

BOOK REVIEWS

JOSÉ MARÍA PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ AND EDWARD WILSON-LEE (eds.), *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Book trade was one of the most important cultural activities in Europe at the beginning of the early modern times. After the invention of the printing press with movable types by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-15th century, the book trade greatly improved and the book market and other economically related activities expanded in all parts of Europe: “the invention of print accelerated the developments that this new linguistic and hermeneutical drift had generated, by increasing the production and availability of textual artifacts, it also magnified the potential diversity of their interpretation” (p. 13).

The first stages of book translation, after the invention of printing, were centred on reviving classical authors, especially Greek and Roman literary masterpieces. A major problem in this endeavour was constituted by the foreign character of Greek and Latin languages for those involved in book translation activities. As a consequence of the desire to make classical works accessible to a wide range of people, the national vernacular tradition emerged. Subsequently, vernacular languages started to be used more often in prints. Another important factor that influenced translation and book trade was the religious division of Western Europe, marked by the Protestant Reformation. This phenomenon, on the one hand, further facilitated the translation of sacred texts in national languages and, on the other hand, improved the quality of the translated texts. However, despite the rising predilection for vernaculars, Latin remained a highly important and appreciated language in intellectual Europe: “for decades Latin would continue to be the international common language of diplomacy, scholarship, and science” (p. 1).

The book edited by Pérez Fernández and Wilson-Lee intends to present the early modern translation phenomenon as a complex cultural endeavour which, apart from its intellectual constraints, is strictly bound to social and political factors. The main contribution of translators and printers rests in their capacity to transfer and translate texts from classical languages but also from one vernacular to another, a phenomenon that shaped the formation of a series of close links between European countries and territories: “they helped the growth of a series of markets for book consumption whose demands promoted the translation of those works that had been successful in other linguistic communities” (p. 19)

The first chapter, “Marketing Adaptations of the Ship of Fools: The *Stultiferae naves* (1501) and *Navis stultifera* (1505) of Jodocus Badius Ascensius”, by Paul White, tells the story

of a successful book of that time, namely Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, published in 1494, in Basel. The book was translated in Latin by the German printer Jakob Locher, in 1497, as *Stultifera navis* and published in the Low Countries. It was so popular that it even had sequels written by other authors, such as *Stultiferae naves* (1501) and *Navis stultifera* (1505), both published by Jodocus Badius Ascensius in Paris. These books show the manner in which, in early modern Europe, the translated texts improved and even changed the original text, demonstrating "the extent to which printed texts could be converted and adapted to different uses – and the ways in which networks connecting printers and scholars in diverse geographical locations enabled this" (p. 22).

The second chapter, "Translation, *Sermo Communis*, and the Book Trade", by José María Pérez Fernández, uses the popular sentimental romances of Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* (ca. 1343–44), and Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini's *Historia de duobus amantibus* (ca. 1444), as case studies for the future translations and promotion of the vernaculars in the early modern period. There were many texts written in the *sermo communis* technique in the fifteenth century, written as dialogues that involved all the characters of the book. They were popular, they circulated among common people and, most importantly, the language of their dissemination was the vernacular. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how, in early modernity, this genre (of sentimental prose fiction) intersected with the practice of translation and how, under the auspices of the principles of philological humanism, this connection contributed to the linguistic assimilation of early modern vernaculars (p.40).

The third chapter, "Language Manuals and the Book Trade in England", by Rocío G. Sumillera, illustrates the contribution made by translation practices to the creation of national identities in early modern Europe. Translation techniques developed based on language textbooks and they served as tools for teaching foreign languages. Additionally, translations served as indispensable instruments in the creation of a multilingual but increasingly interconnected modern Europe (p. 76).

Chapter four, "The Heroes in the World's Marketplace: Translating and Printing Epic in Renaissance Antwerp", by Miguel Martínez shows the ways in which the printing practices of the bookmen of Antwerp developed and improved the European book markets. Martínez's claim is that bookmen in early modern Antwerp contributed not only to the advancement of an international market where translations in vernaculars were sold, but also played a significant role in opening new social spaces for the circulation of prints. (p.103)

Chapter five, "The Politics of Translation and the German Reception of Dante: Johannes Herold's *Monarchy*," by Daniel DiMassa tells the story of Johannes Basilius Herold's translation of Dante's *De Monarchia* from Italian into German, published in Switzerland, in 1599. DiMassa emphasizes the role of translations in the European political context of the early modern period, arguing rather for secular authority than for clerical intervention in state affairs, in a context of rising political tensions between the Habsburgs and the Pope similar to those portrayed by Dante in his treaty, *De Monarchia*. Even more, in his Preface, Herold advocated the irrelevance of religious interference in temporal government and launched "a

radically conceived *translatio imperii* in order to ground the emperor's authority historically" (p. 108).

Chapter six, "Translation Trajectories in Early Modern European Print Culture: The Case of Boccaccio", by Guyda Armstrong, focuses on the trade and translation in English of four of Giovanni Boccaccio's texts, published in England: *Pleasaunt Disport of divers Noble Personages* (1567), *Amorous Fiammetta* (1587), *Famous Tragical Discourse of Two Lovers, Affrican and Mensola* (1597), and *Decameron* (1620). These translations in English were made from other successive vernacular translations in the 15th and 16th centuries, many years after the texts had been written in manuscripts in Florentine vernacular in Italy. Armstrong's paper argues for the complex relations between book markets and vernacular translations, highlighting the geographical and intellectual complexity of the premodern trade networks: "a material reading of the translated Boccaccio editions allows us, as twenty-first- readers, to access the transnational reach of these premodern trade networks and their historically and geographically situated textual performances" (p. 140)

Chapter seven, "Glosses and Oracles: Guiding Readers in Early Modern Europe", written by Edward Wilson-Lee, explains how the book trade of popular, easy to read editions contributed to the creation of a printing culture in vernacular languages in early modern times. "The printing of illicit editions for consumption at home and in their native markets, the use of foreign-language texts as models for typographical developments, and the construction of polyglot compendia of rhetorical equivalents" (p. 161) lead to a culture built around printers, printing houses, book sellers, and book markets.

Chapter eight, "Spenser's Dutch Uncles: The Family of Love and the Four Translations of *A Theatre for Worldlings*", by Stewart Mottram, portrays the story of a very important English eclectic book from the 16th century, *A Theatre for Worldling*. The book was translated from Flemish with the help of Edmund Spenser, one of the most important modern English poets. The book is an illustration of "a text produced by a collaborative community of poets, printers, illustrators, and translators." In Mottram's opinion, the book's collaborative aspect involved in the trade facilitated the "translation" of 16th century ideologies across various texts and translations. (p. 164)

Chapter nine, "Translation, Re-Writing and Censorship during the Counter-Reformation", written by Simona Munari, explains how the trade of books and its markets were affected by the censorship phenomenon after the Reformation. The policies of book censorship varied, and even had a contradictory nature from one country to another. Moreover, the tense social climate of Europe increased in the Counter-Reformation period. Munari's claim is that the political instability and religious controversies equally acted upon the "the intersection of translation, censorship, and the book market in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" as the social and cultural factors (p. 198).

The last chapter, "The Publication of Iberian Romance in Early Modern Europe", written by Louise Wilson, focuses on the increasing popularity of Spanish and Portuguese chivalric romances in the 16th century, even though every national book trade market had specific literary concerns, such as "accusations of immorality or time idly spent in reading" (p.

201). The connections between the highly successful translations in vernaculars and the prosperous book market of early modern Europe are evident: “across the sixteenth century, they were translated into other European vernaculars including French, German, Dutch, Italian, and English” (p. 201).

The book edited by Pérez Fernández and Wilson-Lee is particularly addressed to those interested in the historical formation of European book markets and the evolution of vernacular printings rather than in the pure philological translation techniques. It presents a close analysis of the interconnected relations between the practice of translation, translators and printers in early modern Europe, and the subsequent outcomes that resulted from the printing phenomenon, such as the creation of national correlated book markets. This book makes an interesting contribution to the history of printing by bringing to the fore the multifaceted relations between the circulation of prints and the popularity of translations. The main argument of the book is that the practice of translation did not only facilitate the modern usage of vernaculars, but also contributed in a significant manner to the formation of intellectual and social networks of communication. It also enabled the creation of national identities. Furthermore, even factors such as the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and the phenomenon of censorship played a powerful role for the improvement of the quality of printed texts and the increase of continental book markets.

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DORU RADOSAV, *Istoria din memorie. Încercări de istorie orală* (History from memory. Oral history attempts) (Cluj-Napoca-Gatineau: Argonaut, Symphologic Publishing 2016)

The volume authored by the Cluj-based Professor Doru Radosav compiles a series of studies and articles written and published throughout more than two decades. It includes a substantial and unique contribution to the Romanian historiography: the study that opens Doru Radosav’s book on the concept of oral history, a systematic presentation of the main historiography schools from across the world. Both the introductory comprehensive study and the collection of previously published articles present Professor Radosav as a historian who has introduced a new historiographic subject into the Romanian academic community, as a particular voice of contemporary Romanian historiography. He has also established a school of historiography as the founder and leader of the Institute of Oral History of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.

Professor Radosav’s inclination towards oral history was, on the one hand, determined by his intellectual and professional aptitude for exploring new methodological and theoretical perspectives of general history works in history throughout the 20th century. On the