

Translation-induced interference in Old English

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This paper will look into translation-induced interference in a medieval setting, that of bilingual (Latin and English) literary production in Anglo-Saxon England. I will first describe the contact situation in 7th-11th-century England as a situation of distant institutional contact (cf. Loveday 1996: 19–20; Timofeeva 2010). Next I will dwell on the different modes of medieval translation from Latin, ranging from glosses and gloss-like translations to paraphrases, on their audiences and distribution, and their structural equivalence vs. acceptability. I will suggest whether and how these translation modes could bring about particular types of language interference and conclude by describing several instances of translation-induced language change in Old English, emphasizing the importance of such notions as the continuity of translation tradition, the role of cultural elite in the dissemination of literary and translation standards, and, consequently, the impact of the shift of elites on these traditions and standards.

References

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