said so far. We will now see how Heidegger thinks about the success of a translation precisely from what this structure allows, and also how its formality allows one to dare to take a step beyond Heidegger.

First, it has been seen that translation is a creative act, rather than a corrupting practice and that the meaning of this creation lies not so much in the introduction of an element of novelty nor in an explication of an already existing element. It is now a matter of recognising the proper object of this creation: not so much an isolated meaning, such as *Unverborgenheit*, but rather an entire ‘world’. It is the world that is created, not an entity. Here, the world is understood in a broad sense, both as an articulated network of meanings and as an existential dimension in which the dwelling of the human being is rooted. So, the world revealed by the translation of *aletheia* with *Unverborgenheit* is the twilight world of the first beginning, the world in which we dwell in the transition to the other beginning. A translation is successful, so to speak, if it is then able to create a world, that is, if it can open up a dimension that can constitute an epoch-making turning point. But why precisely a world, and what does it have to do with the structure of space-time? Because Heidegger himself writes that the world “bursts” in the *Unterschied*, that is, in the space-time that unites and at the same time divides the two sides of translation (cf. Heidegger 1985a, 25; Eng. transl. 205). For this reason, *Unterschied* serves as a measure (23; 202). In translation, it is therefore a matter of “transforming” a world (cf. Fink, Heidegger 1986, 87; Eng. transl. 51).

As can be clearly seen, the translation does indeed address Greek words, but what is decisive for its dynamics is this space-time structure. In other words, one can recognise the formality of the structure of the beginning, now asking whether this same structure can somehow also function when addressing non-Greek words. After all, we have seen that it is not so much the Greek element that makes the beginning, but rather (its) translation.¹⁶

Heidegger’s blows against Latin translations have already been recalled (cf. also Heidegger 1977b, 8; Eng. transl. 6), and there is no doubt that Heidegger favoured confrontation with the Greek, even at the expense of other traditions (cf. Nardelli 2021 226-7, 240). This is also understandable if read within a great tradition in German culture, namely that dating back to Luther (via Hegel) and his critique of Latin translations (cf. Caramelli 2022, 5-7). Furthermore, it has been rightly noted that if the exclusivity of the comparison with

¹⁶ This is the only point of divergence from Zarader’s otherwise fully followed investigation (1986). In fact, Zarader states that original signification and plurivocity is something peculiar to the Greeks (162). However, by recognising such a peculiarity in the Greek language, the creative aspect of translation is downplayed and, at the same time, an imbalance is introduced between the two languages in which translation moves. There is little point in distinguishing between *commencement* and *origine*, if it is then the Greek words that are given their original meaning. Here, however, the origin is not located in the Greek language, but in the dimension of translation.

the Greeks is justified by Heidegger concerning Hölderlin's dialectic proper/extraneous, then the Hebrew tradition, German's true 'other' rather than an all too familiar Greek, should have been called in-dialogue (cf. Di Cesare 2016, 258-9).

However, it must be now recognised that in the translation of the 'Greek beginning', the emphasis does not so much fall on 'Greekness' (cf. Nardelli 2021, 100) as on the 'beginning': it is never a question of returning to the Greeks but rather beyond them (cf. Heidegger 1985a, 126; Eng. transl. 38), considering that the pre-metaphysical is not the post-metaphysical (Fink, Heidegger 1986, 110, 113; Eng. transl. 65, 67), that is, the beginning comes last rather than first.¹⁷ What is fundamental, in fact, for something to be a beginning, is first and foremost the spatio-temporal dimension of the game between sunrise and sunset, the identification of a crossroads from which both unfolding and retreat depart: this is the beginning. However, if the beginning consists of this (at least: the being-first of the first beginning), then Greekness (and any *Volk* in general) is not a necessary condition for rethinking history from the beginning. Rather, 'it is sufficient' for translation to be able to detect a distance capable of opening up a world.

Look at then the case of the Latins: is there not a profound distance from them too? Yet, this is already not the same as saying that if the origin is always other, then it is in the experience of the otherness that the origin can be grasped. Distance alone is not enough for something like the beginning that Heidegger speaks of to occur: something must begin, unfold, and at the same time, within the retrospective gaze opened by the translation, something else sets in, opening up the possibility of another beginning. Consider now the translation of *ratio* with *Grund*. Heidegger himself has reflected at length on the gap between the two, there is an analogy here with the translations of *eon*, *aletheia* and *ousia*: just as *Zwiefalt* opens up the possibility of thinking the origin of unfolding, *Unverborgenheit* *Verborgenheit*, and *Anwesenheit* *Wesung*, *Grund* opens up that of *Abgrund*. And this Latin sunset is no less intense than the Greek one because for Heidegger *Abgrund* expresses the same essence of truth, that is, the *Lichtung für das Sichverbergens* (cf. Heidegger 1989, 380; Eng. transl. 265).

17 The judgement is not so clear-cut, so much so that Fink attributes to Heidegger the idea that the post-metaphysical is "included" (*enthalten*) in the pre-metaphysical, a point on which Heidegger glosses over, even if he has previously asked whether the two should be kept separated or not. Of course, the question is complex, because one would have to reflect on the meaning of this 'inclusion'. The beginning has in itself the seed of metaphysics and at the same time that of its overcoming, for this reason, it is a beginning, yet a distinction must be made between the moments of unfolding, of rising, and that of retreat, of setting. This distinction, which is of course reminiscent of the distinction between being and entity, must it in turn sunset? Or must the dismissal of difference be understood as a 'moment' within the waning of the beginning?

According to the idea of temporality discovered in *Being and Time* and transposed into a being-historical view, it would be rather superficial to state that the Latins are not inceptual 'because they come later' as if the dynamics of the beginning could be read within a consequentially that for Heidegger is the result of historiography. Moreover, in the before/after relationship lies the sense of causality (cf. Kant KrV B 247 A 202), therefore one must be very careful in thinking 'non-historiographically' about the primacy of what comes first. To think that what comes after is somehow the betrayal and corruption of what comes before is to do, in terms perhaps more Heideggerian than Heidegger himself, (bad) historiography. What is more, to admit that the Latin *veritas* 'depends' on the Greek *aletheia*, rendering a distorted image of it, implies disavowing the whole potentiality of translation as an experience of otherness and the role it plays in the experience of its own - in this case, the Latins' own experience of truth. It is precisely this discontinuity in history, incomparably more complex than the idea of degeneration in translation, that is Heidegger's best argument for contesting Aristotelian Thomism and, perhaps, the history of metaphysics in general, which is thus not the compact block that Heidegger sometimes gives the impression of thinking, with oversimplification.

The translation of *veritas* with 'correctness' opens up at the same time the whole field of what is not straight, normal (orthogonal). As in the case of *Abgrund* and *Verborgenheit*, the crooked and curved space does not only come to light as the opposite of what is straight but rather as that broader and more varied dimension, about which the straight is merely an emergence, a specific case, the appreciable and fully experienceable apex. Compared to the twisted, the upright can impose itself: when the line becomes upright, it becomes the norm and dictates the norm, just like *Unverborgenheit*. Furthermore, the geometric trait of *veritas* yields an experience of time-space (of translation) that is perhaps more articulated than *Unverborgenheit*, which primarily comprises the chiaroscuro dimension and the play of light and shadow, while righteousness explicitly refers to the straight and the curved, closer to the complex relationship between distance and proximity characterizing time-space itself. This raises the question of whether, compared to *aletheia*, *veritas* does not make the dimension of time-space more experienceable. This would not be so surprising, given that *veritas* is more embedded in the translation dynamic than *aletheia*.

But there is more. Not only could one try to turn the formal structure of the beginning to words other than Greek, to see its initiation. The translation itself here translates itself, that is, leading into a space capable of distancing us from Heidegger and replicating him. As we have seen, Heidegger's conception of the beginning rests on the image of dawn and dusk. This is reflected in the practice of

translation, which is thought of as the experience of the *Zwischen* that runs through the two movements of the beginning. However, it must be recognised that this fundamental motif depends on the *physis* and its translation with *Aufgang*: the beginning is such in the translation of *physis* with *Aufgang* and the translation is the beginning. Nevertheless, this in no way implies that the spatio-temporal dimension of translation should be exclusively thought of in terms of dawn and dusk, unfolding and folding: neither in general nor in the specific case of the beginning. The brief foray into the space-time opened up by the translation of *veritas* with correctness has in fact shown a similar structure to that of *aletheia*, with the difference, however, that whereas here the chiaroscuro dominates, there the right/wrong dialectic dominates. The sense of distance that characterises the time-space of translation can also take place in other ways. Indeed, for an object to be taken out of the realm of familiarity, arousing a sense of distance, it can also be decontextualised, or be broken - for example by the practice of hyphenation. In short, it does not have to be something that emerges from the shadows or fades into them: to think in these terms is still to think within the experience of *physis* (cf. Chiereghin 1993, 100). What possibilities would a translation space be articulated according to the straight and the curved open-up?¹⁸

The translation is indeed a creative process, all the more so when it is thought of as a translation of the beginning. It is then not a question of the richness of a specific language, but rather of the poet who knows how to listen to it and, perhaps even more so, of the translator, who knows how to give voice to further meanings in the dialogue with his own language, opening up new avenues of meaning. In some ways, the *Dasein* itself, as *Zwischen* and “crisis between beginnings” (Heidegger 1989, 295; Eng. transl. 208) is a translator.

5 Conclusions

As we have seen, when the problem of translation in Heidegger is approached from the perspective of the beginning, it not only allows us to avoid certain impasses, e.g. the supposed untranslatability of Greek thought but also opens up new questions, which can perhaps even lead beyond Heidegger.

On a broader account, the question of translation not only testifies to the influence that Heidegger continues to exert within a broader

¹⁸ Some of Visentin’s essays, even very distant from Heidegger’s thought (see e.g. Visentin 2015), offer in their own way an example of how the straight and the curved can be employed as philosophical categories, inter alia to think the same truth.

current debate, that of the 'Translation Studies', as it also seems to confess a demand of his readers that has not yet been satisfied, namely the need to translate his language, so peculiar, into one that is not so much more familiar to the everyday dimension, but at least to that of an academic context. In other words, to investigate the possibility Heidegger granted to translation is to be able to bridge or not bridge the distance of his language from ours and to understand the reasons for this. After all, this is a question felt by Heidegger himself, for example in the famous protocol to the conference *Was ist das - die Philosophie?*, now finally available in its entirety (cf. Heidegger 2022, 422; De Gennaro 2002, 482-3).

Nevertheless, translation seems to play a very circumscribed role in the debate on the Heideggerian legacy. While Heidegger's reflections on translation are appreciated, at the same time they are often completely ignored as soon as it comes to translating Heidegger's own texts. Either the ideal of perfect adherence to the original is thus immediately rehabilitated, or the translation hypothesis is expelled, keeping the original German. In both cases, it is on the thoroughness of the reader that one relies on. Yet, the urgency of a 'Heideggerian language' is perceived, invoking translation.

Take the case of the English translation of the *Beiträge* - an untranslatable text? - by Emad and Maly, followed in just 13 years by another translation, that of Rojcewicz and Vallega-Neu (2012). The latter is surely more readable, especially for non-native speakers, but is in many ways a negation of what has been said so far about translation. Just think of the choice of rendering *Ereignis* with the familiar 'event', instead of the strange 'enowning'. This ignores for instance Heidegger's complex work of intralingual translation - the same as Heraclitus concerning Hesiod (cf. Fink, Heidegger 1986, 81; Eng. transl. 47). Heidegger's language carves a furrow within the German language that, paradoxically, the foreign reader may feel while the native speaker does not, as was also the case with a careful reader like Gadamer, who did not fully grasp the specific meaning of *Ereignis* (cf. Schalow 2011, 180).

So Heidegger did not speak German? Claiming the existence of "the language of the thinking of and by being", "which belongs neither to German nor to English nor to Greek" (Schalow 2011, 186), re-opens the risk of the extra-historical origin, about which translation is entire "contingent" (Kovacs 2011, 194). Furthermore, to justify the hypothesis of a "third language", a kind of continuity must be introduced, whereby Heidegger's *Wesung* would be the *aletheia* of the *Greeks* (cf. Emad 2021, 70-1): again, a nucleus of truth that only occasionally appears in history, neglecting the creativity of translation. In general, intralinguistic translation presupposes a split between the language of thought and the vulgar that is rather questionable, even by Heidegger himself. A convincing move could then be to see the

language intralinguistically translated by Heidegger as the mother tongue (cf. Cattaneo 2017, 31). In this case, the translation from the flat, common language would lead not to a third language, but rather to the maternal one – somehow ineptual.

The question of translation in Heidegger is thus an excellent key to addressing complex issues that go beyond the specific horizon of Heideggerian philosophy, proving the broad philosophical scope of translation. The metaphor of the sowing and the river present translation as fertile ground, not only for thought but also for human dwelling, in a world, understood both as tradition and dialogue among different languages.

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