In literature, the rendering of words from one language to another. The first recorded named translator was Livius Andronicus, who translated Homer’s *Odyssey* from Greek to Latin in 240 BC.

Translations of the most ancient texts extant into modern languages are called decipherments. Two well-known examples are the decoding of the Egyptian hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone by Jean François Champollion and the decoding of the Persian cuneiform inscriptions on the rock of Behistun by Henry Rawlinson. Translating sacred texts has always been the chief means by which a culture transmits its values to posterity. Important translations of the Bible began with the Vulgate (Hebrew and Greek into Latin) of St. Jerome in the 4th cent. A.D. English translations of the Bible include that of John Wyclif in the 14th cent. (from Latin), William Tyndale’s in the 16th cent. (from Hebrew and Greek), and the great Authorized Version of 1611, the King James Version, which has been called the most influential work of translation in any language.

The Renaissance was a golden age of translations, especially into English. Renewed interest in the Latin classics created a demand for renderings of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (tr. by Arthur Golding, 1565–67), Vergil’s *Aeneid* (tr. by Gawin Douglas, 1513; Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, c.1540; and Richard Stanyhurst, 1582), and Plutarch’s *Lives* (tr. by Sir Thomas North, 1579). The flavor of these renderings is indicated in the opening lines of Stanyhurst’s *Aeneid*: “Now manhood and garbroyles [battles] I chaunt, and martial horror.” In addition there were translations of important contemporary works into English: Castiglione’s *Courtier* (tr. by Sir Thomas Hoby, 1561), Montaigne’s *Essais* (tr. by John Florio, 1603), and Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (tr. by John Shelton, 1612). Notable translations of the 19th and 20th cent. include Baudelaire’s translations of the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Scott Moncrieff’s translation of Proust, and Eustache Morel’s translation of James Joyce. American authors whose works have been widely translated include Mark Twain, Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Pearl Buck, Margaret Mitchell (*Gone with the Wind*), and Upton Sinclair.


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