

Reading for Translation: Assessing Italian Fiction for British Publishers (1945–1968)

Sara Sullam

University of Milan

ABSTRACT

This article considers translation as a specific process involving a complex set of professional practices aimed at producing a version of a work in a new language with the intention of distributing and selling it in the related market. Within this context, in-house and external professional readers of foreign fiction should be seen as key actors in the process of literary transfer. I argue that more must be done to understand the factors shaping the professional practice of reading across literatures, within the publishing world, and that readers' reports on foreign literature are important instances of specialised professional discourse. The article provides the first historical account of the cultural agency of the most important professional readers of Italian fiction working in British publishing in the period 1945–1968. I review their educational and professional background, assessing its influence on their critical perspective. I then discuss their reports and correspondence with publishers in order to illustrate their agency and the extent to which their professional discourse on contemporary Italian literature played a part in its reception in Britain.

SOMMARIO

L'articolo considera la traduzione come un processo specifico che comprende una serie di pratiche professionali mirate alla produzione di un'opera in una lingua nuova, nonché alla sua distribuzione e vendita nel mercato di destinazione. In questo contesto, i lettori editoriali – interni ed esterni – sono figure chiave nel processo di transfer letterario. Nelle pagine che seguono, sostengo che i fattori che influiscono sulla pratica della lettura professionale di opere straniere meritano maggiore attenzione scientifica, e che i pareri editoriali possano essere considerati come genere di scrittura specialistica. In questo articolo offro una prima ricostruzione storica della *agency* culturale dei più importanti lettori di narrativa italiana per l'editoria inglese nel periodo 1945-1968, prendendone in considerazione formazione e retroterra professionale, per valutare come questi abbiano influenzato la loro prospettiva critica. Passo poi ad analizzare passi scelti di pareri di lettura e corrispondenza editoriale, per illustrare la *agency* dei lettori tramite esempi concreti e valutare fino a che punto il loro discorso sulla

letteratura italiana contemporanea abbia avuto una funzione nella ricezione di quest'ultima nel Regno Unito.

KEYWORDS

Professional readers; readers' reports; Italian fiction; British publishing; translation.

PAROLE CHIAVE

Lettori professionisti; pareri editoriali; narrativa italiana; editoria inglese; traduzione.

'The almost untranslatable title of this book might be rendered, *mutatis mutandis*, as "The Bardot of Balham": so quipped Lovett Edwards in 1960 in his assessment of Giovanni Testori's novel *La Gilda del Mac Mahon* (1959), which he had read on behalf of the publisher Allen & Unwin.¹ Testori's exuberant heroine might have been flattered by the comparison with Brigitte Bardot, but would perhaps have been less happy about being parachuted into Balham from the Milanese suburbs. Edwards thought that the translation of this book was actually a risky prospect, and it was never undertaken. In any case, it is significant that his reader's report opens with a reflection on translatability. Edwards' comment perfectly illustrates the notion at the core of this article: that the professional reading of foreign fiction has had a central role in the process of linguistic and cultural mediation that takes place within publishing houses. This process involves a series of professional practices – selection of manuscripts, assessment by readers, translation, and development of promotional material – aimed at the production of work by foreign writers in the host nation's language.

The profession of 'reader' emerged in the mid nineteenth century in the wake of the expansion of the reading public, when publishers, not necessarily equipped with either the requisite expertise or interest, had to turn to advisers in the literary field or in particular areas within it.² Early on, two types of reader were established. As Andrew Nash tells us, the large generalist publishing houses (he cites Allen & Unwin) tended to call on external readers, while publishers with a more focused catalogue and a more distinct profile (Chatto & Windus, for example) usually employed in-house readers.³ The functions of the latter overlapped in some degree with those of the editor in that they might allow for some involvement with the manuscript, which was not normally asked of the external reader. The work of the publisher's reader developed in different ways in different national contexts, but without the reader anywhere ever gaining the proper recognition within publishing houses that was awarded to

other roles: in comparison with the editor or production manager, for example, they remained a shadowy figure. In Stanley Unwin's oft-quoted verdict, 'Publishers' readers seldom, if ever, get the praise they deserve. The public knows little or nothing about their conscientious and exhausting work.'⁴

Despite their crucial importance, publishers' readers have hitherto received scant attention, or at least not the attention commensurate with their importance as the first link in the publishing chain, when we consider that their assessment of a book's publishability is 'the action at the start of every path towards public recognition'.⁵ There is an entry by Gail Chester in the *Oxford Companion to the Book*, and a monograph by Ulrike Schneider; the latter, however, focuses exclusively on the German context, not covering the market for translations, and on in-house readers (the '*Lektoren*', whose function in Germany overlaps with that of literary editors).⁶ Otherwise, the history of publishing has generated a series of contributions over time on specific individual figures, particularly critics and writers given employment in the publishing industry. In the case of publishers' readers of fiction, those engaged with their own national literature were often themselves writers or critics who were taken on specifically because of their literary knowledge; their agency was particularly expressed within the borders of the literary field. It was different for the advisers on foreign literature, whose competence was primarily linguistic and cultural, and not necessarily literary. It will therefore be no surprise that publishers' readers of foreign fiction have received even less attention. In the area of studies on literary transfer, these figures have come under scrutiny if they are also translators.⁷ In general, however, their readers' reports have not been regarded as specialised professional discourse on literature, but as working documents on the same level as other editorial material.

In this article, which belongs at the disciplinary intersection between literary studies and the history of publishing, I have used archival research to focus on the readers of Italian fiction who worked for Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus and The Bodley Head during the period 1945–1968. I would argue that there is a need for more work if we are to understand the factors that shaped the professional practice of reading across literatures within the publishing world, and that readers' reports on foreign literature are important instances of specialised professional discourse; publishers' readers should therefore be considered not just in terms of their individual behaviour, but as members of a 'community of readers' that also included their correspondents (mainly editors) within the publishing houses.⁸ This allows us to draw attention to an aspect of reading for publishers that is often neglected: its relational nature, located within a dialogue. The publisher's reader is reading for other people, and often the act itself of reading takes place in the context of one or more questions that influence its performance. These

questions then structure the reader's report, which provides indications as to a work's readability, its potential for success, and its relationship with books by other authors already in circulation, as well as a synopsis. In the case of foreign literature, the reader is not just reading for other people but also functioning as an interpreter, mediating between two languages and two cultures, and thus extending the boundaries of the dialogue and the network of relationships that forms around a text.

If we consider publishers' readers as members of a reading community, located in time and space, we can start from 'the social and institutional circumstances in which people read' rather than studying how they operated from an individual perspective.⁹ For these readers, the institutional framework was established by their relationship with the publishing house, traces of whose activities are preserved in the archives.¹⁰ However, the meagre consideration awarded by scholarship to their assessments and the precarious nature of the role of reader at the institutional level is reflected in the organisation of publishers' archives. Many of these, in the way that they are structured, restore the relationship between authors and editors, and then deal with production (design and typesetting), marketing, and the administrative and financial aspects.¹¹ The already indeterminate status of the publisher's reader has thus remained ill-defined; profiles and testimony of crucial importance are left out of the picture of the network of relationships that underlies the emergence of a book. Some archives do, however, preserve a record of the entire production process, including the selection of manuscripts (for which the key documents are the manuscript entry books), readers' reports, and correspondence with the readers. Only when these documents are present is it possible to reconstruct the activity of readers in relation to publishing houses, in all its manifestations and as it developed over time, so that due recognition can be given to its centrality within the process of producing a literary work.

The international story within British publishing: aliens and uncommon readers

To attempt to sketch a profile of some of the readers of Italian literature – and foreign literature in general – in postwar Britain is to encounter events and experiences that are often much more engaging than some of the novels they assessed; we might call this the 'international story' within British publishing. This story has still not been given the full attention it deserves. However, two particular features of the twentieth-century British publishing industry emerge as characteristic: first, the substantial presence of refugees and immigrants, for the most part

from Central and Eastern Europe; and second, the large number of people, during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, who had been employed in the intelligence services and international relations precisely because of their linguistic skills.¹² This meant that the reading community assessing foreign fiction during the 1950s and early 1960s consisted of people whose linguistic and literary competence, in most cases, had not developed exclusively within the world of literature and in a monolingual context with a shared set of cultural and literary points of reference. There was, instead, a network of people who spoke various languages fluently, and whose skills had developed in the encounter between different cultures and languages. The biographical and professional profiles of the members of this community, as well as the discourse on literature generated within it, draw attention to the creative tension between ‘national cultures and foreign narratives’ at a crucial point in postwar reconstruction and European integration.¹³ This article focuses on the processes of selection, assessment and, in some cases, production of works of fiction within three publishing houses – Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus, and The Bodley Head – drawing on the material conserved in the Archives of British Publishing and Printing at the University of Reading, which cast light on a fascinating page in the more general history of literature translated in Britain.

Jonathan Cape

The activity of importing foreign literature at Jonathan Cape can be properly followed from 1961, the year for which its manuscript entry books are first available. Since 1945, Cape had undoubtedly been one of the publishers most committed to the translation of European literature, whose place in its literary catalogue was fully recognised. In 1955, Jonathan Cape himself had taken on Robert Knittel, an American, as the senior editor; Knittel ‘knew American fiction and had a taste for translations of European writers, but few of his publications made money.’¹⁴ After Cape’s death in 1960, the young Tom Maschler (1933–2020), previously with Penguin, was recruited. Born into the trade, in that his father had been a prominent publisher in Weimar Berlin, Maschler came to England as a child after a brief spell in Vienna. On leaving school he was sent to France to learn the language, which he quickly mastered. Rejected by Oxford, where he had applied to read English, he then left for three years of travel in Israel and the United States. His contact with Italy dated from that period, during which he tried to forge a career in its film industry.¹⁵ When this attempt failed, Maschler returned to England and in 1955 began to work in publishing, first for André Deutsch, then for McGibbon & Kee, then Penguin, and finally, from 1960, for Cape. Maschler’s Cape was one of the ‘literary’ publishers

that had a major impact and great success from the 1960s onwards. Maschler himself was one of the most active figures in the literary arena of the second half of the twentieth century; for example, it was he, in 1969, who established the Booker Prize, now one of the most important literary competitions at the global level. One of his readers, Claire Tomalin, the well-known biographer of Dickens, Hardy, Austen and others, remembers him in glowing terms:

Tom was a dashing figure who took over an old-fashioned firm, fired by ambition to make his mark in publishing. He succeeded triumphantly. He had a good, if not infallible, eye for a bestseller, and a flair for promoting his books that few other publishers could match.¹⁶

Cape is remembered as retaining a proper group of in-house readers longer than most other publishing houses, providing them with good working conditions.¹⁷ However, the manuscript entry books show that when it came to foreign literature the readers were generally external, and many of the volumes of Italian fiction that arrived would seem to have been screened by Maschler. The papers also reveal that some of the books assigned to Maschler were read by other people; Vasco Pratolini's *Lo scialo*, for example, was read by Archibald Colquhoun. Alongside the initials of Maschler and others whose identities are not known – 'DG' (twice), 'WP' (twice), 'CB' and 'PB' (once each) – the only surname that appears in full is that of Isabel Quigly, who acted as an adviser for various publishers.¹⁸

Born in Spain because of her father's work, Quigly graduated in English at Cambridge. Her first job, from 1948 to 1951, was as an editorial assistant at Penguin, after which she spent an extended period in Italy, in Florence, where she married the sculptor Raffaello Salimbeni. The marriage did not last long and Quigly returned to England, where she started working as a literary critic for the *Manchester Guardian*, from 1953, and then also as a film critic for the *Spectator*, from 1956 to 1966.¹⁹ Alongside these commitments she was working hard as an editorial consultant and translator, being able to call on three foreign languages: Italian, French and Spanish.²⁰ Of the two women whom Robin Healey has included in his list of the ten most productive translators of Italian literature during that era, Quigly, who was also a single mother, was notably the only one (the other being the American Frances Frenaye) not to have regular formal employment, instead building up her professional profile from freelance journalism, publishing consultancy, and translation.²¹ It is difficult to know how many books a translator might manage to translate in a year, but in Quigly's case this activity was highly productive: when Maschler asked her to read *Le furie* by Guido Piovene, in 1963, she turned this down because, she said, she was currently working on six translations.²²

For Maschler, Quigly was much more than a mere reader and translator: she was a genuine consultant on Italian literature. When, for example, she was asked for an opinion on Pasolini's *Una vita violenta*, she mentioned her reading of a book by Gadda, which was to be translated by Secker & Warburg some years later:

I recently read a book which was largely in Roman dialect, rather less difficult than Pasolini's but still a bit foxing at times, but it was so good I thought it worth an effort: Carlo Emilio Gadda's *Quer brutto pasticciaccio di [sic] via Merulana* (I hope that's the right spelling, a very complicated word).²³

When Maschler set out on his long quest for a translator for *Una vita violenta*, it was Quigly whom he turned to for assistance: 'There is something I would like to ask your advice about. [...] I simply can't think of a translator who could cope with the Roman dialect [...]. Can you give me any suggestion?'²⁴ Quigly replied that in her view the book 'would *have* to be translated by someone on the spot, I mean in Rome'; she provided him with two names, Ann Natanson, who wrote for both *Life* and *Time*, and a 'more "publishing" contact [...] a girl that you may have known at Longmans until May this year – Benita Wells', who 'might have some ideas about translators on the spot'.²⁵

Chatto & Windus and the Hogarth Press

In 1946, Chatto & Windus acquired the Hogarth Press, which became one of its imprints. Between 1945 and 1968 – a period fully accounted for by the manuscript entry books – these two brand names assessed thirty-five works of Italian literature, twelve of which reached publication. In terms of the number of titles issued, the phase of greatest intensity was the first half of the 1960s, under the partner and then director Peter Calvocoressi.²⁶ Born in Karachi in 1912 into a family of Greek traders from Chios, Calvocoressi went to school at Eton and then graduated in History and German at Oxford. He worked as a lawyer until the outbreak of war, when he was posted to Bletchley Park and assigned to the decryption and translation of German messages intercepted by the service. With the war over, he worked at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (otherwise known as Chatham House). We can reasonably assume that this was where he first met Muriel Grindrod, a specialist in Italian affairs also employed there, to whom he would later turn for various reader's reports: she was described by his colleague Ian Parsons as 'one of our best Italian readers'.²⁷

The limited information available about Grindrod comes from the obituary by Alan Campbell, a former British ambassador to Italy who worked closely with her at the British-Italian Society, which he chaired from 1983 to 1990.²⁸ Grindrod had been involved with this society right from its foundation in 1941, and was the editor of its journal, *Rivista*, from 1948 until her death in 1994. Grindrod was born in 1902. At Cambridge she started by studying Classics, but changed course to graduate in Modern Languages. After a year at the Sorbonne she returned to England, and in due course became Arnold Toynbee's assistant at Chatham House. Her interest in Italy developed during the Second World War, when her Chatham House section was moved to Oxford to join the relocated Foreign Office research department. In 1952, Grindrod took on the editorship of Chatham House's magazine *The World Today*, and then between 1956 and 1962 also edited its journal *International Affairs*. She wrote various articles for these publications on the Italian political situation, which she also addressed in two books published by the institute: *The New Italy: Transition from War to Peace* (1947), and *The Rebuilding of Italy: Politics and Economics, 1945–1955* (1955). In addition, she translated, amongst other works, the series of lectures on Fascism that Federico Chabod had given at the Sorbonne (*A History of Italian Fascism*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963). Grindrod's knowledge of the political world would certainly have been a lens for her activity as a publisher's reader. In this regard, her assessment of Pratolini's trilogy *Una storia italiana* is revealing. Calvocoressi passed this to her in 1963, carefully spelling out the nature of his request:

Where do you place Pratolini in the current Italian literary scene and do you think that these books would find readers in this country? We are of course concerned that they should have something more than a *succès d'estime*, and so we are interested in their readability as well as their literary merit.²⁹

Grindrod replied that she had read Pratolini's *Il quartiere* some years before, but had considered it too 'purely Italian-centred to export well', adding, however, that 'our ideas have changed about that over the intervening years'. For Chatto & Windus she assessed *Metello* (1955) and *Lo scialo* (1960); the third book in the trilogy, *Allegoria e derisione*, was only published in 1966. In the eyes of an English reader who although an expert in Italian politics had been schooled in the English style of writing, *Metello* seemed somewhat lacking as a novel *per se*, because of the major role that political discourse took in the plot:

Thus at the end of the book one has the feeling that the book tells the story less of [its protagonist] *Metello* than of the development of Socialism and trade unionism in Florence at the turn of the century. The detailed descriptions of strikes and all their surrounding discussions and negotiations heighten this impression.

[...] But in so far as the characters come alive, one feels that it is almost in spite of themselves, for they are so – swamped by their surroundings and by the socialist-trade-unionist them. The story, in fact, would interest the historian or sociologist rather than the reader of novels.³⁰

In the lively debate in Italy over *Metello* on its publication in 1955, the book's political theme had not represented a problem either for its supporters or its detractors. Bruno Falsetto describes the different perspectives: at the forefront of the enthusiasts, Carlo Salinari saw Pratolini's novel as the first successful attempt at portraying 'the dynamism of the historical narrative and its solid structuring around a clearly portrayed central character', in tandem with 'the concrete expression of the sort of realism that is supported by coherent narrative structures and an appropriate ideological awareness'; its critics, among them Carlo Muscetta, instead decried Pratolini's inability 'to properly reconstruct the development of the social forces in play in Florence at the turn of the century'.³¹ Grindrod saw *Metello* as an attempt to present a Florence that was a 'forerunner of the city of today, the centre of an intense political life of its own with Communist versus Christian Democrat struggles – an aspect of which the average tourist or reader of Italian novels is little aware'.³² Her interpretation was thus strongly influenced by her awareness of the political field, as revealed by this latter comment, written by a woman who had closely monitored Giorgio La Pira's two terms as mayor of Florence, even if she seems to have been unaware of the debate that had developed around *Metello* specifically and the neorealist novel in general.

The other reader and translator particularly active for Chatto & Windus in the period 1945–1968 was David Morrice Low (1890–1972). Unlike Grindrod, or Isabel Quigly, Low was a man of letters with a very conventional curriculum vitae: an Oxford graduate in *Litterae humaniores*, after several years as a teacher in private schools he held temporary wartime posts as a Junior Assistant in the Air Ministry (1941–1943) and Senior Assistant at the Foreign Office (1943–1945). After the war he was a lecturer in the Department of Classics at King's College London, from 1945 to 1957, and then from 1959 he was chair of the English Association.³³ Low's contact with Chatto & Windus dated back to before the war, and derived from his friendship with its director Charles Prentice; together, in 1930, they met the Florentine

bookseller Pino Orioli and Norman Douglas, an anthology of whose works, edited by Low, was published by Chatto & Windus in 1955.³⁴ In the 1930s the publisher issued two novels by Low and, notably, his biography of Edward Gibbon; they also issued a new edition of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abridged by Low, in 1960.³⁵ He translated three books for Chatto & Windus: Ercole Patti's *Cronache romane* (published as *Roman Chronicle*), and Natalia Ginzburg's *Voci della sera* (*Voices in the Evening*) and *Lessico familiare* (*Family Sayings*). Low read and assessed this last work in full, showing that he could see its innovative potential and the way it transcended a particular type of realism, but also the need to make Ginzburg's book as digestible as possible for an English public, in both formal and cultural terms. 'I do fear that English readers would be helped by chapters', he commented, suggesting that giving them headings would also help with the structure, and he also wrote an introduction for the book that informs the reader about the otherwise unfamiliar Turin setting.

The Bodley Head

If we scan the list of works of Italian fiction translated into English between 1945 and 1968, The Bodley Head was not one of the most active publishers: in fact, it put out only six works, as against ten by Jonathan Cape. However, the archived documentation shows that it was heavily engaged in the assessment of Italian novels: between 1954 (the year from which the arrivals can be traced in the manuscript entry book) and 1968, 105 were evaluated.

The Bodley Head was founded in 1887 and established itself as a 'literary' publisher: suffice it to say that in 1936 it was responsible for the first British edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. It was relaunched in 1958 when Max Reinhardt took it over from its three owners, Stanley Unwin, Wren Howard (a partner in Jonathan Cape) and W. G. Taylor (the chairman of J. M. Dent and Sons), who themselves had saved it from failing in 1937. In the four years prior to Reinhardt's arrival, just four works of Italian literature came in, and were assessed by Eric Mosbacher (1903–1998), Marguerite Waldman and Stuart Hood (1915–2011); these were readers – and translators – who belonged to the generation that had been directly involved in the Second World War. For Hood, a graduate in English Literature at Edinburgh, the link with the Italian language and, in the 1950s, with a certain type of war literature was strongly influenced by his own wartime experiences with the Italian partisans, which he wrote about in his memoir *Pebbles from My Skull* (1963).³⁶

The path followed by Eric Mosbacher, whose wartime experiences were strongly influenced by his knowledge of Italian, was somewhat different. Born in London in 1903 into

a family of Jewish origin, Mosbacher studied Modern Languages (French and Italian) at Cambridge, graduating ‘with distinction in spoken Italian’ in 1924. First a journalist, in the 1930s he also established himself as a translator, often working with his wife Gwenda David, who became the London representative for New York’s Viking Press. In 1934 the couple together translated *Fontamara*, by Ignazio Silone; David became the author’s agent in Britain. Two more of their translations of his works, *Bread and Wine* and *The School for Dictators*, came out before the war. While it is certainly not the case that translators are always free to make their own choices, the presence of several volumes of historical and political writing on Mosbacher’s list of work can hardly go unnoticed. These included Boris Nikolaevsky and J. Otto Maenchen-Helfen’s biography, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (Methuen, 1936, with David); *I Helped to Build an Army: Civil War Memoirs of a Spanish Staff Officer* by José Martín Blázquez (Secker & Warburg, 1939, with Franz Borkenau); and *Hitler and I* (Jonathan Cape, 1940, with David), the memoir by Otto Strasser, a member of the left-wing faction within the Nazi Party who was expelled and persecuted by Hitler. During the war, Mosbacher first worked as an interpreter and translator with Italian prisoners of war, then in 1943 was recruited by the Political Warfare Executive to work on propaganda; after the conclusion of hostilities he was sent to the Allied-occupied Rhineland as a journalist, to set up two new independent newspapers, the *Kölnischer Kurier* and the *Ruhr-Zeitung*. On his return to England he resumed his activity as a translator, from various languages, and worked for the German and Austrian Division of the Political Intelligence Service, subsequently becoming ‘general editor of the German and Austrian section of the Information Services Division in the Control Office for Germany’.³⁷ Mosbacher started working for the *Times* in 1948, but maintained his activities as a reader and translator; in 1950 his new translation of Giovanni Verga’s *I Malavoglia* was published as *The House by the Medlar-Tree* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson), thus giving a fresh voice to a book that British critics had seen as a seminal work in Italian realism. In the period prior to Reinhardt’s acquisition of The Bodley Head, the reader’s report on *La fortezza del Kalimegdan*, a wartime novel set in the Middle East and Yugoslavia by the anti-Fascist Stefano Terra, who had worked with Elio Vittorini on the magazine *Il Politecnico*, had contributions by Mosbacher, Hood and Marguerite Waldman, all of whom had directly experienced the upheavals of the war.

Marguerite Waldman was the wife of Milton Waldman, a Jewish-American journalist posted to London who was also an author of historical biographies, a translator, and, in particular, a well-known publisher’s scout and editor: after the war he worked for Collins, but in the 1930s he had started to work with The Bodley Head as a reader and author of biographies

of British navigators.³⁸ The daughter of a silk manufacturer, Marguerite Waldman grew up in Como, Lyon, Krefeld and finally New Jersey, and had been Peggy Guggenheim's best friend at school; proficient in German, French and Italian, she produced various translations in the postwar period. In 1958, Milton and Marguerite Waldman's son Guido became The Bodley Head's American paperback and book-club rights manager, and oversaw the submissions of French and Italian literature in person; his presence there was responsible for a large influx of Italian books, some of which arrived in response to his direct request to their original publishers.³⁹ Guido Waldman spoke Italian fluently, having retained the personal connection with the country that came from spending his early childhood in Sori, near Genoa, where his parents had set up house. The family had stayed there until the passing of the racial laws in 1938, when they moved first to France and then, when the war broke out, to England. Milton and Marguerite had returned to live in Sori in 1947, while Guido completed a degree in Modern Languages (French and Italian) at Oxford. His father then sent him to New York, where he worked in the bookshops owned by the publisher Doubleday. Having completed his military service he pursued a training programme with Doubleday, although this was more oriented towards the business sector. With American parents but having grown up in Italy and France, Guido said that he felt more at home in England than the United States; when he went back to London, his father, who had meanwhile started his work with Collins, introduced him to Max Reinhardt, who was shortly to take on management of The Bodley Head. Although Guido was very young when he too started to work there, he brought with him his parents' contacts and network of relationships. Milton Waldman was recognised as one of the most able mediators for Italian literature on either side of the Atlantic, as can be seen in a letter from Charles Bode, an important London agent for Italian literature, recommending him to Erich Linder: 'he reads Italian, is deeply interested in Italian literature, and a meeting with him might produce considerable results in due course.'⁴⁰ Guido was also quick to establish himself as a preferred interlocutor of agents and publishers, as is evident from a letter, again from Bode, to a Mr Slater of Jonathan Cape, who had asked about Leonardo Sciascia's *Il giorno della civetta*: 'Tom [Maschler] knows of course that I had to submit "Il Giorno della Civetta" first place to Max Reinhardt, for very special reasons, in spite of your enquiry. Guido Waldman, however, decided against it, so it comes your way now.'⁴¹ From 1958 onwards the volume of Italian literature assessed by The Bodley Head appreciably increased, peaking between 1959 and 1961. Evaluating all the books that arrived fell to Waldman, who on certain occasions relied on an external reader, Brian Glanville.

Glanville, the son of a Jewish dentist from Dublin, was born in London in 1931. He quickly showed a flair for languages, but was especially taken by football.⁴² Having decided not to go to university, and not yet eighteen years old, he started a career as a sports writer; in 1952, this took him to Italy, where he worked as a reporter for *Corriere dello Sport* (Rome), *Calcio Illustrato* (Milan), the Press Association and Reuters.⁴³ While there he was soon in touch with the Milanese literary agent Erich Linder, to whom he offered the translation rights for his book on the history of European football.⁴⁴ Although Linder turned this proposal down, the two of them remained on good terms; Glanville wrote to him when he made his debut as a writer of fiction in the magazine *Cronache*, and remained in touch when he started to work with The Bodley Head on his return to London.⁴⁵ Alongside sports writing, Glanville started a career as a novelist, dividing his time between books with an Italian setting and a larger output with Jewish themes and locations. In an environment in which the Jewish origin of many publishers and readers was not explicitly referred to, and in fact had been deliberately separated off from their acquired British identity, it is interesting that on one occasion Glanville was called on specifically because of his Jewishness. When The Bodley Head was sent Giorgio Bassani's *Cinque storie ferraresi* to assess, the unidentified employee 'PG' suggested him as the most suitable reader:

I suspect that Bassani may well be Jewish himself; several of his stories (especially 'Una lapide in via Mazzini') deal with the Jewish question: here it is the return of one of the Ferrarese Jews who escaped the Gestapo's purge, and his reception in the town.

[...]

What I suggest is that we ask Brian Glanville to read this book: he is bi-lingual, lived in Florence for years, knows Ferrara well, is a novelist, and is Jewish: also he doesn't mince his criticism.⁴⁶

Glanville did not, in fact, hold back: while recognising the literary merit of the stories and acknowledging that they would represent a 'prestige' investment, he argued that Bassani tended to provide the synopsis of a novel rather than write a story. In his view, 'I do not think he has been altogether successful even with *Una lapide in via Mazzini*, though the theme here is much stronger (the solitary Jewish survivor to return to Ferrara from Buchenwald).'⁴⁷ Bassani was never translated by The Bodley Head; Faber & Faber, instead, published *The Gold-Rimmed Spectacles* (originally *Gli occhiali d'oro*) in 1958 and then *Five Stories of Ferrara* (*Cinque*

storie ferraresi) in 1962, probably in the wake of the success of *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* in Italy. Nevertheless, leaving Bassani aside, a scan of the list of Italian titles published by The Bodley Head reveals the dominance of novels that directly or indirectly addressed the experience of the Holocaust: there were two books by Lorenza Mazzetti and the first two books by Primo Levi, who unsurprisingly were the only two Italian authors that Guido Waldman, interviewed in 2018, could remember.

In 1958, The Bodley Head published Fortunato Seminara's *The Wind in the Olive Grove* (*Il vento nell'oliveto*, 1951; translated by Isabel Quigly), a work with a southern Italian theme forwarded by its publisher Einaudi, which was to prove a flop in Britain. The 'Holocaust' strand was initiated when they returned to Italian literature in 1962 with Mazzetti's *The Sky Falls* (*Il cielo cade*, Garzanti, 1961), a strongly autobiographical novel. The author tells of her own experience as a girl at the Rignano massacre of 3 August 1944, in which the family of Robert Einstein (Albert's cousin) are all killed except for Robert himself and two of his nieces, the daughters of his non-Jewish wife's brother: Lorenza and her twin sister Paola. The Bodley Head's choice of Mazzetti was not entirely by chance, in that she was already known in Britain as a director; her name was connected with the Free Cinema movement, in which she had played an active part in the 1950s, and she had remained in touch with its members after returning to Italy in 1956. In 1965 The Bodley Head also published *Rage* (originally *Con rabbia*), the sequel to *The Sky Falls*, which recounts the difficult path towards adulthood of its protagonist Penny, who has been scarred by her tragic childhood experience and is growing up in a bigoted Catholic Italy. The themes of survival after the war and the problematic relationship with the heritage of a Jewish family (although Penny herself is not Jewish), without Judaism itself becoming a theme, are all seen through the lens of an adolescent's first-person perspective. This emerges in the reader's report by Isabel Quigly, who was then asked to do the translation, and who emphasised that Mazzetti's book was much more interesting than 'the run-of-the-mill stuff about adolescent "awakening", and all that (the first Sagan book or two, say, or Dacia Maraini's recent *The Age of Discontent*)'.⁴⁸

In Mazzetti's books the theme of the Holocaust, while an essential presence, stays hovering in the background. With the publication of Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* (*Se questo è un uomo*) and *The Truce* (*La tregua*), however, The Bodley Head gave a strong imprint to its Italian list. *Se questo è un uomo* had been translated by Stuart Woolf, who worked on the text with Levi himself, and had been published for the first time in English by the Orion Press.⁴⁹ Based in New York, this had been founded by Howard Greenfeld, an American located in Florence, and Eugenio Cassin, who had worked at Sansoni, in order to publish English

translations of European literature.⁵⁰ *If This Is a Man* was distributed first by André Deutsch and then by Anthony Blond, without selling well.⁵¹ As a result, Woolf's translation of *La tregua* was rejected in 1963 by Deutsch (as well as by Hamish Hamilton and Gollancz), but it caught the eye of Guido Waldman, who was passed it by Guido Davico Bonino at the Frankfurt Book Fair and then oversaw the negotiations with Einaudi through Charles Bode, whom he knew well.⁵² Waldman talked about working cheek by jowl with Woolf on the translation, which won the Florio Prize in 1966.⁵³ When compared to editions of *The Truce* published in the United States and Germany, The Bodley Head's publication of the translation in Britain, alongside its issue of a new edition of *If This Is a Man*, enjoyed the greatest critical success.

It was not the case that The Bodley Head harboured a special interest, in principle, for Italian literature connected to the legacy of the Holocaust. In fact, as David Brauner observes, although this theme seems not to have been addressed at all by British Jewish novelists, it had an enormous impact on Jewish intellectual activity; in 1963, a debate was played out in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* on 'Being English and Jewish', returning to the issue that had featured in series of interviews in the same newspaper in 1958 and 1959.⁵⁴ Brauner notes that 'Glanville was the only respondent to acknowledge that there might be a problematic tension between a writer's Englishness and Jewishness.'⁵⁵ Each of the professionals who made up the reading community of The Bodley Head had a different and often difficult relationship with their own Jewish identity. Max Reinhardt, who had emigrated to Britain in 1939, spent the six war years trying to assimilate and lose his alien status, something he finally achieved officially in 1946; in the narrative that Reinhardt created for himself after the war, Judith Adamson observes, 'There was never any mention of the Holocaust, of survivors in Palestine or elsewhere. And there was no mention of himself as a Jew.'⁵⁶ Guido Waldman, a child of American Jews, who had grown up in Europe but been educated in England, took absolutely no part in the debate over British Jewish identity, not least because as a student he had converted to Catholicism. However, it was his position as an 'outsider' – 'Guido Waldman describes himself as the firm's resident polyglot', Jack Lambert noted – that probably allowed him to understand the strength of the accounts by Levi and Mazzetti and to have them translated for the British public.⁵⁷

Modern languages professionals

The profiles sketched above allow us to draw some conclusions about the reading community constituted by the publishing professionals – readers and editors – who worked on foreign fiction in Britain in this period. First of all, a striking number of them were involved in the intelligence services or international relations during the war, and sometimes afterwards as well (Calvocoressi and Grindrod, for example). In common with the flow of translations, intelligence work and diplomacy relied on people with a mastery of foreign languages. Linguistic skills were a crucial asset for the Secret Intelligence Service, originally part of the Secret Service Bureau founded in 1909, which served as a common source of employment for graduates in foreign languages at the most prestigious universities. Courses had been set up at the turn of the century at both Oxford and Cambridge with highly practical objectives: the study of oriental languages was oriented towards colonial administration and that of ‘modern’ languages (meaning, in this context, ‘European’, including Russian) towards trade and language teaching.⁵⁸ The orientation of these courses towards employment was naturally one of the issues most frequently raised by their detractors, the members of Classical Studies faculties who at that time were the holders of academic power within the Humanities; this was countered by a vigorous defence of the philological value of modern linguistic studies. One further kind of prejudice was apparent towards the new degrees in languages, and to some extent towards the degrees in English that had also been established relatively recently: those enrolling on Modern Languages courses were in large part women, who in contrast to male students had had better language teaching in secondary education.⁵⁹ While oriental languages were very important in the imperial and colonial context, ‘modern’ languages acquired great importance on the European chessboard in the ‘short twentieth century’ that spanned the two world wars. Knowledge of German – above all – and Italian were to be crucial resources both during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath.

The fields of publishing and international relations found further common ground in the period immediately after the war, during which there was a gradual increase in the use of translations as diplomatic and cultural practice. In addition to its publication of the *Index Translationum*, in 1948 UNESCO launched the ‘Catalogue of Representative Works’, a programme that sponsored the translation of classic works from more than a hundred different languages into English, French and Spanish, and subsequently Arabic and German, and which continued until 2005.⁶⁰ Aside from the UNESCO programme, recent research has highlighted both the propaganda value of the translation work managed by government agencies such as the Central Office of Information and the British Council, whose flexibility over the sale of

foreign publication rights played a key role in the promotion of British fiction, and the diplomatic and cultural function of periodicals.⁶¹

The practice of translation thus took on a more central position in the period after 1945, encouraging a slow process of professionalisation of translators; this development ran in tandem with the consolidation of university programmes in Modern Languages. In student numbers at Oxford, Modern Languages had overtaken English during the interwar period and within the Humanities was second only to Philosophy, Politics and Economics.⁶² Guido Waldman's story provides a good illustration of this transition. Coming from a multilingual and cosmopolitan environment, and born into the trade, Waldman operated as an intermediary in various roles within the publishing chain – reader, editor of translations, rights manager, and editor – but also had a degree in Modern Languages and could establish himself as a translator of classic works for Oxford University Press, working on the prose translation and editing of *Orlando furioso* (1973, still in print in 2021) and translation of *The Decameron* (1993, also still in print).

An additional characteristic shared by the readers profiled in this article was their knowledge of more than one foreign language. This enabled them to assess a work of Italian literature in relation to similar works in other languages: something that was particularly important in the British context, in which European literature in translation was often labelled as simply 'continental'. When, for example, Waldman gave his verdict on Raffaello Brignetti's *La riva di Charleston* (Einaudi, 1960), the comparison he made was with French novels on similar topics: 'Brignetti is several cuts above René Hardy [...]. However, having Jacques Rémy and René Hardy already on our list, both writing about foreign ships [...] I doubt whether there is sufficient reason to take this one on.'⁶³ As we have seen, finally, every reader, whether internal or – even more so – external, brought with them a network of relationships with the country whose literature they were reading: a network whose range then extended, exponentially increasing the number of connections between people, literary works and cultures. This is crucially important when we move on to analyse the discourse on literature that was generated by the readers.

Readers' reports as specialised professional discourse

Publishers, literary agents, editors and publishers' readers perform key roles in the processes of literary transfer between two or more cultures. The effectiveness of their operation is dependent

on, first, a critical approach, which finds expression in the development or translation of various descriptive categories across two languages; and, second, a practical approach, which relates to the actual ‘transportability’ of the work into the destination context, especially in regard to its translation, publication and dissemination. The critical approach relates to the formal characteristics of a novel, or the way in which these determine its inclusion in a particular trend or movement, or both, and is thus located within the literary arena; the practical approach instead relates to the ability of the reader to assess the readability of a novel for its readership in the destination language, and to suggest possible ways of presenting and marketing it: in brief, to help it to settle into its target literary system.

The publisher’s reader who writes a report, although often also a translator, is best considered as an interpreter, whose activity has a highly practical rationale with immediate consequences. However, while the operation of an interpreter leaves no written trace, the reader leaves behind their reader’s reports. These, I would argue, are akin to litmus tests when compared with the retrospective analyses offered by literary history, which often takes its cue from a corpus of critically approved works. The activity of publishers’ readers instead takes place prior to the writing of literary history, and records developments in the literary field as they occur. This discourse on literature, produced at the very moment of its cultural transfer, draws attention to the way in which its contributors understood various literary movements, trends and themes in their transnational dimension.

Some of the categories employed by the readers are semantic equivalents of the same categories in the source language. One concrete example is the use of ‘*realismo*’ and ‘realism’, terms that were particularly important, in both the Italian and British contexts, for the fiction of the period discussed in this article. What is the translational loss, in cultural terms, involved in the use of ‘realism’ in the Britain of the 1950s and 1960s as the semantic equivalent of ‘*realismo*’ as used in Italy during the same period? The use of ‘realism’ is closely linked to the British reception of postwar Italian literature, in which ‘neorealism’ was undoubtedly an awkward term from the critical perspective. In a brief digression on Italian fiction translated in Britain after 1946, Lawrence Venuti emphasises realism’s dominance:

During this period, a canon of modern Italian prose emerged in English, and at its centre stood realism. To be sure, the Anglo-American interest in this literary form corresponded to a dominant trend in Italy, notably the so-called neorealism that revived late 19th-c. models like Giovanni Verga’s impersonal *verismo* to examine social conflicts.⁶⁴

We will now see if we can trace a similar ascendancy in the reader's reports for The Bodley Head, Chatto & Windus and Jonathan Cape. If we take Verga as our starting point, his *I Malavoglia* has undergone four translations into English, two of them during the period analysed in this article. The very first, by Mary Craig, appeared in New York in 1890, printed by Harper & Brothers (and in London in 1891, printed by Osgood). Craig's translation was introduced by an essay from William Dean Howells, a member of the American realist school, whose sympathies are evident in his opening sentence: 'When we talk of the great modern movement towards reality we speak without the documents if we leave this book out of the count'.⁶⁵ In 1950, a new translation, published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, was produced by Eric Mosbacher, who also provided a short introduction of a purely historical nature, although not without political overtones. Thus, in Mosbacher's words, 'The action begins in 1863, i.e., three years after the destruction by Garibaldi's expedition of the decrepit Kingdom of the Two Sicilies'; and, again, 'It was, of course, the Italian Government which introduced taxation, not Garibaldi, to whom that unpleasant innovation is attributed.'⁶⁶ Just fourteen years later, in 1964, the American Raymond Rosenthal provided a translation of the full version of the book (Mosbacher having worked on an Italian edition for schools that incorporated various cuts), which was published with a long introduction by Giovanni Cecchetti, a lecturer in Italian literature at Berkeley. The translations by Mosbacher and Rosenthal together illustrate Verga's importance as a reference point for the neorealist period.⁶⁷ In their different approaches to the task – Mosbacher's version rendering Verga's prose more fluid, Rosenthal's retaining its impersonal style – they also highlight their different reception of an author who is in fact now seen by Italian critics as also having been a precursor of modernism.⁶⁸

The uncertainties about how to place Verga shed light on the boundaries between realism, neorealism and modernism, which were much more porous than had long been thought both in Britain and, in a different way, in Italy. This porousness often emerged in the different ways that an author was categorised in the transfer process, and was already apparent in the readers' reports of that period.⁶⁹ In this regard, the reports by Stuart Hood, 'DS' and Marguerite Waldman on Seminarà's *Il vento nell'oliveto* (Einaudi, 1951), mentioned earlier, and the report by Eric Mosbacher on Giovanni Testori's *Il dio di Roserio* (Einaudi, 1954) are significant. Both novels had been published in the 'Gettoni' series overseen by Elio Vittorini, which aimed to challenge tradition by adjusting the boundaries of neorealism.

In his assessment of Seminarà's novel, which tells the story of eighteen months in the life of a Calabrian landowner using diary form, Hood, writing in 1958, makes explicit reference to neorealism: he demonstrates his awareness of this and treats it as established in Britain as well,

whereas Waldman does not mention it at all. Hood's discussion is strikingly assured: he says that while Seminara 'inevitably belongs to the school of neo-realism', he practises a 'neo-realism with a difference – pastoral instead of urban, realist without being tough' thanks to his use of diary form, which 'allows of description, comment and meditation in the course of the plot', whereby, unlike in other Italian novels of the period, 'the social problems of the South are fairly presented in terms of men and women and not of political doctrines.'⁷⁰

In 1956, Mosbacher assessed Testori's *Il dio di Roserio*. First of all, his opening comments show that he was well aware of the 'Gettoni' project: 'This is a fresh and interesting piece of writing, as, indeed, are most of the books in this series edited by Signor Elio Vittorini.' One of the markers that he uses to situate the work is thus its location within a '*collana*' (a series whose books have similar themes, perspectives or styles); this is even more significant if we think that British literary publishing, unlike its Italian or French counterparts, rarely organised its fiction lists in this way. Mosbacher's knowledge of the 'Gettoni' demonstrates his awareness of the significance of a series in the Italian context. He also relays the opinion of the series editor himself, reporting that 'Signor Vittorini rightly points out in connection with this book that realism is inexhaustible and that this young writer has extracted something new from it.' However, in Mosbacher's description the realism of *Il dio di Roserio* is closer to the narrative technique of the modernist novel, in which first-person narration and the soundscape prevail over the plot: 'There is little story. [...] The landscape goes by as if it were moving and the sweating riders were still, there is the continual noise of the motor-cycle travelling ahead of the riders to clear the way, and when towns and villages are passed the crowd, an impersonal sea of faces, yells and cheers.'⁷¹

Such considerations of a literary nature, which illustrate the thinking about realism and experimentalism under way, albeit in different terms, in the Britain of that period, were accompanied by other considerations based on criteria relating to readability and potential success in the British context. Giovanni Arpino's *La suora giovane* (Einaudi, 1959) and Oreste del Buono's *Un intero minuto* (Feltrinelli, 1959), both read by Guido Waldman, provide examples of the criticism that was voiced most often, to the effect that several Italian books assessed lacked the real structure of a novel, and were really, if suitably slimmed down, excellent short stories.⁷² The medium of publishers' reports allows us to reconstruct the somewhat unfortunate experiences of the short story genre in Britain in the 1950s. When Brian Glanville made his debut as a published author, tellingly in Italy with a story in *Cronache*, he commented to Erich Linder, 'Ironical that if one wants to write anything with any literary

pretensions in the line of brief fiction, one must come to Italy to do it. England is impossible; no market whatsoever.’⁷³

For publishers’ readers, when assessing foreign fiction, their experience, which had developed in the continual passage between two (if not more) languages and literatures, was constantly in play. By reading their reports we can in fact learn more about British fiction, and about how the British read, than by studying literary history. To quote Stanley Unwin once again, ‘The number of people who consider themselves fully qualified for the post of publisher’s reader is unlimited. The number of those really competent to fulfil that function is extraordinarily small. It is not easy to define precisely what is required.’⁷⁴ This problem of definition is an inherent aspect of the profession of reader, and in the case of the reader of foreign fiction it is also linked to the very specific experience of each individual reader: the places and circumstances in which they came into contact with another language and culture, and their ability to incorporate these encounters within the British reader that their education had produced. To conclude with an observation by Guido Waldman, ‘we bring in our own perceptions, and our own background and experience, and that excludes other experiences that someone else should have and that would be equally valuable.’⁷⁵

Translated by Stuart Oglethorpe
(*stuart.oglethorpe@gmail.com*)

Notes

1. Report by Lovett Fielding Edwards on *La Gilda del Macmahon* [sic], 10 March 1960, Archives of British Publishing and Printing (hereinafter ABPP), AURR 24/3/30.
2. Gail Chester, ‘Publishers’ Readers’, in *Oxford Companion to the Book*, 2 vols, ed. by Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), II, p. 1066. Ute Schneider links the rise of the publisher’s reader to the second revolution in reading; see *Der unsichtbare Zweite. Die Berufsgeschichte des Lektors im literarischen Verlag* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), p. 43.
3. Andrew Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader on the Verge of Modernity: The Case of Frank Swinnerton’, *Book History*, 6 (2003), 175–95 (p. 177).
4. Stanley Unwin, *The Truth about Publishing*, 8th edn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), p. 29.

5. Vittorio Spinazzola, *Critica della lettura. Leggere, interpretare, commentare e valutare un libro* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1992), pp. ???. Due to their position at the start of the chain, readers have also been seen as ‘gatekeepers’. See Bo Ekelund, ‘Keeping the gates at Houghton Mifflin’, paper presented at the Second Annual ‘Making Books, Shaping Readers’ Conference, University College Cork, April 2008; Gail Chester, ‘The Not So Gentle Reader: The Role of the Publisher’s Reader as Gatekeeper, with Particular Reference to Macmillan and Co., 1895–1905’ (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of London, 1997).
6. See Chester, ‘Publishers’ Readers’; Schneider, *Der unsichtbare Zweite*. There is a significant distinction in German between the terms ‘*Leser*’ (the ordinary reader) and ‘*Lektor*’ (the publisher’s reader). For a study that emphasises the lack of research into publisher’s readings, but which focuses on the figure of the publisher, see Brigitte Ouvry-Vial, ‘Le savoir-lire de l’éditeur? Présupposés et modalités’, in *Figures de l’éditeur. Représentations, savoirs, compétences, territoires*, ed. by Bertrand Legendre and Christian Robin (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2005), pp. 1–19.
7. On this issue in the Italian context, see the ‘Traiettorie’ section on the website of the LTit (Letteratura tradotta in Italia) project: <https://www.ltit.it/progetto/traiettorie-mappe> [accessed 17 March 2021]. Pieces on individual mediators have also been published in the journal *Tradurre*.
8. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, ‘Introduction’, in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 1–36 (p. 2).
9. Christine Pawley, ‘Seeking “Significance”: Actual Readers, Specific Reading Communities’, *Book History*, 5 (2002), 143–60 (p. 145). For a reconstruction of collaborative reading practices using archived papers, see Nicola Wilson, “‘So now tell me what you think!’: Sylvia Lynd’s reading and reviewing – the collaborative work of an interwar middlewoman’, *Literature & History* 28.1 (2019), 49–65.
10. The idea of publishers creating an institutional framework is corroborated by a paratextual feature: various reader’s reports bear their author’s signature, alongside which appear the initials of the other members of the reading community, or suggestions regarding a second or third reader who could be consulted.
11. See Nicola Wilson, ‘Archive Fever: The Publishers’ Archive and the History of the Novel’, in *New Directions in the History of the Novel*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder, Andrew Nash and Nicola Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 76–87 (p. 78).
12. Iain Stevenson discusses the ‘profound effects that a remarkable group of publishers from Eastern Europe had on British publishing in the 1950s and 1960s’; see *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century* (London: British Library, 2010), p. 129. Stevenson

returns to these publishers later, stating that ‘the new generation of entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe such as Deutsch, Hamlyn, Maxwell and others [...] were for good or ill energetically creating new markets and new publishing categories’ (p. 145). The only book that specifically addresses their contribution is *Immigrant Publishers: The Impact of Expatriate Publishers in Britain and America in the 20th Century*, ed. by Richard Abel and Gordon Graham (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2009), which gathers together a series of profiles of immigrant publishers first published in *Logos: Journal of the World Book Community*. For discussion of the impact of Jewish immigration, see Uwe Westphal, ‘German, Czech and Austrian Jews in English Publishing’, in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. by Werner E. Mosse and others (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), pp. 195–208. The field of art publishing has been more fully studied; see Anna Nyburg, *Émigrés: The Transformation of Art Publishing in Britain* (London: Phaidon, 2014).

13. Francesca Billiani, *National Cultures and Foreign Narratives in Italy, 1903–1943* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
14. Stevenson, *Book Makers*, p. 153. Stevenson quotes the account given by Michael S. Howard (who at the time was on the Cape board) in *Jonathan Cape, Publisher* (London: Cape, 1971).
15. See Tom Maschler, *Publisher* (London: Picador, 2005). Maschler’s book met with considerable criticism, which acts as a reminder that caution should be exercised when dealing with autobiographical writing.
16. Claire Tomalin, *A Life of My Own* (London: Penguin, 2017), p. 155.
17. Tomalin recalls being given a spacious office next to Maschler’s; see *A Life of My Own*, p. 155. On the group of in-house readers, see James Lasdun, ‘Doris Lessing and the Perils of the Pseudonymous Novel’, *The New Yorker*, 23 July 2013.
18. This means that the reports due from Quigly were formally recorded against her name in the manuscript entry book. Colquhoun, from whom reader’s reports were occasionally requested, by contrast asked Maschler on one occasion if he wanted him to read Pratolini ‘officially’. See letter from Colquhoun to Maschler, 8 October 1961, ABPP, JC 22/3.
19. ‘Obituary: Isabel Quigly’, *The Times*, 10 October 2018; ‘Isabel Quigly, novelist, critic and prolific translator. Obituary’, *Telegraph*, 8 October 2018.
20. Quigly’s knowledge of these three languages was also advantageous when she worked for the Red Cross; see the obituary by Raleigh Trevelyan, ‘Isabel Quigly: Translator of Italian, Spanish and French Literature’, *Independent*, 27 September 2018.
21. Robin Healey, *Italian Literature since 1900 in English Translation: An Annotated Bibliography, 1929–2016* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2019), p. xix. On her return to England, Quigly set up house in the village of Fletching, Sussex, where she brought up her

son Crispin on her own; see the obituaries cited above. Frances Frenaye (1908–1996) was instead employed by the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, from 1963 to 1980 (Eric Pace, ‘Frances Frenaye Is Dead at 88; Translated European Literature’, *New York Times*, 15 April 1996).

22. Letter from Quigly to Maschler, 27 April 1963, ABPP, JC 69/5.
23. Letter from Quigly to Maschler, 9 December 1961, ABPP, JC 22/3.
24. Letter from Maschler to Quigly, 22 July 1960, ABPP JC 100/3.
25. Letter from Quigly to Maschler, 23 July 1960, ABPP JC 100/3.
26. Peter Calvocoressi, *Threading My Way* (London: Duckworth, 1994), p. 168. While many obituaries for Peter Calvocoressi were published, his autobiography *Threading My Way* (London: Duckworth, 1994) remains very interesting reading, albeit with application of the usual caution. As its reviewer John Ure noted, this book described Calvocoressi’s transition ‘from a Greek in England into a Greek Englishman’; see ‘Greek Englishman’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 November 1994, p. 26.
27. Letter from Ian Parsons to Sam Lawrence, 6 September 1963, ABPP, CW 214/10. In a letter dated 30 June 1963, Grindrod explicitly referred to shared acquaintances at Chatham House in the 1940s; see ABPP, CW 214/10.
28. Alan Campbell, ‘Obituary: Muriel Grindrod’, *Independent*, 12 January 1994.
29. Letter from Calvocoressi to Grindrod, 13 June 1963, ABPP, CW 214/10.
30. Letter from Grindrod to Calvocoressi, 30 August 1963, ABPP, CW 214/10.
31. Bruno Falchetto, *Storia della narrativa neorealista* (Milan: Mursia, 1992), p. 206.
32. Report by Muriel Grindrod on *Metello*, 30 August 1963, ABPP, in folder ‘Correspondence concerning Bruno Santini’, CW 214/10.
33. ‘Mr D. M. Low’, obituary, *The Times*, 26 June 1972.
34. An account of the first meeting of Charles Prentice and David Low with Norman Douglas and Pino Orioli, in Florence in 1930, is given in ‘Arcades ambo’, Norman Douglas Collection, Yale Beinecke Library, Box 43, folder 14.
35. Low’s first novel, *Twice Shy* (1933), is set among British expatriates on the Italian Riviera.
36. See the article by Daniela La Penna, also in this issue.
37. ‘Eric Mosbacher Obituary’, *The Times*, 10 July 1998.
38. J. W. Lambert and Michael Ratcliffe, *The Bodley Head: 1887–1987* (London: Bodley Head, 1987), pp. 229, 335.
39. The construction of Guido Waldman’s profile was largely possible thanks to my personal interview with him (6 November 2018).

40. Letter from Charles Bode to Erich Linder dated 2 February 1959, Fondazione Arnaldo e Alberto Mondadori, Fondo Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale – Erich Linder (hereinafter FAAM, FALI – EL), folder Charles Bode, 12B/28. In an era of Anglo-American co-productions Milton Waldman’s American nationality must have been important, as it would be for Guido, who as a result started as the book-club rights manager for the United States.
41. Letter from Charles Bode to Slater (Jonathan Cape) dated 12 June 1961, ABPP, JC 22/3.
42. Simon Yaffe, ‘Brian kicked law into touch to score as a top journalist’, *Jewish Telegraph*, 2010.
43. Letter from Brian Glanville to Erich Linder, on headed paper listing his connections, dated 16 June 1955, FAAM, FALI – EL, 11/42.
44. Letter from Glanville to Linder dated 15 July 1950, FAAM, FALI – EL, 4/23.
45. On Glanville’s publication in *Cronache*, see letter from Glanville to Linder dated 16 June 1955, FAAM, FALI – EL, 11/42.
46. Reader’s report by PG and Brian L. Glanville on *Cinque storie Ferraresi* by Giorgio Bassani, ABPP, BH1 RR2/90. It has not been possible to confirm the identity of ‘PG’.
47. Reader’s report by PG and Brian L. Glanville on *Cinque storie Ferraresi* by Giorgio Bassani, ABPP, BH1 RR2/90.
48. Reader’s report by Isabel Quigly on *Con rabbia*, ABPP, BH 1/119.
49. See Stuart Woolf, ‘Tradurre Primo Levi’, *Belfagor*, 64.6 (2009), 699–705; Ian Thomson, *Primo Levi* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), pp. 284–85.
50. Thomson, *Primo Levi*, p. 285.
51. Thomson, *Primo Levi*, p. 288. Both Deutsch and Blond were Jewish; while Deutsch never directly discussed his Jewish origin, for Blond, a British Jew from Manchester, it was the theme of his memoirs, *Jew Made in England* (London: Timewell Press, 2004).
52. Thomson, *Primo Levi*, p. 307. As Guido Waldman recalled, ‘We would go every year to the Frankfurt Book Fair, and I think one of the best books I took for the Bodley Head – I was talking to my friend Guido Davico – and he offered me Primo Levi’s *La tregua*.’ Personal interview with Waldman.
53. Established in 1963 by the Society of Authors, in collaboration with the Arts Council and the Italian Cultural Institute, the John Florio Prize is awarded for the best translation of an Italian work into English (annually until 1980 and biennially thereafter).
54. David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish Fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 9.
55. Brauner, *Post-war Jewish Fiction*, p. 15.

56. Judith Adamson, *Max Reinhardt: A Life in Publishing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 27.
57. Lambert and Ratcliffe, *The Bodley Head*, p. 334. It is also worth noting that during the same period Waldman was working very closely with another convert to Catholicism, Graham Greene; the latter had various connections with Italy, where his writing was well respected.
58. Posner, 'Modern Languages and Linguistics', p. 425.
59. Posner, 'Modern Languages and Linguistics', p. 427.
60. Miriam Intrator, *Books across Borders: UNESCO and the Politics of Postwar Cultural Reconstruction, 1945–1951* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 107–20, 121–22. Founded in 1932 under the League of Nations, the Index Translationum was transferred to UNESCO in 1946; it constitutes a database of all the translations published, each year, anywhere in the world.
61. See, for example, Alison E. Martin, 'Reframing the Past: Post-War German Periodical Culture and Hans B. Wagenseil's Translation of Vita Sackville-West's *Thirty Clocks Strike the Hour*', *Letteratura e letteratura*, 14 (2020), 103–18. On the work by government agencies, see Anna Lanfranchi, 'Italian Translation Rights, the British Council and the Central Office of Information (1943–47)', *Annali di Italianistica*, 38 (2020), pp. 343–66.
62. Robert Currie, 'The Arts and Social Studies, 1914–1939', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VIII: The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 110–38 (p. 118). On professionalisation, see Anthony Pym, 'Late Victorian to the Present', in *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 73–80 (p. 79)
63. Reader's report by Guido Waldman on *La riva di Charleston* by Raffaello Brignetti, ABPP, BH1 RR1/417.
64. Lawrence Venuti, 'Twentieth-Century Prose', in *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 498–502 (p. 499).
65. W. D. Howells, 'Introduction', in Giovanni Verga, *The House by the Medlar-Tree*, trans. by Mary A. Craig (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), p. 1.
66. Eric Mosbacher, 'Translator's Note', in Giovanni Verga, *The House by the Medlar Tree* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1950).
67. See Falchetto, *Storia della narrativa neorealista*, p. 21. In a short reader's report on Giuseppe Mazzaglia's *La dama selvatica*, Brian Glanville asserted that Mazzaglia 'is the amalgam of Verga, Poe, Wilde, Kafka and Kleist that the publisher claims' (emphasis in the original),

- adding that ‘any friend of Verga is a friend of mine’. See reader’s report by Brian L. Glanville on *La dama selvatica* by Giuseppe Mazzaglia, undated, ABPP, BH RR1/2574.
68. See, for example, Pierluigi Pellini, *Naturalismo e modernismo. Zola, Verga e la poetica dell’insignificante* (Rome: Artemide, 2016); Paolo Giovannetti, ‘*I Malavoglia* come romanzo figuralizzato’, *Allegoria*, 69–70 (2014), 171–210.
 69. On the transfer process, see Daria Biagi, ‘La strada “via terra” della *Weltliteratur*. Sulla prima traduzione di *Berlin Alexanderplatz*’, *Letteratura e Letterature*, 14 (2020), 55–70; Daniela La Penna e Sara Sullam, ‘Translating Modernisms: Cultural Geographies and Mediating Agents’, *Letteratura e Letterature*, 14 (2020), 49–54.
 70. Reader’s report by Marguerite Waldman, DS, and S. C. Hood on *Il vento nell’oliveto* (The wind in the olive grove) by Fortunato Seminara, undated, ABPP, BH RR1/3416.
 71. Reader’s report by Eric Mosbacher on *Il dio di Roserio* by Giovanni Testori, 2 March 1956, ABPP, BH RR1/3747.
 72. Reader’s report by Guido A. Waldman on *La suora giovane* by Giovanni Arpino, ABPP, BH RR1/99 (1959), and reader’s report by Guido A. Waldman on *Un intero minuto* by Oreste del Buono, ABPP, BH RR1/929 (1959).
 73. Letter from Brian Glanville to Erich Linder dated 16 June 1955, FAAM, FALI – EL, 11/42.
 74. Unwin, *The Truth About Publishing*, p. 28.
 75. Personal interview with Waldman.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the Archives for British Publishing and Printing at the University of Reading for providing me with all the support that I needed, and some invaluable advice regarding my research. I would also like to thank Guido Waldman for granting me an interview on his career at The Bodley Head, on 6 November 2018, and Bo Ekelund for sharing her unpublished conference paper with me.

Funding

This article is one of the outcomes from research undertaken at the University of Reading between August 2018 and January 2019, thanks to a visiting fellowship awarded by the British Academy in relation to the project ‘*British Novels for European Readers, European Novels for British Readers: A Working Hypothesis for the Anglo-Italian Case (1945–1965)*’.

ORCID

Sara Sullam <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7819-8315>