

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Pérez Fernández, José María and Edward Wilson-Lee, eds.
Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe
Demetriou, Tania and Rowan Tomlinson, eds. The Culture of
Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660

Brenda M. Hosington

Volume 40, numéro 1, hiver 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086319ar>
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i1.28464>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Hosington, B. (2017). Compte rendu de [Pérez Fernández, José María and Edward Wilson-Lee, eds. Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe / Demetriou, Tania and Rowan Tomlinson, eds. The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(1), 263–268.
<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i1.28464>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2017

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

reconstructs the value of money and the monetary flow in order to contextualize the language of realism rooted in financial transactions, illustrates the originality and critical boldness with which Mulholland brings Middleton's play close to modern concerns and locates it in its historical and commercial context. Textual glosses are no less important to the book's critical apparatus than the preliminary chapters; when presented in the form of extensive critical footnotes, they complement the criticism in the introduction, especially discussions on language and the play's themes. The book ends with four appendices: on press variants, lineation, the song (written by David Klausner), and the opening of 3.1 as it appears in Q1 (sig. D1^v–D2^v).

This book is a major addition to the Revels Plays series. Based on the most up-to-date, extensive, and rigorous scholarship on the textual and bibliographical principles of preparing a text, Mulholland's edition is a major contribution to both textual and critical scholarship and the editing of Middleton.

GORAN STANIVUKOVIC

Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Pérez Fernández, José María and Edward Wilson-Lee, eds.

Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 271 + 8 ill. ISBN 978-1-1070-8004-1 (hardcover) US\$99.

and

Demetriou, Tania and Rowan Tomlinson, eds.

The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. xii, 231 + 3 ill. ISBN 978-1-13740-148-9 (hardcover) US\$90.

The appearance of these two volumes bears witness to the growing awareness of the centrality of translation in virtually every aspect of cultural, intellectual, and social transnational exchange in the years between 1400 and 1660. Translation reflected the movement of peoples, languages, texts, and ideas that criss-crossed Europe and beyond, and did so ever more intensely as the power of the printing press increased. Until relatively recently, however, it was underestimated as a

force for change, while the role played by translators was overshadowed by that of original authors. These two essay collections thus make a welcome and worthy contribution to ensuring that early modern translation occupies its rightful place as a vehicle for cultural intervention.

One of the exciting developments within present translation studies is an examination of the links between this discipline and other fields of scholarship. In *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe*, editors and essayists explore the relationship between translation and print or book history. Apart from a special issue of *Renaissance Studies* entitled “Translation and Print in Early Modern Europe” (29.1, 2015), this is the only work to date to examine how translation shaped the book trade, participated in transnational networks of authorship, patronage, print, and publishing, contributed to creating readerships, and influenced the formation of literary canons; and how, in turn, printing practices and norms shaped the translated text, from both material and marketing perspectives.

The range and ambition of the collection are impressive. Ten essays, the editors’ incisive “Introduction,” which sets out the background of humanist philological and linguistic approaches to translation and provides an overview of the factors influencing the early book trade, and a thoughtful and thought-provoking “Afterword” by Neil Rhodes take us from fifteenth-century Italy and Spain, through sixteenth-century France, England, and Germany, to important printing centres like Antwerp and Basel.

The favoured form of discussion is that of the case study. Thus Paul White, in a particularly perspicacious essay on the strategies involved in marketing Brant’s *Ship of Fools* in the form of various adaptations, explores the different ways in which the work was translated, reproduced, put to various uses, and reprinted and marketed by early Paris printers. Daniel DiMassa demonstrates how a translated text can contribute to the changed national identity of the receptor readership, and how, in the case of Ficino’s Italian translation of Dante’s *De monarchia*, intermediary translations play a role—an aspect of translation history that is often ignored. Four essays concern fictional texts. José María Pérez Fernández traces the paths trodden by Boccaccio’s *Fiammetta* and Piccolomini’s *Historia de duobus amantibus* in Spain, and convincingly argues that they contributed to an increasing popularity of romance fiction, particularly reflected in the activities of Salamanca printers. Guyda Armstrong further explores Boccaccio translations by adding three works to his *Fiammetta*

and extending the geographical space covered from Spain to Italy, France, and England. This enables her to propose a model that explains the transnational transmission of individual texts and authors, which she imaginatively bases on that of the neural network model as adapted to literary works. Louise Wilson uses the Spanish chivalric romances, *Amadís de Gaula* and *Palmerín*, to demonstrate, not only early modern views on translating works from one vernacular into another, but also the ways in which emergent book trades evolved across national boundaries and printing practices were copied, imitated, and reproduced in various countries—in this case, France and England. Wilson's insightful comments on Anthony Munday, in particular, should result in a better understanding of this extremely active but underestimated translator. Edward Wilson-Lee examines Guarini's *Il pastor fido* and Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* in order to explore how their respective printers used annotations, comments, and glosses, as indeed the authors employed the device of an oracle, to shape the reader's perception of the works. Rather than describe a specific, concrete link between authors, translators, and printers, Wilson-Lee more subtly presents us with a web of personal and material connections spreading from Italy to England and with an example of how two works, by going through repeatedly renewed linguistic and material forms, could become part of a transnational canon.

Two essays discuss the translation and publication of poetry. Stewart Mottram discusses Edmund Spenser's *Theatre for Worldings*, a translation of Jan van der Noot's emblem book, *Het Bosken*, arguing that, like Spenser's later poetry, especially *The Ruins of Time*, it displays the influence of the Family of Love. Be that as it may, Mottram's tracing of the work through Protestant and Catholic editions and translations does clearly demonstrate how poets, printers, illustrators, and translators could collaborate in order to transmit ideologies across boundaries, both physical and spiritual. Miguel Martinez focuses on printers of poetry rather than poets. The Antwerp printers Martinus Nutius, Joannes Steelsius, and Joannes Bellerus produced classical and Italian epic poetry in Spanish translation, influencing the material features of printing such works, their distribution and consumption, and even the way vernacular epics were later written in the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, Martinez interestingly suggests, a study of how these printers and their translations travelled from Antwerp to Spain might produce a map depicting a new sociology and material history of discursive practices.

The two remaining essays take as case studies a selection of language learning manuals and a corpus of works placed on the Index. Rocio G. Sumillera's account of the rapport between such manuals and the English book trade is perhaps less focused than the other essays in the collection, jumping from a discussion of the manuals and their comments on translation to a brief review of translation theory in prefaces by later poets like Denham, Cowley, Fanshawe, and Waller, writing in a very different context. Furthermore, the role of printers and booksellers distinctly takes second place in this essay; yet printed learning manuals, especially in cheaper formats, were wildly popular and extremely profitable for printers. Simona Munari, on the other hand, provides a magisterial account of how the print trade could be affected by certain outside factors, in this case the powerful impact exerted by the intersecting fields of censorship and translation. The Church's mistrust of the vernacular, as she points out, was particularly pertinent for translations since most were made into or between vernacular languages. Coining the term "selective or adoptive translation," she argues that self-censorship was a strategy that translators could safely employ in order to escape the eyes of the Inquisitors; as mediators between author and reader, they were free to reshape a work and its reception. Her final plea should be writ large: accounts of national literatures should be rethought so that they start to take shape around translation, which is a useful tool for interpreting the cultural history of Europe.

The second collection, *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, is in some ways a more modest affair, although it, too, breaks new ground in the field of translation and cultural history. Equally important, it repeats the claim that translation was central to the intellectual, social, and cultural exchanges that linked the countries of Europe, a point made forcefully by Terence Cave in his "Epilogue" and by others in the collection. In their "Introduction," the editors explain their choice of focus on England and France: French translation culture shaped that of England and was the one that mattered most to it. They demonstrate this in part by stating quite rightly that in terms of English translation, French source texts rank second only to Latin and far outstrip those in any other vernacular, while the same holds true for the intermediary translations that English translators often used.

Ten essays treat a variety of aspects of translation in early modern England and France. Two touch on the relationship of translation and book history. Warren Boutcher, after listing modern models of translation that demonstrate

a new flexibility in translation studies, as well as the various new databases pertinent to translation, emphasizes the importance of diverse nexuses of social relationships in which translation activity is embedded. Paul White's essay on the production and distribution of books focuses on a particular scholar-printer, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, who portrays himself in various translations and commentaries as an importer or a purveyor of foreign commodities. Translation and commentary, as White argues, go hand in hand, and did so for Badius, who saw them both as mediators and used similar paratextual metalanguage in publishing both.

Politics informs four essays, although in various ways. Two explore the interaction of politics, translation, Greek, and religion: Glyn Norton discusses the controversial appointment of readerships in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew by Francis I within the context of the competition between Church-authorized biblical translation and humanist, philological renderings, a thorny issue in Renaissance France. Neil Rhodes paints a wider canvas: the teaching of Greek at Oxbridge, the study and translation of Greek authors of dodgy reputation like Lucian, the importance of Cheke in promoting Greek and translation, and the role of Greek in upsetting the balance between Latin and the vernacular, the "vulgare English," all of which facilitate a "translation culture." Politics and religious ideology merge in another two essays: Patricia Palmer discusses Stanihurst's 1582 *Aeneis*, written against the backdrop of English- and Protestant-dominated Ireland. She perceptively makes a link between the imperial language of Virgil and the colonizing language of Spenser, employed by the English crown in Ireland in 1582, and the "Hiberno-English" of the Irish Catholic translator, exiled in the Low Countries. By doing so, she ably demonstrates how translation can serve both political and ideological ends, as well as helping to forge national identity. Edward Wilson-Lee, in his discussion of Mary Sidney's translations of two French texts by de Mornay and Garnier, claims that to the Elizabethan mind the acts of translation, embassy, and hospitality are linked. He supports this assertion by demonstrating how her translations must be seen not simply in the context of domestic politics, but in that of Anglo-French relations, diplomacy, and political and religious collaboration. It is a new and refreshing consideration of the varied roles played by Sidney's translations in early modern France and England.

Canonical authors in English translation represented in this collection are Homer, Rabelais, and Montaigne. Tania Demetriou compares the portrayal

of Penelope in the *Odyssey*, Elyot's dictionary, Giambattista della Porta's *La Penelope*, and William Gager's 1592 play, *Ulysses redux*, which he calls a "translation of Homer" despite its many omissions, additions, reworkings, and large borrowings from della Porta. The greatest changes, however, concern the depiction of Penelope's character, whereby Homer's prudent wife becomes a paragon of chastity, and the final joyous reunion of Penelope and Odysseus, unclouded by any doubts on her part. These support Gager's own description of the play as a "tragedy with a happy ending." Such is the transforming power of translation. In Anne Lake Prescott's essay on Thomas Urquhart's translations of *Gargantua*, *Pantagruel*, and sections of the *Tiers livre*, translation is examined from a different angle, being seen as part and parcel of the translator's entire literary output. All his works are marked by what she calls, punningly, his "inflationary" method of writing. The blurring of the discursive boundaries so often thought to separate original writing from translation is of particular interest. The two essays on Montaigne address very specific aspects of that author's *Essais*: his use of the adverb "à l'aventure" and his scepticism as expressed in book 2, chapters 14 and 15. Both authors begin by referring to the ways in which modern translators handle these questions. Kirsti Sellevold then explores Florio's various translations of the adverb, concluding that the translator was aware of its importance and contribution to the multi-faceted work that is the *Essais*. John O'Brien focuses on Montaigne's own translations: one phrase from Sextus Empiricus and another from Pliny the Elder. These, he contends, are bound up with Montaigne's writing procedures and modes of philosophical thinking, including his challenge to Aristotelian and Scholastic principles.

These two collections of essays present various and varied ways of examining the nature and role of translation in early modern Europe. They provide a well-documented and convincingly-argued account of the translation movement, demonstrate the need to see translation as one of many inter-related agencies employed in spreading knowledge of all kinds, and above all, promote an appreciation of the protean "task of the translator" in the burgeoning world of print, which for too long escaped modern commentators on the period.

BRENDA M. HOSINGTON

Université de Montréal / University of Warwick