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**Past and present
in translation collaborative practices and
cooperation**

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Past and present in translation collaborative practices and cooperation. An introduction

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1. Preamble

In recent years, the landscape of translation studies has undergone a transformation as scholars increasingly recognise and emphasise collaboration as an integral aspect of the translation process. While historical translation studies have traditionally focused on the solitary translator, contemporary research challenges this singular perspective and highlights the collaborative nature of translation (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017; Folaron 2010; Malmkjaer 2013; O'Hagan 2013). This changing understanding recognises that the notion of the solitary translator is culturally determined and that translation processes inherently involve multiple agents (Bistué 2016).

Despite this shift in perception, there remains a significant gap in research: a comprehensive history that explicitly focuses on the cooperative strategies and collaborative efforts of translators and language mediators. This gap prompts a critical examination of collaborative practices throughout history, shedding light on the dynamic and evolving nature of cooperation – or the absence of it – in the fields of translation and intercultural communication.

The conceptualisation of translation as a solitary enterprise dates back to the 1960s, when Eugene Nida introduced a division of translation into

¹ The first two sections of this Introduction were written by Mirella Agorni, the third one by Giovanni Iamartino.

decoding and encoding phases, with a solitary translator mediating between the source and target languages. While recognising the complexity of the translation process, Nida's model reinforced the prevailing perception of translation as an individual enterprise. Paradoxically, as a leading figure in collaborative efforts to translate the Bible, Nida himself contradicted the solitary agency he advocated. This paradox embodies the historical development of Western translation thinking, which has often emphasised the individual translator and his cultural and time-based positioning (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995, 2012).

Contemporary studies have challenged this bias, recognising translation as inherently collaborative. However, despite advances in specific areas such as early modern cultural exchange, feminist collaborative practices and audiovisual translation, a coherent and comprehensive history that focuses on collaborative strategies and practices remains a significant gap. In the context of the recent global pandemic, where the need for cooperation and collaboration has become paramount, the study of collaborative practices in the historical landscape of translation and language mediation takes on added relevance. This effort goes beyond mere archaeological exploration; it becomes a moral imperative, prompting scholars to examine the historical foundations of collaborative translation in the light of the contemporary need for collective action.

In the following pages, we undertake an in-depth journey that explores the impact of collaboration, cooperation (or its absence) in the historical context of the development of translation and intercultural communication. Our focus goes beyond traditional individual-centred narratives, exploring the strategies and practices of collaboration that have shaped the path of translation in different eras. Our aim is to uncover a spectrum of effective – or sometimes ineffective – collaboration strategies employed by language mediators throughout history. Through this interdisciplinary exploration, we aim to link historical and contemporary perspectives, offering a deeper understanding of collaborative translation practices and their impact on the evolving landscape of translation studies.

2. Contributions to the journal issue

Once the role of collaboration as a fundamental element of the translation process has been acknowledged, it is opportune to look more closely at some of the collaborative practices that have emerged throughout history

in order to identify the effective strategies used by language mediators. Indeed, the articles in this issue of *Cultus* contribute to a broader understanding of collaborative translation, as they focus on a variety of historical periods, cultural contexts, and methodological approaches.

The first two contributions deal with the collaborative nature of Chinese Buddhist translation. **Tianran Wang** explores the collaborative nature of Chinese Buddhist translation from the second to the fifth centuries, a practice that has endured for nearly 1,000 years. Drawing on historical sources, the article examines collaborative Buddhist translation during its formative years, emphasising a linear-cyclical process. Wang challenges the conventional notion of translators as confined to the ‘in-between’ and expands the connotation of ‘translate’. In this context, the position and dichotomy of source text (ST) and target text (TT) are reinterpreted. A case study is used to illustrate the conflicts inherent in collaboration. The research sheds light on the nuanced dynamics of Chinese Buddhist translation, presenting it as an evolving process that goes beyond traditional perceptions of translators and the translation process. In a way, **Lifei Pan**’s article complements Wang’s by examining the collaborative translation of Buddhist texts and focusing on the historical development from ancient Chinese gatherings to contemporary organisations. The translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, beginning in the Eastern Han Dynasty, is regarded as China’s first large-scale translation project, evolving from individual foreign monks to more organised efforts. The study contrasts this historical context with the translation of Chinese Buddhist scriptures into English in the 19th century, marked by the establishment of organisations such as the Buddhist Text Translation Society and Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai. Using the Lotus Sūtra as a case study, Pan examines the practices of ancient Chinese translation societies and compares them with their modern counterparts. The research highlights both the enduring benefits of ancient methods for contemporary translators and the emergence of new forms of collaborative translation.

We move from the East to 19th-century Europe with Agorni’s and Ragazzini’s articles. **Mirella Agorni** discusses the potential for collaboration between translation studies and book history, emphasising the interdependence between translation activities and the changing conditions of book production that have expanded the literary market. Scholars such as Littau (2016), Belle and Hosington (2017), and Coldiron (2012, 2015) have explored this interdependence, with Littau highlighting the role of technologies in the production and distribution of translations. Agorni

stresses the importance of considering book format, paratextual elements, and data on the production and distribution of materials in order to understand the translation process over time. Such factors, often overlooked by translation studies scholars who tend to focus on linguistic and cultural adaptation, deserve equal attention. Firmly grounded in translation studies, Agorni's article aims to explore the theoretical intersections between historical translation studies and the discipline of book history. Using the concept of 'collaboration', the author attempts to analyse the relationship between translation and the evolution of the book market. A brief case study on the development of translation theory and practice in 19th-century literature is presented to illustrate the potential for greater interaction between the two disciplines. **Beatrice Ragazzini's** study, instead, explores a 19th-century academic debate on the periodisation of medieval English architecture, highlighting the collaborative nature of term formation. The article explores how cooperation between experts shaped architectural vocabulary, drawing attention to the translation perspective through a comparison of English and French nomenclatures. Despite the national character of architecture, the study reveals that the formation of terms has been influenced by foreign scholars, fostering international communication and the exchange of ideas. Based on Sager's theoretical framework (1990, 1997), the analysis portrays term formation as a collaborative practice with multiple actors and factors contributing to the evolution of scientific language.

The articles by Kim Grego and Eleonora Federici deal with Italian-American relationships, from different perspectives though. **Kim Grego** investigates the collaborative translation strategy between Italian writer and translator Cesare Pavese and his Italian-American correspondent Antonio Chiuminatto. Focusing on Pavese's role as an 'Americanist', the study examines their correspondence from 1929 to 1933. Pavese repeatedly sought Chiuminatto's expertise, particularly when he had to tackle the translation of American English slang and idiomatic expressions, thus shedding light on their collaborative translation process. The study frames their correspondence within the concept of 'collaborative translation', exploring Chiuminatto's contribution to Pavese's translation activities and its implications for Pavese's role as an 'Americanist'. **Eleonora Federici's** essay explores the diachronic exchange of feminist ideas and practices between North America and Italy, focusing on the translation of feminist texts from the 1970s through the 1990s. The essay examines key texts that illustrate the intersection of feminist theories and practices across national

borders, navigating different cultural, social and political contexts. It emphasises how translations played a crucial role in disseminating US-born feminist ideas and fostering collaborative practices within Italian feminist collectives in the 1970s. Federici's work traces the legacy of American feminism in Italy by analysing collaborative translation efforts involving translators, scholars, and feminist intellectuals. The essay adopts a diachronic perspective, highlighting influential core texts that shaped Italian feminist and academic discourse from the 1970s to the 2000s. This exploration goes beyond theoretical exchanges and takes on a pedagogical dimension through recent anthologies of feminist writings.

The interplay between translation and ideological positioning also comes to the fore in **Christina Delistathi's** article on the collaborative translation practices used by the Communist Party of Greece in the 1950s to translate Marxist texts into Greek. The party's aim to dominate Marxist discourse led to the development of a collaborative model referred to as the 'industrialisation of translation'. Inspired by Mossop's (2006) criteria underlying the industrialisation of translation, such as centralisation, division of labour and quality control, the translation process resembled an assembly line. Employees, following the principles of industrial production, added components in sequence to produce accurate translations of theoretical Marxist texts. This assembly-line approach facilitated the codification of Marxist theory and the production of reliable translations, emphasising the centrality of collaboration in both completing translations and ensuring their accuracy.

The following three contributions to the *Cultus* issue deal with the collaborative element in dramatic and literary translation. **Massimiliano Morini** discusses the evolving discourse on collaborative translation, highlighting the emergence of terms such as 'translaboration'. Morini argues that a full understanding of the inherently collective nature of theatrical translation is overdue and predates modern collaborative tools. Morini argues that viewing theatrical translation as the holistic transfer of action and language from a source performance to a target performance involves multiple actors. Until the late 20th century, scholars viewed theatrical translation through an individualistic, textual lens, dismissing the contributions of directors, intralinguistic rewriters, actors, and audiences as mere 'adaptation'. This perspective, rooted in the textual bias of Western translation theory, originated in the Renaissance, when published plays entered the literary domain. Tracing the historical evolution from dominance to decline of the textual view of theatrical translation, Morini

proposes a nuanced understanding of theatrical translation as a complex collaborative process, drawing on theoretical and practical examples. **Pascale Sardin** and **Serenella Zanotti**'s article explores the complex dynamics of trust and mistrust in author-translator collaborations. While the existing literature recognises the tensions in these relationships, the article highlights the difficulty of identifying these issues solely by comparing source and target texts. Instead, the authors suggest that tensions are better revealed in archival materials such as editorial correspondence and revised translator's documents. Focusing on documents from the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, the study examines both epitextual sources (correspondence with publishers and authors) and genetic sources (translators' manuscripts and notebooks). The aim is to discover how trust develops and is challenged, especially when other intermediaries are involved. The study of the translators William Weaver and Barbara Wright provides insights into the complex interplay of trust and mistrust in translation collaborations. **Leah Gerber** and **Lintao Qi** analyse the journey of literary translations from Australia to China, exploring the dynamics of collaboration involving institutions, individuals and interpersonal relationships. Focusing on mainland China as a target market, the article argues that these translations contribute to an Australian 'national archive', shaping perceptions of Australia and Australianness for overseas audiences. The study analyses the influence of economic support mechanisms, including government-funded literary events, relationships between translators and writers, and support for Australian studies centres in China, on the creation of social, economic and cultural capital. Building on Bourdieu's (1977) framework, the research highlights how these factors influence the dissemination of Australian literary texts in China and explores the intricate connections between translation, national identity and cultural exchange.

The final articles in the collection focus on aspects of collaborative translation that have not been touched upon in the previous contributions. **Sevita Caseres** investigates collaborative practices among English-French subtitlers in the audiovisual translation industry in France. The study takes a human-centred approach, identifying formal and informal types of collaboration and examining the communications of subtitlers within the production network. The research sheds light on the impact of collaborative practices on subtitlers' workflows, roles, working conditions and the sustainability of the profession. The study contributes to a better understanding of collaboration in the French subtitling industry,

highlighting its advantages and limitations. **Joanna Gough** and **Özlem Temizöz** explore the evolution of collaborative translation, particularly in the last two decades, driven by digital communication technology advancements. Their article investigates the impact of evolving technologies on collaborative translation processes, specifically focusing on Concurrent Translation (CT) (Gough *et al.* 2023). CT involves synchronous translation on cloud-based collaborative platforms by trained professionals for commercial purposes. The study, based on a qualitative analysis of a survey involving 804 translators, delves into translators' experiences with this new workflow. It examines how technological changes influence the nature of collaborative translation in terms of proximity, time factors, and configurations of collaborators. The research shows how translators navigate and adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by Concurrent Translation in the context of advancing technology.

Taken together, these contributions offer specific case-studies and new insights into collaborative practices, enriching the historical perspective and highlighting the interdisciplinary and global nature of collaborative translation efforts.

3. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, our research has traversed the transformative landscape of translation studies, witnessing a fundamental shift in focus towards the collaborative nature of the translation process. The studies presented in this collection emphasise the complex interaction of multiple agents in translation activities. The exploration of the historical roots and evolutionary trajectory of translation theory has highlighted the need to explore the collective dimension of translation processes.

Our aim in this issue of *Cultus* was to uncover a range of collaborative strategies that have shaped translation in different periods, moving beyond traditional individual-centred narratives. Through an interdisciplinary lens, the research bridged historical and contemporary perspectives. The intention was to provide an in-depth understanding of collaborative translation practices and, most importantly, their impact on the dynamic landscape of translation studies. All in all, these essays present a comprehensive view of collaborative translation across cultural, temporal and thematic boundaries. While each contribution is unique, together they contribute to a broader understanding of collaborative dynamics in

translation studies. As a unified body, the collection traces a narrative across historical periods, cultural contexts and thematic areas, revealing the different manifestations of collaboration in the complex landscape of translation.

The interdisciplinary exploration undertaken in these essays seamlessly blends historical and contemporary perspectives, forming a continuum that spans the centuries. The rich historical insights, from ancient Chinese Buddhist translation practices to 19th-century academic debates, provide a basis for understanding the roots of collaborative translation. At the same time, the inclusion of modern phenomena, such as the impact of evolving technologies on collaborative translation processes, positions the discourse in the contemporary landscape.

The themes explored cover a spectrum of collaborative strategies and practices, highlighting issues of trust and mistrust in author-translator collaborations, the complex dynamics of collaborative translation in the audiovisual industry, and the evolving discourse on collaborative translation itself. This diversity of topics serves to emphasise the multi-dimensionality of collaborative translation, highlighting its pervasive nature in different fields.

Moreover, the global scope of the essays underlines the universal nature of collaborative translation efforts. From North America to Italy, from Australia to mainland China, the essays provide a global perspective on the interplay between translation, culture and identity. This global reach not only enriches the understanding of collaborative translation at a theoretical level, but also contributes to a broader dialogue on the role of translation in shaping cultural exchange and perceptions of identity.

In essence, this issue of *Cultus* offers a nuanced view of collaborative translation practices and the many ways in which translators and language mediators have engaged in collective efforts throughout history. It is one that inspires future research on and exploration of the evolving dynamics of collaborative translation practices.

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The collaborative translation of Buddhist scriptures in China: from the second to the fifth centuries

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Abstract

The practice of Chinese Buddhist translation lasted for almost 1,000 years, from the second to the eleventh centuries. From the beginning, Chinese Buddhist translation was a collaborative effort. While drawing on various historical sources, this article aims to reflect concepts and ideas related to collaboration through the discussion and examination of collaborative Buddhist translation, particularly during its formative years from approximately the second to the fifth centuries. I show that collaboration within Chinese Buddhist translation was a linear-cyclical process, where translators (yiren) were not only confined to conventional “in-betweenness” as the connotation of “translate” is broadened. In addition, the position and dichotomy of source text (ST) and target text (TT) can also be construed differently in such context. This paper also uses a case study to demonstrate conflicts within collaboration.

Keywords: Chinese Buddhist translation, collaborative mode, linear-cyclical, ST and TT, conflicts.

1. Introduction

Many scholars have stated that the study of collaborative translation is in its initial stages (Huss 2018: 399) and is still “on the rise” (Nunes et al. 2021: 10). The high number of recently published articles on this topic reflect that there may be a “new and richer way” (Dai 2021: 610) to understand translation. Although there are studies on collaboration and translation, these terms are often used more “as buzzwords or everyday concepts”, and they have not been fully investigated academically (Zwischenberger 2022: 7). This paper will take inspiration from the rich history of Chinese Buddhist translation to re-examine collaborative translation. Nearly from the beginning of disseminating Buddhism, Buddhist transmission is “in many

ways a history of collaborative translation” (Neather 2023: 138). Although the collaborative nature of Buddhist translation has many similarities with translation in the West, it is also unique and distinctive. Therefore, examining the past may shed some light on current understandings of this topic because, after all, “the translation of religious texts is [...] not substantially different from” the translation of other cultural texts (Naudé 2010: 285).

Having scrutinized Western modes of collaboration, Bistué admits the difficulty (*res difficilis*) of comprehending collaborative translation (2013: 15), and the same claim can be reasonably made about collaborative translation in China. That is, it is “complex in its causality” (Marais and Meylaers 2022: 1). A collaboration-oriented standpoint can, on the one hand, investigate translators or agents/actants, which conforms with Chesterman’s advocacy for a “translator study” (2009: 13). On the other hand, it can also facilitate the examination of the intricacies of the “translation process”. The combination of “a translator- and process-oriented approach to translation” (Nunes et al. 2021: 7) has led to the study of the “microhistory” of translators (Munday 2014; Wakabayashi 2018; etc.). Similarly, in this paper, both the concept of “the translator” as well as translation processes in ancient China will be explored through examples and case studies.

Therefore, this paper is divided into four sections. The first section is a general overview of the collaborative history of Buddhism. The second section discusses the concept of “multiple translatorship” and reflects on the image or identity of “translator”. The third section examines the translation mode in early China, with particular attention to the following three factors: the linear-circularity of collaboration, the position of the translator and the binary opposition between ST and TT. Finally, contrary to or as a part of collaboration, conflict caused by asymmetrical power balances has been the central topic. However, in the process of Buddhist translation, it is often unclear who has the “upper hand”, and the conflicts that occur during the translation process may generate a back-and-forth battle, incurring a feigned concession and compromise.

By illustrating the complexities of collaborative Chinese translation, this paper seeks to enhance scholarly understanding of collaboration and related concepts, as well as reconsider and broaden understanding of the notion of translation and the translator.

2. The collaborative translation of Buddhist scriptures in early China

Although there were a few cases throughout Buddhist history in China where translations were completed by a single individual, these were “the exception rather than the rule” (Raine 2016: 10). Therefore, the collaborative mode was “central to translation” (Neather 2023: 140). This was particularly true in scriptural translation, which lasted for almost 1,000 years in China. This disrupts the long-standing image of “translation” as something completed by a single individual (St. André 2010: 77).

Initially, only two “Mittelpersonen [lit. middle persons]” engaged in Buddhist collaborative translation (Fuchs 1930: 86). In such cases, a foreign monk – usually one with limited Chinese proficiency – recited the original text from his memory or held the substantial text by hand, rendering it into passable Chinese. After which, a scribe would “take (the translation) down with a brush”. There was a variation of this practice that involved three collaborators, with one holding the text, one interpreting it into Chinese and a third who would transcribe the oral interpretation. The number of contributors and the positions of each (e.g., reciter, interpreter, scribe, etc.) varied greatly between translation forums (*yichang* 譯場). During the early formative stages of collaborative translation in China, typically two to five individuals participated in the process, with many audience members present physically. Since the beginning of the fifth century, royal families showed a strong interest in Buddhism, and translation was greatly influenced by political support. Buddhist translation gradually evolved into a state-sponsored profession under the patronage of the ruling class. As a result, translation practices thrived, and according to Zanning 贊寧 (920-1001 AD)’s account, the number of translation positions increased to twelve.

Summarizing existing information contained in colophons and prefaces from the second to the fifth centuries regarding the translation process results in a seemingly unidirectional lineage, where “participants are often confined to their own roles” and could only start their own work after the previous procedure is finished (Yu 2022: 86). This could be illustrated in the graphic in Figure 1:

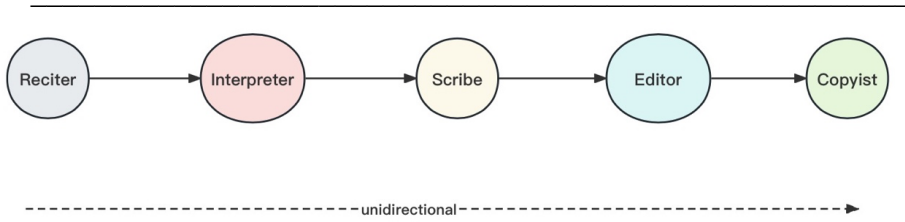


Figure 1: The lineal collaborative process

This figure shows a step-by-step process in a chronological order. In principle, the reciter was always the person who brought a scripture to China and was someone who could recite Buddhist texts. Due to their limited Chinese ability, their job was generally to recite or read the text in front of many participants at a translation forum. The interpreter was bilingual, and modern scholars consider interpreters to have been the “real translator”. There were also cases where the reciter was also the interpreter, i.e., they were conversant in both Indian languages and Chinese (Wang 1984: 180). The scribe was generally a Chinese person responsible for a variety of tasks, including simple tasks, such as transcribing the words of an interpreter, as well as skilled tasks, such as improving the poor Chinese of an unsatisfactory interpretation. The editor, who was occasionally responsible for proofreading, would check the overall quality of the translation. Subsequently, a copyist would hand-copy the translated and corrected text for circulation.

Having provided a broad overview of collaborative translation in China, it is now pertinent to undertake a more detailed examination of this practice. I will examine the concept of multiple translatorship within a Chinese context as a starting point.

3. Multiple translators

The concept of “multiple translatorship” takes all translation agents into account, including publishers, critics and readers (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019: 44). Scholars have become interested in the multiple voices in translatorship, which are believed to be the intrinsic nature of translation (Alvstad 2013; Taivalkoski-Shilov and Suchet 2013). Translators and other agents, as well as even readers, are considered to be able to shape and influence a translation to a certain degree (Alvstad et al. 2017). Although

scholars have clarified that translators are no longer the “lone originators of translations” (Alvstad et al. 2017: 4), the image of the singular translator persists in the popular concept “multiple translatorship” which implies that all agents related to the translation have “a finger in the pie”, and therefore, they all should be seen as influencing both the translation process and the final product (Jansen and Wegener 2013). This concept has undoubtedly taken translation studies to a new level, as it recognizes the contribution of various agents to the translation process. However, the term “translator” is still typically viewed as a singular component within the collaboration. Although the range of “translatorship” has expanded, the scope of the term “translator” itself has not.

When discussing the collaborative mode of translation, most, if not all Buddhist scholars seek to identify the “real” translator and determine who was responsible for the bilingual translation (Nattier 2023: 218, fn. 18; Boucher 2008: 94). In addition to those seeking to ascertain the identity of the “real” translator, there are also scholars who assert that the “so-called ‘translator’” was only one of the many contributors and was “certainly an important one but by no means the main one” (Baggio 2019: 1, fn. 1). In contrast, Radich and Anālayo (2017: 216-217) states that the treatment of translators’ stylistic evidence for translatorship must recognize that texts were often “produced by groups” and that they may “bear the imprint of the style or verbal habits of more than one individual” (ibid). Therefore, when discussing translatorship, he usually refers not to a singular translator but to a “team” (Radich 2017: 3, 6, 26). Nevertheless, in order to attribute translations to a certain “single” translator based on stylistic evidence, he also seeks to identify the “actual translator” (Radich and Anālayo 2017: 217).

Collaborative Chinese translation is also a *generis sui* entity because it is difficult to determine who was the “one and only” translator when rendering scriptures. By examining paratexts – that is, extra-textual and contextual resources, such as biographies and prefaces – it is possible to reveal how past translators viewed themselves and how they were viewed by others. Who could be addressed as a “translator” in a Buddhist translation forum is very different from modern criteria: scribes, proof-readers, and even participants could all be categorized as translators. This compliments Cordingley and Manning’s observation that “participants in collaborative processes may understand their roles differently from those who observe them” (2016: 22). The Bakhtinian polyphony embodied in this collaborative translating process involves the constant interplay of mutual influence between these “translators”, which affects the dynamic translation

mode as well as its ultimate outcome: the translation proper. This suggests that there were “multiple translators” who were all responsible for collective “translatorship”. As Pym says, the idea of translators’ “long-term mono professionalism” is indeed misleading (2014: 163).

The central rationale for assuming the existence of multiple translators derives from the blur of word connotations that connect with the act of “translat[ing]” in Chinese. Similar to Bistué’s observation that many Latin terms can mean “to translate”,¹ there are many Chinese words that also mean “to translate”, thus blurring the boundaries of translation and other translation-related activities. Meanwhile, however, the territory of “translation” has also expanded greatly by intermingling with other relevant terms.

One example of this is the term “*yì* 譯” and its derivative “*yiren* 譯人”. *Yì* is often used to refer to the bilingual translation activity or product, or a person who interprets between two languages. Therefore, it is often equated with the terms “interpret/interpretation/interpreter” in English (Tao 2020: 21-29). Consequently, “*yiren*” frequently refers to a person who transfers language A into language B.

For example, Monk Sengyou 僧祐 (445-518 AD), who compiled *Chu Sanzang Jiji* 出三藏記集 (*Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripitaka*), stated that the term “*yì* means to interchangeably explain two nations”.² Dao’an 道安 (312/314-385 AD) described An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 148-170 AD) as someone who “*yì* [interpreted/translated] Sanskrit into Chinese”. In these cases, “*yì*” univocally indicates bilingual transmission and roughly corresponds to “interpret” in English. Consequently, “*yiren*” often refers to an interpreter who orally “exchange[s]”³ the SL with the TL. For example, the preface to T224 *Daoxing Bore Jing* (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) mentions that *yiren* “orally transmitted (the text)”. In the preface to T1505 *Siaban Muchao Jie* (*Commentary on a Digest of the Four Āgamas*), Dao’an requested the *yiren* to transfer the Indic language into Chinese. In these examples, the image of the *yiren* is, to some extent, similar to that of a modern interpreter.

¹ For example, apart from *interpretare*, there are similar terms such as *verere*, *reddere*, *transferre*, etc. See Bistué 2013: 22.

² The original words are “譯者釋也。交釋兩國”. I will translate these historical materials literally throughout this paper.

³ Behr (2004: 195-197) demonstrates the inner relationship between the paronomastic glosses “*yì* 譯 [interpret]” and “*yì* 易 [(ex)change]”.

However, the connotational range of *yi* or *yiren* could be further expanded to denote a *bishou* 筆受 (scribe). This is one of the most ancient positions that appeared almost together with the advent of Buddhist translation activity in China. Moreover, it later became one of the criteria to judge the authenticity of a translation.⁴ *Bishou* is unanimously translated as “scribe; amanuensis” or someone who “takes [the translation] down with a brush”, implying the image of an amenable co-worker who obediently writes down a Chinese translation provided by an interpreter. This may have been the case: for example, in the preface to the Mahāyānistic T374 *Daban Niepan Jing* (Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*), the scribe is said to be docile and compliant to the interpreter Dharmakṣema (Chi. 曇無讖)’s oral transmission while scribing, without adding flowery ornaments. However, some scribes were able to do more. Sengyou proffered the responsibility of a scribe that a scribe should be in charge of the quality of the wordings – *wen* 文 (refined) or *zhi* 質 (unhewn).⁵ In addition, being conversant and well-read in Chinese was a prerequisite for a scribe (Cao 1990: 46). Occasionally, scribes are also requested to be proficient in the source languages such as Sanskrit (Cao 1990: 43-45; Wang 1984: 186). The flexible and diverse skill set required of a scribe added to the ambiguity of the meaning of *yi* or *yiren*, as scribes could also be addressed as *yi* (*ren*). For example, when monk Sengrui 僧叡 (n.d.) assumed the role of a scribe during the translation of T223 *Dapin Jing* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) at Kumārajīva (Chi. 鳩摩羅什; 344-413 AD)’s translation forum, he delineated Kumārajīva – the presiding translator – as “took the *hu*⁶ text in his hand and orally expounded into Chinese”. The bilingual transmission was done by Kumārajīva, and there is no record suggesting that Sengrui knew Sanskrit or other *hu* languages. Therefore, his job was to write down translator’s oral interpretation and transform it into authentic Chinese – contestably an intralingual translation.⁷

⁴ See Cao Shibang’s example (1990: 41). During an inquiry aimed at assessing whether a translated sūtra was a pseudo-translation (apocrypha) or not, the interrogator asked about the identity of the scribe responsible for the translation. (T50, no. 2061, p. 813c1-3)

⁵ These two antonyms are translated variously. Here I adopt Cheung’s translation (2006).

⁶ The Chinese character is 胡. It is a polemical word, and its translation is controversial. It could refer to Sanskrit, Kharoṣṭhī, barbarian, middle Indic, or generally foreign. To avoid controversies, I shall apply the pinyin “*hu*” throughout this paper.

⁷ The specific contributions of Sengrui remain somewhat unclear, but it is possible that he was involved in proofreading and improving the readability of Kumārajīva’s Chinese translations. One notable example from the *Biographies of eminent monks* demonstrates how Sengrui may have assisted in this process. When Kumārajīva revised Dharmarakṣa’s earlier

But Sengrui thought himself as taking the *yi* position – he wrote in the preface that he “屬當譯任⁸ (took the job as a translator/of interpreting)”.

Moreover, the connotation of *yi/yiren* could also encompass the duty of a reciter / a presiding translator who does not know the target language – Chinese – at all. According to the biography of the Kucchean monk Śrīmitra (Chi. 帛尸梨蜜多羅; fl. 307 – ca. 350 AD), he did not learn Chinese and had to communicate with others via interpreters. Nevertheless, this biography also states that he *yichu* 譯出 (interpreted and issued) dhāraṇīs such as *Kongquewang Zhou Jing* (*Mahāmāyūrividyārājū*).

This circle expands when almost all attendees in a translation forum can be paralleled to *yiren*. During Kumārajīva’s time, hundreds or thousands of participants attended his translation forum. According to the preface to T1484 *Fanwang Jing* (*Brahmajāla-sūtra*), 3,000 scholars examined and proofread more than fifty Mahāyānist and Hīnayānist texts together with the presiding translator Kumārajīva. The numerical phrases “3,000” or “thousands of” frequently appear in descriptions of Kumārajīva’s forums. These “3,000” monks and scholars are considered to have “*yi* (translated)” in collaboration with Kumārajīva and are therefore regarded as translators

translation, he encountered a sentence that read, “天見人, 人見天” (devas see the humans, humans see the devas). Although Kumārajīva believed this captured the original meaning, the wording was overly literal. Sengrui then provided his own “translation” – “人天交, 兩得相見” (humans and devas connect, the two are able to see each other). Kumārajīva was pleased with this modification. (For the original story, please refer to T50, no. 2059, p. 364b2-6; also cf. P.L. Vaidya’s (1960) proofreading, the Sanskrit phrase is “devā api manuṣyān drakṣyanti, manuṣyā api devān drakṣyanti,” which indeed means “devas see the humans and humans see the devas”). In this context, Sengrui demonstrated excellent skills in intralingual translation. However, it is worth noting that, in the *Biographies of eminent monks*, Sengrui’s intralingual translation is used as an example to illustrate his “領悟標出” (outstanding comprehension ability; for a Japanese translation, see Yoshikawa and Funayama, in Ekō 2009: 283), which is an ability required for intralingual translation. Nevertheless, the original document does not specifically mention this ability to elaborate on Sengrui’s translation skills. Even in modern studies, and even after Jakobson’s tripartite types of translation, scholars often discuss “translation proper” while the phenomena of intralingual or intersemiotic translation are relatively neglected (Baker and Saldanha 2020: xx). Therefore, Zethsen advocates for research on “a whole strand of translation activities” (2009: 809) and proposes to discuss the position of intralingual translation in translation studies (Zethsen and Hill-Madsen 2016). Future studies that focus on the analysis of historical materials and provide modern theoretical reflections on proofreading as intralingual translation would help to deepen our understanding of this topic.

⁸ T55, no. 2145, p. 53a28-29.

or, in the least, individuals who took part in the act of translating. It is difficult to imagine 3,000 attendees all engaged in translation. A more feasible explanation is that, while Kumārajīva expounded on the content of the source text, he received direct assistance from scribes, such as the abovementioned Sengrui; most attendees would question his interpretations and renditions while presenting him with hermeneutical questions and discussing how to digest the content correctly by comparing his new translation with former versions, just as the later institutionalized *sengjiang* 僧講 (monk's explication) did. Despite the likelihood that all 3,000 attendees did not participate directly in the translation, they nevertheless still were perceived as *yiren*, to a certain degree.

In *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*The continued biographies of eminent monks*), an interesting comparison is made:

符姚兩代。翻經學士乃有三千。今大唐譯人不過二十⁹。

There were three thousand scholars who translated scriptures under Fu Jian's and Yao Xing's reigns; in our great Tang Dynasty, there are no more than twenty *yiren*.

Here, the 3,000 “翻經學士 (scholars who translated scriptures)” are compared with the less than twenty “*yiren*”. The approximately twenty *yiren* mentioned in this passage refer to the assistants in Prabhākaramitra (Chi. 波羅頗蜜多羅; 564-633 AD)'s translation forum, where T1604 *Dacheng Zhuangyanjing Lun* (Skt. *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra*) was rendered. From the description of its preface and records in *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*, it can be discerned that there were at least three positions – *zhengyi* 證義¹⁰ (proofread the meaning), *yiyu* 譯語 (interpret) and *zhuiven* 綴文¹¹ (scribe to make readable Chinese) at the forum, and the responsibilities of each position were carried out by multiple contributors, forming a sub-collaboration as part of a broader collaborative endeavour. The people who engaged in this collaboration, including the person who checked to ensure the content of the translated text aligned with the ST, were addressed as *yiren*. Along the

⁹ T50, no. 2060, p. 440b14-15.

¹⁰ This position's duty is to make sure the translated content does not deviate from the original meaning (see Wang 1984: 194).

¹¹ *Zhuiven* and *bishou* share many similarities and are sometimes even considered synonyms. Both involve transcribing translations with a brush. However, according to later materials, while *bishou* transcribes the oral interpretation verbatim, *zhuiven* changes the word order to create preliminary passable Chinese (Cao 1990: 46-48; Wang 1984: 190).

same line, by comparing Kumārajīva's collaborators with these *yiren*, the 3,000 contributors of Kumārajīva who helped to collate the meaning could also be referred to as *yiren*.

Therefore, these multiple contributors could all be categorized as “translators”, as they either conducted bilingual transition, or aided in the creation of the translation. Since they are considered *yiren* or participated in the activity of *yi*, they are clearly multiple translators who share translatorship among them, thus expanding the meaning of both “translate” and “translator”.

4. The collaborative mode

This section discusses the detailed collaborative mode as well as the reflection of three adjacent and closely connected concepts: unidirectional linear translation, the position of the translator/translators and the binaries of ST and TT.

4.1. The linear-cyclical translation mode

When discussing collaborative translation modes, Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka (Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka 2017: 169) present three general types. The last type – which involves two or more translators working on the same text while translating into the same language – is more pertinent to this paper's discussion. The very act of “translating into” a certain target language suggests that, ultimately, there should be an end text.¹² Nevertheless, before reaching this final goal, there are many procedures that must first occur. These procedures, in contrast to the representation in Figure 1 (depicting one-dimensional linearity), are not only formed in an “eindimensionale Linearität (one-dimensional linearity)” (Alhussein 2020: 58) of movements. Instead, they encompass cyclical processes where discussions and translations are sent back and forth, obscuring the boundary between the ST and the TT, until a final end text, which will be circulated within the target culture, is produced. There can be many TT, some of which, under certain circumstances, can even metamorphose into a semi ST. Buddhist translation is, therefore, an eventual outcome that is based on bidirectional or multidirectional conversations, and the collaboration

¹² This term denotes the final end target text. For more discussion, see Rosa et al. 2017.

sometimes occurs transgeographically or even transpatially. This is similar to the “hybrid linear-cyclical” process that Yu proposes (2022: 86-87).

To visualize the collaboration mode and facilitate the demonstration, I present a flow chart (Figure 2) to illustrate the early basic translaborative pattern:

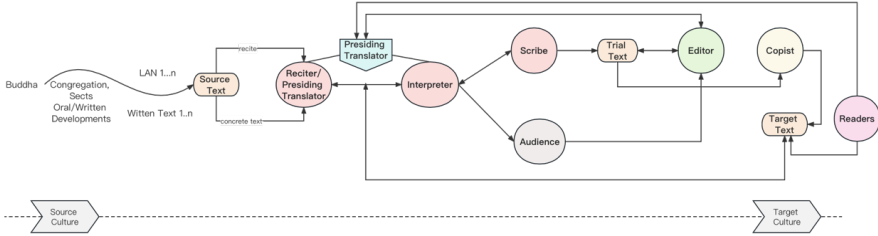


Figure 2: The linear-cyclical collaborative process

As Figure 2 demonstrates, translation is not only a unidirectional process. Rather, it also contains cyclical rotations. For example, when translating T1543 *Abhidharma-jñānaprasthāna-śāstra* in 383 AD in the capital city Chang’an 長安, Dao’an and Fahe 法和 (fl. 349-402 AD) acted as editors. The Kaśmīri monk Saṃghadeva (Chi. 僧伽提婆; fl. ca. 383-398 AD) recited, and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 interpreted. Two Chinese monks Sengmao 僧茂 (n.d.) and Huili 慧力 (n.d.) scribed. Fahe closely examined the doctrinal tenor. Until this step, the translation seems to be unidirectional, even though Sengmao and Huili collaborated on scribing, forming a small circle on their own (cf. Yu 2022: 87). Afterward, it was not Dao’an or Fahe, but Saṃghadeva, whose Chinese skills were not perfected until years later, first checked the meaning with *yiren*. Saṃghadeva’s preliminary examination found that the quality of the translation was insufficient, and therefore, Dao’an and Fahe asked them to retranslate it. After the second translation, Dao’an and Fahe deleted four scrolls of content. Two years later, Chang’an was plunged into a crisis due to wartime turmoil. Dao’an died, and Saṃghadeva and Fahe went to another city Luoyang 洛陽 amid the mayhem. Within five years, Saṃghadeva’s Chinese improved. He started to realize that the former translation was problematic, and therefore, Fahe pledged him to retranslate the scripture again. In this sense, *Abhidharma-jñānaprasthāna-śāstra* underwent at least three retranslations, and the final retranlation occurred at a different place, in a different time period and

with a different team.¹³ The translation contains a cyclical process: not only was it translated and retranslated by a group of people after multidirectional discussions, but it was also translated transpatially and transgeographically, adding another layer of circularity to the process.

4.2. The position of the translator

One haecceity of Buddhist collaboration is that it is performed in real time before a crowd, making the translation procedures quite clear and transparent. Wang describes the spatial configuration of face-to-face translaboration during the Tang and Song dynasties (1984: 166-167). Figure 2, in contrast, delineates mainly the translation mode in a time period before these later dynasties that roughly corresponds with what most scholars termed the “preparatory translation stage” (ca. 67-317 AD) of Buddhist instillation and dissemination in China. This is also referred to as the “expounding sūtra period”, with all participants physically present.

Early translation is a combination of translation and explanation, and translation can also be a homiletic method through which Buddhist philosophies are propagated and promulgated across China. In order to preach Buddhist thought, the presiding translator needed to communicate with the actual listeners either by himself (if he was good at Chinese, such as Kumārajīva) or with the assistance of an interpreter (if he was not, such as Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅, 394-468 AD).

As the presiding translator (with or without the interpreter) must expound on the doctrines in real time to attendees, he/they were not only “translator as real reader” whose first act was “that of a receptive agent” as identified by O’Sullivan in her unidirectional schematic diagram regarding the translation process (2005: 90-92), but also vocal message-senders, making other attendees (i.e., scribes, editors, audiences, etc.) into “real readers” as a corollary. These scribes, editors and even audience members – who either consider themselves *yiren* or are considered *yiren* – proactively interacted with the presiding translators/interpreters, sometimes making the latter into “real-time receptors” to the former’s advice and censures, who then adjusted or defended their translations accordingly. Once things are concluded with the consensus, the copyist could “copy and circulate” the semi-end text, even though this version may require further revisions

¹³ Cf. Daoci 道慈 (fl. 391-401 AD)’s preface (T55, no. 2145, pp. 63c21-64a28), and Palumbo who has discussed this matter in great detail (2013: 68-77).

several years later, as in the case of T210 *Faju Jing* 法句經 (Pāli. *Dhammapada*). This will be discussed in detail below.

This translation mode thus contains “many intermediate positions” (DeLanda 2006: 32-37) that could, to some extent, act as a catalyst for reconsidering the “plethora of binary concepts” (Marais and Meylaerts 2022: 7) that impinged our further understandings of translation.

Buddhist collaboration – with its many procedures and many contributors, all of whom can be considered as “translators” under certain circumstances – is constituted of complicated relationships between the many roles of the translation forum, where multiple translators can be regarded not merely as moving “between” the SL and the TL as Tymoczko perspicaciously suggests (2014: 198 and *passim*). The existence of multiple translators in a collaboration enables a translator to jump out of the conventional position of “in-betweenness” and to transcend the middle space of ST and TT, operating barrier-freely in “a system inclusive of both SL and TL, a system that encompasses both” (Tymoczko 2014: 196).

Accordingly, interlinked with the expansion of the concept of “translators”, translators can move all across the linear-cyclical process in Figure 2. Another objective condition that further emancipates translators from the in-betweenness is the multifarious languages and cultures involved in the translaboration, as the multiple translators in a translation forum do not necessarily come from the same cultural background. There can be as many source/target languages and cultures as the number of participants.

One example would be Dharmarakṣa (Chi. 竺法護, ca. 239-316 AD), whose collaborators, as examined by Boucher, have various cultural backgrounds and come from different countries and regions. According to the summary provided by Boucher (2006: 30-31), Dharmarakṣa was assisted and patronized by “a diverse array of Central Asians and Indians” who came from Kucha, Parthia, Sogdia, Khotan, Gandhāra/Kaśmīri, India and other unidentified western regions. It is indisputable that his translation forum was “truly international” (Boucher 2006: 32). The plurality of nationalities did not only enrich the number of languages and cultures involved in the translation process, but also implies the existence of “intermediate languages”. For example, in the translation of T263 *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, Dharmarakṣa, originally from the Yuezhi lineage but a resident of Dunhuang, expounded on the source text in 286 AD. He orally conferred the explanation to Nie Chengyuan 聶承遠 (n.d.), a Chinese individual proficient in Sanskrit. Nie Chengyuan might have orally translated Dharmarakṣa’s explanation into Chinese or refined Dharmarakṣa’s oral

interpretation into more polished Chinese, after which two native Chinese individuals transcribed what they had heard. Afterwards, one Indian monk and one Kuchean layman together proofread the translation. Five years later, a Sogdian bhikṣu, together with other Chinese laymen, went to Dharmakṣa to confirm the meaning. Following Dharmarakṣa's reiteration of the sūtra, the translation was once again adjusted accordingly. During this process, even though the ST was written in a specific language, and the target language was unquestionably Chinese, there were other languages that were presented and could have played a role. For example, did the Kuchean speaker, under whom the initial translation was proofread and edited, influence the translation final outcome? Did the Sogdian bhikṣu's questions influence the alteration of wordings and expressions in the second collation? With the broadened concept of “translator[s]” and the addition of intermediate languages besides the source and target ones, the translators could move more agilely, emancipating themselves from a fettered “in-betweenness” and, in the process, enervating the traditional dichotomy of ST and TT.

4.3. The dichotomy between ST and TT

There is no static ST or TT. Text is not a still object; rather, it is a “Text-Ereignis (textual event/occurrence)” that should be conceived in terms of “in seiner zeitlichen Dimension und damit in seiner Entstehung und Entwicklung (in its temporal dimension and thus in its origin and development)” (Alhusein 2020: 102). Alhusein proposes that because texts are “multidimensional, multiperspektiveisch und multifunktionell”, and likewise, TT can retrospectively influence ST (2019: 99-100). This also describes the identity of ST and TT in an open translation forum, where TT can be perceived as ST. This process can be equated with indirect translation and until reaching the final “end text”, there are always “mediating texts” (Rosa et al. 2017), even though not necessarily in a relay of multilingual transfers, but sometimes more in an editorial sense – that is, edited texts versus unedited texts. There are many steps from the beginning to the end of a translation, and all of the texts in between are continually transformed by collaborative work.

One peculiarity about Buddhist texts is that there is no ultimate “original text”, as Wynne asserts. It is difficult and even impossible to stratify early Buddhist literature because there are no “original” texts (Wynne 2004: 98). Therefore, St. André (2010: 82) refers to these indirect

texts as “intertexts”. The lack of a clear original text inhibits the dichotomies of ST and TT, making the translation process a more continuous and non-stop one that progresses toward the formation of an ever-changing TT that may transform into an ST. Just as Schahadat and Zbytovský (2016: 7) propose,

die Übersetzung wird [...] in seiner Prozesshaftigkeit bzw. Fortwährenden Transformationsdynamik betrachtet, deren Komplexität über ein einfaches Binärschema >ein Originaltext – ein Translat< bzw. >eine Ausgangskultur – eine Zielkultur< hinaus geht. The translation is considered in terms of its processuality or continuous dynamics of transformation, whose complexity goes beyond a simple binary schema of an ‘original text – a translation’ or ‘a source culture – a target culture’.

For example, when retranslation appeared on the historical stage, it was common practice to hold the already translated previous versions and correct their content by contrasting them with a new “source text”. Many “ST” or sources of oral recitation before Kumārajīva’s arrival in Chang’an in 401 AD consisted of miscellaneous languages because ST were generated mainly in India and its peripheries, including Central Asian regions (Karashima 2016: 34) and source languages were mostly Indo-European (Zhu 2009: 11). After Kumarajiva came to China, he established Sanskrit as the orthodox language and often used the Sanskrit original text to check the previous translations and then produced “new” translations. Consequently, in these earlier translations, the initial TT became a quasi-ST on which emendations, collations and new translations were carried out.

In this sense, there is constant shifting from ST to TT and retroactively from TT/new ST to TT/new TT – a concrete dichotomy between ST and TT is dissolved. Even though when finally reaching an end text that is copied and circulated to the target readers outside the translation forum – who could digest the content slowly, unlike real-time target readers who personally listened to the preaching and translation offhand – there was no guarantee that the end text would not be restored back to a textual form to be revised again, as the above example of the translation of T263 exhibits.

5. Collaboration and conflict

The focus of “collaborative translation” seems to be on the congenial outcome achieved when multiple contributors work together harmoniously to produce an end text. Nevertheless, all relationships in the process of translation can be collaborative, conflicting, “or both” (Nunes et al. 2021: 9). As Israeal (2023: 12) states, “translation projects have often triggered disagreements over concealed differences in opinion and functioned as sites of conflict”.

Scholars have noted the conflicts within the collaborative mode generated by “power-imbalance”, and they aim to deconstruct the translation process to determine who has the final say. Other scholars also discussed the asymmetry of power that creates conflicts during the collaborative process from various perspectives to show that translation is “conditioned by structures of power” (Saadat 2017: 365). They particularly enjoy discussing who has the ultimate say and “the upper hand” (Toury 1995: 184).

By examining all the voices within the translation process, it is possible to trace the diverse viewpoints of the collaborators who engage in a joint project (Buzelin 2007: 141). However, in Buddhist translation, no single translator is endowed with the power to make a final decision. The conflicts in Buddhist collaboration are more complicated. The “final say” is not determined by a single person; rather, it may be the outcome of the interaction of multifarious powers and fields, the examination of which could enhance understanding of the “relations of power underlying” the translative process (Wolf 2010: 341).

One case study that may illustrate the conflicts within collaboration and also demonstrate the difficulty of deciding who has the “upper hand” is the translation of T210 *Fajū Jing* (hereafter abbr. FJJ; translated in 224 AD), which was a cooperation work carried out by the lay translator Zhi Qian (Chi. 支謙; fl. 223-253 AD), who came from a Sinicized Yuezhi group, an Indian monk Vighna¹⁴ (Chi. 維祇難; n.d.), his companion Zhu Jianguan (Chi. 竺將炎, var. Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎; n.d.), and a group of audience members who helped to establish the translation policy as foreignization. Together, they contributed to the translation of FJJ; however, their collaboration was fraught with inconsistencies, and eventually Zhi Qian,

¹⁴ This traditionally accepted spelling, i.e., Vighna, is problematic according to Nattier, who thinks it should be reconstructed as “Vijitananda” (2008: 113; 2023: 218, fn. 17).

who functioned as a scribe and editor in this translation forum, feigned compliance.

Below is a translation of an excerpt of the preface to FJJ, which was written by Zhi Qian himself, and contains primitive and seminal information that requires further analysis:

In the third year of the Huangwu Era (224 CE), the Indian monk Vighna came to settle in Wuchang. Under him I received a version of this sutra consisting of five hundred gāthās, and I requested his companion Zhu Jiangyan to translate/interpret it. Jiangyan was well versed in the Indian language but did not know the Chinese language very well. When he transmitted the words, he sometimes retained the Indian sounds, and sometimes translated literally. The result was a translation that was unhewn and too straightforward. At first, I found it lacking in elegance, but Vighna said, “The Buddha said: follow the meaning without decorations and understand the law without ornaments. The one who transmits a scripture should make it easy to understand without losing its meaning, then it is good.” The attendees all said, “Laozi cautioned that “beautiful words are not trustworthy and trustworthy words are not beautiful”, and Confucius also said, “script cannot fully express the word; word cannot fully express the meaning”. One should know the intention of a sage is fathomless and limitless. Now we transmit the foreign meaning, we should directly convey it.” Therefore, I had nothing to say and received (the translation) from the mouth of the interpreter. (I) followed the original content without adding literary decorations. What (I) didn’t understand about the interpretations, (I) would leave it blank and did not transmit (it). Hence there were falling and missing (content), many hadn’t been rendered out.

[...]

Earlier (when we) transmitted this (scripture), some (content) was not rendered out. Just at that time, Zhu Jiangyan came over. I consulted him further and again received these gāthās, procuring 13 more chapters. Besides, having proofread the older version, some augmentations and collations are made.

According to Zhi Qian’s account, there were conflicts between him and nearly everybody else in the translation forum. Zhi Qian’s translation style has been unanimously described as “巧 (skillful)”, “文雅 (refined and elegant)”, “文麗 (refined and beautiful)” by scholarly monks of later

generations, and he resorted to this translation style because “refinedness and conciseness” were trendy at the time. That is also why he criticized Zhu Jiangyan’s translation, which was either transliterated or literally rendered, censoring that this translation style was not “elegant” enough.

When he criticized Zhu Jiangyan’s translation style, it was not Zhu Jiangyan, but Vighna who brought the foreign text into China spoke for and defended Zhu Jiangyan. However, Vighna did not confront Zhi Qian directly; he prevaricated by first citing Buddhavacana – the word of the Buddha that enjoys the utmost authority. Agreeing with Vighna, all of the audience members joined the fray. They also reverberated with Vighna’s point of view by citing Laozi’s and Confucian words to reason with Zhi Qian. It should be noted that even in the preface, Zhi Qian acted only as a scribe, he should possess great power and prestige in the translation field. According to his biography, he was summoned for his renowned intelligence and erudition by Sun Quan 孫權 (182- 252 AD), the king of the Wu Kingdom. He was then appointed *boshi* 博士 [erudite] and tutor to the crown prince. In addition, it is said that he was also conversant in six languages. With all these traits and being the one who was able to host the translation for FJJ and also being an editor who could control the final outcome of the product as implied in the above preface, Zhi Qian seemed able to have the final say at this translation forum. However, at the end of the discussion, Zhi Qian had to agree to their criterion and write down verbatim what Zhu Jiangyan conferred to him.

Zhi Qian could have buckled under the pressure, and he lost his “power of speech” not directly to Vighna, Zhu Jiangyan and listeners, but more specifically to the representors of upper symbolic power – Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius – whose words were tacitly acknowledged as an “invisible” legitimacy of power, enforcing Zhi Qian to toe the mark. Zhi Qian could not win this battle in light of he was fighting at the odds and that his opposers cited unassailable quotes from great figures. It was possible to grasp Zhi Qian’s passive resistance, as he said that he had to sincerely take down whatever was imparted to him, and he left it blank when he did not grasp the interpreter’s intention. This conflict within the collaborative process was a war without gunfire.

In the current T210 FJJ, there are examples of transliteration and literal translation, which derived from the translation style advocated by Vighna and his supporters. For example, in Chapter Bhikkhuvagga (Chi. 沙門品), there is a pāda which the Pāli version reads:

	na	aññesaṃ	pihayaṃ	care ¹⁵
Eng P.	not	of others	envy	should act ¹⁶
Chi.	無	愛	他	行
Eng C.	not	envy	of others	(should) act

(extracted from DhP 365, von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 103)

Without Pāli or other parallel texts, one will find this Chinese hard to understand, even though it conforms to Chinese grammar rules. This may be the typical “literal translation” or nearly “word-for-word translation” that Zhi Qian opposed originally but nonetheless retained in the current FJJ, manifesting Zhi Qian’s concession after the debate.

However, Zhi Qian was not a completely subordinate and passive “translator”. For example, in the paralleling *Pāli* text, the original lengthy and redundant verses of the same provenance in the same chapter are:

360. cakkhunā saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu sotena saṃvaro,
ghāṇena saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu jivhāya saṃvaro.
361. kāyena saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu vācāya saṃvaro,
manasā saṃvaro sādhu sādhu sabbattha saṃvaro
sabbattha saṃvuto bhikku sabbhadukkhā pamuccati.¹⁷
(von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 102)

A word-for-word translation for the above two stanzas would be:

360. [*eye¹⁸] [restraint] [good], [good] [*ear] [restraint]
[*nose] [restraint] [good], [good] [*tongue] [restraint]

¹⁵ As a euphonic combination, the “na-aññesaṃ” part should be “nāññesaṃ” (von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 103). Here it is separated to demonstrate the word-for-word translation.

¹⁶ A free translation provided by Norman is “One should not wander about envying others” (2000: 52)

¹⁷ Norman (2000: 52) translates these two gāthās into English as:

360. Restraint of the eye is good; restraint of the ear is good;
restraint of the nose is good; restraint of the tongue is good.
361. Restraint of the body is good; restraint of the-voice is good;
restraint of the mind is good; restraint everywhere is good.

A bhikkhu who is restrained everywhere is released from all misery.

¹⁸ All nouns in these two gāthās are in singular instrumental case, which could be rendered as “with”, “over”, etc. As is seen in Norman’s English translation above, these are all translated as “of”. All instrumental cases will be marked with asterisks.

361. [*body] [restraint] [good], [good] [*voice] [restraint]
 [*mind] [restraint] [good], [good] [everywhere] [restraint]
 [everywhere] [restrained] [bhikku] [all suffering¹⁹] [is released]

The Chinese version, compared to the lengthy original, is very concise and does not adopt a *verbum pro verbo* strategy:

端目、耳、鼻、口，身意常守正，
 比丘行如是，可以免眾苦²⁰。
 (Constraint eye, ear, nose, mouth and always
 uphold body and mind straight; If a bhikkhu can
 do so, he could be remitted from all misery.)

If Zhi Qian truly followed other people’s advice to take down Zhu Jiangyan’s “phonetical transliteration” or “literal translation”, as he proclaimed in the preface, these would not appear in the present FJJ, as Zhu Jiangyan was not *au fait* with Chinese and he was less likely to be able to shorten source sentences while maintaining the meaning.

Accordingly, as he indicated in the preface, Zhi Qian revised and collated the initial translation several years later with the previous interpreter, Zhu Jiangyan. This time, Zhi Qian had the “upper hand”, and he was finally able to not only amend what was not rendered – partly²¹ due to his tactic of not writing down what he did not understand – but also rephrase and revise the “inelegant” literal translation. In fact, he even went a step further. Nattier (2023: 342) illustrates in great detail how Zhi Qian inserted additional verses from other sources into “chapters that were already present in the original translation” and insinuates Zhi Qian possessed editorial license.

Consequently, Zhi Qian lost the battle and surrendered *status quo ante* but won the power to collate the translation in a way he was more conformable with *status quo post*. The power imbalance during the formative years of the translation shifted. By looking closely at the interactions

¹⁹ This is a compound of ablative form.

²⁰ T04, no. 210, p. 572a2-3

²¹ There are of course other factors that influenced the collation of FJJ. Another major impact factor could be the different source versions that were imported into China at that time. According to the preface to FJJ, apart from a nine hundred gāthās one, there was a seven hundred gāthās translated version before Zhi Qian and his collaborators’ translation; the version Vighna brought to China was five hundred gāthās version. For a discussion on this matter, see Nattier 2023, etc.

recorded in historical materials, it is possible to better understand the conflict, recessions and even “revenge” that occurred as part of the collaboration, which can occur transpatially, transgeographically and transtextually.

6. Future Studies

The collaborative translation of Buddhist texts in China is a kaleidoscopic and fascinating, as well as dazzling and perplexing, process. This paper discussed some of this phenomenon, which could be found passim in the vault of this almost terra incognita, with most of it lying wide open, clamouring for investigation. Collaborative translation is nomothetic in the sense that it shares certain similarities with other translaborative activities; nevertheless, it is also idiographic when considering the large number of multiple translators who contributed to the establishment of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the multifarious cultures and languages that were involved in its translating process, and the lingual gap between the source languages and Chinese – which was so dichotomously heterogeneous (Zacchetti 2005: 2) that Boucher considers the translation of Buddhist scriptures to be “one of the most extraordinary cross-cultural exchanges” (2017: 498). Future studies on Buddhist translation written from the perspective of modern translation studies should seek to enrich the discipline while also expanding existing viewpoints on Buddhist collaboration by applying an interdisciplinary approach.

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Collaborative Translation of Buddhist Texts: Ancient Chinese Assemblies and Contemporary Organizations

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Abstract

The translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, which began in the Eastern Han Dynasty and continued until the twelfth century, may be considered as the first large-scale translation project in China's history. Initially carried out by individual foreign monks, the translations gradually became more organized and collaborative, as is well recorded in Chinese historical documents. Thereafter, the translation of Chinese Buddhist scriptures into English began at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and new Buddhist text translation organizations – including the Buddhist Text Translation Society, established by Xuan Hua, a monk of Chinese origin, and the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai in Japan – were subsequently founded. Using the translation of the Lotus sūtra as a case study, this paper surveys the working practices of Buddhist text translation assemblies in ancient China, then compares their operations with those of their modern counterparts. By exploring the similarities and differences between the two eras, it demonstrates that the ancient translation teams' methods can still be of benefit to today's translators, but also acknowledges that new forms of collaborative translation are sure to emerge.

Keywords: collaborative Buddhist text translation, ancient Chinese translation assemblies, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, Buddhist Text Translation Society, comparative study.

1. Introduction

The translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese has a long history, beginning in the mid-second century CE and continuing steadily over the course of the next millennium. Initially, individual monks from the Western Regions [西]

域]¹ traveled to China and translated Buddhist sūtras written in the Hu language [胡語]² into Chinese. As these sūtras gradually gained popularity among the Chinese literati, local Chinese scholars started to undertake their own translations, with some of them, such as Zhu Shixing [朱士行] (203-282), Faxian [法顯] (ca. 337-ca. 422 CE), and Xuanzang [玄奘] (600/602-664 CE), even making perilous journeys in search of more original texts. However, these Chinese translators may have faced some significant problems – such as the language barrier, limited knowledge of Buddhist doctrine, and so on – which led them to seek collaborations with foreign translators in the hope of producing better-quality translations. These collaborations reached their peak after the imperial court sponsored the establishment of a series of large translation assemblies [譯場] with dozens or even hundreds of members, usually under the supervision of one eminent monk. However, many of the participants in these projects were neither translators nor monastics, with the administrative positions often filled by high-ranking, secular imperial officials. These organizations eventually produced thousands of Chinese versions of Buddhist texts that were passed down from generation to generation and ultimately had a profound impact on the cultures of East Asia.

More recently, attention has turned to translating the Chinese Buddhist canon into English and other Western languages. Although this process began in the nineteenth century, it has gained considerable momentum since the Second World War (Pan 2021: 55). The work has been undertaken by both individual translators and translation teams who employ a wide variety of different techniques. Two of today's most renowned translation teams – the Buddhist Text Translation Society and the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism) – share the same goal: to translate and then disseminate a large number of Chinese Buddhist texts throughout the English-speaking world. Of particular relevance to this study, both have produced their own English-language versions of the *Miaofa lianhua jing* [妙法蓮華經] (Skt. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka sūtra*; now

¹ In Chinese historical documents, this term refers to the area west of the Yumen Gate [玉門關], including what is modern China's Xinjiang Province, parts of Central Asia, and beyond.

² In Chinese historical documents, this collective term refers to the languages of Central Asia. The main source languages of Chinese versions of Buddhist sūtras varied considerably across the generations. For a discussion of this complex linguistic situation, see Cheung 2010: 6-7.

usually known as the *Lotus sūtra*), an important sūtra that the eminent monk Kumarāṅga [鳩摩羅什] and his team translated into Chinese at the start of the fifth century CE.

Many scholars (e.g., Yuan 1982; Wang Wenyan 1984; Shao 2004; Liu 2007) have studied the translation of Buddhist texts in ancient China; however, few have explored the similarities and differences between these early endeavors and the much more recent translation of the same texts into English. This article first traces the methodologies of a number of ancient Chinese translation assemblies, with an emphasis on the team led by Kumarāṅga, then compares their working practices with those of the Buddhist Text Translation Society and the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai. The ultimate aim is to highlight techniques that may prove useful in future efforts to translate the whole of the extensive Chinese Buddhist canon into English.

2. The translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese in ancient times

2.1. From individual work to collaboration

The translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese – which comprised the first large-scale, long-term translation project in Chinese history – began during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE). Most of the scriptures were translated by translation assemblies, although some individual foreign or Chinese translators would occasionally undertake such work alone either on account of a perceived pressing need to translate a particular Buddhist text or because of their inability to find competent assistants (see Wang Wenyan 1984: 129-130). For example, one of the earliest Buddhist text translators – An Shigao [安世高], a prince of the ancient country of Parthia [安息國] who renounced the throne to devote himself to Buddhism – was solely responsible for the first Chinese version of a Buddhist sūtra, the *Sūtra on the fifty schemes of the perfection of wisdom*³ [明度五十校計經] (Cheung 2010: 53), which he translated after traveling to the Chinese capital Luoyang around 148 CE and mastering the local language. More than a century later, another monk, Dharmarakṣa [竺法護] from Tianzhu [天竺] (India), transported a large number of Buddhist texts from the Western Regions to China,

³ The English title of this sūtra is taken from Cheung (2010: 53).

translating them into the language of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-317 CE) while still en route from Dunhuang to Chang'an (see Huijiao: 326). Individual translators were also active outside of China. For example, while visiting the Western Regions, the renowned Chinese monk Xuanzang translated the *Ten-volume extensive treatise in one hundred verses* [廣百論十卷] during a recitation of the sūtra (see Wang Gu: 618). Similarly, Xuanzang's near-contemporary Yijing [義淨] (635-713 CE) translated the *Five-volume sarvāstivāda vinaya gāthā* [根本說一切有部毘奈耶頌五卷] within the confines of the Nālandā Temple in northeastern India, then corrected the text following his return to China (see Zhisheng: 568). However, these diligent individuals were responsible for no more than a tiny proportion of the Chinese Buddhist canon, as the vast majority of the translation work was undertaken by large, state-sponsored teams of monastics and secular officials (Wang Wenyan 1984: 130).

The collaborative translation of Buddhist texts began in the early stages of the transmission of Buddhism to China. For example, after arriving in Luoyang in 167 CE, Lokakṣema [支婁迦讖], a native of the Kingdom of Yuezhi [月支] (the Kushan Empire), not only translated Buddhist texts unaided but also collaborated with a monk from Tianzhu named Zhu Shufo [竺朔佛] (also known as Zhu Foshuo [竺佛朔]; fl. second century CE) and the Chinese scholars Meng Fu [孟福] and Zhang Lian [張蓮]. Later, when Buddhism became widely accepted in China, and especially after it gained imperial patronage, these modest translation teams were superseded by large translation assemblies. The scale and precise nature of these groups evolved over time. For instance, the earliest assemblies included masters who studied and lectured on Buddhist doctrine in addition to the translation teams themselves, as epitomized by Kumarājīva's vast organizations, which boasted hundreds or possibly even thousands of members in a wide variety of roles. By contrast, later assemblies were more streamlined as the majority of their participants – who tended to be fluent in a number of languages and/or well versed in Buddhist teaching – were engaged in the main task of translation itself (see Wang Wenyan 1984: 148-153). Such assemblies were institutionalized by the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE) (Wang Wenyan 1984: 152), with a number of

eminent monks, such as Xuanzang and Yijing, leading typical examples over subsequent generations.⁴

2.2 Collaborative translation in Kumarājīva's assemblies

Chinese versions of the Buddhist sūtras have had a profound impact on East Asia for more than a millennium, as illustrated by the *Miaofa lianhua jing* [妙法蓮華經], which Kumarājīva translated in 406 CE. This sūtra is still widely chanted in Buddhist temples throughout China, Japan, and other East Asian countries to this day. One of Kumarājīva's disciples, Hui Guan [慧觀], describes the text's translation in the preface to his work *Doctrinal essentials of the lotus sūtra* [法華宗要]:

A foreign Buddhist monk Kumarājīva [...] in the summer of the eighth year of the Hongshi reign of the King of the Later Qin State, gathered over two thousand learned monks from all quarters together in the grand monastery of Chang'an, and studied this sūtra in detail with them to bring forth a new translation. While holding the Hui-language version of this sūtra in hand, he translated it orally into Chinese.

[有外國法師鳩摩羅什[...]秦弘始八年夏。於長安大寺集四方義學沙門二千餘人。更出斯經。與眾詳究。什自手執胡經口譯秦語。] (Sengyou: 57)

The “grand monastery of Chang'an” here refers to the Xiaoyao Garden [逍遙園], where several assemblies led by Kumarājīva engaged in a series of translation projects. The large number of participants and Kumarājīva's oral translation of the *Lotus sūtra* indicate that the translation process typically involved recitations of the text to an audience. This seems to be confirmed in the preface to another Chinese translation of a Buddhist text, the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* [摩訶般若波羅蜜經], which Kumarājīva and his team had completed three years earlier. The master's foremost disciple Seng Rui [僧睿] writes:

⁴ For details of Xuanzang's translation assembly, see Huili: 253-254; for details of Yijing's translation assembly, see Zanning: 710-711.

On the twenty-third day of the fourth month in the fifth year of the Hongshi era [403 CE], this sūtra was translated in the Xiaoyao Garden in the north of the capital. The dharma master [Kumarājīva] held the Hu-language version in his hand, declaimed the Chinese translation, explained the differences between the two languages, and analyzed the textual meaning. The King of the Later Qin State studied the earlier translations of this sūtra in person. The merits and faults were examined. The reasonings were consulted. The fundamental essence was brought to light. Kumarājīva, together with over five hundred learned monastic acquaintances, including Hui Gong [...] and others, studied the meaning of the sūtra, considered the appropriateness of words used, and then wrote them down. The translation was completed on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month of the same year, and was proofread and examined until the twenty-third day of the fourth month of the next year. The text was more or less final; however, when examined against its explanatory text, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra*, it was found that many points were still not thoroughly considered. Therefore, the *śāstra* was also translated while this sūtra was checked against it. When the translation of the *śāstra* was completed, the translation of the sūtra was finalized.

[以弘始五年歲在癸卯四月二十三日。於京城之北逍遙園中出此經。法師手執胡本口宣秦言。兩釋異音交辯文旨。秦王躬攬舊經。驗其得失。諮其通途。坦其宗致。與諸宿舊義業沙門釋慧恭[...]等五百餘人。詳其義旨。審其文中。然後書之。以其年十二月十五日出盡。校正檢括。明年四月二十三日乃訖。文雖粗定。以釋論檢之猶多不盡。是以隨出其論隨而正之。釋論既訖。爾乃文定。] (Sengyou: 53)

As Seng Rui explains in this passage, Kumarājīva's team not only translated the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* but then tested it against their own translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, an explanatory treatise written by the eminent Indian monk Nāgārjuna between the mid-second and the mid-third century CE. However, it should not be assumed that this was a routine part of the translation process, as far from every sūtra had an accompanying explanatory treatise, let alone a Chinese version of such a text. Moreover, it is doubtful that the King was an active participant in all of the Xiaoyao Garden's translation projects. Nevertheless, it seems certain that Kumarājīva and other learned monks, including his disciples, were similarly meticulous in their translation of the *Lotus sūtra*, even though they were unable to examine the end result with reference to a *śāstra*.

Translation assemblies' division of labor was probably still quite fluid in Kumarājīva's time. However, the various positions had become firmly established by the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127 CE).⁵ The eminent monk Zanning [讚寧] (919-1001 CE) provides a useful summary of the ten most common posts and their corresponding responsibilities in his *Biographies of eminent monks composed in the Song Dynasty* [宋高僧傳]:⁶

1. the Presiding Translator [譯主];
2. the Recorder [筆受], sometimes known as the Syntax-Reverser [綴文], established during the Western Jin Dynasty [265-316 CE];
3. the Interpreter [度語] or Translator [譯語], also known as the Word-Transmitter [傳語];
4. the Examiner-of-the-*Fan*-Sources [證梵本], with subdivisions including the Examiner-of-the-*Fan*-Meaning [證梵義] and the Examiner-of-Religious-Meaning [證禪義];
5. the Stylist [潤文];
6. the Examiner-of-Meaning[-of-the-Chinese-Translation] [證義];
7. the Gatha-Reciter [梵唄], established during the Yongtai era of the Tang Dynasty [in 765 CE];
8. the Collation-Officer [校勘];
9. the Superintendent [監護大使]; and
10. the Examiner-of-Transliteration [of Sanskrit Words] [正字].
(Zanning: 724-725)

The position of Presiding Translator – effectively the leader of the translation assembly – was usually occupied by a renowned monk who was well versed in Buddhist doctrine, such as Kumarājīva during the translation of the *Lotus sūtra*. Moreover, Hui Guan's record of this project suggests that Kumarājīva, along with other members of the assembly, also fulfilled the roles of Interpreter, Examiner-of-the-*Fan*-Meaning, and Examiner-of-Meaning [-of-the- Chinese-Translation]. In addition, he may have been the Examiner-of-Transliteration [of Sanskrit Words], given that the sūtra's mantras had to be transliterated rather than translated. It is highly likely that two or more of Kumarājīva's foremost disciples occupied the positions of

⁵ For the study of Buddhist translations in the Song Dynasty, see, for example, Sen 2002 and Orzech 2006.

⁶ English translations of the posts are taken from Cheung 2010: 189-190. For details of the tasks associated with each post, see Zanning: 724-725.

Recorder and Stylist, as the assembly's translations are renowned for their elegant style,⁷ while responsibility for collation of the translated sūtra was probably shared by the whole team. The role of Superintendent was usually awarded to a high-ranking secular official, but the King himself may well have fulfilled this function in the case of the *Lotus sūtra*. Finally, it is not known if Kumarājīva's translation assembly engaged in the ritual recitation of gathas (Buddhist hymns) prior to undertaking their translation duties.

3. The translation of Chinese Buddhist texts into English

The translation of Chinese Buddhist texts into English dates back to a partial translation of the *Extended annotations to śrāmaṇera disciplines overview* [沙彌律儀要略增注] within Charles F. Neumann's *The catechism of the shamans, or, the laws and regulations of the priesthood of Buddha in China*, published in 1831. More recently, several scholars have studied the history of the translation of Chinese Buddhist texts into English (e.g. Li 2009; Ban 2014; Zhu 2019; Pan 2021; Xu and Liu 2023), while a number of websites provide lists of all existing translations for reference. For instance, the website established by Marcus Bingenheimer in 2001, which comprises a comprehensive bibliography of translations of Chinese Buddhist texts into several Western languages, including English, demonstrates a significant increase in translation activity since the 1970s (see Bingenheimer).

There have been more than ten English versions of the *Miaofa lianhua jing* [妙法蓮華經] – one of the texts that Kumarājīva's assembly translated into Chinese – since the first (partial) translation by Samuel Beal (1825-1889) was published in his 1871 work *A catena of Buddhist scriptures from the Chinese*. Of these, one was produced by the Buddhist Text Translation Society (hereafter BTTS) and another by the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (hereafter BDK).

⁷ Kumarājīva was reportedly unhappy with one sentence in the Chinese version of the *Lotus Sūtra* – “Men can see devas, and devas can see men” [人見天, 天見人] – as he felt it was rather unrefined, even though the meaning was clear. Seng Rui suggested an alternative – “Men see devas and meet them across the divide between heaven and earth” [人天交接, 兩得相見] – which Kumarājīva praised for its elegance. See Huijiao: 364.

4. Collaborative translation in the BTTS and comparison with the work of ancient Chinese translation assemblies

In 1970, a Chinese monk named Xuan Hua [宣化] (1918-1995) founded the BTTS as a subsidiary of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, which itself had been established in the United States some eleven years earlier. The new society immediately set about translating Buddhist scriptures into English, publishing its first text in 1972. It claims to “emulate” the ancient translation assemblies, in part by refusing to publish any translation until it has passed scrutiny by four committees – primary translation, revision, editing, and certification (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.) – each of which is headed by an esteemed monk or nun. Most of the BTTS’s sūtra translations are accompanied by commentaries based on Xuan Hua’s lectures, including its English-language version of the *Miaofa lianhua jing*. A team of translators began working on the latter text shortly before the society was established and – in an echo of earliest stages of the transmission of Buddhism to China – had to overcome both language barriers and difficulties in understanding complex Buddhist concepts in order to finish the project. In marked contrast to every other complete English translation of the sūtra, each of which is contained within a single volume, the BTTS’s version was finally published in no fewer than sixteen volumes between 1977 and 1999.

After arriving in the United States in 1962, Xuan Hua’s first task was to lecture on Buddhist sūtras. In November 1968, he started to present daily lectures on the *Lotus sūtra* at the Buddhist Lecture Hall in San Francisco, with interpreters providing simultaneous translations. It was two years before he delivered the final lecture in the series. In order to reach a wide audience, and mindful that his translators were unfamiliar with arcane Buddhist terminology, Xuan Hua always endeavored to keep his explanations of the text as simple as possible. Nevertheless, in the early days of the lecture series, a number of translators found the task so difficult that they resigned, leaving Xuan Hua provide the translations himself, despite his limited knowledge of English. Only three people attended the first lecture, but the numbers gradually grew, with some of the attendees eventually becoming Xuan Hua’s students. From 1968 to 1969, to improve these new disciples’ Chinese, Xuan Hua launched nightly lessons in which he used Chinese sūtras as textbooks. Later, he set up language classes in which the students learned Sanskrit, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and English. In addition to helping his students improve to their language

skills, he established the aforementioned four committees and drafted eight guidelines for the translation of Buddhist sūtras. Finally, in 1993, the BTTS's translation and publication process was formally defined under Xuan Hua's guidance (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: *City of ten thousand Buddhas* for further details).

The BTTS's translation of the *Lotus sūtra* into English is entitled *The wonderful dharma lotus flower sutra*. All of the members of the translation team, and their respective roles, are listed on the final pages of the first volume. A total of thirty-six people contributed to the project, with some of them serving on more than one of the four committees (see Table 1), and there were twenty-two discrete steps in the translation process. First, recordings of Xuan Hua's lectures on the sūtra were transcribed in Chinese, with the transcription then checked, proofread, and polished. Next the Chinese transcription was translated into English, with the resulting text then checked against the Chinese original, proofread, and polished. Then the English translation was transferred to a computer, laid out, proofread, and corrected. Finally, a sample text was produced, artwork was added, and the book was printed (see Table 2).

Positions	Number of Members	Composition
Chairperson	1	1 monk
Primary Translation Committee	14	10 monks and nuns plus 4 laymen and laywomen
Revision Committee	17	7 monks and nuns, 8 laymen and laywomen, and 2 university professors
Editorial Committee	20	11 monks and nuns, 8 laymen and laywomen, and 1 university professor
Certification Board	11	6 monks and nuns plus 5 laymen and laywomen
Others (Dharma Postman)	1	1 layman

Table 1: Roles in the BTTS's translation of the *Lotus sūtra* (Source: Buddhist Text Translation Society 1977)

1) Transfer (the Master’s lectures) from reel-to-reel tapes to cassette tapes	2) Transcription (of the Master’s Chinese lectures from cassette tapes)
3) Chinese data entry	4) Checking Chinese transcription
5) Proofreading the Chinese (several times)	6) Polishing the Chinese (several times)
7) Certifying the Chinese	8) Translation into English
9) Bilingual review	10) Polishing English translation (several times)
11) Certifying the English	12) Bilingual review (several times)
13) Bilingual certification	14) Initial layout on computer
15) Proofreading (several times)	16) Corrections on computer
17) Second layout	18) Proofreading (several times)
19) Corrections on computer	20) Sample (silver-print)
21) Artwork/graphics	22) Printing

Table 2: Steps in the BTTS’s translation of the *Lotus sūtra* (Source: Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: “About Us”)

Table 3 compares the tasks undertaken by Xuan Hua and his associates during the BTTS’s translation of the *Lotus sūtra* with Zanning’s description of the division of labor in a typical translation assembly in ancient China.

Posts in an Ancient Translation Assembly	Corresponding Translation Steps / Responsibilities in the BTTS
1) Presiding Translator	Xuan Hua explaining and interpreting sūtras
2) Recorder	Recording Chinese in Steps 1, 2, and 3 Recording English in Steps 8, 14, and 17
3) Interpreter or Translator	Step 8
4) Examiner-of-the- <i>Fan</i> -Sources	Examining and proofreading the Chinese sources in Steps 4 and 5 Certifying the Chinese in Step 7 Certifying the Chinese and English in Step 13
5) Stylist	Polishing the Chinese in Step 6 Polishing the English in Step 10
6) Examiner-of-Meaning	Certifying the English in Step 11 Certifying the Chinese and English in Step 13 Proofreading and corrections in Steps 15, 16, 18, and 19

7) Gatha-Reciter	No equivalent
8) Collation-Officer	Bilingual review in Steps 9 and 12
9) Superintendent	No equivalent
10) Examiner-of-Transliteration [of Sanskrit Words]	No equivalent

Table 3: Comparison between the BTTS and an Ancient Translation Assembly

Several significant differences are immediately apparent:

1. The ancient translation was from Sanskrit or Hu-language to Chinese, while the BTTS translated a Chinese text into English.
2. The Recorder's main function in an ancient assembly was to write down the target text – that is, the Chinese translation. Similarly, the Stylist and the Examiner-of-Meaning respectively polished and checked the Chinese translation. By contrast, those occupying equivalent positions in the BTTS recorded, polished, and examined *both* the source text (the Chinese transcription of Xuan Hua's lecture series) *and* the target text (the English translation).
3. A number of Buddhist nuns and laywomen participated in the BTTS project, whereas ancient translation assemblies very rarely recruited women.
4. Large ancient translation assemblies led by eminent monks invariably enjoyed generous patronage from the imperial court, and the post of the Superintendent was usually occupied by a high-ranking government official. Of course, no such support was available to the BTTS, and the post of Superintendent was filled by a monk or a nun.
5. According to Zanning, some ancient translation assembly had Gatha-Reciters who sang these Buddhist hymns before work began, perhaps to calm the translators' minds and prepare them for the day ahead. By contrast, members of the BTTS's translation team would begin each day with a quiet, personal recitation of "Homage to the eternally dwelling Buddhas of the ten directions. Homage to the eternally dwelling Dharma of the ten directions. Homage to the eternally dwelling Sangha of the ten directions" (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: *City of ten thousand Buddhas*) These "three jewels" of Buddhism – the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha – are revered by all the religion's devotees.

6. The final three steps in the BTTS's production of the English-language version of the *Lotus sūtra* concern the design and printing of the proofread and corrected text. There is no equivalent in Zanning's account of the division of labor in ancient translation assemblies, as the tenth and final role he describes relates to checking the transliteration of Sanskrit terms.
7. In the BTTS, Xuan Hua insisted that each section of the text should be read to everyone present three times once the translation had been completed. Then everyone was invited to give their opinions until they all agreed that the translation could not be improved (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: *City of ten thousand Buddhas*). There is no evidence of a similar procedure in ancient translation assemblies.

Notwithstanding these differences, the BTTS still resembles ancient translation assemblies in several respects. First and foremost, the leader of the organization, Xuan Hua, was a modern counterpart of the Presiding Translators of ancient China, not least because he was far from fluent in the language of his new environment and therefore had to collaborate closely with locals to fulfill his translation projects. Indeed, this “modern Chinese missionary” (Buddhist Text Translation Society 1977: ix) brought the Chinese translation tradition to a new continent by gathering together a group of converts and establishing what was effectively a latter-day translation assembly. Furthermore, the BTTS's procedures and regulations are entirely in keeping with the Chinese translation tradition. For example, the final pages of its translation of the *Lotus sūtra* enumerate the eight guidelines that the translators were expected to follow. An updated version of these rules (which acknowledges the work done by female as well as male translators) was subsequently uploaded onto the society's website:

1. A translator must free him/herself from motives of personal fame and reputation.
2. A translator must cultivate a sincere and reverent attitude that is free from arrogance and conceit.
3. A translator must refrain from aggrandizing his/her work and denigrating that of others.
4. A translator must not establish him/herself as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with his/her fault-finding.

5. A translator must take the Buddha-mind as his/her own mind.
6. A translator must use the wisdom of Dharma-Selecting Vision to determine true principles.
7. A translator must request Virtuous Elders of the ten directions to certify his/her translations.
8. A translator must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing Sūtras, Shastra texts, Vinaya texts, and other Buddhist texts when the translations are certified as being correct. (Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.)

It is surely no coincidence that the BTTS's translators are obliged to follow these eight rules. Yancong (557-610 CE), an eminent monk during the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE) who was fluent in Sanskrit and participated in several major translation assemblies, wrote a well-known treatise entitled *Bian zheng lun* [辯正論] (*On the right way*) that included eight prerequisites for Buddhist translators:

First, a translator must sincerely love the dharma, devote [him/herself] to benefiting others, and not mind spending much time. Second, as a person who is going to step on the place of enlightenment, a translator should firmly obey the rules of abstinence and not be contaminated by the bad habits of ridiculing others. Third, a translator must be well read in Buddhist Tripiṭaka, understand both Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism, and not be intimidated by difficulties. Fourth, a translator must study the Chinese classics and Chinese history and be well versed in letters to avoid clumsiness in [his/her] translations. Fifth, a translator must have a broad, fair, and compassionate mind instead of a stubborn one. Sixth, a translator must devote [him/herself] to practicing, be indifferent to fame and wealth, and have no desire to show off. Seventh, a translator must study Sanskrit to sustain the right translations and should not lag behind in the Sanskrit knowledge. Eighth, a translator must be well acquainted with the lexicon of ancient Chinese writings such as *Cangjie pian* 倉頡篇 and *Erya* 爾雅 and Chinese scripts such as seal script and official script, and should not be ignorant of the Chinese knowledge.

誠心愛法志願益人不憚久時其備一也。將踐覺場先牢戒足不染譏惡。其備二也。筌曉三藏義貫兩乘不苦闇滯。其備三也。旁涉墳史工綴典詞不過魯拙。其備四也。襟抱平恕器量虛融不好專執。其備五也。沈於道術澹於名利不欲高銜。其備六

也。要識梵言乃閑正譯不墜彼學。其備七也。薄閱蒼雅。粗諳篆隸。不昧此文。其備八也。]. (Daoxuan: 439)

Therefore, both the BTTS and Yancong stress the importance of maintaining righteous attitudes and virtues, although the latter places more emphasis on studying Buddhist doctrine and becoming fluent in source and target language alike. These discrepancies are understandable, as the recently established BTTS probably would have found it very difficult to recruit translators who fulfilled all of Yancong's rather stringent requirements. Instead, to ensure that its work is of a consistently high quality, every member of the team reads through each translation three times and makes corrections as necessary.

Further evidence of the profound influence of the Chinese translation tradition on the work of the BTTS comes in the form of the three principles to which the society adheres – faithfulness, elegance, and clarity, with faithfulness paramount (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: *City of ten thousand Buddhas*). There are echoes here of three principles proposed by the renowned Chinese scholar Yan Fu [嚴復] (1853-1921) – fidelity [信], expressiveness [達], and elegance [雅]⁸ – which gained wide popularity in China during the twentieth century.

In summary, although the BTTS does not slavishly follow all of the working practices of the ancient translation assemblies, as an organization led by a Chinese monk, it undoubtedly follows the long-established Chinese Buddhist translation tradition. In this respect, it stands in marked contrast to another modern translation organization – the BDK.

5. Collaborative translation in the BDK and comparison with the work of the BTTS

The Japanese industrialist and Buddhist missionary Yehan Numata (1897-1994) established the BDK in 1965, but it was another seventeen years before the organization set up the Editorial Committee of the English Tripiṭaka Translation Project to oversee the publication of English-language

⁸ These three words were first grouped together in Zhi Qian's [支謙] (fl. c. 222-252) "Preface to [the translation of] the [Buddhist sūtra] *Dharmapada*" [法句經序], although in a different sequence. Yan Fu reordered them to highlight what he perceived as fidelity's primacy (Chen 2000: 106-107).

versions of the Buddhist sūtras. Its ultimate aim is to translate all 3360 works in the 100-volume *Taishō* canon into English. In 1991, a Publication Committee was established at the Numata Center for Translation and Research in Berkeley, California, to coordinate this mammoth task. Thus far, the Editorial Committee has selected 139 works for translation, 69 of which have been completed, while the remaining 70 are currently “being translated by Buddhist scholars in over ten countries throughout the world” (see Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai n.d.: “English Translation of the Buddhist Canon and Publication Project”). The BDK’s English-language version of the *Lotus sūtra*, translated by Tsugunari Kubo (b. 1936) and Akira Yuyama (b. 1933), was published in 1993.

In the organization’s 2019 newsletter, the chair of the Editorial Committee, Kenneth K. Tanaka, highlighted the support that the ancient translation assemblies received from emperors and governmental institutions (Tanaka 2019: 6), so he is clearly familiar with the history of Buddhist translation in East Asia. However, the BDK operates in a completely different way from its renowned predecessors. For example, in an earlier newsletter, dating from 2008, the organization enumerated sixteen guidelines for the English translation of the Chinese Buddhist canon. These elaborate the project’s primary aims, source texts, rules to be followed with regard to titles, introductions, notes, glossaries, and bibliographies, translation strategies (including transliterations of mantras and proper nouns), submission requirements, expected time frames, and remuneration and crediting procedures. In addition, Guidelines 13 and 16, respectively, assert that the editorial decisions of the Editorial and Publication Committees are final, and that copyrights are held by the BDK and the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research (Editorial Committee of the English Translation of the Chinese Tripiṭaka 2008: 5-7).

It is noteworthy that the BDK generally employs no more than two translators for each text – or each section of a large text – and that these are usually eminent Buddhist scholars, in contrast to the monastics and Buddhist laypeople who mostly comprise the translating teams at the BTTS. As a result, the BDK’s translators tend to be highly knowledgeable about Buddhist doctrine and fluent in a variety of languages, including Chinese, English, Sanskrit, and others. In other words, the BDK gathers together dozens of experts in Buddhist text translation from around the world, assigns each (or pairs) of them individual tasks, then works with them towards the ultimate goal of translating the whole Chinese Buddhist canon into English.

In 2013, the chair of the Publication Committee, Charles Muller, highlighted one important aspect of the BDK's work – the application of digital tools. Understanding the urgent need for a comprehensive Chinese-English dictionary of Buddhist terminology, Muller set himself the task of developing the *Digital dictionary of Buddhism*, which by 2013 comprised some 60,000 entries, including many supplied by its users (Muller 2013: 2). This has proved to be an invaluable resource for the BDK's translators, especially when used in conjunction with the Saṃgaṇīkīkṛtaṃ Taiśotripīṭakaṃ (SAT) Taiśhō Text database, which contains 85 complete volumes of the *Taiśhō shinsbū daijōkyō* [大正新脩大藏經]. Moreover, in addition to publishing print editions of all its translations, in 2014 the BDK announced that it would be making the texts available online in order to increase their availability among the target audience (Yonezawa 2014).

Generally speaking, then, the BTTS is very traditional in comparison with the more innovative BDK. In addition, the members the BDK's Editorial and Publication Committees, like the translators themselves, tend to be Buddhist scholars who are still active in universities and other areas of academic research, rather than monks, nuns, or Buddhist laypeople. Hence, the BTTS's project could be described as more “religious” than that of the BDK. For instance, as mentioned earlier, the BTTS's translators quietly pay homage to the “three jewels” of Buddhism prior to starting work each day, and the society's eight guidelines focus on the participants' integrity and principles, rather than their aptitude for translation. In other words, the BTTS's translation project may be viewed as an extension of Buddhist practice. Furthermore, because they are practicing Buddhists, the society's members should not expect any remuneration for their work (see Buddhist Text Translation Society n.d.: *City of ten thousand Buddhas*). Because of this, in the eleventh and all subsequent volumes of *The wonderful dharma lotus flower sutra*, the eight guidelines refer to the “volunteers” who have produced the text, rather than the “translators” (see Buddhist Text Translation Society 1998: vii). Clearly, the BDK, which characterizes itself as a “non-sectarian organization” (Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai n.d.: “Message”), has no such expectations of its translators, and it fully remunerates and credits them for their work.

The final notable difference between the BDK and the BTTS concerns the amount of collaboration within each organization. The BTTS's more “traditional,” collaborative approach means that each Buddhist text is translated in precisely the same, meticulous way, and in almost identical style. By contrast, as each BDK text is the work of just one

or possibly two translators, who may be based anywhere in the world, there is no discernible “BDK style.” The BTTS emphasizes the importance of cooperation among a tight-knit team of translators who are all devoted to increasing access to Buddhist texts throughout the English-speaking world, whereas the BDK’s committees assign individual translation tasks to a disparate group of individual scholars. Therefore, the BTTS may be viewed as more traditional (Chinese) and collaborative, and the BDK as more modern and non-religious.

6. Conclusion

The modern era of the transmission of Chinese Buddhist texts into the West can be traced to the first translations of such texts into English almost two centuries ago. Although this new phase contains obvious echoes of traditional Chinese Buddhist translation, today’s translation projects are far more diverse than was ever the case in the thousand-year history of ancient translation assemblies. For instance, there are notable differences in terms of personnel and working practices between the BTTS and the BDK. Due, in part, to the founder’s Chinese background and the strength of the participants’ devotion to Buddhism, the BTTS operates in much the same way as an ancient Chinese translation assembly. In comparison, the BDK is less collaborative, less “religious,” and more willing to utilize modern technology. Given these contrasting approaches to the task of translation, it is hardly surprising that their English versions of Chinese Buddhist texts – including the *Miaofa lianbua jing* – are far from uniform.⁹ As a result, their respective publications probably appeal to different types of reader, but that merely aids the transmission of Buddhism to an ever-wider audience throughout the English-speaking world.

Abbreviations

L *Qianlong edition of the canon* [乾隆大藏經]. Taipei: Xinwenfeng

⁹ Unfortunately, space constraints mean that this paper is unable to explore the specific textual differences between the two organizations’ English-language translations of the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, as mentioned earlier, the BTTS’s version includes the society’s eight guidelines to highlight the translators’ devotion to Buddhism.

Publishing Company, 1991. Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) edition.

T *Taishō shinsū daijōkyō* [大正新修大藏經]. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō [高楠順次郎] and Watanabe Kaigyoku [渡邊海旭]. Tōkyō: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-1934. (CBETA) edition.

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Translation Studies and the History of Books: a productive collaboration?

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Abstract

Translation historians, such as Littau (2011, 2016, 2022) Belle and Hosington (2017) and Coldiron (2012, 2015) among others, have attempted to demonstrate the interdependence between translation activities and new conditions of book production that expanded the literary market. Littau, in particular, has paid special attention to the technologies behind the production and distribution of translations, making us more aware of how knowledge transmission processes operate materially.

Book format, paratextual elements and, above all, data on the material production and distribution of books are key factors in understanding what is translated and how it has been and is being translated, both in the past and in the present. Hence, all these factors deserve the same degree of attention as linguistic and cultural adaptation strategies, elements more familiar to Translation Studies scholars.

Firmly grounded in Translation Studies, in this paper I will exploit the notion of 'collaboration' in order to tentatively explore the theoretical intersections between historical studies of translation and the discipline of Book History, and analyse the relationship between translation and the evolution of the book market.

A brief case study on the momentous changes of translation in the 19th century in the Italian territories will attempt to shed light on the potential for greater interaction between the two disciplines, while admittedly remaining within the scope of my expertise, namely Translation Studies.

Keywords: Translation Studies, translation history, History of Books, expansion of the book market, 19th-century Italy

1. Introduction

The crucial role that translation has played in the development of cultures has been intensively explored over the past fifty years or so, at least since Steiner's pioneering work in 1975, and further enhanced by the so-called

‘cultural turn’ in Translation Studies in the 1990s.¹ However, that celebration of translation’s pivotal status, innovative at the time as it signalled a new international positioning of the discipline, now risks appearing outdated. Today, Translation Studies enjoys a well-established academic relevance and the problem is rather to avoid disciplinary fragmentation, as the discipline encompasses increasingly varied fields of study in terms of research objects, methodologies and specific goals. Furthermore, much has been written about the benefits of interdisciplinary research, a fundamental principle in the development plans of our universities, particularly appropriate in a field as transdisciplinary by its nature and definition as Translation Studies (it is enough to mention Rizzi, Lang and Pym 2016).² But leaving aside the complex issues of impending fragmentation, here I would like to address just one of the challenges that, in my view, lie ahead for Translation Studies.

Several voices have been heard arguing that the discipline should expand beyond the investigation of interlingual and intercultural phenomena, particularly in those areas where translation activities are engaged with various technological devices, such as AVT and its various branches, or when technology is applied to translation production, as in machine translation (see, for example, Malmkjaer 2013). Another more recent trend that is actively driving Translation Studies beyond its linguistic and intercultural concerns is research focused on the topic of ecotranslation, inaugurated by Cronin 2017 by embracing a broad ecological dimension that includes everything human and non-human.³

Setting aside these complex and fascinating paths for the moment, I would instead like to focus on the material and social aspects of translation and its relationship to the activity of book production, which is particularly significant when translation is ‘on the move’, i.e. when we analyse this activity in terms of geographical and historical mobility. For this reason, I would like to focus my attention on the relationship between Translation Studies and the Book History, addressing the specificity of this exchange

¹ The so-called ‘cultural turn’ is a theoretical shift in translation studies that took place during the 1990s and is mainly associated with the work of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere.

² Rizzi, Lang and Pym 2019 devote a whole chapter to the topic of interdisciplinarity, particularly in historical studies on translation. See “On Interdisciplinarity: Trusting Translation History”, pp. 87-108.

³ On this same line also see the relationship between translation and biosemiotics in Marais and Kull 2016.

and the collaborative dynamics that arise when studying translation phenomena alongside the activity of book production and circulation.

2. Translation and the books: a brief historical overview

Translation Studies and Book History have many aspects in common, as both of them deal with some of the most fundamental activities in knowledge production and transfer. The aim of this article is to examine whether it is possible to adopt, or rather exploit, a broad concept of ‘collaboration’ – the central theme of this *Cultus* issue – to draw some potential and actual connections between the two disciplines, in order to promote an optimistic outlook for future developments.

The way in which the two disciplines should be approached collaboratively, particularly at times of historical, cultural and technological transition, has been illustrated in a seminal essay on translation and the evolution of printing in the Renaissance period by Coldiron:

To study printing and translation as co-processes in linguistic, social, and material transformation thus gives us direct, dual access to a moment of tremendous technological change, and a moment of equally tremendous cross-cultural interaction. (Coldiron 2015: 6)

As early as 2017, Belle and Hosington pointed out that just a few studies had effectively connected these two interrelated fields. However, as Armstrong (2016: 103) had shown shortly before them, the relationship between translation and the materiality of book production had been addressed, particularly by scholars concerned with the mediation and transformation of texts in late medieval manuscript and print culture. Indeed, most studies on the relationship between Translation Studies and Book History have been produced by scholars working in the early modern period, such as Coldiron (2012; 2015), Armstrong (2015), Littau (2011; 2022) and Rizzi (2020; 2018), to name a few.⁴

This is not surprising, since the early modern period witnessed a momentous transition from manuscript to print culture. In the second half of the 15th century, thanks to the invention of printing technology, Europe

⁴ Colombo’s 2019a and 2019b contributions on 19th-century ephemeral literature are an important exception to the prevailing interest in this topic by scholars focusing on the early modern period.

witnessed an enormous change not only in terms of the production and consumption of texts, but also and above all in terms of their circulation. The development of book production and circulation was due to technical advances in printing technologies, which enabled publishers to reduce the price of books, with considerable consequences for cultural progress in Europe. The evolution of printing, as with all other media technologies, had a dramatic and permanent impact on writing and reading practices, and arguably also on translation, as Littau has claimed:

If media technologies (from the human body to the computer) make a difference to practices of writing and reading, as historians of the book have demonstrated, then surely the same technologies have also made a difference to practices of translation. (Littau 2011: 261)

As a consequence, the study of translation can only benefit from a parallel meticulous analysis of the technologies underlying its production, and Translation Studies should take advantage of the methodologies already extensively developed by book historians in this field.

In the course of the 17th century, and later in the 18th century, printed books began to be mass-produced, thus satisfying the rapidly growing demand for reading by an increasingly literate middle class that needed to find more affordable prices. In this way, print technology reached a mass audience and laid the foundation for the creation of a literary market. Furthermore, the new reading public did not read Latin, the language of the educated elite, but appreciated books in the vernacular.

Bachleitner⁵ (2018) has emphasised an important double effect of the connection between print production and translation in this historical period. On the one hand, the extraordinary increase in the mass of readers demanding literature in the vernacular strengthened the national borders within which these languages were spoken. Latin significantly lost its role as the language of communication in Europe, while the number of new, less educated readers increased. It can therefore be argued that the new printing technologies were behind the gradual emergence of national literatures

⁵ As early as 2009, Bachleitner modified Robert Darnton's (1982) original proposal of a "communication circuit" by including translation in the dynamics of production, circulation and consumption of books. Bachleitner's field of investigation was the production and translation of books in the German territories in the 19th century, but his argument about the crucial link between translation and the technologies of knowledge production and distribution can be applied to all other historical periods.

(2018: 107). On the other hand, another consequence of the development of print technologies must be acknowledged, which is particularly interesting for the purposes of this article. Indeed, translation became increasingly important as a fundamental tool to ensure communication between peoples, thus counteracting linguistic fragmentation. From the early modern age until almost the beginning of the 18th century translation functioned as a crucial bridge in Europe, in a much more complex communicative context than in the pre-printing era. To sum up, it can be maintained that print technology significantly created the conditions for the emergence of a strong demand for translation in Europe from the 17th century onwards.

3. Print technology and translation methods: two parallel paths?

Translation Studies and Book History are both actively involved in the study of the dissemination of knowledge across linguistic borders. As Colombo has aptly argued, scholars working in the two disciplines must necessarily come to terms with the relationship between translation and transnationality, i.e. with all the issues related to the “transnational migration of literary works, genres, modes and trends as well as in transforming national literatures and cultures more generally” (2019a: 153).

But it must also be acknowledged that media technologies have made possible the development, communication and circulation of knowledge throughout history and, consequently, also of translation. In this respect, the contribution of Book History is particularly important for Translation Studies, as the former provides the tools for new forms of materialist analysis. Book historians have long distanced themselves from abstract theories by reminding us that when we analyse a cultural product, we are not only dealing with its content on a linguistic level, but we are also addressing that product as a material object. Therefore, the study of translation in relation to print production offers crucial insights into the ways in which meanings are produced, processed and disseminated, as Coldiron has demonstrated with reference to the printers and translators of the English Renaissance:

Printers, like translators, control the distance between the reader and the prior foreign text. Just as the translator may elide or enhance cultural distance with each lexical and syntactical choice and with register, tone, and style, so too the printer may elide or enhance the

work's foreign elements with choices of *mise-en-page*, ornaments, initials, and typography. (Coldiron 2015: 173)

A seemingly obvious but perhaps not sufficiently explored consideration is that at the origin of all cultural objects and their transfers, including translation, are the processes of their production. These processes must be studied in their materiality, shaped by the technological resources that have been developed throughout human history.

The point has already been raised by Littau (2016: 90), who has argued that translation methods have changed throughout history according to the available technological resources, and that the study of translation should be complemented by the study of the media that support its implementation. A paradigm shift is therefore required in the study of translation phenomena through an integrated approach that takes into account not only the linguistic and cultural codes involved in the transfer, but also the concrete means of knowledge transmission.

Print technology has been responsible for fixing the written word. As Bachleitner (2016: 107) has aptly argued, word-for-word translation became much more important from the Renaissance onwards. Then, in due course, thanks to the revolution that print technology created not only in the production of books and transmission of knowledge, but also in people's reading habits, the reading public grew enormously, producing a demand for easy and comprehensible reading.

As a result, particularly in the course of the 17th century, fluency and readability emerged as key criteria, also in translation. The link between the physical materiality of the book and the way its content was conveyed through translation in such a crucial historical period, when the method of the *belle infidèle* became established in France, has been explored by Littau, who writes:

Can the translational strategy of fluency, which according to Venuti (2000: 55) first emerged in the late seventeenth century, be explained at least in part with reference to typographical changes made possible by print innovations, insofar as inter-word spacing now combined with new typefaces, page layouts, punctuation, chapter breaks, etc. introduced greater legibility, smoother readability, and by extension favoured more immediate intelligibility? (Littau 2016: 91)

The expansion of the book market had a significant influence also on the translator's profession. At the beginning of the 19th century, various

intellectuals, journalists, writers and teachers took up this profession in many European countries. Indeed, the growing demand for translation by the reading public increased the number of those beginning to do this type of work.

Translation can thus be firmly embedded in a kind of virtuous circle that sees the material production and transmission of knowledge in the book market increase dramatically as a result, and at the same time as a trigger, of a new approach to reading. As Bachleitner has argued: “The fact that the emerging class of authors, *translators* and journalists that was called ‘intellectual proletariat’ by eighteenth century critics could earn a living by writing was the condition for literary mass production” (2018: 106, my emphasis).

In the course of the 19th century, new legislation to guarantee intellectual property went beyond national borders, a clear sign of the economic importance that translation had acquired. One of the earliest supra-national copyright legislation that also mentioned translations was signed by the Kingdom of Sardinia and the Austrian Empire in 1840 (Palazzolo 2013). In the historical periods before the regulation of copyright and translation rights, the price of books, and of translations in particular, was the result of bargaining between supply and demand and was therefore subject to economic competition. This type of competition naturally led to lower prices. With the advent of the new legislation, the situation changed radically, creating not only a significant increase in prices, but also a greater awareness in the reading public of the value of literary products, and of translations in particular.

The study of translation alongside that of the material conditions and technologies behind its realisation appears extremely promising. It also seems a preliminary confirmation of the importance of collaboration between the two disciplines of Translation Studies and the Book History. However, a risk looms on the horizon, somewhat similar to the one Lefevere warned against in the early 1990s in his review of Even-Zohar’s polysystemic theory (1990), when the Belgian scholar put forward a revision of that theory, in which he perceived an abstract and mechanistic tendency. Instead, he wanted to emphasise the crucial presence of the human element in the production, distribution and transmission of cultural products. For this reason, he suggested the introduction of “instruments of control” (Lefevere 1992), represented by people and institutions (made up of people) that have a crucial influence in orienting, manipulating and/or safeguarding the reception and consumption of cultural products.

However, nowadays a so-called humanising approach (Pym 2009) in translation has become a sensitive topic because it is seemingly at odds with a broad ecological trend that would rather analyse human and non-human resources on equal terms in cultural production.⁶ I have already mentioned this trend by referring to the concept of eco-translation, elaborated in particular by Cronin 2017. Littau also explicitly criticises an overly anthropocentric emphasis that she considers pervasive in most of the humanities, and primarily in Translation Studies. As she has put it herself: “The anthropocene is impossible without its material infrastructure” (Littau 2016: 84).

4. Translation Studies and Book History: collaboration or subordination?

The question of how to envisage a collaboration between two distinct disciplines such as Translation Studies and Book History, so as to create a fruitful dialogue with mutual benefits, rather than establishing a predominance, even only on a methodological level, of one over the other, is not easy to answer.

Colombo speaks of the need for the two disciplines to complement each other, but she seems to support this statement mainly by referring to the ways in which translation historians in particular often need to “carry out extensive archival research and to consult databases and library catalogues”, practices that she apparently ascribes to the domain of book historians (Colombo 2019a: 151).

Another interesting, and undoubtedly true, issue on which the two disciplines should produce greater synergy concerns the way in which translation should be perceived as a social practice, involving many different agents. However, while book historians seem to be interested in studying “all the agents involved in the production, distribution and consumption” of different versions of a given text, translation scholars seem instead to focus on the agency of the translator, “and his or her relations with the other actors involved in the production, distribution and consumption of

⁶ It is worth noting that one of the outcomes of a ‘humanising’ translation approach is the increased visibility of all those who participate in the translation process. Despite this, I have previously argued that the concepts of visibility and collaboration in translation have often been seen as incompatible when considering the past. For further information on this topic, refer to Agorni 2022.

translations” (Colombo 2019a: 150). Consequently, Colombo concludes that the history of translation is above all the history of translators.

I believe she has a point here, and that Translation Studies should integrate the “inclusive perception of the publishing scene developed within Book History” (Colombo 2019b: 289). On the other hand, book historians could profit from the cross-cultural and cross-lingual focus of Translation Studies” (2019b: 289) to better understand the cross-cultural mobility of texts, genres, trends, and the role they play in shaping cultural systems.

A review of some of the most recent literature on this topic (Littau 2011; 2016; 2022) suggests that scholars have attempted to redress the presumed dominance of a human-centred view of research in Translation Studies, and disciplines such as the History of Books and Media Studies have been proposed as allies in this endeavour. Hence, the constitutive role of those technologies that have shaped cultural objects throughout history has been repeatedly emphasised by Littau, who sees translation in a relationship of dependence on the medium that makes it available – be it “papyrus scrolls, parchment books, printed books” (Littau 2022: 132). In this approach, media technologies would be responsible for the form that translation has taken over the centuries, not only influencing, but ultimately dictating translating methodologies, as Littau makes clear when she claims that technologies are the real driving force in the dissemination of knowledge across linguistic boundaries (2016: 87).

However, I am not alone in questioning the agency of non-human, technological agents that are probably the product of human intellect and creativity in response to some human need or desire. Technologies do not magically develop and function on their own, but have been invented and adapted by humans to serve purposes dictated by human needs. Bachleitner poses the question very aptly: “When Littau asks: ‘what is a printer without a printing press; or a translator without a medium?’, we must also ask: ‘what is a medium without humans?’” (Bachleitner 2016: 108). Translators, their publishers and readers, audiences and critics are undoubtedly active participants in translation processes, along with the medium that provides the structure of what is possible and common to accept as a translation. It is the combination of these factors and agents that ultimately shapes any translation.

The distinction between a relationship of primacy or collaboration between two approaches that respectively take into consideration the material aspects of media technologies (of utmost importance to book historians) and the immaterial aspects of translation (probably the field of

research most familiar to translation scholars) is very subtle and perhaps all in all confusing, as Littau herself admits that: “the translator is part of a material, medial and technologised ecology that shapes every aspect of the mind” (2016: 85). Yet, it seems to me that, even at the risk of seeming anachronistic, at a time when ecological concerns clearly show us that the age of the Anthropocene has definitively passed, the collaboration between human and non-human agents in translation, between human intervention and the materiality of the technological medium - whether one considers the materiality of the book or the virtual reality of information technology - still needs to be emphasised.

It is precisely with a view to a fruitful collaboration between the two disciplines of Translation Studies and Book History that research can best be conducted, especially when it comes to historical research on translation phenomena.⁷

For this reason, in the following paragraphs I would like to illustrate a case study, taken from my latest monograph (Agorni 2021a), in which I attempted to use some of the methodologies from both fields.

4.1. A case study: Translation in 19th-century Italy⁸

In 1816 Madame de Staël’s (1816) published a seminal essay, “On the Manner and Utility of Translations” in one of the most important periodicals in the Italian territories, *La Biblioteca italiana*. This event triggered a strong literary controversy between two factions – defined as Classicists and Romantics – with a focus on translations from modern languages. Two competing models emerged: the Classicist model, characterised by an adaptive and domesticating strategy, and the Romantic model, which favoured a more source-oriented approach to translation. Throughout Europe, in fact, Romantic movements proposing foreignising models of translation were gaining ground. In the Italian areas, on the other hand, fidelity to the source text was linked in a rather original way to the need to make texts accessible to a readership that was still developing, as we will see in the following paragraphs.

⁷ The relevance of translation history and its specific methodology within the discipline of Translation Studies as a whole is the main topic of discussion in Agorni 2021b.

⁸ In the first half of 19th century, the Italian territories were still fragmented into a series of states occupied by regimes constantly perceived as foreign and more or less oppressive to the population. Memorable is the remark of the Austrian Count Metternich who defined Italy in 1814 as “merely a geographical expression”.

A brief look at the history of books in this historical period shows how the Italian states lagged behind the developments in the book trade already taking place in other European countries. But some Italian cities, such as Milan in particular, distinguished themselves both by the growth of the market and by an increasing professional development in the field of culture. The evolution of the book market produced remarkable innovations, which were appreciated by many intellectuals but also criticised by others. Translation was one of the practices most affected by the radical changes in a market where the first semi-professional positions in the field of publishing were appearing.

In the first decades of the 19th century, translation became a means to enrich Italian culture and its literature. Indeed, Italian literature was in a receptive state as outlined by Evan-Zohar as a moment of “turning point, crisis or literary vacuum in a literature” (1990: 47). Publishers, critics and intellectuals in general had to come to terms with the widespread belief that Italian literature was lagging behind the rest of Europe, and translation was therefore exploited to assimilate themes and genres produced abroad. Two simultaneous factors played a key role in the development of the book market all over Europe: on the one hand, the mechanisation of printing, which made possible the production and sale of new, thin and cheap book formats. On the other, the emergence of new entertainment genres such as the novel, which fuelled the demand for easy-to-read material.

4.2. Book production in Italy: the professionalization of intellectual work

The Catalogue of 19th-Century Italian Books (CLIO) illustrates the development of the book industry during this period. While at the beginning of the century the total production of all Italian states was around 800 titles per year, by the end of the century it reached a total of 8,000 titles. On the other hand, during the course of the century, the Italian population grew from 20.4 to 31.6 million, a growth rate of 55%, while book production increased by 325% during the same period. Immediately after the Congress of Vienna, book production accelerated dramatically: from 1815 to 1823, it doubled in just eight years. Particularly in the time of the revolutionary uprisings of 1848, book production came to a standstill, but began to grow again in a rather discontinuous manner until the unification of Italy in the 1860s (data from Borghi 2003). The most productive city was certainly Milan, which published between 15 and 20 per cent of all books in the Italian territories in the first half of the 19th century (Albergoni 2006: 27).

It is also especially significant that the data reported by Borghi (2003: 115-116) see translations accounting for a significant share of all published texts (19.4%).

The Milanese literary author Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), in his essay *Condizione economica delle lettere* (The economic condition of letters) (1838), mentioned the so-called “intellectual manufactory”, which was a community of practice formed by people who derived their income from intellectual activities (Borghi 2003: 11). They were mainly scholars, writers, translators and journalists. The diversification of the roles of intellectuals is one of the most striking aspects of the development of the book trade in this historical period. The transition from the mid-1820s to the mid-1830s, when cultural agents dependent on the government were transformed into modern intellectuals living off their profession (Berengo 1980), is one of the main consequences of the evolution of the book market.

The growth of the book trade also stimulated a debate characterised by strong contradictions. The industrialisation of this sector entailed a careful cost reduction strategy that often resulted in savings in intellectual labour costs, and publishers chose to reprint old books or produce low quality editions and translations. Very often, authors, translators and literary critics were forced to accept paltry salaries, so that the imbalance between supply and demand for literary works actually resulted in a reduction of intellectuals’ salaries (Borghi 2003: 147; Berengo 1980: 301-303). From the 1830s onwards, more and more writers denounced their difficult economic conditions.

In 1858, for example, the Milanese journalist Carlo Tenca (1816-1883)⁹ drew attention to the opposition between the earlier patronage system and the newer market system. If in the former system, writers had enjoyed a certain freedom – although they were subject to the judgement of a patron – in the market system, the public risked exercising a virtually despotic power. Thus, if 19th-century literary authors believed they had freed themselves from patronage, in reality they found themselves in another form of subordination to the judgement of readers. They had to submit to the rules of the capitalist market, which were just as despotic as previous forms of patronage.

Translation was in fact one of the most sought-after jobs in the intellectual professions, but being considered an unskilled activity, it was

⁹ See Cesare Cantù, *Del commercio librario in Italia e dei mezzi di riordinarlo*, 1858 in Palazzolo 1986.

poorly paid and, as a result, translators could not support themselves with their salary and were forced to find other occupations. However, they were rather willing to devote themselves to translations from classical languages, which enjoyed a certain recognition and also better pay. Contemporary foreign novels, on the other hand, were very popular with readers and were a key resource for publishers, as copyright did not apply to this type of texts. Translations were therefore often marketed at a lower price than the original texts and often generated fierce competition between publishers.

Many authors harshly criticised the invasion of foreign literature, as translations were perceived as potential threats to original literary production. For instance, in his 1841 article published in the *Corriere delle Dame*, Tenca described the new professional role of the translator quite vividly. He showed his hostility towards translators who “have usurped the monopoly of the book market, and to them readers owe what is printed, good or bad” (Palermo 1967: 183).¹⁰ Accordingly, Tenca drew an almost conspiratorial picture in which translators would be allied with publishers in a struggle against authors, the real prey of the system (ibid.: 183). The Milanese author distinguished three different types of translators. The first included “translators of dead or imaginary languages”, ironically described as “decipherers of ancient inscriptions”. They were depicted as genuine “monsters of knowledge”, beloved by their readers. The second type consisted of the so-called “versifiers, i.e. translators of modern poetry”, a typology that included Byron’s translators, although “many of them had only managed to publish a few fragments of *The Corsair* or *Child Harold*” (ibid.: 184). The third group “embraces the lower class of translators”, i.e. translators of short stories and novels, “literary labourers who earn just so much per page” (ibid.). Tenca described them as being closely linked to publishers, siding against authors “whose sworn enemies they are” (ibid.). Sometimes they even claimed to be authors themselves, and unfortunately the public saw them as such. Tenca thus seemed to blame translators for all the problems of the book market system, accusing them of being responsible for the decadence of Italian literature. Translation was certainly perceived as a minor career compared to original writing, yet it must be pointed out that it was gaining unprecedented popularity at the time.

¹⁰ In Tenca’s own words, translators “have usurped the monopoly of book publications, and to them readers owe what is printed, good or bad” (Palermo 1967: 183). All references to Tenca’s works are my translations.

4.3. A new Romantic approach to translation

The publication of De Staël's article in 1816 triggered an unprecedented interest in translation in Italian cultural circles. In particular, not only did translations from modern languages abound, but also the periodicals of the time methodically reviewed these works. The languages most often translated from were French, the *lingua franca* of the time, but English and German were also increasingly appearing. In this period, it is not possible to outline a predominant translation theory on which all reviewers could agree. Indeed, these articles addressed issues such as audience appeal, the problem of translating cultural references, style and even the register to be used. The question of compliance or, as it is often put it, fidelity to the original was naturally the focus of the reviewers.

The Romantic faction gradually emerged in the course of the controversy between Classicists and Romantics, representing the ideals of a new bourgeoisie in the making, eager to measure itself against its European counterparts. The Italian Romantic authors and translators strongly believed that translation had an innovative function, both in the choice of texts to be translated, and thus to be imported into the Italian cultural repertoire, and in the strategies to be used for translating.

Not only did the countries in which a new political and cultural identity was taking shape, such as Italy and Germany, develop approaches to translation that were particularly sensitive to the linguistic and cultural specificity of the original (see Venuti 1995). The Romantic movements, despite their profound diversity in terms of goals and methods, spread throughout Europe between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. A common feature was the rejection of the *belles infidèles* translation model, considered obsolete. For this reason, the original text was reproduced fairly faithfully in form and content, with a marked attention to the historical and geographical context in which it had been generated. Particular emphasis was therefore placed on the transposition of cultural references. As Venuti would put it, the trend that was developing virtually throughout Europe was that of a foreignising rather than a domesticating method of translation (1995).

However, it is important to emphasise that this trend took a very particular shape in the Italian territories. The respect for the identity of the original and the strong desire to come to terms with its otherness were also characterised by a strong drive for political, social and cultural renewal that manifested itself in the rejection of obsolete Classicist cultural models. Not

only writers, literary critics and publishers, but also translators found themselves caught up in the Classicist/Romantic controversy, which set two models against each other: one that aimed at innovation and embraced Romantic ideals, on the one hand, and a conservative tendency that followed classical models, on the other.

This dichotomy often emerged in reviews published in the main periodicals and the translation process acquired extraordinary visibility in this historical period, but what stands out is the fact that a sort of ‘double fidelity’ in translation was emerging: to the original text, on the one hand, and to the target reader, on the other.

The final part of this article will illustrate some reviews from the first decades of the 19th century that are particularly significant from this point of view. By shifting the focus away from the agency of individual translators and instead highlighting the role of other agents involved in the translation process, particularly literary critics and reviewers and the micro-network of relations among them, I hope to give an idea of what a collaboration, or synergy, between Translation Studies and Book History can produce.

4.4. The new proposal of a ‘double fidelity’

The literary author and critic Ludovico di Breme (1780-1820) published a review of Byron’s narrative poem *The Giaour* (1813) in the journal *Lo Spettatore Italiano* in 1818. In this writing, a fundamental link emerges for the first time between fidelity to the original text and another kind of fidelity, “no less important, to the Italian reader” (di Breme 1818: 119). Di Breme, one of the most important spokesmen of Italian Romanticism, encouraged translators to maintain all the distinctive features of the original text, but at the same time reminded them of the need to “translate the English character into the Italian character” (120). In di Breme’s intentions, therefore, Italian readers were to benefit from foreign works precisely because of their cultural diversity, which, however, had to be made accessible to them. While identifying himself as part of a broader European Romantic movement, di Breme paid close attention to the needs of the Italian public, which was still in its early days and thus far behind more advanced countries such as Great Britain or France. This ‘double fidelity’ was an extremely complicated task for the translators, who had to make a serious effort to mediate not only in terms of language, but also and above all in terms of culture.

Although the translation strategies of domestication on the one hand, and fidelity to the original, on the other, are seemingly at odds with each

other, in the periodicals of the time they were often addressed together. The poet and translator Sansone Uzielli (1797-1857)¹¹ offers us an original view of these issues in his review of Guido Sorelli's version of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Uzielli 1827). The reviewer identifies a potential dilemma between two opposing attitudes: literary creativity against fidelity to the main characteristics of the original. It was up to the translator to find a balance between the two extremes, i.e. to find a way to reproduce and create at the same time, and each translator had to find his/her own way, as Uzielli's own words make clear:

It seems that two qualities are required in the translator that are difficult to combine: a lively mind that suddenly discovers how the effect of the translated language can be reproduced, I would almost say created, in one's own language, and a quiet discernment to pursue step by step and conform to the author's way of feeling, and sometimes to the form in which he expresses his feelings, when this does not repulse the nature of the language into which one is translating. (Uzielli 1827: 32-33)

Uzielli's proposal is a translation that is faithful to the original and at the same time not only comprehensible to the reader, but also appealing (*ibid.* 35), although he makes it clear that translators should not employ any adaptation strategy: "Shall we be accused of defending that mode of translation which enslaves the taste, or the genius of the original author, of his nation, and of his century, to the particular taste of the translator, to the genius of his times, and of his fellow citizens?" (*ibid.* 39).

Translators' challenging task was therefore to find a way to reconcile the two extremes represented by a sort of limited creativity, on the one hand, and faithful reproduction of the source text on the other. Their responsibility was enormous, but the result was perhaps unexpected: their voices began to be heard more and more distinctly. Indeed, translators intervened, very often with a certain authority, in notes, prefaces or reviews, to illustrate their approaches or even to defend themselves against criticism

¹¹ In 1822 Sansone Uzielli translated Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* as "Il riccio rapito" and then worked as a literary agent to bring Walter Scott's historical novels to the attention of the Italian public, publishing three essays in the Italian periodical *Antologia* in 1823-24. Between 1824 and 1825 he edited a column entitled "Rivista letteraria inglese" (English literary review), also in the *Antologia*, which was specifically aimed at introducing English fiction to the Italian public. All references to Uzielli's works are my translations.

and blame. Forced to contain their creativity in translation, translators transferred their most original interventions into the paratextual material. And, most notably in this historical period, translators' voices featured in the pages of the leading periodicals of the time, reported by authoritative reviewers and critics.

4.5. The new visibility of the translator

Based on her experience in the field of Translation Studies, medieval and Renaissance literature, and text history, Coldiron (2012) has questioned the notion of translator invisibility proposed by Venuti (1995), in particular with the aim of demonstrating that this concept is specifically linked to the historical periods under consideration. For instance, she emphasised that in the Middle Ages it was not translators' invisibility that was important, but rather their visibility, i.e. a translation model opposite to that observed by Venuti in the Romantic period in Germany. The medieval literary system valued concepts such as respect for tradition and a sense of continuity with the past, observing a hierarchy with regard to the authority of classical authors. Hence, translators' visibility was crucial, as they presented themselves as custodians of an illustrious cultural tradition.

Similarly, but for completely different reasons, the focus in the early modern age was on the visibility of translators, not their invisibility. In this case, translators were identified because they made an important contribution to the interpretation of the literature of the past through their translations. As it were, they 'signed' their interpretations of their source texts.

Coldiron's argument thus makes us aware of how the concept of translators' visibility or invisibility is linked to cultural-historical changes, which cause translation norms to shift over the centuries, as these concepts "are an important indicator of ideological and aesthetic change" (Coldiron 2015: 195).

As far as the Romantic period is concerned, Coldiron agrees with Venuti, who associates the Romantic conception of originality with the model of the translator's invisibility. However, as we have seen above, the Italian Romantic translators engaged in a kind of double fidelity – to the original text and to its intelligibility by the target audience. For this reason, they developed a rather original type of 'visible mediation', in which translators became visible by providing readers with a variety of information to help them gain awareness of the source text's cultural specificity. Indeed,

Romantic translators became increasingly visible, as they not only often took on the role of critics in translation reviews, but also used extra-textual apparatuses, such as prefaces and notes, to discuss their translation strategies. And that no longer only concerned translations from classical languages, as in the past, but also translations from modern languages, especially French and English.

The wave of novelty produced by the Italian Romantic translators led to substantial changes in the approach to translating in the first half of the 19th century. Their efforts were not limited to greater fidelity to the letter or spirit of the original, concepts that were inadequate and repeated in both domesticating and foreignising translations. Rather, the Italian Romantic translators advocated a true mediation approach, through processes that can be described today as careful linguistic and cultural transfer. In this way, they aimed to make the reader understand the linguistic and cultural diversity to which the source text belonged and drew attention to the new developments that had emerged outside the Italian cultural system.

However, we must not make the mistake of thinking the Italian Romantics were simply looking elsewhere for literary models to imitate. Rather, they wanted to open the minds of their readers to the cultural diversity of foreign literatures through painstaking mediating translation, a process that was becoming increasingly professionalised, as not only linguistic, but also and above all intercultural skills were now required.

As I have tried to show in this very brief case study, this result was not produced by individual translators' agency, but was rather the effect of a series of interacting factors: the progress of printing and publishing technologies, the growing political debate in the Italian territories and its effects from a cultural point of view, which involved intellectuals, literary critics, reviewers, publishers and translators in a micro-network of relationships. Translation studies methodologies help us to recover above all the strategies of exchange with the foreign, tracing the path of cross-cultural textual transmission (Colombo 2019b), while the history of the book provides both the context that made these exchanges possible and opens the way to the study of the impact of these exchanges once they are embedded in the target cultural system.

5. Conclusion

In spite of the enormous growth in book production, including translations, on the one hand, and the new visibility of translators, especially in the Italian territories, on the other, translators did not acquire a new social status. On the contrary, there was a gradual erosion of translators' social and economic recognition from the 19th century onwards. In the Romantic perspective translation was seen as a means, the instrument of linguistic and cultural mediation, caught in an opposition that increasingly distanced it from the original production. In other words, if the role of translation was to enable those who had no access to the foreign language and culture to understand foreign works, the result was that translation could never replace the source text, or even compete with it, as had happened at other times in literary history. An obvious example of this are the versions from the classical languages of British authors such as Dryden and Pope between the 17th and the 18th century, who became famous mainly thanks to their translations, rather than their original works. Furthermore, as we have seen, the increase in book production, which also included translations, was due to technological changes in the printing industry and increased demand from a more literate public. The more translations were produced, the less translators were paid.

Yet an important side effect of all this was the new visibility, albeit limited to the literary and not the economic and social sphere, that translators gained in this period, especially in the Italian territories. The careful linguistic and cultural mediation present in their translations allowed their voices to be expressed in a unique manner through literary reviews, critical comments, footnotes, etc. These were written by either the translators themselves or by critics and reviewers, who provided remarks on the strategies utilised or reference to successes and failures in translation.

A striking example is the almost forgotten figure of Gaetano Barbieri (1770-1775/1853), a very prolific translator from French and English (Agorni 2021: 102-103). He was the most famous Italian translator of Scott's historical novels at the time, but among other works he also translated Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Barbieri's central role as a cultural mediator has hardly been recognised by translation scholars and even Italian literary historians often devote only a few paragraphs to him. However, using the methodological apparatus of Book History to trace book production in Italy, one cannot overlook the enormous growth of translations in the first

half of the 19th century, which saw a flourishing of Italian versions of Scott's historical novel. Barbieri alone translated and published under his own name 19 translations from Scott in 11 years.

Collaboration between the two disciplines of Translation Studies and Book History seems not only desirable, but necessary. In the field of historical research, material data on the production of books allow us to unearth forgotten pieces that enable us to fill in the contextual frameworks within which translation methodologies have been developed. Conversely, Translation Studies offer book historians the possibility to go beyond narrow linguistic boundaries and map not only production but also transfers of texts and knowledge in a broader view of the development of cultures. And if this collaboration can prove fruitful in the study of the past, as I have attempted to demonstrate, it can certainly also be of great use in the study of the present and in imagining the future.

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Term formation as a collaborative practice: between translation and cooperation among experts

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Abstract

This study describes a 19th-century debate among scholars on the periodisation of English medieval architecture. Through this example, in this article I explore the creation of architectural vocabulary as a collaborative act, whereby the cooperation among experts shaped concepts and terms. At the same time, a translational perspective is offered through the comparison of English and French nomenclatures, which contributed to the creation of a European code of medieval architecture. To illustrate such collaborative practices of terminologists, original quotes from the debate are presented and discussed.

The analysis reveals that while “proper” term translation was not considered as possible, given the exclusively national character of architecture, experts drew inspirations from foreign scholars in the formation of terms, thus fostering international communication and exchange of ideas. Moreover, term formation, as theorised by Sager (1990), is described as a collaborative, and sometimes non-collaborative practice, where multiple actors and factors, including the co-existence of an official and several conversational nomenclatures, contributed to making scientific language evolve.

Keywords: terminology theory, term formation, collaboration, international nomenclature, diachronic perspective, knowledge advancement.

1. Introduction

This article illustrates term formation as a collaborative act. In this context, the international dimension of communication is particularly significant, as the experts addressed the creation of a European nomenclature with the aim of an effective exchange of ideas.

The subject of this study is the discussion which took place in the specialised journal *The Builder* in 1851 between a group of experts on the renewal of the official periodization of English medieval architecture.¹ It was Edmund Sharpe, an English architect, who launched the discussion when he presented his proposal for a new nomenclature and periodization of English medieval architecture. In this study I frame the debate as an example of a collaborative process of the creation of terms and description of concepts.

In this scenario, I look at different aspects of collaboration in the construction of an architectural vocabulary. My reconstruction of the dispute is inspired by John Michael Hughes' 2010 biography of Edmund Sharpe. While Hughes' work focused on an exclusively historical reconstruction of Sharpe's career in architecture, I describe in detail a single episode, i.e., the discussion of Sharpe's alternative periodisation of English medieval architecture by architectural experts and analyse this discussion from the perspective of terminology theory.

Specifically, I address the central role of architecture scholars who cooperated in the construction of the official nomenclature of the discipline. In this collaboration, all scholars contributed – through their nomenclature and classification proposals – to the definition of concepts, as the collaborative discussion entailed successful and unsuccessful naming attempts (see Sager 1990; Pecman 2014). In this process, the proposed nomenclatures were steps forward in the formation of knowledge, resulting from a collaborative and non-collaborative practice of definition of the concepts they designated i.e., periods of English medieval architecture. Following the ISO Standard 704 (2022), reported by Cabré (1999: 95), concepts are “mental constructs that are used to classify the individual objects in the internal or the external world by means of a more or less arbitrary process of abstraction”: the periods of medieval architecture can be said to constitute the concepts that needed to be named in this debate.

I also observe this discussion from a terminological perspective, drawing on Sager's (1990: 60) definition of the process of ‘terminologisation’ i.e., the description of a concept through successive stages of naming, and on Pecman's (2012; 2014) illustration of term formation as a strategy of knowledge construction. Besides terminology theory, the existing literature describes the formation of architectural

¹ *The Builder: an illustrated weekly magazine for the architect, engineer, operative and artist, archaeologist, constructor, sanitary-reformer and art-lover*. First published by Joseph Hanson in London, December 1842–1966. Then continued by a journal named *Building*, still in existence.

vocabulary from the perspective of the history of architecture (Skipton-Long 2018), as Sharpe's (1851a) proposal is contextualised within the evolution of the discipline, and the overall discussion among experts on the formation of scientific knowledge during the 19th century, specifically in England (Lightman and Zon 2014). The work of Snyder (2011) is also relevant in this context, as she addresses the importance of the debates among experts in the construction of 19th-century knowledge, and illustrates the discussions among William Whewell, John Herschel, and other scholars within the systematisation of knowledge in various disciplines.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the theoretical framework in terminology theory, presenting the principles on which this study relies, while section 3 describes the methodology of this study, providing details on the research methods adopted. To elaborate on the issue of collaboration, I present a historical reconstruction of the debate in section 4, to provide the reader with the necessary information about the episode.

The central sections of the article examine multiple aspects of collaboration in term formation, as identified in the debate. In section 5.1., I present collaboration as the contemporary existence of an official and multiple conversational nomenclatures, while in section 5.2., I discuss collaboration as the derivation of the present nomenclature from previous naming attempts. Collaboration in naming is illustrated at an international level in section 5.3., as the debate among the 19th-century scholars addressed the co-existence of national nomenclatures and a shared European code. The section describes the translational aspect of term formation, as discussed by the experts.

In section 5.4., other cooperating factors are mentioned. Among them, the publisher's interests in defending a specific nomenclature and publication, or the role of tradition in naming concepts are listed. In section 6, the mutual influence of experts in proposing alternative nomenclatures is illustrated as further evidence of collaboration. In this section, this influence is analysed on an international level, through nomenclatures of foreign architecture, which the authors wrote during their travels.

Finally, section 7 concludes the study. In this section, I reflect upon the representation of term formation as a collaborative act, as consisting of the discussion of alternative nomenclatures and the balancing of contributing factors. A conclusive reflection on collaboration in term formation ends this contribution, as future research perspectives on the application of the proposed method of analysis are outlined.

2. A terminological perspective on collaboration in term formation

This section presents an overview of descriptions of term formation as a collaborative practice in terminology theory. While collaboration is not explicitly defined in terminology, the cooperation among naming attempts and actors is addressed from various perspectives as part of the description of term formation (see Humbley 2018; Myking 2020).

Specifically, the theoretical framework of this study bases on Sager's (1990) definition of terminologisation, as the progressive description of concepts through naming attempts. Pecman (2012: 1) later addresses the same idea of 'tentativeness', considering term formation as a cognitive device in scientific discourse, while various studies describe the motivations behind term formation (Humbley 2018; Myking 2020). This section mentions some significant ones to contextualise this contribution within the existing literature.

Sager's (1997) definition of primary and secondary term formation seems relevant in this context. Specifically, Sager describes primary term formation as the creation of terms for unnamed concepts i.e., concepts which were not named before, while secondary term formation is described as the formation of term variants to define already named concepts. Indeed, as Sager (1997) specifies, existing terms normally influence secondary term formation. Regarding this, Humbley (2018) examines the collective character of term formation, and he also underlines the role of experts within it or, quoting Rondeau (1984, in Humbley 2018: 442) "a group of enlightened speakers", who coin terms. Moreover, Myking (2020: 9) describes the situated nature of the process, as he argues how that differs "across domains, languages, and traditions", and thus "contextual factors" must be considered while describing it.

Additionally, Freixa (2006: 52) illustrates the cooperation of scholars among the discursive causes of term variation. According to Freixa, these can be retraced to the "different stylistic and expressive needs of the authors". Similarly, Pecman (2012) addresses the selection operated by the scientific community of the best proposal for a term. In doing this, she underlines how, most of the times, the chosen term was not new, but a variant of an existing one. This seems comparable to the dynamic represented in the debate I focus on:

in scientific papers terminological variation can be deliberately used in the text to achieve a specific rhetorical function, and thus should not be interpreted simply as a sign of the formation of a new term.

[...] The terminology constructed can in turn play an *influential role* among the scientific community and encourage the use of the *proposed denomination* for referring to this specific *concept*, thus effectively giving birth to a new term [...]. The appropriate term is regularly selected by *others*, and not by the person who coined it. It is necessarily others who choose the “right” term from amongst the *competing forms*. Through reuse, the term becomes the *common denomination* for a concept. (Pecman 2012: 51)²

In this quote, as in this article, the role of existing terms is central in the choice of denominations for concepts, as I describe the influence of precedent term variants and tradition as a form of collaboration. As Pecman (2012) states, term variation can also be interpreted as a declination of secondary term formation, where alternative denominations for already named concepts are proposed, due to different motivations.

In a following article, Pecman (2014) discusses the creation of terms as a cognitive device, concerning in particular “how scientists construct knowledge through term formation” (ibid.: 1). She presents the attempts at denomination as steps forward in the description of concepts, and thus in the formation of knowledge. Pecman’s (2014) definition can be connected to Sager’s (1990) terminologisation. Indeed, both theories interpret tentative denominations as evidence of a knowledge advancement. The debate I describe can be considered as a representation of this progress of knowledge.

It is important to note how Pecman (2014) lists the different functions of neology in scientific discourse. Quoting Cabré (1999: 206), Pecman (2014: 7) points out that an “essential feature” of neologisms is their instability, which often presents itself in the existence of “a series of variants” for the same term. On the same line, in reference to the role of the scientific community in coining new terms, Myking (2020: 10) underlines both the creative and the normative nature of term formation with the aim of “efficiency in specialised communication”.

For the purposes of this article, the role of the scientific community in determining the success of new terms is noteworthy. Collaboration among participants is mentioned as a “crucial” (Meyer *et al.* 1997: 107) component of all terminology projects. Work on terminology is said to be possible only when participants possess a shared knowledge of the

² Unless otherwise specified, emphasis in italic font in citations is added by the author of this article to signal the most salient aspects of the citation itself.

concepts, to create “a common basis for discussion” (ibid.). Along the same lines, Gilreath (1992: 138) describes term formation as an act of “participation”, which can become more successful if participants in the discussion are more involved.

3. Methodology

The method I employ in this study combines multiple approaches for the analysis of the primary sources. The first stage of retrieval of the sources is followed by a secondary stage, where I analyse these sources from the perspective of modern and contemporary terminology theory from the 20th and 21st centuries.

First, historical research approaches are applied in the search for primary sources using online and physical archives, and in the reconstruction of the selected historical episodes (see Lundy 2008). Second, a case-study approach is adopted in the selection of the sources, as the study is centred on a specific episode, reconstructed in its chronological development (see Kothari 2004). Only primary sources are included in the study, which contribute to an exhaustive historical reconstruction of the case-study.

The search for primary sources is performed in online archives using a keyword strategy for the selection of relevant texts. The texts featuring the relevant keywords are then catalogued to be included in the study. The final selection of the sources is performed according to the relevance of the texts in the reconstruction of the terminological process I focus on in this article. In doing this, the primary sources are distinguished in two categories: first, the ones which attest the terminological process described in the study; second, the ones which are useful to reconstruct the historical context of the debate.

Arising from this, secondary sources mainly on terminology theory, but also on history, and the history of science, are selected as part of the theoretical framework of the study. These sources are fundamental for the reconstruction of the episode, and of its historical and social context.

In the elaboration of the primary sources, I employ discourse analysis research strategies. Specifically, I adopt a method known as ‘narrative analysis’ in the examination of the primary sources, which makes it possible to reconstruct “the history behind the data” (Gimenez 2010: 200). Finally,

I apply approaches pertaining to textual analysis in the elaboration of texts from the primary sources.

4. The debate in *The Builder*: a terminological discussion among experts of architecture

4.1. Historical reconstruction

In 1851, in the sector journal *The Builder*, a discussion occurred among experts on Edmund Sharpe's proposal of an alternative nomenclature for the periodization of English medieval architecture, which he published in a volume entitled *The seven periods of English architecture* (Sharpe 1851a). Sharpe suggested that English medieval architecture should be divided into seven periods instead of the widely accepted four periods devised by Thomas Rickman (1817) in his *Attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture*. There followed a debate in *The Builder* over the merits of each periodization. While the debate took place in English and among English scholars, the international usability of the nomenclatures was discussed, with a view to architectural explorations in Europe, in which scholars were involved at the time (Daunton 2005).

Sharpe's nomenclature was already known at the time of the debate since his volume (Sharpe 1851a), had been presented by the architect at a conference May 19th of the same year (Sharpe 1851b). On June 7th, 1851, a first letter by Sharpe appeared in *The Builder*, which agreed to present his classification (Sharpe 1851c).

In response to Sharpe's letter (1851c), on June 21st, an unidentified scholar named FSA condemned *The Builder* for giving space to Sharpe's periodization (FSA 1851a). FSA's criticism concentrated on the dating of buildings and the issue of term originality in Sharpe's classification. The scholar writing under the pseudonym of FSA would reveal his identity later in the debate, introducing himself as John Henry Parker, the publisher of Rickman's (1817) volume, in which the traditional periodization of English medieval architecture was presented. On July 5th, Sharpe responded questioning FSA's authority in determining the period of buildings. In this letter, FSA quoted Parker's (1836) *Glossary of architecture*, as main reference on dating the English ecclesiastical buildings.

On July 12th, 1851, a contribution to the debate was sent in by Edward Augustus Freeman, an architecture historian and author of another

classification in a volume entitled *An essay on the origin and development of window tracery in England* (Freeman 1851a); Freeman questioned the originality of the concept of a *geometrical* style. After him also George William Cox, Late Secretary of the *Oxford Archaeological Society*, addressed the impossibility of a universally agreed-upon categorisation of all medieval buildings. Sharpe's reply followed, on July 19th, underlining the importance of the concept of transition in history and a subsequent one by FSA on the same date, lamenting the insufficient foundation of the new nomenclature to substitute the old one. Starting from the letter published on July 26th (FSA 1851c), the tone of the discussion worsened. Bored with the participants' attitude to the debate, on August 2nd, George Gilbert Scott, architect, and architecture historian, tried to end the discussion making two points: while a secondary unofficial nomenclature, which he termed "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480), existed already in the general use next to Rickman's traditional one, it was desirable to reach a common European nomenclature. In a following contribution, published on August 16th, Freeman, lamenting the tone of the dispute, described his own nomenclature. On September 6th, Sharpe replied to this with a methodological statement in which he argued that, given the constant evolution of knowledge, Rickman himself would have updated his nomenclature, if he were still alive.

Two weeks later, on September 20th, 1851, Scott addressed the so-called "honour of precedence" (Scott 1851b: 590) in the naming of periods, claiming that nomenclatures were essentially arbitrary and proposing a simpler numerical system, as was adopted in other European countries. In a letter published on October 18th, the participant under the pseudonym of FSA revealed his identity, while discussing the nomenclatures' international applicability. Sharpe's last letter, published on November 8th, 1851, ended the dispute by comparing his own and Rickman's classifications. In a final statement, Sharpe admitted the prescriptive purpose of his nomenclature. Contradicting his initial intention to present a nomenclature which would contribute to the description of buildings, Sharpe concluded the last published letter of the debate stating that he wanted to prescribe his own terms, according to his subjective view of the periods.

5. Collaboration in the primary sources

In this section, I illustrate multiple aspects of collaboration in term formation, through original quotes from a 19th-century debate among

experts of architecture. Among these aspects, the scholars mentioned the translational perspective, through their intention to create a shared European nomenclature for medieval architecture. The premises of this lie the impossibility of translating terms, due to the exclusively national character of the architectural tradition to which they refer. Section 5.3. provides an example of these national nomenclatures, which compares the English and French traditional terms.

Specifically, this section sheds light on the importance of alternative nomenclatures in history, trying to underline how each nomenclature, in presumably every discipline, is selected among alternatives and through a collaborative process of discussion and evaluation among members of the scientific community. The contribution of these naming alternatives to the shaping of the scientific concepts and their meaning is claimed in this paper to be of great relevance in the progress of knowledge.

5.1. Collaboration as a dialogue between official and “conversational” nomenclatures

The discussion analysed above shows multiple aspects of collaboration. First, the coexistence of an official and multiple unofficial or “conversational” (Scott 1851a: 480) nomenclatures, which architecture historians used in the daily practice for the description of ecclesiastical buildings. In this section, I address the contemporary existence of official and unofficial nomenclatures as a form of collaboration. Indeed, while being used in different contexts, all nomenclatures were useful in the description of buildings and the research advancement in the field. According to the experts, the choice of an official nomenclature did not exclude the contemporary presence of other unofficial classifications, which could be used to specify the description of buildings and periods.

As Scott (*ibid.*) pointed out in the following quote, an unofficial nomenclature, like Sharpe’s proposed one, was already used by experts in their daily practice. The main reason for that appeared to be the necessity of a more detailed division of the periods, for an efficient description of English architecture. Indeed, the wish for a precise classification seemed to be one of the reasons the scholars provided in favour of a substitution of Rickman’s (1817) traditional division of English medieval architecture into four periods:

We all, for many years past, have practically adopted, and that we must of necessity in practice use, a *system of division* closely resembling, and often *in words* as well as in facts *coinciding with Mr Sharpe's Periods*. [...] Thus far our *vernacular, conversational nomenclature* is *identical* with that adopted by *Mr Sharpe*, and the two remaining divisions we only differ upon so far as name go, calling one "*Flowing*" vice "*Curvilinear*"; the other "*Perpendicular*" instead of "*Rectilinear*". *Where then we do practically differ?* Simply in this, that Mr Sharpe in some cases gives the dignity of *separate styles or "periods"* to divisions which we generally consider merely as *sub styles*. (Scott 1851a: 480, August 2nd, 1851)

In Scott's words, two issues needed to be underlined. First, the acknowledgement of the coexistence, in the daily practice of architectural description, of two nomenclatures: Rickman's official one, and a "vernacular" or unofficial one, resembling Sharpe's own. Relating to this, Scott did not understand Sharpe's intention to substitute Rickman's official nomenclature; and not making his nomenclature "subservient" (FSA 1851b: 446) to Rickman's more general one. In this second case, the nomenclatures would collaborate: while Rickman's would remain official, Sharpe's own would be used by experts in the daily practice, as the two nomenclatures together would have ensured an efficient description of buildings and periods.

Second, as Scott argued, official terms were derived from vernacular ones used in the experts' daily practice. Indeed, this derivation of terms from existing denominations could be considered as another aspect of collaboration, or derivation among terms, in a diachronic perspective. As I state in the next sections, most terms that the authors proposed were already familiar to the scientific community, who employed them in architectural description. The main merit of the authors was in most cases to have collected the existing terms in dedicated publications, where they were organised in classifications and defined. As a matter of fact, in all these publications, the so-called "honour of precedence" (Scott 1851b: 590) i.e., the original attribution of terms to previous experts, was signalled, as well as the inspiration they took from past term variants.

The coexistence and parallel use of official and unofficial nomenclatures can be considered as a form of collaboration, since different terms used in different contexts contributed to a better description of concepts. Concurrently, the inspiration from previous nomenclatures and the work of past scholars can be considered a further form of collaboration among experts in term formation.

5.2. Collaboration as the relation between originality and non-originality of terms

The non-originality of terms, or what Scott (1851b: 590) termed “the honour of precedence” in the use of terms confirmed their collaborative nature. In this sense, the scholars addressed collaboration in a diachronic perspective, as they acknowledged the derivation of a term from a previous denomination and the work of past experts. Indeed, in the following quote, Scott stated how other experts invented the terms presented by Rickman and Sharpe in their volumes. As Scott affirmed, those terms existed already, and the authors merely arranged them into new nomenclatures. Stating this, Scott addressed the nature of terms as results of a collaboration among experts in time. From this point of view, the evolution of terms towards their contemporary form saw the contribution of multiple experts to their formation:

Of the *two leading systems* of classifying Pointed Architecture, the *three-fold division* (Early English – Decorated – Perpendicular) is popularly attributed to *Mr Rickman* and the *four-fold* (Transitional – Lancet – Geometrical – Rectilinear) to *Mr Sharpe*. To neither of these gentlemen, however, does the honour of precedence justly belong, though to each is to be attributed much credit for placing their several systems in a popular and generally intelligible form. The *honour of precedence* belongs, for Rickman’s system to the “Description of the Cathedral Church of Ely” by Reverend *George Millers*. [...] I will next claim for my friend *Mr Freeman* the honour of precedence over Mr Sharpe as to the four-fold division. (Scott 1851b: 590, September 20th, 1851)

Scott’s statement hinted at the fact that only the arrangement of terms in new systems was attributable to Rickman and Sharpe, not their invention. With reference to the aspect of collaboration I described in the previous section (see section 5.1.) and following Scott’s (1851b: 590) last quote, Millers’ (1808) and Freeman’s (1847) terms could presumably also had been already in use in a vernacular terminology, as the authors collected existing terms in their volumes. This, too, reveals the collaborative nature of term formation in a historical perspective, as a continuous discussion and elaboration among experts in the field.

A further aspect of collaboration in term formation, connected to the issue of originality, was the attribution of a nomenclature to a specific

author. At recurring stages in the debate, the authorship of the nomenclatures and the possibility to connect a specific classification to one's own name seemed more important than the logic and usability of the nomenclature itself. Indeed, as Scott (1851a) stated, the value of any nomenclature did not depend on the name of their author. On the contrary, the traditional nomenclature was valid and applicable regardless of the name of its author and should therefore be separated from it. As a matter of fact, some authors of the time seemed to be more concerned with the survival of their name and authorship than with the actual benefit of the classification, and thus of the progress of knowledge in their own field of studies. This progress would be connected, for instance, to the didactic purpose of a nomenclature and to its use by students while learning:

His [Rickman's] classification [...], with his *selection of the distinctive characters* of each style, and his *fixation of the language* of the science, were strokes of genius which quite changes the aspect of the subject, as soon as their influence was generally diffused. Instead of a wavering use of *vague terms*, and a loose reference to undefined distinctions, which had previously prevailed in works on Christian Architecture, Mr Rickman offered to the world a *phraseology* so exact that, as he said, "*the student should be able to draw the design from the description*", and a division of styles, followed out into its characters in every member of the architecture. He thus enabled his reader to acquire a knowledge of details as precise as that possessed by practical builders, [...] and by this means the literary and the practical architect were brought to *a mutual understanding*, which has been of immense service to both. (Whewell 1842: XIV, in Yanni 1997: 211)

According to Whewell, the *didactic purpose* of creating a nomenclature which would enable both the students and the world to describe buildings was the aim of multiple authors, not just of Rickman. In that, the subjective role of the author in promoting his own nomenclature seemed at times more important than the evolution of knowledge itself. By contrast, the advancement of knowledge and the convenience of a nomenclature to that purpose should prevail over the name of the author, as Parker (1851: 656) stated. The four-fold division, which Rickman's volume made traditional since 1817, should, indeed, remain traditional, even if not connected to its author's name, which was, according to Parker (ibid.) "not at all essential" to his system.

5.3. The construction of a European nomenclature as a form of collaboration

The translational aspect of term formation was present in the debate in two different declinations. First, in the influence of the French scholarship on the formation of English terms, which was presented in the debate in a comparison of the traditional periodisation of medieval architecture of the countries. Second, the experts acknowledged the impossibility of translation in the discussion, as they recognised terms as typical of a cultural context and language. Moreover, the experts proposed collaboration, in the form of a coexistence of a national and a European nomenclature of medieval architecture. While each nomenclature and architectural production were intrinsically national, a European code was needed, to assure international comprehension and knowledge exchange.

The experts also stated the importance of international collaboration in the construction of architectural periodizations. In Parker's words, Rickman's traditional periodization was recognised abroad at the time. For this reason, he felt that the traditional nomenclature should not have been substituted, since it constituted the basis of scientific communication at an international level:

I find *no difficulty in conversing with them*, and discussing with them [the experts of architecture in France] [...] the uses of the various buildings [...] this sort of *friendly intercourse* between those engaged in kindred pursuits in different countries I hold to be very desirable and useful to both parties; but if compelled to adopt Mr Sharpe's system only, it would be *impossible for me to continue it*, and necessary to *abandon the acquaintance and correspondence with my friends in France*. No one who has studied Gothic architecture by Mr Sharpe's system only, can ever hope to establish a similar correspondence or even to understand anything of *foreign Gothic*. (Parker 1851: 655; October 18th, 1851)

To further focus on the translational aspect of term formation, in the following paragraph I compare Rickman's (1817) official periodization of English medieval architecture, to the official one in France, by Arcisse de Caumont (1825), who presented this classification in his *Essai sur l'architecture religieuse du moyen-âge, particulièrement en Normandie*.

Thomas Rickman (1817) – *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture*

Norman – to 1189 A.D.

Early English – 1189 – 1307 A.D.

Decorated English – 1307 – 1377 A.D.

Perpendicular English – 1377 – 1630/1640 A.D

Arcisse De Caumont (1825) – *Essai sur l'Architecture du Moyen Age*

Roman Primordial - depuis l'expulsion des Romains de la Gaule jusqu'au Xème siècle.

Roman Secondaire – Fin du Xème et XIème siècle.

Transition – Fin du XIème et première moitié du XIIème siècle.

Gothique Primordial – Fin du XIIème siècle et première moitié du XIIIème siècle.

Gothique Secondaire – Fin du XIIIème siècle et XIVème siècle.

Gothique Tertiaire – XVème et XVIème siècle.

While the former list was composed of four terms, the latter work divided medieval architecture into six periods. As becomes evident from the classifications, the distinction of the general term *Gothic*, into more specific ones, was very important in England, where also the adjective *English* appeared in the terms used to identify the periods, to highlight the exclusively national character of the styles. Indeed, English experts extensively discussed a subdivision of the *Gothic* into more specific periods, while France traditionally adopted a relatively simpler subdivision into a primary, secondary, and tertiary style, both for the Roman and the Gothic style.

It is worth highlighting that the importance of Rickman's periodization for international communication was not only due to its diffusion within the scientific community. As a matter of fact, the periods of Rickman's nomenclature were so broad and general, that they could ideally be applied to the periodization of all medieval architecture in Europe, and thus also be used to understand the "Foreign Gothic", as Parker claimed (1851: 655).

In the following quote, Scott addressed the issue of international communication, which could be considered as particularly forward-looking. To enhance international knowledge exchange, Scott hoped for the creation of a European periodization of medieval architecture. Specific national classifications could coexist with the European nomenclature, as further

subdivisions of that periodization. The possible coexistence of a European nomenclature and specific national ones could also be considered as a collaborative practice in the formation of the European specialised language of architecture:

Mr Rickman's terms, I fear, must be relinquished sooner or later: it will never do to go on talking about Early English and Decorated. Whether the fourfold division of pointed architecture be right or not I should certainly hope for a European code. Mr Sharpe's is exclusively English, which is one of the great objections to Rickman's. (Scott 1851a: 481; August 2nd, 1851)

Although Rickman's nomenclature remained official at the end of the debate, the experts acknowledged its limits. A more detailed classification was needed, for the advancement of knowledge, as the architects recognised the necessity of using both an official and a "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480) nomenclature for the description of buildings. This could be seen as an extraordinarily modern approach to the use of terms. As a matter of fact, the parallel use of multiple terms denoted the sensitivity of the experts to employ the appropriate terms in different contexts, as well as the necessity of multiple terms to describe concepts from various perspectives.

The translational and international aspect of term formation were addressed in this section with reference to two specific subjects in the debate. First, the necessity of the scholars to create a shared European nomenclature for medieval architecture, to be used in combination with the traditional national ones. Second, the experts' acknowledgement of the impossibility of term translation, given the exclusively national character of all nomenclatures, which was due to the specific building traditions. While scholars were aware of the impossibility of translating national terms, international communication based on the shared knowledge and comparison of different national systems, as exemplified in the comparison of the English and French traditional nomenclatures. In this perspective, descriptive and precise terms became even more important for international communication and knowledge exchange.

5.4. Other contributing factors

Extending the perspective, other 'external' factors appear to have been involved in the process of term formation as a collaborative practice, such

as the publisher's interests in maintaining the official nomenclature and the role of tradition in terminology against term variation.

The publisher of Rickman's (1817) volume containing his nomenclature, John Henry Parker, contributed to the debate. Indeed, altering the official nomenclature would have presumably meant a substantial decrease in the diffusion of the volume, as well as a loss of relevance in the field of studies. Due to the power and reputation of Parker in the field, probably all scholars in the debate were aware of the possible consequences of altering the traditional nomenclature. Possibly, this factor could have influenced the final rejection of Sharpe's proposal, to maintain Rickman's official classification:

Some such classification as that I propose, by whatever terms it should be characterised, [...] appears to me "*so obvious, so easy and so natural*", would inevitably *force itself into general use*. [...] It unfortunately happens, however, that no change of this kind can be made in the nomenclature of any art or science, which does not *affect certain vested interests represented by those publishers who possess the stock and copyright*, as it were, of the system about to be superseded. I have strong reasons to believe that it is one of this class, who under the signature of FSA complains so loudly. (Sharpe 1851d: 417; July 5th, 1851)

A further factor to consider in the debate was the role of tradition and the possibility to alter a shared nomenclature. Numerous scholars in many disciplines decided not to update existing terms, since the wide usage sanctioned their validity. Indeed, the main criticism other experts directed to Sharpe concerned his intention to substitute Rickman's traditional nomenclature, instead of supporting and specifying it with parallel subdivisions of the official system:

But Sharpe does not want to make his observations *subservient to the general system*, he refuses to adopt the general system of four great divisions (corresponding nearly to the four centuries) with subdivisions and transitions between each. He wishes to establish a new system of his own, with seven great divisions, which he calls periods. *It is against this change of system that I protest*, as these proposed new divisions are less marked, less true, than the old ones. (FSA 1851b: 446; July 19th, 1851)

This issue could presumably be connected to Sharpe's wish to attach his name to the new official periodization of his own field of studies, making it

significant for the future of the discipline, as this intention could probably be considered as the main reason for the failure of Sharpe's attempt. As FSA (1851b) remarked, if Sharpe's detailed periodization had been proposed as a parallel subsystem for the subdivision of Rickman's four traditional periods, with the intention of supporting Rickman's more general nomenclature, his proposal would probably have been approved by the scientific community. This aspect of the debate can be described as a failed form of collaboration among experts.

To conclude, the personal aspirations of each scholar seemed to have strongly influenced the process of naming in the debate, and therefore the construction of knowledge. While the authors, such as Sharpe, promoted their nomenclature to become official, they appeared to oversee the condition of the specialised language of architecture employed in the daily practice, i.e. the co-existence of multiple nomenclatures at once.

Indeed, all fields of studies needed multiple parallel nomenclatures at the time. While one of them could have been official and traditional, all the unofficial and auxiliary ones were equally important, considering the progress of knowledge as their aim. This is, back then as nowadays, decisively dependant on the possibility of an accurate description of the reality through terms, as in this case the periods and buildings of medieval architecture.

6. Collaboration as mutual influence of alternative nomenclatures: a perspective from outside the debate

A further form of collaboration in term formation was the experts' custom of comparing alternative nomenclatures. These proposals, as the subject of the debate among scholars, provided competing linguistic descriptions of multiple aspects of the concepts to be classified. Among them, the experts chose the most suitable denomination for each concept.

As illustrated through the following examples, competing nomenclatures, as well as their authors, influenced one another. This mutual influence can be described as a form of collaboration, and it improved the definition of both terms and concepts. Moreover, with reference to Sager's (1990: 60) 'terminologisation', successive naming attempts improve the definition of concepts, while describing them from different perspectives, which are mirrored in multiple terms.

As an example of the previous statement, a mutual influence among scholars can be recognised in the debate I examine in this paper, where other scholars proposed contemporary classifications to Sharpe's own (cf. section 5.2.). Among them, John Henry Parker, the editor of Rickman's (1817) volume, shared his proposal in his *Glossary of architecture* (1836). Additionally, Edward Augustus Freeman (1849) suggested a similar one in his *History of architecture*, discussing the appropriateness of terms as *geometrical* and *flowing* for the classification of window tracery (ibid. 1847).

The same mutual influence in term creation can be recognised at an international level, as scholars advanced periodisation proposals not just for English architecture, but also for other countries. Among others, Robert Willis, author of the *Architectural nomenclature of the Middle Ages* (Willis 1844), suggested a classification of Italian medieval architecture in his *Remarks on the architecture of the Middle Ages, especially of Italy* (ibid. 1835), as William Whewell travelled to Germany and France, to then present a periodisation similar to Rickman's traditional English one in a volume entitled *Architectural notes on German churches: With notes written during an architectural tour in Picardy and Normandy* (Whewell 1830). Moreover, in the same volume of *The Builder* in which the dispute on Sharpe's classification occurred, Edward Lacy Garbett (1851: 620) proposed some alternatives to the "names hitherto used" for the English periods.

Numerous scholars at the time proposed alternative periodizations for English medieval architecture, mostly as part of a dedicated volume on the subject. Among others, John Britton classified English churches in *The cathedral antiquities of England* (1814) and *The architectural antiquities of Great Britain* (1807), while Banister Fletcher (1905) compared the existing periodizations of English medieval architecture in *A history of architecture on the comparative method for the student, craftsman and amateur*. While almost all treatises began with a chapter on the nomenclature used in the text, they proposed periodizations of English medieval architecture as based on the classification of different architectural element, such as the vaults, the window tracery, and the mouldings. These were presented in the form of a glossary, where terms were defined and often illustrated. More than defining new terms, these glossaries aimed to clarify the terms used in the treatises and their definition, according to the author. Notably, these definitions were not always the same for the same terms: from a terminological perspective, this process of definition of the same terms by different scholars seemed to help their knowledge and the description of their meaning.

7. Conclusions and future research

In this essay I presented a 19th-century debate on the periodization of English medieval architecture as an example of collaborative term formation. Concepts were established as terms through the discussion among experts in the sector journal *The Builder* in 1851, with the aim of fostering international communication and knowledge exchange. The most significant features of this collaboration were the following.

First, a possible contemporary employment of an official nomenclature, and multiple “conversational” (Scott 1851a: 480) alternatives was illustrated since, in the daily practice of the profession, the experts employed multiple nomenclatures to describe the historical buildings.

Second, the scholars discussed collaboration as the co-existence of multiple nomenclatures in a diachronic perspective. Specifically, they addressed the originality of terms, and referred to it as the “honour of precedence” (Scott 1851b: 590) in the creation of terms and their attribution to their rightful author.

Concurrently, the experts introduced the coexistence of national nomenclatures and a European code, as they addressed the translational perspective in term formation. While terms were impossible to translate, due to the exclusively national character of architecture, comparisons across national nomenclatures in Europe were conducted, as a shared European classification was felt to be necessary. Thus, the English and French nomenclatures were compared, to address collaboration in naming internationally.

In a final section, other aspects of collaboration – or lack thereof – in the definition of a nomenclature were addressed. Among them, the publisher’s interests in maintaining the existing nomenclature were mentioned, as well as the role of tradition in naming. In the end, a significant factor in the description of term formation as a collaborative practice was the mutual influence of scholars in proposing alternative nomenclatures. As the object of discussion on the selection of the most appropriate term for each period, these alternatives constituted not just an advancement of knowledge, but also the result of a collaborative and non-collaborative practice among experts through successive stages of naming, as Sager (1990) suggests.

Ultimately, future research perspectives to this study should include the application of this analysis to other disputes among scholars. This should be done with a twofold purpose. First, to contextualise term

formation within a process of discussion of alternatives which is not normally analysed from a terminological perspective. Second, it would be worth describing other contributing factors to this process. Indeed, if further nomenclatures were examined, these would presumably be found to result from a collaborative process, instead of being the production of the single author to which they were attributed. While the nomenclature legitimately had an author, its affirmation in a discipline was the result of the collaboration and influence of both experts and other naming proposals.

To conclude, this paper would like to encourage a more detailed historical contextualisation of terminological practices, and to consider them, as previously stated, as the result of collaboration among scholars, not necessarily belonging to the same discipline, and of external factors. While this might be obvious for historical events and achievements, it is not so in the description of nomenclatures and terminological practices in the existing literature to date.

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**“Of course there is something here and there
I’m afraid I don’t quite understand”.¹
Cesare Pavese’s correspondence
with Anthony Chiuminatto:
a collaborative translation strategy?**

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Abstract

The Italian writer Cesare Pavese (1908-1950) is also known as an ‘Americanist’, or populariser of American culture, mainly thanks to his work as a translator in Italy during the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1929 and 1933, he entertained frequent and detailed consultations by letter with his Italian-American correspondent Antonio Chiuminatto. Pavese’s requests were mainly lexical, focusing especially on slang and idiomatic expressions. The Pavese-Chiuminatto correspondence is thus explored, examining their collaboration, how it worked and developed, and extracting Pavese’s metalinguistic reflections on slang and language in general. Finally, the epistolary is framed within the notion of ‘collaborative translation’, in order to understand Chiuminatto’s contribution to Pavese’s famous translation activity and the possible implications for his well-known role as an Americanist.

Keywords: Cesare Pavese, Anthony Chiuminatto, translation, collaborative translation, Americanism.

1. Introduction and materials

1.1. Cesare Pavese the translator and Americanist

While the intense activity of the Italian writer Cesare Pavese (Santo Stefano Belbo, 1908 – Turin, 1950) as a novelist, poet and essayist has been the

¹ Cesare Pavese, Letter to Antonio Chiuminatto dated 26 November 1930, in *Mondo* (1966: 93).

subject of studies and considerations by literary critics for decades, his work as a translator is undoubtedly less studied from an academic perspective. Not that it has not been addressed, even in insightful and enthusiastic ways (cf., e.g., Gorlier 1964; Stella 1977; Bernascone 2010; Pietralunga 2012; and see the scant bibliography on Pavese's translations in Mesiano 2007: 398-402 and Dore 2016: 141-142). Rather, it is emphasised here how his translations are considered especially in regard to his activity as an 'Americanist', or populariser of American literature, which he carried out in Italy in the first half of the 20th century. The most famous example of that spell of Italian Americanism is possibly the often-cited anthology *Americana* (1940/1942), edited by Elio Vittorini, published by Bompiani, Milan, introduced by Emilio Cecchi, and translated, among others, by Eugenio Montale, Alberto Moravia and, naturally, Cesare Pavese. The major focus, in other words, has always mostly been on Pavese's import and promotion of American novelists, and on the role his translations played in making American culture known to Italy's general public. Especially in the decades after the Second World War and until the 1970s, particular emphasis was placed on the anti-fascist value of such dissemination work, seen from the understandably ideological perspective that characterised the Italian intellectual scene of the time.

Considerably less studied, as previously said, are Pavese's translations *in se* and *per se*, both from a linguistic and translational point of view. Over the decades, scholars – not many of them, actually – have partly addressed issues related to the evaluation of his translations, the degree of lexical-terminological accuracy, the employment of syntactic adaptation strategies and the stylistic aspect (cf., e.g., Bozzola 1991; Billiani 1999; Masoero 2014). Partly, nonetheless, these questions still remain unanswered. In recent decades, the interpretation of Pavese's work has been slightly less influenced by the aura of the politically engaged intellectual that used to surround him. This means that his translations, too, may now be considered not only as finished literary *products* and cultural *practices*, but also in their capacity of linguistic and cognitive *processes* (Grego 2010). Therefore, we could legitimately add another question to the previous list, which is: *how* did Pavese translate, especially as regards lexicon? While it is currently still impossible to be 'in the head' of a translator *ex post*, to partly reconstruct Pavese's method is not, especially given the amount of reflections on the subject that he meticulously and famously left in his letters, diaries, essays and notes. The recent edition of his correspondence with his American acquaintance Anthony Chiuminatto (Pietralunga 2007) can therefore

contribute to shedding light on the latter aspect which, as will be seen, may be identified as a translation collaboration strategy.

1.2. Anthony Chiuminatto

Anthony Chiuminatto was born in Rivarolo Canavese (Turin, Italy) on 31 May 1904, and died in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1973. Emigrated to the United States with his mother when only a few months old, he came to Italy from Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1925 and enrolled at the Regio Conservatorio di Musica ‘Giuseppe Verdi’ in Turin. In October 1929, after his graduation, he returned to America. According to him (Pietralunga 2007: 5-6), it was in 1926-27 that he came into contact with two young university students from Turin, Massimo Mila and Cesare Pavese, who were interested in practicing American English and with whom he met several times, especially in city cafés, precisely for this purpose. Back in Green Bay, Chiuminatto would keep in touch by mail with both Mila and Pavese. His correspondence with Mila soon ceased, while that with Pavese continued until 1933. Meanwhile, Chiuminatto embarked on a brilliant professional career in the musical field, both as a performer (he was a distinguished violinist) and a conductor, and later as a teacher and musicologist. Well after the end of his correspondence with his Italian pen-pal, Chiuminatto crowned a successful career by becoming the first director of the Department of Music at St. Thomas College in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1946, a position he would hold until his death (Pietralunga: 22). His personal and epistolary relationship with Pavese is therefore limited to the 1926/27-1933 period. His linguistic competence was that of a professional musician and music scholar, a native speaker of American English and a proficient bilingual speaker of Italian, who took a serious interest (spurred by Pavese) in his other language, but was certainly no literature expert or translator either by training or by profession.

1.3. The Pavese-Chiuminatto epistolary

Pavese’s letters to Chiuminatto have been known to the public since their first publication, in 1966, edited by Lorenzo Mondo, with translations from English by Italo Calvino. A second edition, published in 1973 under the title *Vita attraverso le lettere*, also edited by Lorenzo Mondo, includes a small selection of such letters. Neither volume, however, featured Chiuminatto’s responses to Pavese. These (together with one letter by Pavese dated 22 February 1930 that had escaped Mondo in 1966) were instead patiently

retrieved by Mark Pietralunga at the Guido Gozzano - Cesare Pavese Study Centre in Turin, then transcribed and published in 2007 in the volume *Cesare Pavese & Anthony Chiuminatto: Their Correspondence*. This collects them for the first time in chronological order, thus alternating questions and replies and adding, as an appendix, the meticulous work of translation and explanation of Anglo-American terms and expressions unknown to Pavese that Chiuminatto carried out for him in those years. It totals 70 letters – of which 32 by Pavese and 38 by Chiuminatto – that were exchanged between 29 November 1929 and 8 March 1933. Table 1 details all the letters in the correspondence.²

² Quotations from the letters shall refer to this table, indicating author (CP or AC), date (dd.mm.yyyy) and page as in Pietralunga (2007).

CP	AC	CP	AC	CP	AC
29 Nov. 1929 →	← 24 Dec. 1929 ← 26 Dec. 1929	21 Jun. 1930 →	← 30 Jun. 1930 ← 5 Jul. 1930	May 1931 →	← 28 May 1931
12 Jan. 1930 →		20 Jul. 1930 →		14 Jun. 1931 →	← 29 Jun. 1931
22 Jan. 1930 →		31 Jul. 1930 →		Jul. 1931 →	
	← 1 Feb. 1930 ← 11 Feb. 1930	19 Aug. 1930 →	← 1 Aug. 1930	28 Aug. 1931 →	← 8 Sep. 1931 ← 22 Sep. 1931
22 Feb. 1930 →		22 Sep. 1930 →	← 2 Sep. 1930	15 Oct. 1931 →	← 29 Oct. 1931
1 Mar. 1930 →	← 24 Feb. 1930 ← 15 Mar. 1930 ← 18 Mar. 1930 ← 19 Mar. 1930	28 Oct. 1930 →	← 22 Sep. 1930 ← 7 Oct. 1930	24 Dec. 1931 →	← 6 Jan. 1932
5 Apr. 1930 →		26 Nov. 1930 →	← 11 Nov. 1930	Jan. 1932 →	← 21 Feb. 1932
17 Apr. 1930 →			← 6 Dec. 1930 ← 18 Dec. 1930	2 Apr. 1932 →	← 3 Jun. 1932
22 Apr. 1930 →	← 28 Apr. 1930 ← 7 May 1930 ← 16 May 1930	9 Jan. 1931 →	← 23 Jan. 1931	24 Jul. 1932 →	← 14 Nov. 1932
17 May 1930 →	← 27-May-30 ← 5 Jun. 1930 ← 7 Jun. 1930	11 Feb. 1931 →	← 25 Feb. 1931 ← 12 Mar. 1931	1 Dec. 1932 →	← 16 Dec. 1932
		18 Mar. 1931 →		24 Jan. 1933 →	← 8 Mar. 1933
10 Jun. 1930 →		26 Mar. 1931 →	← 24 Apr. 1931		
				Tot.: 32	Tot.: 38

Table 1: The Pavese (CP) – Chiuminatto (AC) correspondence, 1929-1933

Adding to the epistolary, the appendix included by Pietralunga (2007) collects Chiuminatto’s translations of specific terms and expressions, which occupy 128 pages, i.e. almost the same space as the entire collection of letters (146 pages), and refer to the novels:

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- *Dark Laughter* (1925) by Sherwood Anderson (*ibid.*: 173-200);
 - *Babbitt* (1922) by Sinclair Lewis (*ibid.*: 201-262);
 - *Arrowsmith* (1925) by Sinclair Lewis (*ibid.*: 263-300);
 - *As I Lay Dying* (1930) by William Faulkner (*ibid.*: 301-302).

Note that, of all these works, Pavese only published the first in his own translation, i.e. *Riso nero*, in 1932, for Frassinelli, Turin. He translated and published other novels by Lewis and Faulkner, but not these ones. Therefore, although examples of Chiuminatto's annotations concerning all four of the novels listed above will be reported here, an all-round reflection can only be made with respect to *Dark Laughter*.

2. Objectives and methods

In light of the above, the purposes of this study can be formulated as the following research questions: what was the role of Anthony Chiuminatto in Cesare Pavese's American translations? How did their collaboration work and develop? Can the result of such work be understood as a form of collaborative translation? And what are the implications with respect to Pavese's role as a translator and Americanist?

To understand and organise the notes that Chiuminatto wrote for Pavese, i.e. his interpretations of the terms and expressions unknown to the Italian writer of which he asked the meaning, it is firstly necessary to clarify what the two correspondents meant by (American) English 'slang' and, secondly, what is meant by 'slang' currently. This can help classify the various words and phrases listed by Pavese (only a selection of which will be reported in this introductory pilot study, see note 6), since 'slang' may not be the correct or the only label to use. To this purpose, reference is made to lexicological and lexicographical works, some of which including sociolinguistic and pragmatic reflections to better define the object of the analysis: Barnhart (1978), Widawski (2015), Dalzell (2018), Pinnavaia (2018) and Yong (2022).

Secondly, the historical approach within Translation Studies may be at least partly considered, referring in particular to Pym (1998), who supports the view of attempting to "explain why translations were produced in a particular social time and place" (*ibid.*: ix), i.e. what he calls 'social causation'. To do so, the focus should be placed, in his opinion, on the human translator and "their social entourage (clients, patrons, readers)"

(*ibid.*: ix), and on the “social contexts where translators live and work” or ‘intercultures’ (*ibid.*: x). In addition, this ought to be done bearing in mind that any historical investigation of translation, while uncovering the “movement of people and texts” (*ibid.*: 18), should be relevant in and for the present, or ‘here and now’ (*ibid.*: x). Although Pym’s (1998) approach is generally believed by the author to be much historical and little linguistic – “[i]t is certainly not by removing translation from History that the primary function of the dynamics of transfer and circulation will be recognised” (Agorni 2021: 11) – , the method he suggests seems to fit the wider scope of this study, in that the story of Pavese and Chiuminatto centres around two specific persons, their specific places and time, their social entourage, the texts and culture they ‘moved’ from America to Italy and the intercultures they thus created.

Thirdly, within the functionalist Translation Studies tradition (Nord 1997), according to which in the intercultural translation process the responsibility mostly lies with the translator and his or her linguistic and cultural choices, it was useful to rely on research conducted on collaborative translation. This, rather than a methodological approach, may be better understood (with the exception of Pym 2011: 77 that considers it a synonym of crowdsourcing) as a vision of the translation process. In this perspective, especially relevant for this study are Agorni (2005, 2021, 2022), in particular for the notions of (in)visibility and trust, and O’Brien (2011) and Cordingly and Frigau Manning (2017) about the (political) role of translators-collaborators. Collaborative translation can furthermore be conceived as both the practice of collaborating in the various editorial phases of translation, revision, editing, publication, etc., and the cognitive process, shared by several people, of performing the textual transposition. The present study does not focus on the former, although the relationship between Pavese the translator and his publishers is very interesting, above all that with Giulio Einaudi, with whom he had a notoriously conflicting, almost love-hate relationship– cf. the letter he famously wrote to Einaudi on 14 April 1942, see Mondo 1966: 173. Conversely, the intellectual and collaborative relationship between Pavese and Chiuminatto evidently concerns the latter.

3. Slang, idiom and ‘I don’t know what’: Chiuminatto the translator?

3.1. Slang

Answering the first research question, i.e. what role Anthony Chiuminatto played in Cesare Pavese's American translations, is formally quite simple: the Italian writer himself asks his interlocutor for help with "slang, idioms, I don't know what" (CP, 20.11.1929, p. 26), to "understand better your contemporary writers [...] for an half incomprehensible" (*ibid.*)³. Pavese's naive view as to what slang and what idioms are is supposedly due in part to his young age (he was 21 years old in 1929), in part to his inexperience with English, a language that was geographically and culturally distant at the time, and to the fact that, as a translator, his focus was mainly on the Italian rendering of the text. However, what is certain is that the non-expert's confusion about the concept remains even to this day, when English is the global lingua franca of diplomacy, science and technology and, as such, is widely known as a second language by a very large share of the world's population. It is therefore worth clarifying the term linguistically, perhaps to discover that Pavese's vague definition was ultimately not so unjustified.

Under the umbrella term of 'slang', heterogeneous linguistic realities such as idioms, phrasal verbs, technical jargon and even African-American vernacular (cf. Green 2004), etc. are often brought together, with the quality of belonging to a low or colloquial register being their only common denominator: "[l]anguage of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting of new words or of current words employed in some special sense" (*OED*, s.v. SLANG, n. 3). It is thus clear how, even among linguists, the concept is not always neatly or univocally defined, how it has only been approached in recent times and, as such, is still significantly understudied.

Scholarly interest in non-standard forms of American English historically emerged, according to Yong (2022: 85), towards the end of the 19th century, with the collection of essays *Good English or popular errors in language* (1867) by Edward S. Gould. A number of purely prescriptive manuals of style about the (correct) use of the language then followed, until the publication of the first real North American slang dictionaries, in the second half of the 20th century: *A dictionary of American slang* (1926, 64 pp.) by Clement Wood and Gloria Goddard and the larger and even more

³ All the examples from Pietralunga (2007) report the spellings as in his edition, which include the many 'imperfections' of Pavese's English and which were diligently aintained by editor Mark Pietralunga (2007: ix). Wherever the annotation '[sic]' is found, it only refers to actual misspellings.

significant *Dictionary of American slang* (1960, 766 pp.), compiled by Harold Wentworth and Stuart B. Flexner.

Also according to Barnhart (1978: 94), who reviewed American lexicography from 1945 to 1973, Wentworth and Flexner (1960) remained the only work of its kind at least until 1973, excluding a 1952 *American thesaurus of slang*. Regarding this scarcity, Barnhart (1978: 96) further reflects: “[t]he neglect of the study of slang results in a vacuum in our knowledge of an important and innovative part of language that is an important and innovative part of the influx of new technical terms and much less well understood”. Another resource he cites is the *Dictionary of American underworld lingo* (Goldin, O’Leary and Lipsius 1950), from which he derives that there is “only 50 percent general agreement as to what constitutes a slang word or meaning” (Barnhart 1978: 95). He therefore wonders: “[w]hen is a colloquial term slang? Clearly the word slang’ itself needs to be defined more exactly than it has been so far (ibid.).

Coming to the present, it is a fact that “slang dictionaries started to mushroom upon the dawn of the 21st century” (Yong 2022: 88). An interesting example is the *Routledge dictionary of modern American slang and unconventional English*, edited by Tom Dalzell (2008), which edits and builds upon Eric Partridge’s historical *Dictionary of slang and unconventional English* (1937). The uncertainty about what makes up slang, however, is not definitively resolved even to this day, if Dalzell (2008: vii) too states

[r]ather than focus too intently on a precise definition of slang or on whether a given entry is slang, jargon or colloquial English, I borrow the wide net cast by Partridge when he chose to record ‘slang and unconventional English’ instead of just slang, which is, after all, without any settled test of purity.

It can therefore be concluded, in Widaski’s words (2015: 7), that no differently than in the past

very few professional linguists study slang as their main academic field. Instead, slang is mostly described by amateurs who often lack the necessary knowledge to adequately analyze it. As a result, slang continues to be misunderstood and is perceived as a mere sensational or vulgar deviation from standard language.

In the appendices of the Pavese-Chiuminatto correspondence, where Pietralunga (2007: 173-302) collected the meticulous translations and

explanations by the American musician, the examples of slang – diastratically low varieties of a certain standard – truly abound. To name just a few due to space reasons, we can report the words ‘pep’, ‘slap’ and ‘ragamuffin’, which the Green Bay musician explains, translates and puts into context in fluent and even occasionally articulate Italian:

[a] lot of pep in his book. ‘lot’ è comunissimo e si traduce perfettamente con il francese ‘beaucoup de’ – A lot of. ‘Pep’ è un americanismo per dire ‘della vita’ (p. 179);

to slap it home. (oppure) To slap it to someone – ed altre di queste forme con poche variazioni di preposizioni, vogliono dire ‘Lasciarlo a qualcuno Darlo a qualcuno’ nel senso di ‘daglielo!’ When it comes to English, slap it home to Pavese. Quando si tratta d’inglese, lascialo a Pavese! (daglielo a Pavese.) To slap, slapping, slapped, slapped – ‘schiaffeggiare’ (classico). Nello slang vuol dire ‘gettare ironicamente’ come si fa con certe frasi di disprezzo (p. 196);

ragamuffin – Scugnizzo – Straccione da strada (p. 250).

Many other instances appear in said appendix, which ought to be explored in greater detail and possibly will be in future studies (see note 6).

3.2. Idioms

Closely related to slang, so much so that it is sometimes equated with it, is the concept of ‘idiom’ or idiomatic expression:

[i]diom is erroneously equated with slang, too. [...] However, in order for idioms to be considered slang, they would have to be socially and stylistically lower than standard English. The difference, then, lies in their social and stylistic acceptability rather than in phrase structure itself. Moreover, although numerous slang expressions happen to be idioms, slang is not restricted to the form of a phrase; consequently, the following examples are all slang but not idiom: *cool* (‘excellent or admirable’), *babelicious* (‘sexually attractive’), *peanuts* (‘small amount of money’) or *wuss* (‘weak person’). (Widawski 2015: 10-11)

Again, even in the case of idioms there is no unambiguous categorization of the linguistic phenomenon. According to Hudson (1998), for instance, idioms can be classified following a syntactic criterion, while Wray (2002)

refers a semantic one. Pinnavaia (2018: 5) defines them as a minimum of two words, the combination of which gives rise to a meaning that is defined idiomatic or figurative in certain reference dictionaries; however, she excludes phrasal verbs and lexicalised nominal compounds. What she adds regarding the latter – that “[t]he inclusion and exclusion of phraseological types from the sub-category of idiom is in fact not univocal but at the discretion of each linguist” (*ibid.*) – can therefore be extended in general to the very concept of idiomatic expression: idioms remain extremely discretionary realities, whose understanding varies according to the linguistic perspective adopted by those who study them. As has been shown, Pavese’s profane expression “slang, idioms, I don’t know what” (CP, 20.11.1929, p. 26) was not so far removed, back in 1929, from the current specialised conception of the same phenomena. For the purposes of this work, therefore, an idiom will be defined, following Pinnavaia (2018: 3), as an expression of at least two words with well-defined syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties; nevertheless, phrasal verbs and lexicalised compound nouns shall also be included, if only because Pavese frequently and expressly listed them among the terms he asked Chiuminatto to explain to him.

Examples of idiomatic expressions found in Chiuminatto’s translations in Pietralunga (2007) are:

Shake a leg – Faccia in fretta! (p. 256)

and

the cat’s pajamas – modo di dire era tutto quello che si poteva desiderare. Abbiamo un sacco di questi mod[i], che poi vogliono dire la stessa cosa – per esempio To be the cat’s meow! cat’s pajamas. To be the snake’s hips! To be the berries! ECC. To put on the dog – darsi delle arie! (p. 299).

Having chosen to include phrasal verbs in the category, the following may also be reported:

[t]o let on. – Questa è una frase che si potrebbe spiegare con un’altra in inglese, cioè, ‘to make believe’ (far credere). Vuol anche dire ‘fingere’ (p. 173);

to blurt. – blurting, blurted, blurted – seguito generalmente dalla preposizione ‘out’ e che vuol dire ‘parlare senza pensarci su’ come fa l’individuo che deve rispondere subito e che non sa cosa dire e quindi dice basta che sia, interrottamente! (p. 224);

to which at least one phrasal prepositional verb may be added:

[t]o get away with something. – Farla franca (p. 242).

3.3. ‘I don’t know what’

Even the expanded definition of idiom adopted here, however, does not include various other linguistic phenomena that Pavese asked Chiuminatto to account for. Thus, it was decided to list some of them under the label ‘I don’t know what’ of Pavesian coinage. Chiuminatto’s explanations reported in Pietralunga (2007) include examples of literal meanings, non-standard spellings and contractions, such as

[t]o maul someone. – Non è slang ma puro inglese! Vuol dire ‘to beat some one, to handle roughly, to hammer someone.’ Si usa quando si vuol intendere il battersi forte (p. 174),

which was simply a word unknown to Pavese or one that he could not find in a dictionary, and

[w]hat t’ell. – Abbreviazione di ‘What the Hell!’ frase (p. 177).

Other commentaries, nonetheless, deal with cultural issues. It is the case of

White Sox. – È una squadra professionale di giocatori di baseball – giuoco molto amato in America (p. 177),

baseball being something that Pavese, like most other sports, did not seem fond of. Another example is

roll of bread – Un pane qualunque in forma di rotolo, così formato perchè nei ristoranti da noi sono più comodi a manipolare che non una mica (p. 179),

similar to the Italian *panino*, but of course not as localised as the Piedmontese *biova* and *mica*. Rather more complex is the subject of the African-American vernacular and the related cultural references. Here Chiuminatto willingly explains what is known to him, for example,

Old Master – (Vecchio Padrone) che sarebbe ‘Dio’ nel modo negro⁴ (p. 302).

Equally confident is he when he explains the mysteries of black magic, going so far as to specify the word’s stress. From the following explanation, however, a clear cultural also bias emerges that must obviously be understood in the context of the historical period:

[a] Voodooistic power. – Da ‘Voodoo’ ch’è il nome del mago negro. ‘Voodooism’ è la forma di superstizione e di magia degenerata che si trova fra i negri degli Stati Uniti e che è l’eco della barbaria Africana. Quindi qui vuol dire ‘avere la potenza, il potere del mago negro.’ Si pronuncia – vudu – con l’accento sulla prima! (p. 220)

To be fair to him, as a white Italian-American from Wisconsin, Chiuminatto is the first to admit the limits of his knowledge of the language and culture of his black compatriots, not only regarding specific expressions such as

‘[o] ma banjo dog’ è una forma negra per ‘Oh my banjo dog’ ma tutto quello che so di questa frase è qui! Se mai vengo a sapere qualchecosa di piu’ Le scrivero’ (p. 194);

To cut loose with the colors. – To open up with the colors. – Che vuol dire ‘mettere in vista d’improvviso dei colori.’ Riferisce forse ai negri che sono usi a mescolare i colori negli abiti e certe volte fan persin male agli occhi! [...] Nello slang si usa per spiegare un atto [sic] d’improvviso che abbia in se qualche cosa di furioso, qualche cosa che urta. ‘Tagliarsi libero’ è la forma letterale, ‘scattare,’ direi (p. 178),

but also when engaging, albeit as a non-linguist, in a not-so-trivial reflection of a more general nature:

⁴ The spelling, here and elsewhere, is that of the original and must, of course, be understood against the backdrop of the times.

[n]egro slang is about the hardest to understand, for we hear so little of it and on the other hand we get so much of it in writing! This kind of slang would be as well known to me as the pure American slang were I a resident of the negro States, such as Missouri or Alabama (AC, 26.12.1929, p. 31).

In this reflection, while calling ‘slang’ – in line with the approximate use that Pavese makes of the term – what is actually a sub-variety of American English, he nonetheless nails the diatopic dimension of its diffusion, which is what in fact prevents him from fully understanding the African American vernacular. Although this does not emerge from Chiuminatto’s words, at least not here, the reference to ‘pure’ American slang should be seen not as a racial evaluation but as the perception that, in addition to its geographical distribution, what also sets white slang apart is the social (diastratic) dimension.

4. The Pavese-Chiuminatto team: a translation collaboration

To answer the second research question – whether the exchange between Cesare Pavese and Anthony Chiuminatto did in fact constitute a form of collaborative translation – it is necessary to investigate the nature and development of their relationship. Fortunately, their epistolary, now available in its entirety, seems to clarify it accurately and extensively. The first thing to underline is that their acquaintance did not start out by mail: they met in person, face to face, and saw each other regularly in Turin. This could suggest that they were friends, to begin with. However, Pavese himself tells a different tale, in his very first letter to America:

[d]o you remember our slang lessons? You see: I took advantages of you the most brazen-facedly, but as for you now the saddest thing is certainly whether I intend to go on (CP, 20.11.1929, p. 25).

The tone is friendly, as is most of their correspondence, but it is immediately made clear how their meetings, initially facilitated by the Turin-born intellectual and common acquaintance Massimo Mila, had a utilitarian function right from the start, aimed as they were at the teaching and learning of English. In this way, Chiuminatto could spend time with some locals, while studying music in Turin, and Pavese was able to approach the American culture he had been passionate about since high school – a

passion that led him, not much later on (1930), to write his university thesis on Walt Whitman. Only one month after Chiuminatto had returned to the United States, Pavese was already reaching out to him by letter, to consult him “brazen-facedly” about what he did not understand of Sherwood Anderson’s *Dark laughter*, whose Italian translation, *Riso nero*, he would publish in 1932. The reference to his brazenness and the fact that he “took advantages”, with which the epistolary opens, establishes the ‘business-like’ nature of his request, typical of Pavese’s ‘business of translating’⁵.

Given the historical period, their letters were exchanged by mail, naturally. While this is obvious, it may inspire a few less evident reflections: intercontinental mail took a long time to reach its destination, and presupposed significant time and economic commitment on both parts. It is possibly correct to hypothesise that, should Chiuminatto have stayed on in Turin, Pavese would probably have consulted him in person, orally, over a hot drink in a café under the porticos. This would have been oral mediation, clearly, and, in that way, we would have had no trace of their collaboration: the American musician’s role would have remained invisible – yet another case of disappearance and loss of collaborative work, against Agorni’s (2022: 27) hope, shared by many a scholar including the author, that “the visibility of all actors involved in the translation process may become a methodological key to investigating present and future cultural dynamics in Translation Studies”. As things are, Pavese and Chiuminatto corresponded and also exchanged material, and sending books to-and-fro across the Atlantic often required a degree of inventiveness, as well as implying some political risk, since Italy’s fascist censorship was in force and the US customs also kept a close watch. This is where motivations come into play. No matter how hard one tries, and from whatever angle one looks at it, Pavese’s intention seems to be nothing but opportunistic, aimed at obtaining a) linguistic clarifications, especially lexical ones, for his translations and b) books by American authors, both on loan from libraries and to purchase from bookshops. Of course Pavese, coming as he did from an impoverished middle-class family that nonetheless retained its dignified Piedmontese manners, was quick to pay Chiuminatto back whatever he owed. Indeed, the exchange of money across the Atlantic, the price lists of the various books, the sums of the purchase bills, and the shipping rates and times are perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of the publication

⁵ A *mestiere* is a business or a trade, as in Pavese’s posthumously published diary, *Il mestiere di vivere*, or *The business of living* (1952).

edited by Pietralunga. To the timely financial reimbursement, Pavese added the occasional gift: one may check out the entertaining “liquor-center chocolates” (CP, 17.05.1930, p. 72) story, unfolding over numerous letters. The gourmet sweets, shipped around mid-May 1930, only arrived at the end of June, in the number of seven, having probably been decimated by the American customs officers.

If Pavese’s motivation is clear, Chiuminatto’s too, after carefully reading his missives, appears to be equally evident. It seems, however, different and based on something closer to friendship. The musician does not seem to have any particular need for or gain any advantage from corresponding with Pavese, if one excludes the occasional box of chocolates, of which he is fond. He asks nothing of the young translator from Turin. On the contrary, he devotes enormous amounts of time to his requests, finding and loaning books from local libraries, which he then sends to Italy for him to read and returns when they come back to the United States, always by mail. He carries out *blitz* missions in bookshops to buy him more novels, often paying in advance, then runs to the post office to ship them off to him. He racks his brains to provide him with accurate translations and reasoned explanations, which he notes down in long, detailed letters. So it would seem that he does it entirely for pleasure and, thus, for friendship:

[i]t was a pleasure for me to be able to explain the list of slang and non slang phrases that you sent me (AC, 24.12.1929, p. 28).

However, far from being the stereotypical over-eager American enthusiast, Chiuminatto appears to feel some sincere pleasure in providing information about the American language and culture, a task that he carries out with a certain degree of national pride. In this way, he also possibly keeps a connection with Italy as one of those emigrants who got ‘lucky’, if one can say so, and now promotes his adoptive land especially in his country of origin. His motivation may thus have been twofold: to maintain relations with Italy, on the one hand, and to perhaps exercise an unconscious sort of soft power on the other. Last but not least, we should consider the sincere intellectual stimulus that Chiuminatto – himself a finished musician and later an academic – must have drawn from the correspondence with a young but already well-read contemporary of his, who would not coincidentally go on to occupy a significant place in Italy’s cultural landscape of the first half of the 20th century and beyond. What is undeniable is Anthony’s devotion

to Cesare (they soon start using first names), which also gives rise to enjoyable anecdotes such as that of the typewriter: eager to respond to Pavese, Chiuminatto writes night and day, pounding away noisily on the keys. His neighbour complains, but the musician intends to ignore him, except that “the ole son-of-a-So-and-So goes to the police and they serve me with an order whereby I am forbidden to typewrite after sunset” (AC, 22.09.1931, p. 146). The ‘noise’ created by Pavese’s translations almost got his American correspondent arrested: it makes for an ironic parallel with Pavese being deported for his antifascist activity, when he only agreed to hide incriminating letters to please a woman he loved (cf. Lauretano, 2008 for the differing opinions on the story) and, especially, with the censoring of *Americana* (1940/1942), which only featured one translation by Pavese but consecrated him as a militant Americanist, at a time when his first infatuation with that generation of American novelists was over and he was already starting to turn his attention back to Europe and its classical myths.

In summary, the relationship between the two correspondents appears unbalanced in both its purposes and motivations, resembling a pure business relationship (*un mestiere*) for the Italian and something more akin to a friendship for the American. This is made evident by how the relationship ended. It had begun out of a need of Pavese’s, with his naive request for a dictionary of slang that did not exist at the time, at least as he conceived it (if one excludes Wood and Goddard’s, 1926, 64-page dictionary):

as the most pressing thing, would you be so kind as to go fetching, whether there is in USA a book – a dictionary, a treatise, something – about modern American language, which can enable me to understand better your contemporary writers? [...] I want such a book, as the air I am breathing. Can you fetch it? (CP, 20.11.1929, p. 26).

The reply he received shows all of Chiuminatto’s dedication and generosity:

I am sorry to say that there is not as yet a book of any kind which will explain to you the usage of American slang. [...] If ever I should hear of some book or other of this kind, I shall get it and send it to you; for the present, Mr. Pavese, send me a list of the phrases you do not understand and I’ll be this book for you (AC, 24.12.1929, pp. 29-30).

The end of the correspondence displays its purely professional, opportunistic nature: in 1932 Pavese published *Riso nero*, the Italian version

of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark laughter* (about which he had long and thoroughly consulted with Chiuminatto); the same year their letters began to thin out; 1933 saw one letter sent from Turin in January and one from Chicago in March. The latter ended with Chiuminatto's enthusiastic closing line "[u]ntil next time, then, believe me your old pal clean down to the wishbone" (AC, 08.03.1930, p. 171), to which Pavese would never reply. Pietralunga (2007: 21) reports that Chiuminatto, interviewed by Lorenzo Mondo in 1966, "speculates that the epistolary exchange may have ended because Pavese had obtained a level of self-sufficiency and was no longer in need of books or linguistic explanations primarily related to American slang". The abrupt interruption also fits well into Pavese's approach to translation as pure business (trade, labour, *mestiere*).

How, then, to frame the Pavese-Chiuminatto relationship with respect to their translation work? According to O'Brien (2011: 17), "[c]ollaboration can occur between translators and any one of these other agents [authors, publishers, agencies, translators] or between two or more translators." Although Pavese's editorial role with Einaudi (beginning with his contribution to *La Cultura*, 1934-1936) was not long to come in time and he might already have a clear idea as to which American authors and novels he wished to see translated into Italian, with respect to his correspondence with Chiuminatto, he ought to be regarded only as a translator. Indeed, as a professional translator, he would do as his publishers bid him, e.g. when Bemporad, the famous Florentine publishing house, asked him to translate Sinclair Lewis's *Our Mr Wrenn* in a hurry, in the wake of the Nobel prize for literature won by its author in 1930. Chiuminatto, in fact, contributes to Pavese's translation of *Dark laughter* in the manner of a present-day terminologist. He provides Pavese with the key to all those non-standard words that make up what is possibly the novel's main stylistic feature, and without which he could not have translated it. In this regard, then, is Chiuminatto to be seen as an actual active contributor to the translation work, in an almost contemporary way: similarly to those who, in a translation company, work on the glossaries that will then be provided to the translators proper, who in turn differ from the post-editors. Clearly, he is no professional translator, nor is he a linguist. However, as a clever and educated person, he 'thinks' like a translator, for instance when he asks Pavese to provide him with a context for the words whose meaning he wants explained – the first question that any translator who can be defined as such would ask, when faced with a lexical request:

[a]s for the slang phrases you sent me, well, I'll fix them up as soon as I can. I notice that there are some phrases that make it almost imperative that I have the book, for standing alone, as they do, it is almost impossible to give them a proper interpretation (AC, 15.03.1930, p. 56).

It was actually quite naive of Pavese to send him long lists of individual terms and expressions to translate, without any co-text or context of sorts. Operationally speaking, then, Chiuminatto's contribution to the Italian version of *Dark laughter* must be acknowledged as not only significant but as even indispensable to the comprehension of the source text. As a terminologist, however, he alone cannot put his name to a complete literary translation, since he only dealt with one linguistic level – the lexicon – and only insofar as the non-standard words. The syntactic and stylistic rendering, the translation's flavour, as well as that of all the standard lexicon of his understanding, are Pavese's, and Pavese's alone.

It ought to be added that it was the Italian writer himself that completely excluded Chiuminatto, albeit transparently, from the editorial process. Indeed, he gladly informs him of his successes as both an essayist and a translator, thus making it clear that the auxiliary function of the American correspondent is to be understood within the scope of their personal relationship, and will not be acknowledged editorially. After all, Pavese did in fact treat his translating as a business, both for his economic return (fatherless since the age of five, his mother died in 1930 and he had to support himself) and to try and make a name for himself in the field of American literary studies with his translations as well as with his essays. Signing his translations is therefore paramount to him: his tenure as much as his prestige depend on them, and there is no room for outsourcing the translation work and sharing either the fees or the fame. Not that Chiuminatto would have needed it, it is possible to speculate; perhaps he would have liked it, but no indications emerge from the epistolary in this regard. In other words, if Cordingly and Frigau Manning (2017) hypothesise that a plurality of translators can weaken the already diminished authority of the translator, as well as his creativity, the Pavese-Chiuminatto case certainly highlights Pavese's fear of losing authority. He nonetheless has no problems privately acknowledging Chiuminatto's great contribution:

[s]ay, I'm becoming a true authority about American literature, I begin to feel chesty with my fellow-students, and especially with co-

eds. But, let's on: it's you the fellow who is doing half the work (CP, 10.06.1930, p. 80).

Indeed, there was never an issue with trust between them: Pavese trusted his correspondent blindly on slang and other problematic lexicon: in other words, if “[t]rust is identified as a sort of defence strategy against the degree of uncertainty that characterises any translation” (Agorni 2021: 9), then Chiuminatto’s role contributed to reducing such uncertainty to a degree at which Pavese may be confident enough to venture his own lexical (re)formulations based on the American musicologist’s explanations that were never (could not be) questioned. However, back to why Chiuminatto’s work was not acknowledged, the hypothesis is that, in 1930, Pavese’s fear of losing authorship must still be seen as at least on a par with his fear of losing an income. Thus, the money and time he spends in corresponding with Chiuminatto must be understood as a professional investment which shall cease, as a matter of fact, the moment he does not need it anymore (1933) – cf. Pym (1998: 166), “Could it be that certain social groups become linguistic mediators in search of enhanced status then abandon that role as soon as it is no longer advantageous?”.

To sum up, in Pavese’s translations from American English, especially *Dark laughter* by Sherwood Anderson, Anthony Chiuminatto played an operational role ‘connected’ with translation – of non-standard terms and expressions – but he cannot, even according to today’s standards in the translation industry, be considered an actual co-translator. He may at most be deemed a translation operator, involved in the “production” cycle (Cordingly and Frigau Manning 2017), which is collaborative by definition. Having therefore to decide whether theirs was a professional collaboration focused on translation, the answer is certainly affirmative; however, *Riso nero* cannot properly be defined a ‘collaborative translation’ but, at most, the result of a ‘translation collaboration’.

5. Pavese the cloven Americanist?

Regarding the implications of his collaboration with Chiuminatto for Pavese’s role as a translator and Americanist, the former cannot possibly in any way have undermined, even in retrospect, the latter. The label of ‘Americanist’ translator attached to Pavese is part of the anti-fascist aura ideologically built around him in the decades following his death and, as has

already been argued, has long needed to be redefined (Grego 2023). However, if Pavese's Americanism is to be re-sized, it is certainly not because of the necessary yet not sufficient contribution that Chiuminatto made to the translation of *Dark laughter*. One can say that Pavese himself, in his letters, diary and, now, American epistolary, explains why: for example, by showing us how, as early as 1933, his initial infatuation with contemporary American novelists was already over. Indeed, whether based on his long-established and enduring fame as an Americanist, or even seen from a contemporary perspective redefining his love for American writers, Pavese's part as a connoisseur and facilitator of things American, who introduced them into Italy ("a true authority about American literature", CP, 10.06.1930, p. 80), does not seem to be in danger, for at least three reasons. Firstly, Chiuminatto's help was exquisitely lexical and concerning a single published book. Secondly, the weight of terminology in literary translation is not equivalent to that in specialised fields. Thirdly, more often than not, from Chiuminatto's explanations, Pavese mostly drew inspiration for very personal renderings, only occasionally using the versions of his correspondent *verbatim*.⁶ Additionally, Pavese's sincere interest in the American language and culture is not in question: suffice it to consider the famous reflection he made on slang, even within the limits of his expertise, in one of his letters to Chiuminatto, and to which Pietralunga (2007) gives new value, by adding Chiuminatto's reply to it. Pavese sketches his own idea of slang, venturing a heartfelt as much as daring parallel with Italian dialects, in his syntactically correct and even lexically nuanced English. Although widely cited by literary critics, it is worth quoting it in its entirety, but reading it this time from a linguistic and translational perspective:

You say: this word is slang, and this is classic. But is not slang only the bulk of new English words and expressions continually shaped by living people, as for all languages in all times? I mean, there is not a line to be drawn between the English and the slang words, as two different languages usually spoken by different people and only in certain cases used together.

That book you know, *Dark Laughter*, for instance, is written in English, but there are numberless slang-expressions in it and they are not as French words in an Italian book, but they are a natural part of

⁶ The author is currently working on a linguistic analysis of Cesare Pavese's translation of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark laughter*.

that language. And I said always English, but I should have said American for I think there is not a slang and a classic language, but there are two diversified languages, the English and the American ones. As slang is the living part of all languages, English has become American by it, that is the two languages have developed themselves separately by means of their respective slangs.

My conclusion is then that there are not a slang and a classic language.
(CP, 12.01.1930, p. 33)

The answer of Chiuminatto, supposedly the American authority, expresses other ideas, partly understandable, partly equally confused – certainly not as structured into a poetic vision (revolving around the classics, the livelihood of speech, the freshness of dialect/slang) that in Pavese’s mind already seemed fully formed as far back as 1930:

I shall refer myself now to the paragraph of your letter where you spoke of slang, as not being separated from what I shall call real American. Well, you are right in what you say, Mr. Pavese, save that what I wanted to say before was that very many forms of slang are not of good use, that is, they are insulting forms of speech. When I speak of classic English I mean that kind of English which was current years and years ago and which still remains to-day, even though it may have been even slang at that time. When I speak of slang now, though, I mean that form of English which is current and yet new to us, something that is produced in our times. Oh, I agree with you that real American and American slang now go hand-in-hand, but we are still in the period where we distinguish slang from what used to be our American language. Get me? I merely called one form ‘classic’ and another ‘slang’ so that you would not think that the former were something relatively new or the latter a part of our one-time English. (AC, 01.02.1930, p. 40)

If, on the other hand, we consider the almost superhuman myth of Pavese the translator, according to which he alone, at most with Elio Vittorini, imported American novels into Italy in a rebellious drive against the fascist regime and toward freedom (cf. Fernandez 1969), this indeed ought to be cloven, but only to derive a vision of his work that is closer to reality. Pavese does not act alone: as a translator, he takes advantage of at least Anthony Chiuminatto for *Dark laughter* and Libero Novara for *Moby Dick* (cf. Pavese, 1931: 95-100); as an editor-in-chief, he had to interact with both publishers

and translators within the productive cycle mentioned above, which naturally underlies collaborative translation understood as a process and social practice (Grego 2010). Nonetheless, Pavese stays on as ‘the’ unquestioned translator of *Dark laughter*, as well as of the other fifteen English-language novels he translated into Italian. Considerably helped on the lexical level by Chiuminatto, the latter remains a supporting actor, a co-star, a collaborator, but not a co-translator, since, “[i]f all translation is collaborative, not all collaborators are translators” (Cordingly and Frigau Manning 2017: 23).

6. Conclusions

Three are the concluding reflections. The first falls within the scope of trying to demystify Pavese’s translation activity as a conscious anti-fascist operation (Grego 2023). Only by removing the ideological aura of the committed intellectual, a member of the Italian Communist Party, an anti-regime activist and a bootlegger of *Americana* – a trend that is already well underway with respect to his works (cf., e.g., the reflections surrounding Mondo 1990’s so-called *Taccuino segreto*) – is it possible to reframe, from a contemporary perspective, the translatory acts of Cesare Pavese and the indisputable cultural role they played. Exploring his translations in the light of the rich corpus of annotations he left us – in letters, diaries and essays – is the philological operation to carry out, and the study of the Pavese-Chiuminatto epistolary falls precisely within this purpose: to focus on his translations not only as an editorial choice, but as an operational translation process, starting from the texts and placing the texts at the centre. In this sense, Pym’s (1998: 37) suggestion, within the historical perspective in Translation Studies, that we should “find out why the work of translators might have been important in the past” and what its relevance is to the present is also adhered to: Pavese was indeed a great intercultural operator, only not for the reasons that intellectuals have been indicating usually, and the awareness thereof can contribute to reassess and re-appreciate Pavese’s translating role in contemporary times.

The second reflection is oriented towards a recognition of Chiuminatto’s work as that of an excellent translation collaborator: “I’m with you now, Cesare, so take advantage. I may be the only one you know in America – but this old Buddy of yours is going to be the whole of America to you if he can!” (AC, 12.03.1931, p. 128), as well as a devout

fellow: “I’m still at your service, you know – and I only wish I were a consul or something like that so that I could do more to get you into America” (AC, 14.11.1932, p. 162). Differently put, acknowledging the musicologist’s work does not downsize that of Pavese; rather, it returns a more complete view of his profile as a translator. It is also a due recognition of the merits of the Italian-American who, although jokingly, explicitly asked Pavese to remember him, both professionally (“[i]f you should ever be asked to write your ‘memoirs’ some day for one of those syndicated magazines, please don’t forget to give me a look-in on the immortality!”, AC, 30.06.1930, p. 84), and personally (“[w]ell, Cesare, keep the thread of my plans and write me often. Anything you want – books, records or what have you – just remember me!”, AC, 06.01.1932, p. 155).

The third and final reflection necessarily addresses the positioning of this specific epistolary within the broader notion of collaborative translation, in which collaboration “effectively explodes the notion of translation as a unitary activity, breaking it down into a set of parallel practices and corresponding roles” (Agorni 2005: 827). It has been argued that Anthony Chiuminatto cannot be considered a real co-translator, although he can be seen to have played the parallel role of translation collaborator. Indeed, this does not mean that the Pavese-Chiuminatto interaction cannot still be placed within the practice of collaborative translation and contribute to it, since “[t]he real potential for collaborative translation as a critical concept and tool lies not in its drawing attention to the different roles played by actors in a process, but in its capacity to complicate our assumptions about translation” (Cordingly and Frigau Manning 2017: 24). It has also been argued here that Cesare Pavese, in translating the American novelists of his time, did not make a conscious political choice but one about ‘poetics’. Similarly, this too represents an act of collaborative translation which, if “[u]nderstood as a poetics, [...] surpasses the epistemology of the individual, offering instead various dialectics of imbrication and fusion that subtend and produces collective work” (*ibid.*). Incidentally, it was the very imbrication that Pavese sought for himself between American culture, meant as a “great laboratory [...] of work and research” (Pavese 1947: 3), and his own writing. Finally, since “[a] poetics of collaboration will draw attention to the motivations and social forces that animate collaborative projects and the cultural and political statements they embody” (Cordingly and Frigau Manning 2017: 24), even if Pavese’s translating from American may have been no openly anti-fascist operation, it does not mean that it was not a deeply and intrinsically

‘political’ choice: in its manner of exploring the other, in its linguistic and cultural approach and in its ultimately universal curiosity about all that is human.

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Industrialisation of translation and collaborative practices in the Greek translations of Marxist texts

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Abstract

This paper investigates how collaborative translation practices were employed in the Greek translations of theoretical Marxist texts published by the Communist Party of Greece in the 1950s. The party's efforts to dominate Marxist discourse required the codification of Marxist theory and the creation of accurate translations and retranslations of theoretical Marxist texts. To this end, a specific model of collaboration was developed based on the principles of industrial production, and conceptualised here as "industrialisation of translation" (Mossop 2006). The translation process resembled a production line where, at different stages, each contributor added a part until the completion of a translation. The translation process is analysed by adapting indicators of industrialisation from Mossop (2006), e.g., large quantities of materials to be translated, centralization of translation, intensification of work, division of labor, and quality control and employee discipline, to show how collaboration was central both to the completion of translations and to claims about their accuracy.

Keywords: collaborative translation, translation and Marxism, Marxism in Greece, history of Marxism, translation and communism.

1. Introduction

The study of collaborative practices in translation highlights the fact "that translation involves more than one writing subject and more than one interpretive position" (Bistué 2013: 1). These practices encompass an array of relations and configurations, from dyadic interactions (Zanotti 2020; Heller and Hawkins 2020) to extensive teamwork which may involve a thousand contributors (St. André 2010). They can take place in formal or informal groups (Yang 2020; Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka 2016) where contributors may occupy a variety of roles as translators, revisers, proofreaders, editors and publishers. However, despite its long history,

collaborative translation is a neglected area of research in Translation Studies, so it is a welcome development that this is now changing with more studies, from monographs to edited volumes and journal special issues (Bistué 2013; Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2016; Zwischenberger 2020) including this volume. But, with some exceptions (Bingenheimer 2010; Neather 2012), the focus of such research remains on literary texts and concerns mostly contemporary contexts and online interactions (Heller 2016; Jiménez-Crespo 2017; Yang 2020) enabled by technological innovations (O'Hagan 2009; Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006). On the other hand, and even though Marxist ideas have been key in most areas of intellectual production as well as in events that have shaped our world, there has been little attention in Translation Studies on the translation of works by Marx and Engels. Even recent interest in translation in the communist era in the USSR and Eastern Europe (Baer and Witt 2017; Rundle *et al.* 2022) concerns mostly literature and religion, and do not specifically attend to the translation of Marxist or more broadly political texts.

This paper contributes to historical research in collaborative translation by investigating the ways in which collaboration was operationalized in the translations of Marxist theoretical texts. These translations were commissioned by the Communist Party of Greece [Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας, henceforth KKE], and performed by a group of its members, employed by the party specifically for this task, with different responsibilities and roles (e.g., translators, revisers and proof-readers). They were political refugees based in Bucharest, Romania, where the party apparatus had converged after the party's defeat in the civil war (1946-1949).¹ So, although translation was carried out by communists living in a country of the Eastern bloc, it was not a state-sponsored initiative. The paper aims at foregrounding the social structures and conditions in which collaboration took place and translation was carried out and, as Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets (2022: 142) note, to contribute to “what translation can say about the history of communism”. It will be argued that the model of collaboration that was put in place was organized on the principles of industrial production and bore similarities to a production line. Collaboration served as a way to both codify Marxist theory and to create (the impression of) accurate translations.

¹ The civil war (1946-1949) was fought between the regular Greek army with the support of Britain and, later, the US and the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) [Δημοκρατικός Στρατός Ελλάδας] formed by the KKE.

In their recent work on *Translation under communism*, Rundle *et al.* (2022: 7), call for a greater attention to archival research in order to connect translation with its social and historical context. This paper responds to this call by utilizing biographies of those involved in translation work, party publications from the period of study discussing aspects of translation, secondary sources and archival textual material. The latter have been collected from the KKE's archive, located at the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) in Athens and available to the public. The documents from ASKI used here include a) staff lists, that provide information on the contributors' identities, remuneration and responsibilities, which, in turn, indicate their places in the organization's hierarchy and the tasks they performed; b) production reports; and c) decisions and notes of correspondence between various party bodies which convey the party's policies and procedures and comment on their successes and failures. Unfortunately, no translation drafts exist in the archive, so this study also encountered the same problems noted by Hersant (2016: 98) and also Zanotti (2020: 221) who laments the "paucity of textual evidence of the [translation] process" and the difficulty in finding materials that record the dynamics between collaborators.

The selection of the records to study was based on their date, title, body of issue and description in the archival records. The archival research is work in progress, so the following discussion represents preliminary findings. However, partial as it is, it constitutes progress towards the study of the history of collaborative translation practices and more specifically those through which theoretical Marxist texts were made available. As these texts have been translated in many languages, it is hoped that this paper will help stimulate more research in the history of their translations, and will extend our knowledge of the diverse and distinctive collaborations that made them possible.

2. Collaborative translation in historical studies and political texts

Translation Studies scholars have noted the variety of contexts in which the term collaborative translation has been used and the consequent challenges in defining it (Neather 2020: 70; Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2016: 2-4). In this discussion, it will refer to a situation "when two or more agents cooperate in some way to produce a translation" (O'Brien 2011: 17). This wide-ranging definition allows for the involvement of at least one

translator and other contributors, such as revisers, editors, and proofreaders, as is the case in this study, and suggests that the absence of one of the contributors may jeopardize the completion of the translation. It is a useful definition because, as will be shown, each contributor executed a part or aspect of a translation without which the final version would not have been possible.

Although studies regarding historical accounts of collaboration are still limited, they provide a rich account of the various contexts of such practices. Perhaps one of the most eminent works in historical instances of collaborative translation is Bistué (2013). In her study of translation in medieval Europe, Bistué shows the importance of collaboration in the transmission of philosophical and scientific texts. She challenges the long-held beliefs which perceive the translated text as the exclusive creation of a single person with bilingual expertise (Bistué 2013: 2) and argues that despite these beliefs and claims, translation as a collaborative act was a well-established practice.

Other studies concern missionary and colonial settings. Hill (2013) and Hofmeyr (2004) have called attention to the complex positions that various contributors can occupy in the creation of translations. Colonial encounters were sites where collaborative practices emerged, but the power imbalances were such that the native person's position was often one of extreme subservience (Hill 2013: 34). Through historical examples of collaborative translation in the Chinese context, St. André (2010) discusses the process of the translation of sutras into Chinese over a period of ten centuries, which involved not only relay translation, but also discussion and revision among large groups of contributors (ibid.: 74). St. André argues for the value of historical research in translation groupwork and stresses its importance in translation education. Looking at more recent periods in film translation, Zanotti (2020) uses the term 'translaboration' to investigate the power imbalance in a dyadic collaboration between Stanley Kubrick and his translator in the 1980s. Using archival materials from the official Stanley Kubrick Archive, translation drafts and audio-material of phone conversations from the translator's estate, Zanotti shows how Kubrick intervened in the translation process to guide the translator's interpretation in ways that she describes as a more or less forced collaboration (Zanotti 2020: 222).

Finally, studies of collaboration specifically on political texts are few and tend to focus on contemporary settings. One of the earliest is by Koskinen (2008) who investigates translation practices in the European

Commission and the ways that collaboration shapes the translated text. Koskinen shows that in the final version it is the institution that ‘speaks’ through the translations (Koskinen 2008: 22) and the individual translator bears limited responsibility. Similarly concerned with the impact of collaboration on the lexical choices and construction of the TT are Fournel and Zancarini (2016) who describe their own collaboration during the translation of political texts from Italian to French. Following a historical and political analysis of the STs, and combining their different competences, the two translators describe how they arrived at their lexical choices (ibid.: 71) and refer to their collaborative model as “political philology”. It is a philology because they begin the translation process with a slow, careful reading of the originals, and political both because of the types of texts they translate, and because “approaching texts critically and reflecting on the meaning of the words has an eminently political value” (ibid.: 71). Their paper describes the application of theory into practice by close textual analysis and provides much-needed evidence of the impact of “translating together” on the wording and construction of translated texts (ibid.: 72). Having outlined previous studies of collaborative translation in historical studies and political texts, the discussion will move to the context of production of translations by the KKE followed by a detailed discussion of its model of collaboration.

3. The KKE and the translation of theoretical Marxist texts

From the late 1920s onwards, Marxist ideas began to gain credence in Greece, causing a surge in the translation of theoretical Marxist literature (Elefantis 1976: 137f; Noutsos 1993: 372). For the KKE, which had closely aligned itself with the Marxism propagated in the USSR, its translation efforts intended to address two major priorities: firstly, to educate members in Marxist ideas and raise consciousness among the working class; secondly, to secure its domination over Marxist discourse and defeat its political opponents on the Marxist-oriented left in Greece. These political groups offered alternative interpretations of Marxism and had considerable influence within the Greek labor movement in the pre-war era. In its 1927 Congress, the party’s intention to control Marxist discourse was unambiguously stated (Delistathi 2023: 4): “our Party should aim at the monopoly of representation of the Marxist-Leninist theory” in order to

marginalize rival, ostensibly Marxist political forces (Rizospastis 1927: 1) (my translation).

Key to the success of the project of discourse domination was the codification of Marxism, which involved, on the one hand, the (re)translation of Marxist theory into Greek, and, on the other, establishing these official party (re)translations as the only correct interpretations of the original texts (Delistathi 2011: 208-209). This latter aspect was important because the party claimed that earlier translations published by its political rivals contained errors that they had deliberately inserted to manipulate Marxism for their own ends (Delistathi 2017: 208-209). Political events and the intense state persecution of communists throughout the 1930s and 1940s impeded but did not banish the translation of Marxist literature; even during the Axis occupation (1941-1944) there had been a handful of translated publications, e.g., *Dialectical and historical materialism* [Διαλεκτικός και Ιστορικός Υλισμός] (1942). But after liberation in 1944, when, briefly, conditions became less restrictive, there was once again a surge in translated Marxist texts: in 1945, their number soared to 40% of book production, dropping sharply to 7% the following year at the beginning of the civil war (Noutsos 1993: 372).

By the end of the Axis occupation, the KKE had become the dominant party of the Greek left and the influence of its pre-war rivals had diminished. Now it directed its criticism against the version of Marxism propagated by Tito in Yugoslavia and against those party members who espoused critical views of the regimes of the Eastern bloc. Having been defeated in the civil war, the KKE was made illegal in Greece and its members and supporters were persecuted. Tens of thousands crossed the borders and became political refugees dispersed in Eastern European countries; the party apparatus converged in Bucharest. Despite these difficulties, codifying Marxism in translations remained a priority and the stability provided in Bucharest gave this project a new impetus as evident from the output of the party's publishing activities: in 1951, translations accounted for 50.8% of its overall publication output (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 64). In the pre-war era, the translation of theoretical texts in the KKE was usually undertaken by an individual (where translators' names are stated this seems to be the case). However, because the published translations were authorized by the party, it is certain that at least one other person would have checked and approved them on its behalf. In this respect, translating had always had a collaborative aspect in the KKE.

This is the historical context of the Greek translation of the two volume *Selected works of Marx and Engels* [Μαρξ Ένγκελς Διαλεχτά Έργα] which were published in 1951. The *Selected works* are one of several authorised party translations created through collaborative practices and the publication is an example where these practices are explicitly stated for the readers to see. Early in the first volume, there is a “Note by the Publishing House of the Central Committee of the KKE” informing the reader that this volume of the Greek edition mirrors that of the Russian edition as “edited by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute” in Moscow (1948) (Anon. 1951: n.p.) by including the same texts. The Institute was the ultimate interpreter of theoretical Marxist texts and published official translations and other authorized works by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Delistathi 2023: 3). The Note states:

The volume we submit today has been translated and revised by a team of translators, editors and partners. We carried out the translation directly from the original, the German or English text. We translated and revised Marx’s works, such as *The Civil War in France*, [and] *Wages, Price and Profit*, directly from the English original, considering also the corresponding editions in German and Russian language. (Anon. 1951: n.p.; my translation)

The Note makes the organization of the translation process and the different contributors visible. Readers are reassured that no relay translation and no unsupervised and unauthorized interpretations had been introduced, but it is unclear how editions in other languages had been considered. However, the practice of direct translation contrasts with the experience in Ukraine where the works of Marx and Engels were only allowed through relay translation from the authorized Russian versions (Kalnychenko and Kolomyets 2022: 153). In any case, the Note makes clear how important it was for the party to document and explain the practices used for the creation of the publication and the following discussion will elaborate on how these were organized and actualized in this and other party publications.

4. Industrialization of translation

In a study which specifically relates political priorities to the organization of translation work, Mossop (2006) addresses the effects of the Canadian government's 1995 state policy on translations. The new policy transformed translation from cultural activity into a business for profit (Mossop 2006: 18). This, in turn, ushered in changes in the organization of translating which left visible traces in translators' lexical choices. To account for these changes, Mossop (2006) uses the term "industrialization of translation" to mean not a transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial era, but a change in the perception of translation as business. Mossop borrows from Gouadec (2002: 237-254) several "indicators of industrialization" and identifies sixteen categories that stratify these changes in work organization and practice. They include: substantial quantities of material to be translated, standardization of work organization, division of labor, search for productivity gains, and appearance of quality management and salaried employees (Mossop 2006: 10-11).

In contrast to its use by Mossop (2006), the term industrialization usually denotes a period of major socio-economic transformation marked by the reorganization of production and labor practices, and an orientation towards mass production for a mass of consumers. It is associated with the rational division of labor and its subsequent further reorganization around the principles of the assembly and production line for increased productivity and profit. As will be shown in the following sections, the process of translating followed in the *Selected works* and other publications by the KKE shares many similarities with a production line (Delistathi 2023: 18), but also important differences. Whereas it is certainly the case that translating was reorganized collaboratively and hierarchically, that each contributor created an aspect of the translated text, and that productivity was key, it is also the case that scholarly publications like the *Selected works* were neither intended for a mass readership nor were they expected to make a profit in the monetary sense. Instead, the party would benefit from an increase in its cultural and political influence.

Nevertheless, the concept "industrialization of translation" provides useful directions which I will follow to systematize the analysis of collaborative practices. It foregrounds the fundamental changes in the ways in which translations were created within the KKE in the early 1950s in relation to the pre-war era, through a particular collaboration, a specific way of organizing work. Many of the categories in Mossop (2006) mentioned

earlier are helpful here. To facilitate the discussion, I have reordered and modified them as follows: 1) large quantities of materials to be translated, 2) centralization of production, 3) intensification of work and productivity gains, 4) division of labor, and 5) quality control and employee discipline. In this last category, I have added the dimension of employee discipline because, as it will be discussed, discipline related to translation quality. Each of these categories will be analysed in the following sections.

4.1. Large quantities of materials to be translated

A common association of the word “industrial” is with large-scale production; in the case of translation this encompasses both the volume of texts to be translated and the number of contributors involved (Mossop 2006: 14). Unlike pre-war times, the KKE now had a clearer and more consistent translation policy, with a distinct focus on the translation of the ‘classics’ (i.e., works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin) in scholarly, and often multi-volume publications of selected and collected works. The extent of the operation becomes clearer when we consider that the translations of the ‘classics’ in 1951 totalled 28.9% of all translations by the KKE, and in 1954 40% (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 64). The scale and complexity of translating the ‘classics’ as well as the importance of their translations (cf. St. André 2010: 79) determined the size and range of operations and the scope of collaboration. An extensive number of dedicated and specialized contributors was required to undertake this task and a large scale and precise organization was needed to coordinate and supervise their activities. To facilitate this, the KKE set up the Department of Classics discussed below.

4.2. Centralization of translation

An important element of industrialization is the centralization of production from small and dispersed sites to sizable units. By 1951, most party translation activity had coalesced into the Publishing House (1949-1954), formalizing the collaborative dimension of translation within the party. Based in a five-storey building in Bucharest,² its activities were supervised by the Committee for Enlightening (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 56) and financed by the Labor Party of Romania, which collected all income generated by book sales (ibid.: 49). The Publishing House, which had its

² See photograph in Patelakis (2019: 370).

own printshop, was divided into sections and included a Translation Section with its own sub-divisions, such as the Socio-political Department, the Literature Department and the Department of Classics (ASKI b.239, f.13/1/2),³ so different contributors specialized in the translation of different text types. The Department of Classics was set up specifically for the translation of the ‘classics’ in scholarly editions. One of its earliest publications was the *Selected works of Marx and Engels* [Διαλεχτά Έργα Μαρξ Ένγκελς] (1951) as well as Lenin’s *Collected works* [Άπαντα] (1952, volume III) and Stalin’s *Collected works* [Άπαντα] (1953) among others. By bringing together different contributors in a single location, creating easy and clear lines of communication between them and enhancing coordination, centralization made possible the timely completion of the translations.

An effect of centralization was the appearance of salaried employees engaged expressly in translating theoretical Marxist texts. By 1954, the Department of Classics was employing 15 people, including Domna Christea, Petros Rousos, Leonidas Stringos and Panagiotis Mavromatis (ASKI b.286, f.13/48/131). However, it was not uncommon for personnel to move between departments according to needs and personal abilities. Although further information about Domna Christea is unclear, Rousos and Stringos were longstanding party members occupying various leading positions, as was Mavromatis until his expulsion from the KKE in 1950, although he continued to work in the Department and was translating directly from German (Georgiou 1992: 609-610). Overall, the appearance of salaried personnel with distinct responsibilities gave visibility and formal recognition to translators and other contributors and acknowledged them as specialized in the interpretation of Marxism (Delistathi 2023: 12).

Regarding the organization of daily work, little is known other than that it was eight hours long (ASKI b.293, f.13/55/25). Part of the workplace life was a “factory committee” which followed up “all relevant matters (production and norm, quality of work, discipline, order, cleanliness, moral commendations)” (ASKI b.294, f. 13/56/17). From 1950, there was a canteen for all employees, for printers as well as for those with text-writing responsibilities regardless of rank, which improved nutrition by providing meat four times a week (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 47), although rationing was in place for basic foodstuff, clothes and shoes (Georgiou 1992: 609).

³ All references to archival material here include the location of the material at ASKI, followed by ‘b’ which denotes the box number where the documents are held, followed by ‘f’, denoting ‘file’. This is followed by the serial number of the document referred to as it is recorded in the archive.

Overcrowded housing, however, remained a pressing issue with fourteen rooms housing 61 employees (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 47). In terms of their place in the Romanian society, employees were largely isolated from the local population, which was “unpleasant for all” (Georgiou 1992: 609) and nearly all aspects of their lives were planned, provided for and controlled by the party.

4.3. Intensification of work and productivity gains

Similarly to the experience in other countries of Eastern Europe, such as Bulgaria (Ivleva 2022: 361), translation work was carefully planned in the party, but the introduction of production plans and targets for all employees of the Publishing House in 1950 accelerated its pace. What were initially collective and individual monthly and annual targets (ASKI b.294, f.13/56/17) soon also became daily (ASKI b.109, f.4/1/139), a change which further intensified work and added pressure on employees. This was also an indirect way of controlling and regulating employee behavior. Undoubtedly, production plans and targets were a fundamental feature of the economies of the Eastern European bloc and, given the KKE’s political affiliation, it is unsurprising that it adopted this approach to production. But they were also part of an overall effort to make productivity gains and enable industrialized production. The 1950 annual Report on the activities of the Publishing House commended employee performance which improved translation output, from 300 pages per week in March 1950, to 430 and then to 534 later in the year (ASKI b.294, f.13/56/17).

This pace of production depended on overtime, which was frequent and often unpaid: for example, in order to fulfil the 1951 production plan, employees worked 15,387 hours of overtime until 25 November 1951 and it was anticipated that by the end of the year there would be an additional 1,400 hours; of the overtime already worked, only 7,500 hours had been paid (ASKI b.294, f.13/56/67). Indeed, work was fast paced. Vassos Georgiou, Head of the Publishing House (1950-1951), noted that the *Selected works of Marx and Engels* were issued ahead of their deadline (Georgiou 1992: 618) and that staff “worked intensely because deadlines were tight from the start” (Georgiou 1992: 610). But these levels of intensification caused resentment and complaints were logged against Georgiou’s disproportionate demands (ibid.). Occasionally, though, it was accepted by the party that pressure was extreme. In 1953, it was acknowledged that in the Department of Classics “most of the revision work falls on [the

shoulders of] comrades Stringos and Mavromatis. The plan is too big for two” and a third person was needed, so the department “would be able to respond more comfortably and satisfactorily” to its assigned targets (ASKI b.239, f.13/1/6). Adherence to targets and deadlines was especially significant for the KKE: it confirmed not only the importance of the codification of the Marxist theory within the Greek context and the urgency of this task, but it also signalled the party’s continuous strength and achievement despite its defeat in the civil war. Regardless of its exile and persecution, the party could still mount an extensive and elaborate operation and sustain a dominant ideological presence within the Greek left. The intensification of translation work was accompanied by meticulous planning and a clear division of labor as discussed in the next section.

4.4. Division of labor

Personnel records from the KKE's archive provide names, so we can discern the organization of the Department of Classics. Additionally, the production plan for 1955 cited in Mattheou and Polemi (2003: 65) has been used, which shows the names of contributors, responsibilities, number of pages to be worked on by each contributor and deadlines for the submission of work. All these documents have helped me reconstruct the timeline of the translation process and the workflow in the Department of Classics.

Industrialization is usually associated with the division of labor between supervised workers with distinct tasks, degrees of specialization and responsibilities. In the Department, production was hierarchically organized, with clear lines of managerial responsibility and division of labor. At the top of the hierarchy was the Head of Department, followed by revisers, sub-divided into reviser A and reviser B, and a person completing the last check of the final draft which was usually the Head. Reviser A worked on the first draft and had more extensive input than B who revised the second draft. Translators were also sub-divided into translator A and B, perhaps according to experience and/or competence. Other contributors to translation were typists and proofreaders (*αποδιβαστές*) as well as those whose responsibilities and place in the timeline are not entirely clear, such as stylists (*στυλιστες*), contrasters (*παρραβολή*), and correctors (*διορθωτές*). It seems that stylists were responsible for improving expression, particularly after so many different voices had been involved in creating the translated text, whereas correctors probably rectified typing errors (Delistathi 2023: 14-15). The contrasters’ responsibilities were described in a later document

in 1962 as those who compared the typed manuscripts with the handwritten ones, presumably checking that all corrections had been incorporated (ASKI b.250, f.13/12/310).

Decisions about the translation process were made at the top of the hierarchy and were issued down the chain of command; the workflow was as follows: each ST was divided into parts (perhaps by the Head);⁴ these were assigned to individual contributors, initiating the translation process. Translators would complete a first draft, which would be sent to a typist and then to Reviser A, who would comment and propose changes. A second draft would be prepared and typed (and perhaps checked by a contraster) and forwarded to Reviser B for more comments and changes. A third and final draft would be prepared and sent to the stylist and proofreader and then to the Head or other approved official for the final check and authorization to print (Delistathi 2023: 17-18). It is unclear, however, whether revisers contrasted the Greek translation with the original German or English text (for the works of Marx and Engels) or with their Russian translations.

Regarding the dynamics of interactions between contributors, translators could exercise their judgment on lexical choices, however, the extent of this was bound by what was institutionally allowed (see next section). They bore responsibility for their choices, but revisers were empowered to challenge and reverse them; the Head, as the person who authorized a translation on behalf of the institution, could veto everyone else's decisions; thus, contributors found themselves in a web of power relations and a cline from less to more powerful.

The 1955 production plan shows the timeline of the translation process including clear and identical stages which were followed across different publications, so for the translation of theoretical Marxist texts the translation process was standardized. As indicated by the deadlines for each task in the same plan, revision was happening as translation was progressing and revisers would not wait for the whole draft of the translation to be completed first. This meant that production could keep moving towards the realization of the plan, making a more rational and productive use of labor and ensuring a faster turnover. It is clear from the structure of the workflow that every contributor specialized in an aspect of the translation process, from creating the first draft of the translation to improving its accuracy and fluency in later drafts. The collaborative translation process, during which

⁴ A similar process described in Mossop (2006, p. 24) as “chunking”.

contributors constructed different parts of the translation and performed different textual processes to prepare the text for the next stage of production, can be likened to a production line where each contributor adds a component or applies a process to the product which then moves to the next workstation. In this way, no single contributor is visible or solely responsible for the end product, but all have added their expertise for its construction.

4.5. Quality control and employee discipline

Central to the codification of Marxism was the production of translations which would be accepted as accurate interpretations of their originals, so quality control, another aspect of industrial production, was key. Speaking on behalf of the party, Petros Rousos, second secretary of the Committee for Enlightening (the supervisory body of the Publishing House) who authorized translations, opined on the best method to translate theoretical Marxist texts that party translators should follow: neither word-for-word, as it would “kill the text” by not making it fully comprehensible to the reader, nor a free translation which “shows irresponsibility”; translators should, instead, opt for “greater adherence to the original” while preserving the author’s style in a fluent expression (Rousos 1953: 79-80; my translation). The party stated the characteristics of a good quality translation: both word-for-word and free translation were considered unreliable.⁵ Instead, a good translation should be accurate, but also fluent and reproducing the authorial style. With its various levels of scrutiny, correction and supervision, the party’s collaborative model was the appropriate way to organize translation work in order to create such translations. On the one hand, quality control helped to eliminate translation errors as the party saw them; on the other hand, it also increased the party’s control over the translation process and the actions of its own members.

The translated text became the product of a production line with many contributors and processes. As it was checked and modified by different people, moving across various phases of inspection and correction, its reliability and trustworthiness increased, gradually becoming more suitable for authorization and endorsement by the institution. The personal, subjective interpretations of individual contributors were eliminated by the impersonal and seemingly objective, and thus correct,

⁵ In the context of literary translation in the GDR free translation was also discouraged as “a falsification of the original text” (Blum 2022: 302).

interpretation of the team (Delistathi 2023: 18). In other words, collaboration was not only a mode of work organisation, but also a process of achieving (assumed) objectivity. The Note in the *Selected work of Marx and Engels* announcing the collaborative translation practices mentioned earlier declared the rigorous processes followed to assert the supposed accuracy of the translations.

Did the overall quality of translations improve because of collaboration? Georgiou was sceptical of the venture to translate the ‘classics’ and of their overall quality: “I don’t know what the outcome of this endeavour was after all and what its quality was” (Georgiou 1992: 610). In 1951, the politburo noted that the party’s translations had “serious deficiencies” (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 52). Issues identified concerned expression and the “quality of revision”, but accuracy was not specifically mentioned. For the party, these problems were rooted, on the one hand, in insufficient knowledge of publishing practices and on the other, in “inadequate ideological party work” (ibid.: 52).

Overall, the industrialization of translation enabled the party to keep firmer control not only of the translation process and the translated text, but also of its own members. If production plans were a means for the intensification of production and the indirect control of employee actions, there were also specific supervisory mechanisms for their discipline. A “Regulation of internal order” (1953) with the specific purpose of “organizing discipline” to “ensure compliance with socialist discipline at work, increase in productivity at work and production of good quality products, [and] realization and transcendence of [production] plans with reduction in production costs” (ASKI b.295, f.13/57/73) was intended, on the one hand, to prevent employees from disrupting or undermining production, and on the other, to ensure that they carried out their duties in institutionally defined ways. Regarding translation, the Regulation defined a “defective product” to be “a bad translation which required double the normal time for revision, a reprint due to errors in translation or revision” (ASKI b.295, f.13/57/73). Increase in productivity was key and employees were expected to complete the assigned tasks within and even before the deadline. Detecting undesirable behaviour was central: the need for more than the allocated revision time delayed production and signalled underperformance by a translator, while a reprint would be a more serious matter as it wasted both time and printing resources. A five-tier system of disciplinary measures was put in place to ensure conformity, ranging from reprimand to dismissal. As in the experience of Eastern Europe (see Rundle

et al. 2022), so here, translation was carefully guarded, a politically important and ideologically sensitive enterprise as well as an output of industrial production subject to scrutiny and to the monitoring and discipline of its creators.

5. Conclusion

Central to the KKE's project to dominate Marxist discourse was to codify Marxist theory through good quality translations as the party saw them. From this point of departure, this paper investigated ways in which collaborative translation practices were operationalized to create institutional translations of Marxist theoretical texts. It showed the relationship between political priorities and social structures and argued that to advance codification, a specific model of collaboration was developed based on the principles of industrial production, referred to as "industrialisation of translation". This model was critical to the successful completion of the translations, but did not necessarily bring the desired quality. The term "industrialisation" encapsulates different characteristics of the organisation of the collaborative translation practices, commonly associated with industrial production. The volume of material to be translated was significant enough to require standardised translation processes and repeatable stages, and the involvement of multiple contributors with different specialisations and levels of expertise, such as translators and revisers. In the hierarchically structured Department of Classics, where operations were centralized, contributors occupied distinct places in a web of power relations and accountabilities. Collaboration was organized as a production line where supervised contributors added parts and performed processes until the translated text was completed and authorized for publication. Production plans, which intensified work and tightened the party's control over its employees, ensured productivity gains were made, and specific mechanisms of discipline were put in place to ensure compliance with institutional demands. The rational division of labour was essential both to guarantee that production targets were met and to introduce different levels of quality control throughout the translation process.

Indeed, producing translations that would be accepted as accurate was part of the success of the project of discourse domination, so clear pronouncements were made on what constituted a good translation and the

best method to translate. In the example of the *Selected works of Marx and Engels*, collaborative work practices were brought to the reader's attention. With their various layers of checks and corrections, collaborative practices suggested processes of text-creation through which individual and subjective interpretative positions were erased, promoting instead the assumed objectivity of the group (Delistathi 2023: 18). Collaborative translation practices functioned both as a means of controlling translation and as a means of evoking the accuracy and objectivity of translations in the service of discourse control. Considering collaborative practices as part of an industrialized model of translation production illuminates new aspects of past practices in translation and the varieties of contexts and models in which these practices were implemented.

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**Collaborative translation(s) and feminism(s):
A diachronic perspective on the exchange of feminist
theories and practices
between North America and Italy**

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Abstract

The aim of my essay is to offer a diachronic perspective on the exchange of feminist ideas and practices between North America and Italy looking at the translation of feminist texts starting from the 1970s to the 1990s with reference to a selection of touchstone texts which make clear how major feminist theories and practices overlapped national borders and spread in a different cultural, social and political context. It is through translations that feminist ideas born in the U.S.A context were shared and that feminist practices arose within the Italian collectives in the 1970s where exchange of ideas, practices and active collaboration were at the core of the political feminist agenda. My essay demonstrates that the legacy of American feminism in the Italian context can be retraced looking at the translations of core texts done through collaborative efforts by translators, scholars and feminist intellectuals. My work will adopt a diachronic perspective outlining some core texts which were influential for the Italian feminist and academic debate starting from the 1970s to more recent anthologies aimed at not only a theoretical exchange but also a pedagogical one. The corpus is made up of American feminist texts that were translated into Italian from the 1970s to the 2000s.

Keywords: collaborative translation, North-American feminism, Italian feminist thought, feminist theories, feminist practices.

1. Introduction

The aim of my essay is to offer a diachronic perspective on the exchange of feminist ideas and practices between North America and Italy, looking at the translation of feminist texts from the 1970s to the 1990s and based on a selection of touchstone texts which make clear how major feminist theories and practices overlapped national borders and spread in a different cultural, social and political context. Translation has undoubtedly been a

central tool for widening the reception of feminist theories around the world and for enabling a planetary feminist knowledge that works outside national borders, but what is more important is that local feminisms, feminist theories and practices born in one context have been re-contextualized, reshaped in totally different situations acquiring new nuances thanks to translations and collaborations among translators. It is through translations that feminist ideas born in the U.S.A context were shared and that feminist practices arose in the Italian collectives in the 1970s where the exchange of ideas, practices and an active collaboration were at the core of the political feminist agenda. As a matter of fact, the 1970s were a period of feminist turmoil and ideas scattered around the world through women's political and engaged voices. It is at the beginning of this decade that feminist acts of collaboration became visible and started a global feminist battle. In 1972 a seminal collection of texts from English and French was published by the Milanese collective *Anabasi* under the title *Donne è bello*, while a second translation by the same collective *Noi e il nostro corpo* based on the Boston Women's Health manual *Our bodies, ourselves* (1969), a text full of testimonies and women's experiences, was published and had a profound echo in the Italian context. Luisa Passerini called translations of US radical feminist texts "movement translations" done by feminists, read by feminists and adapted for the Italian reader because Italian feminists "turned foreign texts and events into tools that might speak to their own immediate situation" (Bracke 2014:18).

My essay demonstrates that the legacy of American feminism in the Italian context can be retraced looking at the translations of core texts done through the collaborative efforts of translators, scholars and feminist intellectuals. I adopt a diachronic perspective outlining some core texts which have been influential for the Italian feminist and academic debate starting from the 1970s to more recent anthologies aimed at not only a theoretical exchange but also a pedagogical one. The aim is to answer the following research questions:

1. How has collaborative translation, circulation and discussion of US feminist texts had an impact on the Italian context?
2. How have translations been tools for discovering not only new ways of interpreting feminist ideas, but instruments of social, cultural and political consciousness-raising leading to a struggle for equal rights in society?
3. How has a practice of collective and collaborative translation in the interpretation, translation and reception of these texts had an impact on new forms of feminist practices?

2. Feminisms across national frontiers

Practices of translation are connected to the society into which the translations are transplanted and received, so that texts travelling from one language/culture to another are re-thought and re-shaped with an eye to the target reader. There are always choices behind any publication; some texts are chosen to be translated, others are not, texts can be translated with more or less attention to the translator's competence on the subject, the content itself can be adapted to the new context and reformulated. However, it is this continuous exchange of feminist ideas through translation that makes us aware of the power of feminist thought in a global perspective. An analysis of the translation of core feminist texts and the travel of feminist ideas across national borders implies a political awareness of the impact of translation on the country of arrival. We are not dealing with neutral texts but highly political ones, written to acquire civil rights, to undermine patriarchal assumptions and to propose a more equal society. It is through translation that feminists around the world began to have a dialogue and build up a feminist epistemology. Moreover, the translation of feminist texts has always been directed to feminist practices in society, and not only to enrich and enlarge theoretical debates. Since the 1970s feminist ideas, thoughts and practices have been exchanged and have brought a vital force not only to academia or intellectual circles but also to entire societies. The starting point of this analysis is to find out the impact of a practice of collective and collaborative translation in the translation and reception of feminist texts travelling across linguistic and cultural frontiers.

We are aware that collaboration was a key factor in the 1970s and that the movement for women's liberation at that time depended on women coming together to negotiate, share experiences and read texts from other women (at least women mainly living in the Western world). Women's collectives meant that participants were supported on a smaller, more personal level to start a change in society. It meant that women's liberation could become a mass movement without a central organisation, and that many women were politicised by talking about and listening to their own personal experiences. Women collaborated in their activism, sharing texts that gave birth to the international spread of feminist movements; they interacted across geographical and cultural distances. Collaboration was born also from reading texts that led to consciousness-raising experiences. Clearly far from a smooth enterprise, collaborations were marked by divergent opinions that took waves of feminism in various directions and

started a global feminist dialogue that has become more and more visible in the last decades.

As a matter of fact, the last decade has witnessed a bloom of feminist texts outlining the necessity to open a global and transnational debate on feminist issues, activism and the role of collaboration in the spreading of feminist texts, ideas and practices. Major scholars such Sonia Alvarez (2014), Lima Costa and Alvarez (2017), Olga Castro and Emek Ergun (2017), Luise von Flotow, Farzaneh Farahzad and Hala Hamal (2017; 2020), Eleonora Federici and José Santaemilia (2021) have envisioned globalised forms of feminisms and outlined how the interdisciplinary cross-fertilization of feminist thinking from different contexts has brought a fruitful exchange on both feminist theoretical positions and social/political practices. The connection between the theoretical stance and social and cultural practices has been outlined in all these volumes unveiling the central role of translation in a theoretical dialogue among women from different contexts. The publication of these volumes – which certainly propose a canonization of some feminisms and are the result of a choice by the editors – demonstrate that different feminist thoughts have shaped women’s minds in various contexts, and feminism has often acted as a bridge to connect academic, political, social and cultural perspectives, so that feminist interventions have been able to deconstruct mainstream structures of knowledge and cultural production. Feminism today is a method, a movement, and a critique; it has become transnational, open to multiple women’s voices, thanks to the work of editors and translators who have ensured the exchange of ideas and have enabled feminist theories to travel from one place to another and another and another.

3. Mapping authors and identifying texts

The list of American feminist texts translated into Italian from the 1970s to the 2000s is a very long one and demonstrates how much North American feminism(s) have influenced Italian feminism(s). The 1970s saw many voices of radical American feminism translated into Italian, among them: Betty Friedan’s *The feminine mystique* (*La mistica della femminilità*, 1978), Adrienne Rich’s *Of woman born. Motherhood as experience and institution* (*Nato di donna*, 1979), Adrienne Rich’s *On lies, secrets and silence, selected prose 1966-1978* (*Segreti, silenzi, bugie. Il mondo comune delle donne*, 1982), Juliet Mitchell’s *Psychoanalysis and feminism* (*Psicoanalisi e femminismo*, 1976), Kate Millett’s *Sexual*

politics (*La politica del sesso*, 1971), Angela Davis's *An autobiography* (*Autobiografia di una rivoluzionaria*, 1975). Some texts were translated several years after their original publication, like the iconic *Simians, cyborgs and women. The reinvention of nature* (1991) by Donna Haraway, which was presented to Italian readers in 1995 with the title *Manifesto cyborg. Donne, tecnologie e biopolitiche del corpo* by a major publisher, Feltrinelli. The volume, translated by the Italian feminist scholar Liana Borghi, included a very long paratextual element, an 'Introduction' by the feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti who did not only clarify Haraway's central position in the feminist context of the USA but also demonstrated the influence of Haraway's works on American culture and society. The 'Introduction' touches on many points: Braidotti analyses the powerful figuration of the cyborg created by Haraway and underlines how it became an icon for a new planetary feminism and also brought a new perspective into the international debate on women, feminism, science and technology. In the Italian 'Introduction' the text is connected both to the North-American technophile-technophobe debate of feminist women scientists like Evelyne Fox Keller, and to the Italian context and the debate among women of science like Elisabetta Donini. The importance of the Italian translation is thus explained through the connection with the wider international debate on women, science and technological developments and it is perceived by Italian readers as an important instrument to better understand this controversy through a planetary perspective. The influence of Haraway's theory is important and so is its repercussion on feminist issues worldwide. Braidotti highlights Haraway's central role in the cyberfeminist wave and presents a few reading keys for the text. The Italian translation clarifies the content of the volume thanks to its subtitle "women, technologies and body biopolitics". This text is an example of a publication that reached a wide audience thanks to an editorial collocation which promoted its visibility and distribution, while others have remained gems for smaller and more specialised markets and readers.

My selection of texts is a possible one, many other essays could have been selected for a diachronic analysis but I chose to focus on publications which have had a central role in the Italian context in different historical periods and for a very clear reason. The texts are: 1) the first seminal collection of feminist texts from English and French that was published by the Milanese collective Anabasi under the title *Donne è bello* in 1972; 2) the first Italian translation of the well-known manual, full of testimonies and women's experiences, entitled *Our bodies, ourselves*, published by the Boston

Women's Health book collective in 1969; 3) the volume *Sui generis. Scritti di teoria femminista* by Teresa De Lauretis, who stands as an example of a scholar in-between American and Italian language and cultures and is a symbol of feminist collaboration between US and Italian feminism; and 4) two anthologies of feminist texts edited by Italian scholars that introduced an international debate into Italy, *Critiche femministe e teorie letterarie* (1997) and *Donne in traduzione* (2018).

The selection was made after mapping authors writing in English from the 1970s to the 2000s and identifying a corpus of translated texts that I categorized in regard to date of publication, translators, publishing houses and strategies of editing, adapting and changing the texts. This mapping enabled me to divide the analysis into three phases: 1) collaboration and engagement in the 1970s; 2) author-translator collaboration in the 1980s-1990s; 3) collaboration for a pedagogical intent in the 1990s-2000s. All these texts were examples of collaboration among intellectuals, scholars and translators.

4. Phase 1: collaboration and engagement

The role of activism and translation in social change movements has been outlined by various scholars (Trzciak 2018; Langer 2018) and we are aware that translation has worked as a space for resistance for Italian feminists transforming foreign feminist texts into tools that could speak to the Italian situation. The expansion of feminist groups supporting local consciousness-raising practices in the 1970s was a starting point for a strong and continuous collaboration among intellectuals, translators and scholars (also acting as translators). Groups were focused on testimonies and the practice of sharing women's experiences, so that translation was not only a passage from written texts but also a translation of ideas and practices that could be adopted by and adapted to a different social and political context. Since the 1970s Italian feminists have established very important relationships with US and French feminists, as well as numerous contacts among feminist groups in Europe and North America. These exchanges became the focus of debates within women's collectives which played a strategic role in spreading feminist ideas and practices in Italy.

Recently Andrea Hajek (2018) has underlined the role of the Milan Women's Bookshop as a site of translation and circulation of feminist knowledge. Generally speaking, publications by collectives put together

voices of women from other countries, especially North America, translating their texts and making them available to a new audience. Lidia Menapace, a well-known intellectual, edited the first edition of the periodical *Sottosopra* published by the members of the Women's Bookshop of Milan and entitled *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna* (For a political movement about women's liberation). This small volume was divided into different sections that reported the author's name for each text, but not the translator's. This was due to a common trend within activist movements, the so-called amateur translation, that meant that activists translated texts and did not require professional translation. This choice was done for various reasons: firstly, the idea that the content could be better understood by someone in the collective; secondly, economic reasons; and thirdly, because both the translation and the dissemination of texts were part of the political agenda. Women of the collective were in charge of translating texts and thus disseminating ideas from other women's groups. As Tommaso Reborà underlines, Italian feminist ideas and texts also reached across the Atlantic creating a strong network (Reborà 2021). The CR (or *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*) group, a Turinese collective which provided the left-wing party with translations of material from American underground magazines and other publications related to the New Left published *Note*, a periodical supplement. In the first collection of feminist texts from English and French, as *Donne è bello* in 1972, the majority of the texts of North-American origin (twelve out of thirty-two texts from the United States) were sourced from *Notes from the second year*, a collection of radical feminist texts published in 1971 in New York by Anne Koedt and Shulamith Firestone. The sources of the originals are not clearly indicated in the table of contents (only the names of the authors are known); the translator is generally a truly invisible presence in the volume and the question of amateur/non professional translators is at the centre of the debate at the time, where many texts were translated by women participating in feminist groups, more focused on the translation of ideas and practices than on texts themselves. Moreover, in some cases it was possible to find more translations, because it was a period of 'reshaping texts', and moulding them so that they might be more useful for the target readers. The translations of *Donne è bello* (or just excerpts of them) had been published in Italian feminist magazines or circulated in other collectives before the printing of the first entire translation. As for the content, the volume is divided into seven sections, the most common topics are women's psychological oppression, women's work and housework, sexuality, the women's liberation movement, consciousness-raising

practices and politics. The texts are written by major American feminist intellectuals such as Shulamith Firestone, Pat Mainardi and Monique Wittig but in the Italian translation there are some additions like, for example, excerpts from Italian feminists such as Carla Lonzi and her famous text *Let's spit on Hegel*. The inclusion of Italian feminist texts was a strategy to bring Italian voices into international dialogues on feminist issues and at the same time, it worked to make this translation useful in the Italian political, social and cultural context. The topics discussed in these texts are radical and presented in a great variety of styles, from the serious and academic to the ironic. The reader can find essays, journalistic texts, speeches and documents. Of paramount importance is the use of paratextual elements, first of all the use of images that can be found alongside the texts. Images, drawings and funny comic strips were added by the members of the *Anabasi* in order to make all the material more 'Italian', that is to say, adapted to their own context and aims. Another important paratextual element is the editorial voice of the collective where the reader understands that materials have been chosen and selected from various sources ("Abbiamo deciso di presentarvi questi scritti, li abbiamo raccolti da giornali, riviste, e documenti di vari paesi occidentali" – we decided to present writings from newspapers, journals and documents of various Western countries). This selection demonstrates the possibility of exchange because these have been important readings for the acquisition of a feminist awareness. The volume is presented as a space for discussing women's issues where the keywords are collaboration and activism. Feminist awareness grows thanks to dialogues with other women around the world and vivid collaborations that spread feminist ideas, because these ideas were not just a theoretical starting point but the beginning of a fight for a change in women's roles in society. The text is presented as a way to create a new form of solidarity among women and it directly addresses the readers, inviting them to collaborate with impressions, testimonies, poems, drawings and songs to be included in the publication. The aim of the text is clear: "[...] this, then, is the first overground publication by radical feminists rather than about them". It is a place where women's voices can be heard, what is asked for is "writing *by* women, not *about* women" ("Vogliamo scritti *delle* donne, non *sulle* donne").

Looking at the Italian text we can see that the translation of the extracts where editors state the aim of the publication differs from the original texts (Basilio 2017). The decision to change and adapt the text through a different translation aims at collocating it in the Italian context which is socially, politically and culturally different from the North

American one, but it may also reveal a different reading of the material and a re-assemblage due the collaborative effort of more translators.

The addition of paratextual elements, such as editorials, prefaces and footnotes, in order to explain the text to its new readership was central for informing the reader that the text was a useful instrument in facilitating the expansion of the Italian feminist groups and for supporting local consciousness-raising practices. In this way ‘travelling feminist texts’ of the 1970s were re-contextualised and presented to a new readership while editors and translators chose the materials, translated them and proposed their own versions according to their motivations and how they might be received in their own socio-cultural contexts.

The publication of Kathy Davis’ *The Making of our bodies, ourselves. How feminism travels across borders* (2008) has made us aware of the centrality of this text in the international panorama, and clarified how much the translation of the original text into many languages has made it one of the most influential volumes not only on feminist debates but in women’s lives all over the world. It is the most influential book on women’s health ever written and it outlines the importance of a connection between gender equity and health outcomes. The volume has been revised at multiple levels to reflect different cultural/socio-political assumptions connecting individual knowledge to community-based activism and other groups/collectives. The result is a selection and adaptation of texts for each political agenda according to the women and the contexts where the translation has been published. This has been done through the re-arrangement of chapters, a different topic order, the omission or the addition of some sections showing a strong and evident collaborative approach to translation. These choices and changes are examples of feminist translation strategies, supplementing, ‘hijacking’, prefacing and footnoting (Flotow 1991). We can say that translators and editors of this volume thought that the most important thing was to adapt the text to the target context, enriching it with material from this same context and making it more useful to women living there. Translators and health activists have thus adapted the book for women in various cultural, social and geo-political contexts. In Italy *Noi e il nostro corpo* from the Boston Women’s Health book collective, was published in 1974. In her study written fifteen years ago, Kathy Davis (2008) reminds us that by 2008 the text had been translated into more than thirty languages, Japanese (1975 and 1988), Danish (1975), Chinese (Taiwan, 1976), Spanish (U.S., 1977), French (1977), English (UK, 1978), Greek (1979), Swedish (1980), German (1980), Hebrew (1980),

Dutch (1981), Spanish (Spain, 1982), Telugu (India, 1991), Arabic (Egypt, 1991), Russian (1995), Serbian and Bulgarian (2001), Romanian (2002). Up to the present, millions of copies have been sold around the world mainly because it is a user-friendly publication, accessible, clear and written in a conversational style. The global dissemination of *OBOs* has not meant simply reproducing the original edition in a different language. Translating *OBOs* for a different audience is a process of rewriting and editing the original American version to make it culturally sensitive and relevant to the local gender politics. The collective nature of the original text shines through in the way it is collaboratively translated, adapted and rewritten in target texts. In the USA alone there were nine editions of the volume. It is important to remember that the foreign editions of *OBOs* are not only direct translations but in many cases adaptations or rewritten versions of the original text. Since the original was the result of a very specific cultural and social context, the text was regularly re-adapted by women's collectives around the world to their own needs.

Moreover, the text has reached a further adaptation and development in a new form, that is to say, it has been 'translated' into a website (ourbodiesourselves.org). The website and the blog have been online thanks to the collaboration of health consultants, board members and contributors, but in 2018 due to economic problems the site was highly reduced and a partnership with the University of Suffolk Centre for Women's Rights and Health began so that it could still be a site advocating women's health and human rights. In September 2022 resources based on *OBOs* have been developed in 34 different languages, and the most recent project, *Nossos corpos por nós mesmas*, a Portuguese Brazilian adaptation, was published in 2021. As we can read in the website additional projects are underway: The Roshan Institute for Persian Studies and the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Maryland are developing online content in Farsi, and women in Morocco are creating resources on sexual anatomy and body image in Arabic and French. The site makes clear that the translation of the original text was an adaptation. If we look more closely at the website section about translation choices we understand that Norma Swenson, one of the founders, led the global outreach, working on early editions in Europe. She explored new opportunities in Latin America, Asia and Africa and championed a program dedicated to the organization's growing network and vision. With a foundation in place and projects underway in Thailand, China and Senegal, transitional leadership was provided by Jennifer Yanco. In 2000, Sally Whelan, another *OBOs* founder, led the

global work under a dedicated program called the Global Translation/Adaptation Program. Sally was joined by Ayesha Chatterjee in 2006 and, together, they shaped a program that facilitated a thriving global network. The program was re-named the Our Bodies Ourselves Global Initiative in 2010.

Precise information on the many translations of the original text is available in a special section on *OBOs* translations. In this section it is possible to see many of the book covers, which already offer some idea of each adaptation for each new set of readers. The text not only was born from a collaborative action among activists but was translated keeping in mind the issue of collaboration and adaptation in order to provide a useful tool to women in different contexts. The development of the site demonstrates the capacity of women's collectives and centres to use the text to demand more equal conditions in each country and also shows how the practice of collaboration is a key one in feminist activism.

While we cannot address further issues in regard to *OBOs* and its translations here, we note that other topics need to be taken into consideration, such as for example, derivative works from the original text and the will to create open-access for materials. This implies a re-discussion on copyright, authorship and new approaches to ownership that are central in a discussion on collaborative practices of feminist collectives (Ratcliff 2019).

5. Phase 2: author-translator collaboration

In the 1980s and 1990s the collaboration between authors and translators became evident. Publishers and editors made choices for the Italian reader adapting texts and utilising paratextual elements such as introductions and prefaces. Texts were published as a result of a collaborative effort of feminist scholars, activists, translators and publishing houses. It is clear when we look at the Italian translations that texts of North-American thinkers were not translated in their wholeness, but publishers or editors make a choice for the Italian reader. A selection of materials was undertaken from different writings and publications. One example of a partially translated book is, for example, bell hooks' choice of essays in *Elogio del margine. Razza, sesso e mercato culturale* (1998), a volume edited by Maria Nadotti with a choice of chapters taken from different books by the author (bell hooks 1991; 1992; 1994; 1996). This choice may be due to problems

connected to copyright, but it may also have been a well-thought editing choice. In her 'Introduction' Nadotti affirms that this selection wants to offer the author's theories and thought in a wider perspective. The back cover helps us to understand this editorial choice; in fact the book is introduced as "the first systematic attempt to present bell hooks's production on race and gender" (my translation). On the back cover a comment on hooks by Cornel West – an African-American philosopher and political activist – is included together with a short text outlining the author's biography. In the same year, 1998, La Tartaruga publishing house published *Scrivere al buio* (Writing in the dark), a dialogue between bell hooks and Maria Nadotti about gender and racial issues. The two publications have recently been re-published together by Tamu publishing house.

The strong connection between Italian and North American feminists was also due to people's movement between the two worlds. Some intellectuals and scholars migrated to the USA and at the end of the 90s, some feminists were considered 'women bridges' between the North American context and the Italian one. Teresa De Lauretis, Italian born but living and working in the USA, is an example. First of all, it is important to highlight that her publications have not been entirely translated into Italian. The volume *Sui generis. Scritti di teoria femminista* was translated by Liliana Losi in 1996 and included the translation of five essays written by the author between 1984 and 1992. The Preface by Giovanna Grignaffini is very important because it affirms that this text aims at collocating the author in the 'gotha' of American feminist criticism, declaring her to be an authoritative international feminist voice. The Preface enables the reader to understand the key issues of De Lauretis' thought. The volume includes the first chapters of *Technologies of gender: Essays on theory, film and fiction* (1987), two chapters from the volume *Alice doesn't: Feminism, semiotics, cinema* (1984) and two lectures given at the Universities of Bologna and Utrecht. Similarly, the volume *Soggetti eccentrici (Eccentric Subjects)*, published in 1999, includes essays written between 1987 and 1998. The book is presented with an 'Introduction' by the author herself explaining the main theoretical points of North American and Italian feminism in the 1990s. De Lauretis affirms that the red thread connecting the essays in the volume is about the body, sexuality and gender. These essays stand as a testimony to her will to clarify different feminist theories and positions; De Lauretis claims that North-American feminist theories and practices were brought to the European debate on Gender Studies. The idea of recuperating materials from the past in order to build up a new feminist knowledge revolves around the idea of

testimonies, memory and the need to clarify women's role following the practices of women's communities and associations. Knowing the Italian feminist legacy well, De Lauretis makes herself visible in the paratextual element by offering a key to reading the text and outlining the importance of the translation of her own thought in the Italian context. The volume was translated by the author herself who chose to entitle a section "tradotta e riscritta" that means "translated and rewritten". The translation makes clear not only the individual's story but a story of collaboration and feminism; it revolves around the idea of women's testimonies in feminist groups, of the exchange of 'good practices', of collaboration among women's communities and associations both in the USA and in Italy.

Her voice emerges also in the 'Introduction' to the volume *Pratiche d'amore. Percorsi del desiderio perverso* (1997), where she affirms that this book is a shortened and revised version of a book previously written in English, so that the Italian translation is presented as a manipulation of the original text by the author herself. Quite strikingly, but not unsurprisingly, the Italian title does not include the words 'lesbian sexuality'.

In this period translation is based on a strong collaboration between authors, translators and scholars who in many cases frame the text by introducing and connecting it to the Italian context, making visible the usefulness of the translation in spreading feminist theories and practices.

6. Phase 3: collaboration for a pedagogical intent

At the end of the 1990s, a volume edited by four Italian literary scholars (Baccolini *et al.* 1997) introduced a choice of American scholars who dedicated their works to various issues in the Italian feminist landscape of literary criticism. The volume is divided into four sections that include different areas of feminist literary criticism: 1) The origins of feminist literary criticism (with essays by Annette Kolodny, Myra Jehlen, G.C. Spivak); 2) The re-birth of the author (with essays by Peggy Kamuf, Nancy Miller, Trinh T. Minh ha); 3) Subjects/bodies (with essays by Hélène Cixous, Audre Lorde, Hortense J. Spillers); and 4) African American literary criticism (Anna Julia Cooper, Alice Walker, Valerie Smith, Barbara Christian). The editors included a general 'Introduction' to the volume and a specific 'Introduction' to each section. In the general 'Introduction' the editors affirm they want to fill a void offering a translation of texts which are very well-known within the USA context; the work is presented as a

reader for students in feminist and gender studies, as an instrument of feminist knowledge. The 'Introduction' to each section explains the choice and the editors' interpretation of the selected texts. The volume deconstructs the idea of a monolithic Anglo-American feminism, outlining the many feminisms within the North American context, the interdisciplinary exchanges among academic fields and the main issues around which the debate has developed in the past twenty years in the USA. Importantly, the general 'Introduction' also tackles the controversial issues of the non-institutionalization of women's studies in Italy, of the need for visible Women's and Gender Studies at the end of the 1990s in Italy and of the necessity of a teaching practice that transmits feminist knowledge in the chinks of the Italian academic machine. Essays of the sections have been chosen by the editors and each essay has been translated by a different translator. The practice of having a text translated by more translators implies a final editing of the translations in order to create a more cohesive volume born from the result of collaborative efforts.

These translations also fulfill a specific aim: to demonstrate how feminist ideas and theories travel from one context to another and need to adapt to the new one. Via this volume, Italian readers are introduced to feminist concepts, metaphors, and narratives which have not only been the most important theoretical and analytical tools of academic discourse but have provided critical interfaces with society and created a dynamic exchange on the basis of a common language. Through constant appropriation and reassessment, feminist concepts have triggered a re-organisation of the prevalent orders of knowledge. These translations opened a debate within Italian feminist academia and tackled political issues related to women's rights in society.

Recently, a new volume appeared in the Italian context, emblematic of the transnational dialogue around feminist translation. The volume edited by Elena Di Giovanni and Serenella Zanotti is entitled *Donne in traduzione*, and was published by a major publisher, Bompiani, in 2018. Editors put together different voices on feminist translation and included an 'Introduction' to the volume tackling the aim of the translation of these essays focused on feminist translation, gender issues and the translation of feminist ideas. Translations were made from different languages, English, French and German and essays were chosen according to the reception they already had in the context where they were published. Each essay presents an 'Introduction' by the translator that aims at explaining not only the importance of the individual text in the context of its origin and in the Italian

one, but also relates each essay to the others included in the anthology creating an idea of collaboration among scholars, editors and translators. The translator's comments also explain the translation choices introducing the text and the author to the Italian reader and contextualising them for the new readership. The volume offers historical voices on feminist translation (Carol Maier, Barbara Godard, Rosemary Arrojo, Sherry Simon) and contemporary perspectives (Luise von Flotow and Joan Scott, Emily Apter, Toril Moi, Pascale Sardin, M. Phil Korsak, Olga Castro, Luise Pusch, Claudia da Lima Costa and Sonia Alvarez, M. Pillai, Kate Sturge) thus mapping out a chronological portrait of transnational feminist translation. The text also includes a Preface by one of the first scholars to deal with feminist translation, Susan Bassnett, who creates a theoretical and historical frame for the reading of the volume. Moreover, the book also has a Postface written as a collaborative work by two scholars, Raffaella Baccolini and Valeria Illuminati, who introduce other issues that can be retraced reading the volume: the importance of translation in Gender Studies as a means of transmitting theoretical frames and methodological tools; the central role of translation in the transmission of feminism(s); the role of women translators as cultural mediators and the importance of metaphors about translation in the genealogy of feminist translation. Paratextual elements, content choices and the visibility of the work of editors and translators make this volume a true example of collaboration for educational and pedagogical intent.

7. Conclusion: Feminisms as collaboration

A new wave of feminist theories and practices is rising, as previously outlined; an international dialogue is taking place around different feminist issues. Translations of texts from different languages and contexts have made it clear that feminisms are many and that theoretical exchanges can help to widen our horizon wherever we are living. The same theories and feminist practices can take a different shape according to the new place to which they are transplanted through translation. Since the 1970s translations have made this possible, and they continue to make it possible to envisage new spaces of fruitful debate. As I have demonstrated, texts translated across the Atlantic Ocean have certainly deepened and widened the debate on feminist thoughts and practices in the Italian context. Translation is a primary instrument of international dialogues and exchanges of feminist theories and practices among the Atlantic shores.

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Theatre translation: the oldest form of translaboration?

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Abstract

The last few years have produced a sizeable number of monographs, articles, collections and monographic issues on 'collaborative translation', 'translation as cooperation', traduction à plusieurs or – quite simply, as recently established by Target 32 (2) – 'translaboration'. The time seems therefore ripe for a full appreciation of the collective nature of theatre translation – a nature which was in evidence long before it was possible for translators to work together on a shared file or an online platform.

If theatre translation is seen as the whole process that transfers a series of actions and wordings from a source text/performance to a target performance, it is almost inevitable that more than one practitioner will be involved in the transaction. Nevertheless, until the end of the twentieth century, translation scholars thought of theatre translation in individual and textual terms, usually relegating the contributions of agents other than the textual translator (directors, intralingual rewriters, actors, the audience) to the spurious domain of 'adaptation'.

This simplified view was a reflection of the textual bias of western translation theory, as well as the result of a historical dissociation of sensibility in how theatrical writing was perceived. That dissociation originated in the Renaissance, when European playwrights began to publish their scripts in the hope that they, too, might aspire to literary fame. As a result, published plays entered the domain of printed literature, and their written translations were subjected to the same rules set out for important secular writings; stage translations, on the other hand, continued to be relatively unruly, but their words and actions were rarely, if ever, immortalised in print.

Mentioning a small number of significant examples, both theoretical and practical, this article chronicles the birth, long dominance and slow decline of the textual view of dramatic translation, and proposes a complex description of the collaborative process that is theatre translation.

Keywords: Descriptive translation studies, collaborative translation, theatre translation, theatre history, Renaissance drama.

1. Translaboration, plural translation, and the theatre

Translaboration, collaborative translation, *traduction à plusieurs*: in the last decade, a substantial number of publications have appeared exploring this general area of interest. The reasons for this flowering may be twofold: on the one hand, translation studies is a burgeoning subject in universities, so the discipline needs to branch out into ever new research domains; on the other, the reality of the connected (first) world we live in makes the experience of collective translation more and more frequent. The fact is so obvious that most examples sound commonplace: people from different parts of the world, completely unknown to each other, may find themselves ‘fansubbing’ the same piece of film dialogue at the same or at different times; or to mention a practice which predates the internet, each chapter of a bestseller which needs to be on the bookshelves as soon as possible is sent to a single professional, and an editor is then entrusted with the task of making all those disparate parts into a whole. Situations such as these obviously create novel material and mental conditions for the translators involved, and are therefore worth exploring, descriptively and theoretically. A general awareness of the plural nature of their subject, among other things, may also teach scholars new ways of seeing old phenomena: is it fruitful, for instance, to think of translators working on the same text in different epochs as somehow collaborating with each other (Morini 2018)?

In theory, studies of theatre translation should be at the forefront of this wave: after all, the production and performance of (translated) theatre intuitively feels like a collective effort, and – as shall be briefly seen in the third section – has been regarded as one for a couple of decades in certain academic circles. However, if one sifts the secondary literature for articles, chapters and monographs on theatre translation as translaboration, one ends up finding very little. One recent French volume and the monographic issue of a leading journal in the field provide more specific proof of this relative dearth: in *Traduire à plusieurs / Collaborative translation*, edited in 2018 by Enrico Monti and Peter Schnyder, only two chapters out of thirty-four can be said to be about theatrical writing – and of these two, one is concerned with the relationship between the translator and the librettist in the operatic field (Béghain 2018), while the other focuses on a particular instance of textual dramatic translation which happens to have involved a group of people rather than an individual practitioner (Regattin 2018). In other words, neither contribution takes particular note of the intrinsically plural nature of theatre translation. As for the 2020 issue of

Target on Translaboration: Exploring collaboration in translation and translation in collaboration, edited by Alexa Alfer and Cornelia Zwischenberger, in this case only one article out of eight is dedicated to the theatre. Kerstin Pfeiffer, Michael Richardson and Svenja Wurm examine two case studies in which groups with different mother tongues or linguistic abilities are involved in the making of dramatic pieces. Again, while this article is valuable in itself – just as the two chapters in the French book – it focuses on a special situation which brings the need for translaboration and translanguaging to the fore, and it does not highlight the collective nature of theatre translation. I will briefly return to this point, and this article, in the third section.

The comparative scarcity of literature on theatre translaboration may surely be due to the specific research interests of the scholars who are mining this field; but it is also quite probably a consequence of certain enduring prejudices about staged performance and creativity. Notwithstanding all the evidence to the contrary, theatrical writing and theatre translation are still predominantly viewed as resulting from isolated, individual efforts.

2. The textual, individualistic view of theatre writing/translation

The most direct illustration of this individualistic view of theatrical writing – and therefore, by logical presupposition, of theatre translation – can be gleaned by leafing through any twentieth-century edition of Shakespeare's plays. In *The complete works* first published by Oxford University Press in 1988, Gary Taylor introduces readers to the relatively complex textual history of *Hamlet*, and to the choices he made in his edited text. In 1603, he writes, “appeared an inferior text apparently assembled from actors’ memories”. This was followed a year later by a second quarto publication containing a longer playtext, and by a third, yet different version when the First Folio was assembled in 1623. These are Taylor's philological conclusions:

It is our belief that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* about 1600, and revised it later; that the 1604 edition was printed from his original papers; that the Folio represents the revised version; and that the 1603 edition represents a very imperfect report of an abridged version of the revision. So our text is based on the Folio; passages present in the 1604 quarto but absent from the Folio are printed as Additional Passages because we believe that, however fine they

may be in themselves, Shakespeare decided that the play as a whole would be better without them. (Wells and Taylor 1988: 653)

The rationale behind such choices is obvious enough: whatever appears to belong to Shakespeare, to have his creative stamp of approbation, is good; and conversely, whatever is good cannot but “represent” Shakespeare. Since it is judged to be interpolated and based on actors’ memories (maybe, therefore, on what the text actually sounded like on stage!), the 1603 edition is judged to be “inferior”, an “imperfect report of an abridged version”. As a consequence, none of the lines ostensibly remembered by the actors in 1603 make it past the final editing cut. The 1988 version is based on the 1623 Folio, which having been printed at a later date must represent Shakespeare’s mature, ultimate decisions on his work; but the 1604 playtext is also brought in, if only in the more shadowy garb of paratext, because it is thought to mirror the playwright’s mind at an earlier date.

Of course, the present article does not intend to dispute the soundness of such editorial choices (nor to claim that they represent the whole gamut of Shakespearean scholarship), but merely to highlight their rootedness in a view of theatrical writing as one man’s, or one woman’s, work.¹ It is worth remembering that around eighty years before the appearance of the 1988 Oxford *Shakespeare*, a previous generation of philologists had established a firm distinction between good and bad quartos, i.e., between the playtexts deriving from Shakespeare’s papers and those reconstructed from memory by either members of the audience or the acting company themselves (Pollard 1909; Werstine 1999). The limitation of such views is that they almost completely overlook the contribution of all the other agents in the theatrical transaction. By contrast, if one were to imagine the text-to-stage transition as a continuing process of reciprocal adjustment (the author brings a script to rehearsal; the actors change it in their own way; then the text changes again during a series of public performances; certain modifications prove effective and are kept), one could make as strong a case for the inclusion of ‘reconstructed’ versions

¹ That view is still popular, even though it was challenged as early as 1983 by such influential figures as Jerome McGann (1983), who pointed out that every text is rooted in a community of production. Recent developments in the field of Shakespearean editing seem to reflect a different, more inclusive model – as shown for instance in Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor’s decision, in the 2006 Arden *Hamlet*, to publish both quartos alongside the folio. However, even Thompson and Taylor admit that even though they felt it was right to publish the 1603 ‘bad quarto’, “the dream of the original text’ [...] inevitably informs every editor’s mind and, therefore, practice” (Thompson and Taylor 2016: 95).

in the canon. In the author-centric, individualistic vision of theatre, however, the contributions of other agents are frowned upon, and even collaborations with other playwrights are seen as slightly spurious (see Stanley Wells's treatment of *Macbeth* in Wells and Taylor 1988: 975).

This notion of theatrical creativity can be said to have originated during the Renaissance, and in Shakespeare's day and age as far as England is concerned. In post-Roman times, with few and mostly anonymous exceptions, dramatic writing had remained outside the domain of manuscript circulation. Tragedy and comedy had become narrative genres (Benson 1988: 929), while staged performances had mostly turned into communal, parish or municipal affairs. In early modern Europe, and with the introduction of print, dramatic authors began to be enticed by the promise of immortality implicit in the publication of their works. By the end of the Renaissance, the best of them had been welcomed in what was much later to be known as the Western canon, and the idea had set in that a little book can sum up a whole theatrical experience – and that what happens on stage is, or should be, dictated by what is written down in a text.

The transformation of dramatic writing into literature, and of playwrights into revered authors, can be easily observed in England and in the microcosm of London – where the process took place later than in Italy or France, but was completed in a relatively short time. In 1589, Puttenham graced dramatic writing in verse with the name of “*Poesie Dramaticke*” (Puttenham 1589: 27). In the 1590s, before the construction of the Globe, Shakespeare had his first stage hits – and in the course of that decade, a restricted number of London printers decided to invest a limited amount of money in the business of publishing playtexts (Straznicky 2013). By 1616, the transformation was already so advanced that Ben Jonson dared to present a folio collection of his *Workes* – though at this time his gesture, maybe because he was still a living author, did incur a modicum of ridicule (Dutton 1996: 57). In 1623, Shakespeare's First, posthumous, celebratory Folio edition was presented by Heminges and Condell. And in the early decades of the Restoration period, after the civil war, the Republic and the closing of the theatres, Shakespeare was celebrated as a modern Homer, the rough but infinitely creative father of English letters (Morini 2007: 339-344). In less than a century, theatrical writing had gone from relative textual obscurity to being placed at the very heart of the English literary system. Similar trajectories, though with different timetables, could also be observed in continental Europe (see Andrews 1993: 45 on Italy, for instance).

Of course, this exalted position meant that in the following centuries, the norms for theatre translation were assimilated to those regulating literary translation – which, in the meantime, were becoming stricter and stricter, in accordance with the humanistic notion of elocutionary recreation (Morini 2006: 8-10) and, from the late eighteenth century onwards, with the appreciation of creative writing as cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). It is sufficient to read A.W. Schlegel's famous reflections on Shakespeare in Germany to realise that these conditions do not make for a performative view of theatre translation: the philologist acknowledged Wieland's role in presenting the English playwright to the public, but he still thought that there was scope for a new German edition of the plays – not because Wieland's was not stageable, but because it did not adequately represent the English Bard's poetic qualities (Schlegel 1796). Conversely, when someone decided to bring a modified translation of a famous play on stage, as J.-F. Ducis did in France with many Shakespearean works, they normally felt that they had to present their texts as adaptations rather than translations, and to excuse their freewheeling strategies by reminding the public that if they wanted to know what the source plays were like, other, more literal versions were already available on the publishing market (Ducis 1827: 205). In other words, it was now only dramatic versions which were thought worthy of the name of translations, while whatever happened when foreign theatre was staged went largely unrecorded, or was presented under a different set of names (adaptations, rewritings, works done 'after' some celebrated author, etc.). This idea was reflected unquestioningly in the few theoretical treatises to have appeared in Europe before the twentieth century (such as Alexander Tytler's 1791 *Essay on the principles of translation*), which treated the translation of theatre as a mere subspecies of literary and/or poetic translation.

This state of affairs did not change radically when translation theory became an established field of research after World War II. Though translation scholars were aware that dramatic translation and translated theatre were separate phenomena, most continued to think that what happened on stage lay outside the scope of their analyses. A passage from Levý's *Art of Translation*, first published in Czech in 1963, is perfectly representative of this position:

The point is that the text is the means rather than the end (Stanislavskii said that to the actors words were not mere sounds but rather they evoked images); its individual elements contribute to the creation of scenic images to different degrees and in

particular ways (it exhibits a markedly teleological hierarchy). This [sic] point of this remark is not to furnish any theoretical justification for carelessness in translation, but to point out that it is necessary to translate, at least in some key respects, much more precisely and above all in a more carefully considered way than is usual. The dramaturg should in any case have the relevant original script to hand. (Levý 2011: 166)

On the one hand, Levý accepts that the text is not the be-all and end-all of theatrical experience (it is, in fact, “the means rather than the end”). On the other, though, he does not allow translators any additional liberties just because their texts are going to be moulded and modified on stage: on the contrary, this circumstance means that even more carefulness than usual must be exercised in giving a precise account of the source text – a protectionist attitude which is projected in the image of the dramaturg working with the “original script to hand”. Most interestingly for the present purposes, the actors, the dramaturg and the translator are here seen as working in their separate spheres – and it is only the translator that is pictured as having anything to do with interlingual transposition. What happens when the translated playtext is given over to the theatre professional is still relevant to the whole experience, but it is no longer translation. As happens with the editing of original theatrical writing, the translation of theatre is presented as the work of an individual practitioner working on a text.

The next section will sketch the map of the long journey from early ideas on theatre translation to the more performative views which have come to dominate the field in the twenty-first century. However, before the notion of translation as translaboration is presented, it is necessary to point out that text-centric views such as this are still the norm, outside a restricted circle of specialised scholars. The universe may well be teeming with quantum particles, but most people still think of the workings of everyday life (insofar as they do that at all) in Newtonian terms. Analogously, scholars may now have accepted the idea that theatre translation is a collective effort, but lay people, including many theatre professionals and non-specialised scholars, continue to think of it as something that happens on the page, is done by a single person and involves words. This collective cognitive latency could be treated as a matter of mere passing interest, were it not that it influences the way people translate and present theatrical works.

A couple of academic and practical examples may be useful to show that the idea of theatre translation as individual and textual – as reduced to

dramatic translation, in short – has been dominant until very recently, and is still very widespread. In 2007, one of the most important specialised publications in the English-speaking world, the *Theatre Journal*, dedicated a monographic issue to the theme of translation. In his editorial comment, “The stakes of theatrical translation”, Jean Graham-Jones inevitably took into account questions related to directing and intercultural communication, but whenever he used the term ‘translation’ he essentially meant the interlingual transformation of texts (“Theatrical translation in performance, in which we often sense the presence of two or more texts”; Graham-Jones 2007: n.p.). In the rest of the publication, academics and theatre professionals joined efforts in trying to define what “theatrical translation” is and can do – but the starting point and the lodestar, for practitioners and scholars alike, was always the personal creation of a target text. Even the most hardened stage professionals, such as Argentinian actor, playwright and director Rafael Spregelburd, thought of translating practice as one of “writing” before a single line is spoken, insisted on the importance of “rhythmic” aspects, and agonised over the impossibility of “fully faithful” translation (Spregelbund 2007: 374). Other, more academic contributors understandably left the question of performativity more in the background, and gave their articles significant text-centric, source-oriented titles like “Semper fidelis” (Senelick 2007).

That this idea is still normative, and that the norm is very cogent, is shown by the lengths to which professionals will go in order to prove that the text they bring to the stage has been preliminarily produced by a single translator, or a restricted team of translators, working on a well-defined source text. Quite recently, for instance, Italian actor, director and TV personality Luca Barbareschi decided to produce a stage comedy called *L'anatra all'arancia*, which toured the national theatre circuit rather successfully between 2016 and 2018. Clearly, the production counted on mature Italian theatregoers recognising the title of a mainstream Italian movie featuring Ugo Tognazzi and Monica Vitti, which had enjoyed a good deal of popularity between its first appearance in 1975 and a number of televised reruns in the early 1980s. The movie had been loosely based on a French play by Marc Gilbert Sauvajon, *Le canard à l'orange* – itself a creative translation of a British play, William Douglas Home's *The secretary bird* (1969). As can only be expected given the circumstances, the textual and performative fabric of the 2016 show was fairly complex and very composite: ultimately, the dialogue was based on the French translation, but with modifications and additions which were partly derived from the

performative tradition of the work (some names, for instance, were retrievable in other Italian scripts), and partly from the company's desire to modernise the whole and leave their own mark on the show. The Italian movie was the source of a few characters and situations, rather than of any specific stretches of dialogue, while any resemblances between Barbareschi's production and Douglas Home's ur-play were understandably accidental. Nonetheless, the early playbills advertising *L'anatra all'arancia* in 2016 claimed that the text was based on "*The secretary bird* by W. Douglas Home", and Barbareschi himself stated in several interviews that he had decided to go back to the original English play (Morini 2022: 97-104). The producer and actor must have thought that reworking some previous Italian text with an eye to the 1970s movie was too disreputable a practice to be bandied about in public – and he also clearly thought that postulating the existence of a textual translation, and providing a (fictitious) link between that translation and the prime source of his show, would confer some cultural prestige on his performances.

The point here is not establishing which play *L'anatra all'arancia* was based on, but observing that the normative strength of the textual view led the production to misrepresent their creative processes, and the process of theatre translation as a whole. In particular, the work of a number of professionals was completely obscured in the claim that this show was merely the updated version of a 1969 play with which it had evidently little in common. Though it is impossible to retrieve and acknowledge the names of all these professionals, it is easy enough, when one studies the Italian diffusion of *The secretary bird/Le canard à l'orange*, to gauge the import of their contributions. The creators of the French play and the Italian film have already been mentioned; in addition to these versions, one should take into account a run of performances in Italian theatres between 1974 and 1975, and at least two further tours by different companies in the 1990s and 2000s. Some of the scripts are no longer available, but everything seems to point towards the French version being the source for the 1974 production, and this in turn influencing the films and all subsequent Italian stage versions, including Barbareschi's. Obviously, given the time span between the earlier and the later versions, each production must have changed the setting, the characters and the dialogue in order to make the show plausible and funny for their own audience. The protagonist, a BBC radio personality in Douglas Home's *The secretary bird*, has become a TV presenter by 2016.

But this still looks like a mere history of textual transmission – albeit a rather complicated one, even by the standards of mainstream non-

canonical theatre. What is left out of the description above is the obvious fact that for all of the passages mentioned above, it was not only textual translators who contributed to the creation of the show, even if the dialogue is considered in isolation. From the very first Italian performance in the 1970s, the companies must have worked on scripts which would get modified during rehearsals – because a line here did not prove to be effective, a line there ended up being adapted to the intonation of an actor or an actress. Since what works in public is different from what works during rehearsals, further modifications were certainly made in the course of successive performances. Maybe the final script would somehow survive, and be handed down to other generations of theatre professionals – who would add further touches, again with the whole company and the audience having their say – and so on and so forth, until 2016 and Barbareschi's team. Of course, each production would also create a different show in terms of delivery, scenography, and all the paraphernalia of staging – and each successive performance would be different from the last.

This more fully performative description leads one back to the beginning of the section, and to the process whereby a playwright's work becomes canonised and fixed on the page – because if the aspect of interlingual transposition is momentarily left to one side, it becomes evident that it is theatrical writing, and not merely theatre translation, that is to be considered as a collaborative phenomenon. Except for those relatively rare instances in which a single person produces, writes, and performs, it is almost impossible to conceive of a performance as an individual creation. Again, if one goes back to *Hamlet*, and even if one concentrates on the playtext alone, one can picture Shakespeare and his company engaging in a series of back-and-forth exchanges: the playwright brings a script to the company; this gets modified during rehearsals; it gets modified again in performance, and in successive performances; and the playwright, in all this, takes stock of all changes, and maybe decides which ones to record in his papers. Of course, all this does not exclude the possibility that a quarto edition be assembled badly by actors or by someone attending several performances, or that a printed playtext be the result of the playwright's desire to create a more literary, readable version: but it does cast a veil of suspicion, or unfairness, on the practice of trying to obscure the contribution of anyone who is not 'the author' (or 'the translator').

3. A collective view: theatre translation in/as performance

If one considers the context of contemporary commercial theatre, there may also be a number of rather mundane reasons for failing to acknowledge the sources one is working on, or the complex, interpersonal nature of on- and off-stage translation. On the one hand, the production may wish to keep a prudent silence on their debts to other shows and companies. On the other, the complexities of theatre translaboration are such that it would become difficult to attribute the merits and financial rewards of its realization to the textual translators alone.² However, as seen in the case of Barbareschi's *L'anatra all'arancia*, a producer may wish to trace his company's work back to a textual source even when doing so brings no financial advantage, because the book rights for that source have not yet expired (William Douglas Home died in 1992). Other case studies in contemporary theatre translation show that the textual bias persists even when there is no suspicion of same-language pilfering (Morini 2022: 104-110). And the general ideological stance within theatre studies – where the complexity of theatre translation might be openly acknowledged without any immediate threat to translators' livelihoods – indicates that a preference persists for seeing theatre translation as a single, textual, and often individual process.

Even within Descriptive Translation Studies, an appreciation of the plural, collaborative and performative nature of theatre translation has been very slow and gradual – though the notion of this practice as something that is done on paper by a single expert (or even a pair, or a small group) has been in crisis for at least four decades. In the 1980s, while manuals were continuing to treat the subject as merely textual (though with a passing nod to the special needs of the stage; see Newmark 1988: 173), the few dramatically-inclined scholars in the field tended to present it in a more problematic manner. These academics thought that they had a duty to view it in textual terms – and at the same time most of them had a feeling that their textual descriptions were unsatisfactory. Susan Bassnett, who may be said to have founded the sub-discipline of theatre translation studies almost single-handedly, wrote a number of chapters and articles about “the

² This kind of acknowledgment might also produce a backlash on the part of translation groups and corporations, as shown by the way in which the International Federation of Translators (FIT) and the American Translators' Association (ATA) reacted to the rise of spontaneous and solicited online collaborative translation (see Jiménez-Crespo 2022).

problems of translating theatre texts” (Bassnett 1981), invariably denouncing the infinite “textual complexities” entailed (Bassnett 1990). The reason for her difficulties was her position as a theatre translator working on words – and only occasionally on their *mise-en-scène* – who was also fully cognizant of the performative incompleteness of any translated play.

At the turn of the millennium, Bassnett’s ‘problematic’ views were translated into a fuller awareness of the interpersonal complexity of theatre translation by a newer generation of scholars. Sirkku Aaltonen, in particular, significantly titled her 2000 monograph on the subject *Time-sharing on stage*. Even though her book still carried a residue of terminological uncertainty (its subtitle included the term *Drama translation*), it clearly accepted the notion that theatre is a collective production: when translation enters the process of staging a play, therefore, the contribution of actual textual translators must be taken into account alongside those of all other professionals, including scenographers and costume designers. In the 2000s and 2010s, a number of edited collections, monographic issues and single contributions were published which followed Aaltonen’s lead (see for instance Baines, Marinetti and Perteghella 2011) and accepted the idea that “the act of theatrical translation can take place in front of a computer in a rehearsal room, in a café, over Skype, and of course in front of an audience” (Graham-Jones 2017: no page number). Naturally, if it happens in a rehearsal room, over Skype and in front of an audience, the act of translation cannot but be a collaborative one.

The inevitable theoretical consequence of these performance-centric developments is a complete reversal of post-Renaissance views of dramatic writing and translation, which are in fact repurposed as theatre writing and *theatre translation* (the term used throughout this article). If a theatre translation is the sum total of the interventions of all agents involved, including the audience, it follows that it must be seen as a finished product – in other words, that it must be viewed post-factum, in descriptive rather than in prescriptive terms. This shift in perspective began five decades ago for literature, and was partly impeded in the theatrical domain – rather paradoxically – by the conflation of theatrical with literary writing. Of course, a theory of theatre translation does not make the training of dramatic translators useless; but it does set severe limits to what dramatic translators can do in isolation, and gives them a better awareness of the partial nature of their contribution. A 2022 monograph on the theory, history and practice of *Theatre translation* distinguishes four aspects, or phases, of the process (Morini 2022: 71): interlingual (the translation of a

script or play), intralingual (the way that a script or play gets modified in rehearsal and performance), intersemiotic (everything that happens when a text is brought onto the stage, but also the dependence of the show on other media) and intrasemiotic (the dependence of a performance on previous performances in the same medium). Even without detailing all the possible permutations entailed by this complex definition, it is evident that actual linguistic translators are normally just involved in the first phase, and may ideally have a word in the second and the third. And if this pluralistic view is accepted, the final product is no longer to be viewed as a modification of the initial translated play, but as a complex negotiation between people belonging to several professional categories, who may have roughly the same purpose but different agendas.

It is now possible to go back to the picture of translaboration sketched in Pfeiffer, Richardson and Wurm (2020): in the two case studies analysed by those three collaborating scholars – one workshop involving hearing and deaf English-speaking people and another setting German alongside Czech speakers – no initial script had been provided, and the creation of theatrical content had been partially or fully entrusted to the participants (Pfeiffer, Richardson and Wurm 2020: 359-360). Inevitably, given the different codes employed within the groups, the whole process had involved translation as well as translanguaging: and obviously enough, the final products could only be described as collective efforts. Now, this kind of democratic situation is different from the ones in which theatre professionals normally operate, particularly within the context of mainstream theatre: but it is only different in degree, and not in kind. In the two situations described in the article, all the actors on stage may be said to have been equally responsible for the processes of creation and translation – alongside those who have been responsible for creating the workshops and, at least in one of the cases, proposing a topic (Pfeiffer, Richardson and Wurm 2020: 360). But even when the conditions are much less democratic, every participant has at least a small percentage of agency with respect to the finished theatre act (Morini 2022: 74). It is only when a single writer-director-performer-stage designer performs all the roles in a theatrical production, and if the contribution of the audience is disregarded, that a single person can be said to be the sole author of a piece of theatre.

The same applies to theatre translation, which, if viewed as a final product rather than as an initial textual stimulus, must (almost) always be considered as a collective effort – as translaboration, in short. And while it may be difficult in most cases to disentangle one agent's contribution from

another's, there may be no doubt that even in the most dictatorial situation it is only the whole company that may be said to have crafted a translated piece of theatre, just as in cinema it is the whole crew who is presented in the end credits as having brought the movie to life. Admittedly, once the inner workings of theatre are closely observed, the collective view is exposed as obvious, and would not be worth expatiating about were it not that theatre professionals, and the world at large, appear not to be fully aware of it – or to have a nostalgia for the older, textual view. It may be a while before the notion of theatre translation as translaboration makes it outside the restricted domain of academia – but if one remembers that collective and performative practices have gone largely unnoticed since Roman times, one is more than ready to concede that a few more years, or decades, may not make that great a difference.

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From suspicion to trust: “the pact of translation” in two author-translator collaborations

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Abstract

There is a vast literature showing that author-translator relationships are often fraught with tensions which undermine trust between the two parties (Anokhina 2017; Hersant, 2017, 2020). These tensions are hardly detectable from the sole comparison of source and target texts but are likely to be revealed in archival material such as editorial correspondence or revised translator’s typescripts and galley proofs. The examination of archival material makes it possible to observe how trust between translator and author develops and deepens, but also how it can be jeopardized when other intermediaries come into play. This paper focuses on documents taken from the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana Bloomington. Both epitextual sources (such as correspondence with publishers and authors) and genetic sources (such as translators’ manuscripts and notebooks) pertaining to translators William Weaver (1923-2012) and Barbara Wright (1915-2009) are examined, with a view to better understand the complex interplay of trust and mistrust that takes place in translation collaborations.

Keywords: trust, author-translator collaboration, translators’ archives, (copy)editors, power relations.

1. Introduction¹

As noted by Michael Cronin (2000: 108), “translation has been viewed with profound suspicion” in the history of intercultural exchanges and the oft-quoted Italian saying ‘Traduttore, Traditore’ reflects well the mistrust with which translation as a practice and as an artefact has been regarded (Folena 1991; Bassnett 2001; Pym 2004; Rizzi *et al.* 2019). Secondary in status, not the original, and ‘self-evidently a lie,’ the translation has often been suspected of being but an ‘unfaithful’ reflection of the original. The fear is that the translator will “alter, deform or mutilate the sacred wholeness of the original” (Cronin 2000: 108). George Steiner ([1975] 1998: 233) argues that “[t]here is in every act of translation – and specially where it succeeds – a touch of treason.” And as Esperanza Bielsa (2016: 9-10) notes, “the suspicion of treason that translation and translators constantly provoke” stems from “[t]he fact that translation serves both the foreign work and the domestic reader at the same time.” This explains “the contradictory esteem” in which translators are held, as “objects of both necessary trust yet at the same time deep suspicion” (Inghilleri 2018: 147-148). What is more, literary translation is a profoundly inegalitarian process, where the translator is often placed in a position of subservience to the commissioner of the translation (Simeoni 1998: 11-12; Venuti 1998: 48), and their auctorial status is necessarily second to, and therefore weaker than, that of the author.

This principal mistrust is in reality counterbalanced by a degree of trust that renders the translation process possible. In their recent study of translation history, Anthony Pym *et al.* posit that translation “is not possible without trust” (2019: 2), and that the “axiomatic mistrust of the intermediary” (Pym 2004: 168) can be subsumed by a leap of faith, which “means taking on trust not only the expertise but also the honesty of the person translating” (Bassnett 2011: 22). Thus a complex interplay of trust

¹ We would like to thank the Lilly Library in Bloomington, IN for granting us permission to publish extracts from William Weaver’s letters. We are also grateful to Prof. Breon Mitchell for his invaluable help and advice. Every effort has been made to locate William Weaver’s heirs and to obtain their permission for the use of copyrighted material in this article. We apologise for any errors or omissions and will be happy to hear from anyone who may hold copyright whom we found impossible to contact. We would also like to thank the Queneau Estate for permission to quote from the unpublished letters by Raymond Queneau (rights reserved Raymond Queneau Estate).

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and mistrust takes place in the translatorial process involving author and translator or editor and translator. These tensions are hardly detectable from the sole comparison of source and target texts but are likely to be revealed in archival material such as editorial correspondence or revised translator's typescripts and galley proofs. The examination of archival material makes it possible to observe how trust between translator and author and other intermediaries develops and deepens, but also how it can be jeopardized. This paper focuses on documents taken from the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, which houses one of the world's largest collections of translators' papers.² Adopting a historical perspective, it focuses on two case studies dating back to the mid-20th century. Both epitextual sources (such as correspondence with publishers and authors) and genetic sources (such as translators' manuscripts and notebooks) pertaining to translators William Weaver (1923-2012) and Barbara Wright (1915-2009) are examined. We show how this gives privileged insight into the complex tensions involved in the relation of trust between author and literary translator. The interplay of power thus exposed will lead us to reframe the very notion of the "translation pact", previously defined by Cecilia Alvstad (2014: 2) as a "mechanism" or "rhetorical construction through which readers are invited to read translated texts as if they were original texts written solely by the original author" and question the issue of the authority of the agents involved in the field of literary translation.

² In 2002 Breon Mitchell (1942-), a renowned American translator of German and professor of Germanic studies, became the new Director of the Lilly Library at Indiana University, Bloomington. There, he initiated a collection of translators' archives, including correspondence with authors and publishers, translators' manuscripts, and annotated copies of their works. Such is the material pertaining to Barbara Wright, which is otherwise dispersed in France (at the IMEC in Caen, the BNF in Paris, and in Bourgogne in particular) and in the UK (at the British Library and the Themerson archive, London). At Bloomington can be found some 10,000 items: correspondence with authors and publishers, radio scripts, notebooks, clippings, photographs, etc. Of notable interest are Wright's *Exercices de style* notebooks, which reveal the linguistic and stylistic work done during the translation process with its corrections, additions, emendations in blue and red and the Queneau correspondence that enables us to gain insight into the author-translator relationship. See Section 3 below.

2. On how the translation process may be jeopardized by suspicion

As Rizzi *et al.* (2019: 33) suggest, “[t]rust is often silent, whereas distrust tends to leave traces”. Indeed, there is a vast literature that shows that author-translator relationships are often fraught with tensions which undermine trust between the two parties (Anokhina 2017; Hersant 2017, 2020). The aim of this section is to explore how suspicion takes over in a translation relationship. We examine a case study based on documents that are part of the William Weaver collection at the Lilly Library (The Weaver, W. mss., 1954-1988; The Weaver, W. mss. II, 1833-2006). More specifically, we discuss what happens when the author becomes involved in the production process that lies behind a published translation. We argue that, in this kind of situation, the risk of eroding trust in the translator is particularly high. The English translation of Elsa Morante’s novel *La Storia* is further used as a case study with the aim of shedding light on the influence of editors and copyeditors (Buzelin 2005; Bogic 2010; Siponkoski 2013; Solum 2017, 2018; Kruger 2017; Hersant 2019), their degree of intervention, and the role they may have played in undermining the relationship of trust between the translator and the author.³

2.1. Suspicious authors

William Weaver was “the premier American translator of modern Italian fiction” (Venuti 1982: 16). He was one of the most prolific translators of his time, averaging “close to two book-length translations a year” (Healey 2019: xix). He translated the works of some of the most important Italian writers of the twentieth century: among them Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, Primo Levi, Elsa Morante, Alberto Moravia, Italo Svevo and Carlo Emilio Gadda.

Collaborating with the authors he translated was integral to Weaver’s method (cf. Bollettieri and Zanotti 2017). He worked closely with most of them, establishing a relationship of “total collaboration with some and less with others” (Venuti 1982: 21). As Weaver pointed out, “relationship with writers can [...] be very difficult because when you start translating [their] work, you are in a sense taking it away from [them]” (Covi *et al.* 1987: 90). He recalled having “some very rough moments” with Calvino, with whom

³ This may even sometimes lead to the termination of a contract, as exemplified by the case of María Reimóndez’s Galician translation of British bestseller *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time* by Mark Haddon (see Castro 2013).

he worked for twenty years: “he was extremely possessive about his work, and he loved – once the translation was in proof – to make little changes in the English. This way he could feel that in the end he put on the finishing touches” (Covi *et al.* 1987: 90).

On several occasions, Weaver mentioned Elsa Morante as one of the most difficult authors he happened to work with:

Elsa Morante made a point of not wanting to see my translation. [...] But every now and then she would call me up and say, “Bill, on page 29, how are you going to translate this phrase or that one? I would have to say, ‘I’ll call you back’, which I did and explained what I meant.” (Venuti 1982: 21)

In Weaver’s view, authorial suspicion was often triggered by imperfect knowledge of English, something that happened with other writers as well:

sometimes her partial knowledge of English misleads her, so she thinks she has understood something when she hasn’t. But this happens with other writers as well. It used to happen with Giorgio Bassani, who didn’t know much English [...]. When I started translating his work, he would actually sit down with a dictionary and go over the translation, usually after it appeared in print, and then say, “Bill, why did you use ‘cot’ and not ‘bed?’”. And I would say, “Well, Giorgio, in this case the bed is for a child and it’s presumably smaller”. Then he would say, “But ‘cot’ – doesn’t that mean ‘cottage?’” And I said, “No, that’s a poetic version of the word. So we would have our little problems.” (Venuti 1982: 22)

In an interview published in *The Paris Review* in 2002, Weaver was particularly outspoken about his relationship with Morante, confessing that she “was by far the hardest person [he] worked with”:

Elsa was a pain in the neck. [...] When I was translating *La Storia*, I was living in Tuscany. Every now and then she would call me up in the morning. I had told her once that I worked from the time I got up until about ten-thirty, and then I would have a cup of coffee, and then I would work again until lunchtime. She would always phone at ten-thirty, thinking that that was my break. The reason I took the break was that I didn’t want to think about translation for half an hour or so before I went back to it. But she would call and start asking questions. She said, Now on page three hundred and fifty-nine when I use the word so-and-so, how will you translate that? And I said,

Elsa, I'm on page one hundred and twenty-three. I've got no ideal That didn't stop her, and she started calling me almost daily at ten-thirty, ruining my morning. (Weaver 2002: n.p.)

But the image of the suspicious author chasing her translator on the phone tells us only part of the story.

2.2. *History: A novel*

In his 1982 interview with Lawrence Venuti, Weaver (in Venuti 1982: 24) noted that publishers tend to “regard translators simply as hired help”, while “some editors regard manuscripts [...] as raw material which is shaped into the exquisite vase by the editor”:

Just a couple of years ago I had an extremely unpleasant experience in this respect with a novel that I translated. The publisher wanted to make endless changes. I mean hundreds and hundreds of changes. They weren't so much changes in the translation as really changes in the book. I defended the book very hotly, and the head publisher and the editor with whom I was having the fight argued back, saying, “Oh, but we do this all the time. We completely rewrote a translation of a Japanese novel and it won the National Book Award. [...]” I did win in the end. But I also had to bring the author into the battle on my side. (ibid.)

The novel in question was Elsa Morante's *La Storia*, whose translation had been commissioned to Weaver by Knopf. In her historical novel, published in 1974 and soon a best-seller, Morante narrates the story of a Jewish woman and her two sons. The English translation, a book of almost 600 pages, appeared in 1977.

In Autumn 1975, “fighting off nervous breakdown” (Weaver to Marcia Higgins, 29 September 1975),⁴ Weaver completed the translation of the Morante book, after a long gestation extending over seven months that included extensive consultation with the author (Weaver to Bill Koshland, 5 August 1975, 9 September 1975 and 8 October 1975):

I have spent several long sessions with Elsa – whole days, in fact – checking certain things, and she has approved of my solutions to

⁴ Weaver, W. mss., 1954-1988, Subseries: Morante, Elsa, Box 16, *History: A novel*, correspondence, November 1958-February 1985.

several thorny problems. She has also read a bit of the translation (in a less than final draft, to my dismay, and at her gentle insistence), and likes it very much. One hurdle past, I trust. (Weaver to Bill Koshland, 9 September 1975)

In sending off the manuscript, an exhausted but triumphant Weaver confessed to his agent: "I feel like the Red Army after the Long March!" (Weaver to Marcia Higgins, 8 October 1975).

Towards the end of October 1975, the manuscript was sent into copyediting, while the author was reading her copy in order to give "the go-ahead" (B. Koshland to Weaver, 20 October 1975). In November Weaver received a telephone call from the Knopf editor, Bill Gottlieb, who told him that the copy-editor had made numerous corrections "on almost every page".

Weaver wrote to Erich Linder, Morante's literary agent and commissioner of the translation, saying he has decided to withdraw the translation:

I'm giving up. Mr. Gottlieb's telephone call, in the first place, was a severe shock. If he had said there were some passages that could bear re-thinking, I would have been the first to want to do just that. But he spoke of "necessary" corrections on almost every page. I may very well have made some mistakes (in a book of 1000 typewritten pages), but I can't believe I made hundreds of mistakes. So there is obviously a basic divergence between Mr. Gottlieb's view of the text and mine. (Weaver to Erich Linder, 16 November 1975)

But what worried Weaver most was Morante's change in attitude upon hearing about the Knopf editor's negative reaction to the translation:

I would, however, have waited before withdrawing the work, until I received his 'revised' version, if Elsa hadn't chosen this moment to turn mean. Obviously, having heard of Mr. Gottlieb's reaction, she has become suspicious and distrustful. She called me Thursday night and kept me on the phone for nearly an hour. At that point, she had reached page 5 of the typescript. Her questions were, for the most part, foolish, deriving from her lack of knowledge of English. But they also betray a profound lack of faith in my knowledge of English (to say nothing of Italian). I simply cannot spend the next six months explaining to Elsa the meanings of English words she doesn't know (ibid.).

On the same day he wrote a letter to inform Morante about his decision to withdraw the translation, a decision he had made after her telephone call. He wrote: “I sensed in your words some kind of hostility towards the translation and, what is more, a distrust in my abilities”:

Ti confesso che a questa decisione la tua telefonata dell'altra sera ha contribuito. Ho avvertito nelle tue parole una certa ostilità verso la traduzione e, ancora di più, una sfiducia nelle mie capacità. Non voglio – e so che non potrei – importarti niente. Ma nello stesso tempo non me la sento di giustificare ogni mia scelta. Ho lavorato per sette mesi con dedizione e amore per il testo. Ma a questo punto penso che saresti più felice con un altro traduttore, al quale faccio ogni augurio di successo.” (Weaver to Elsa Morante, 16 November 1975) [I confess that it was your phone call the other night that led me to make this decision. I sensed in your words some kind of hostility towards the translation and, what is more, a distrust in my abilities. I do not want to – and I know I could not – impose anything on you. But at the same time I do not feel like justifying every choice I made. I have worked for seven months with dedication and out love for the text. I think that, at this point, you would be happier with another translator, to whom I wish every success.]

On the same day he wrote to his agent, Marcia Higgins, briefing her about the recent developments and the ensuing crisis in his relationship with Morante:

Having found out from Erich Linder about Mr. Gottlieb's negative reaction, the author has become suspicious and is going over the typescript also. There is a problem: she knows very little English and is basically hostile to the whole idea of translation. She kept me on the phone for almost an hour (after she had reached only page 5), making me explain to her the exact meaning of words like 'gladly' and 'pledge'. Obviously, such explanations could continue for another six or eight months. My sanity is more valuable to me, and so I must abandon the enterprise. (Weaver to Marcia Higgins, 16 November 1975)

Later on, on the same day, Weaver wrote another letter to Higgins, informing her that “the crisis was past”:

at 11, Elsa Morante called me and when I told her I was thinking of abandoning ship, she was very distressed, swore that she wasn't going

to bother me, and that she has complete faith in me and only in me (i.e. not in Knopf). So the crisis is past. (Weaver to Marcia Higgins, 16 November 1975)

Having succeeded in bringing the author into the battle on his side, he was now in a position to negotiate from a vantage point of strength with the Knopf editors: “if Mr. Gottlieb’s ‘corrections’ are unacceptable to me, I want to be able to say ‘no’ with some clout. (If I sic the author on him, he’ll be in real trouble anyway).” (Weaver to Marcia Higgins, 16 November 1975)

2.3. Battling with editors

Weaver wrote about his problems with the Knopf editors in a letter to Helen Wolff, the publisher at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich:

I am in the midst of a big row with Knopf (more specifically with Mr. Gottlieb) about my translation of the Elsa Morante novel. They announced that they wanted some changes, and I expected the usual sort of thing: a few tactfully pencilled suggestions for improvement. Instead, they returned the first 250 pages of the typescript with literally hundreds of scrawls, marginal. Nearly all of them are unacceptable, and so I am fighting my way – like a Calvino character – through a thicket of pencil marks, trying to restore some sanity to it all. (Weaver to Helen Wolff, 1 December 1975, Box 2, Calvino, *The castle of crossed destinies*, correspondence, April 1972-May 1987)

In sending back the first 225 pages of the revised manuscript, the Knopf editor pointed out that the problems were of two kinds: those where the sentence structure followed the Italian original too closely (for example “the night, dark and dreary” instead of “the dark and dreary night”) and those where sentences or phrases did not read quite right due to a lack of a final polishing up (Gottlieb to Weaver, 19 November, 1975).

Weaver replied with a sharp letter on 1 December 1975, where he stated quite clearly that “[he] felt that [his] professional ability and honesty had been under attack”. And while he admitted that the copyeditor had made quite a few good suggestions, he also made it clear that the manuscript contained “literally hundreds of modifications” that he found “totally unacceptable”. These, he wrote, “confirm my first impression of the editor’s tendency to banalize and conventionalize the text” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 1 December 1975). He therefore fired back by saying that “The editor has

certain regular habits, so to speak, which conflict with the author's style" – "a very special, unconventional style" that "should be reproduced also in the translation, as far as possible". For example, he suggested that "the editor must not eliminate exclamation marks" and "must allow the author (and me) to begin sentences with the word 'And'" (ibid.). He also invited the editor to refrain from introducing clichés in places where the author uses unconventional images and from toning down words:

When the author uses a bizarre image, it must not be replaced with a cliché. Phrases like 'tangled web', 'seething emotions', 'last resting-place', 'ominous thunderclouds', 'heaven on earth' should not be introduced into the text. If the author uses a cliché herself, she does so with evident irony. (ibid.)

And in those instances where the author ironically uses "high-flown words", these "should not be 'toned down'". For example, he suggested not to change the word *warrior* (for *guerriero*) into *soldier* in the following passage:

For him, that little maternal hamlet in Bavaria signified the only clear, domestic spot in the tangled dance of fate. Beyond there, until he became a *warrior*, he had visited only the nearby city of Munich. (*History*, 13)

Weaver was firm in rejecting what he thought were arbitrary changes to the text: "Sometimes, I feel the editor has made capricious changes, which are also mistaken" and "seem to indicate a lack of feeling for the text" (Weaver to Gottlieb, 1 December 1975). He pointed to the copyeditor's failure to grasp crucial aspects of linguistic characterization, for example by suggesting substituting "depths" for "abyss" and "mud" for "mire" in the tirade of a character who "often uses high-flown, cataclysmic expressions" (ibid.):

Ah, what a cross! Quiet, I tell you. You want to plunge this household into the *abyss* of shame and dishonor! You want to drag this family in the *mire*! (*History*, 21)

He clearly made a point of using the term "divergence of views" in contrast to the idea of error implied in the word "corrections" used by the editor.

In sending back the first 225 pages of the manuscript, Weaver urged the editor not to turn the writer's style "into the more anonymous house

style”. He noted a tendency in the copyeditor’s work “to conventionalize, to banalize” and “to eliminate difficult words. I do not think this is permissible, if the author uses them” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 1 December 1975). For example, in the episode where “some boys insult Nino calling him ‘Negus’ (after the ruler of Ethiopia) – an insult typical of the period”, the copyeditor suggested “antique peddler”, which in Weaver’s opinion was “[a]n unlikely sort of insult for Roman boys to use.” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 23 December 1975):

s’erano urtati il gomito, dicendosi fra loro: “Anvedi er *Negus*?” (*La Storia*, 150)

they had nudged each other and murmured: “Hey, look at the *Negus*!” (*History*, 146)

Weaver also questioned the copyeditor’s correction for the translation of the word *triclinio*, which the copyeditor commented with “a peremptory ‘no!’ in the margin” (ibid.). In the editor’s queries, the term was dismissed as “too arcane” and the suggestion was to replace it with “couch” (Morante / *History* / editor’s queries / 6). Weaver was firm in defending his translation choice: “Why? If the author had wanted to say ‘sofa’ or something of the sort, she would have. Instead, she chose an exotic word, and the word must be retained.” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 23 December 1975):

Involontariamente gli succedeva d’allungarsi sul sedile del banco come su un *triclinio* (*La Storia*, 152)

Involuntarily, he would sprawl on the bench of his desk as if on a *triclinium* (*History*, 131)

In another letter to Gottlieb, dated 26 January 1976, Weaver did not spare criticism of the copyeditor’s corrections, which he believed tended to level out the author’s style:

Again, I have found some useful suggestions, which I have readily incorporated. And again, I have found a far greater number of capricious and insensitive changes. Obviously, your editor and I have divergent views about the translator’s mandate. With considerable effort, I have tried to convey, in English, not just the novel’s contents, but also its quality, its style. Thus, when the editor queries the syntax

on occasion, it means that the author's eccentricity (or originality) is being questioned. (Weaver to Gottlieb, 26 January 1976)

A case in point was “the description of the big refugee family known as *I mille*”, which Weaver had translated as “The Thousand”. This was changed by the editor into “The Horde” (*ibid.*), thus obscuring the reference to Garibaldi. Another controversial point was the translation of the term “*anticamera della morte*”, which was used “to describe the bunker-cell from which people are taken to be killed” (*ibid.*): “Do you know what they're like? The bunker security cells? They're known as the *antechamber of death*” (*History*, 205). The editor suggested replacing “antechamber of death” with “Gate of Hell”, which was discarded by Weaver as, to him, it sounded “like the name of a tourist attraction” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 26 January 1976).

Weaver also responded, point by point, with his usual incisive counter critique, to the comments made by one of the copyeditors on two separate documents (Morante: *History* / Lesley and Morante: *History* / Queries). The editor observed that “often he tried to translate literally rather than idiomatically” (Morante: *History* / Lesley / 1), to which Weaver replied: “I should say that my aim was not, as you write, to be ‘literal’ (impossible), but to be faithful, to spirit even more than letter. Free translations are much easier for the translator but often unfair to the author” (Weaver to Gottlieb, 26 January 1976).

The copyeditors failed to understand Morante's use of “reversed name order” (Morante: *History* / Lesley / 2), as in “And *Vivaldi Carlo* neither rejected them nor made friends” (*History*, 174). In his letter, Weaver explained:

This is a European usage, and generally means the tone is either official or working class or peasant. So when Eppetondo presents himself as Cucchiarelli Giuseppe it shows he is working class. The author uses the form frequently – especially in the case of Vivaldi Carlo – to indicate how others think of the person in question. The fact that in English-speaking countries we don't see Weaver William or Knopf Alfred doesn't bother me. I don't mind the text occasionally having a “foreign” (not “translated”) sound. No point in changing pasta to hot dog, etc. (Weaver to Gottlieb, 26 January 1976)

Another controversial point was the use of *would of* for *would have* or *would've*. The copyeditor objected to the use of eye-dialect, suggesting that “it might as well be spelled properly.” (Morante: *History* / Lesley / 1). By contrast

Weaver made it clear that non-standard spelling “stands to indicate that the speaker is speaking colloquially, not correctly. So please STET”.

The last example, out of many possible others, concerns the phrase “senseless screams of matter” in the following passage:

As a rule, none of the bunkers remained empty for long. You were shut up in them, usually, after the interrogation, while waiting to be sent elsewhere. At night especially, voices emerged from them; often voices that were no longer reasoning, but rather *senseless screams of matter*. (*History*, 189 – our emphasis)

The copyeditor objected to Weaver’s translation, arguing that it did not make sense and suggesting “screams devoid of substance”, “senseless screams of beasts”, “screams without substance” as possible alternative solutions (*Morante: History / Queries / 9*). In his letter Weaver clarified that “What the au[thor] means is that the humanity has been drained from the prisoners. They are reduced to mere matter, without sense. We must bear in mind that Elsa Morante is a poet and therefore not every sentence in this book has to be crystal-clear. *The translation should avoid becoming an explication or a simplification.*” (Our emphasis).

Recent studies have pointed to the role of editorial intervention in favouring explicitation, conventionalization and simplification in translation. As Kruger (2017: 119) points out,

[e]ditors’ concern with clarity of communication may lead them to increase the explicitness of lexicogrammatical encoding of texts, while their concern with ease of communication may cause them to simplify texts to improve accessibility. Copyediting, with its strong emphasis on normative usage, self-evidently leads to greater conventionalization.

The material in the Weaver archive brings before our eyes the image of a translator battling with editors who seek to make his translation conform to Anglo-American norms. It thus comes as no surprise that, in sending off the translation of Morante’s last novel, *Aracoeli*, Weaver enclosed a special warning for Jon Galassi, editor at Random House:

WARNING: please be very careful in your choice of copy-editor. And tell him or her to go very light with the pencil. Elsa’s punctuation, capitalization, etc etc are all highly quirkish, but they are very much a part of her and of her book. I am just recovering from

a terrible experience with a copy-editor from another house, who thought her job was to re-write my work. I wrote stet so many times that I'm thinking of investing in a rubber-stamp to that effect. *Els[a]'s (and my) prose must not be turned into senior-composition English*. Don't mean to sound testy, in advance. I'm sure you understand the problem. (Weaver to Jon Galassi, 10 March 1984 – our emphasis)

3. On how mutual trust is built and how it enhances the translation process

Trust both in the source text and in the translator is a prerequisite to a successful translation. As George Steiner explains in *After Babel*, the “hermeneutic motion” (1998: 312) starts with trust in the meaningfulness of the source text and in one’s ability to render it in the target language. Furthermore, as Umberto Eco has argued, an implicit pact tying author and translator, or commissioner and translator, and based on the principle of the faithfulness of the target text with the intention of the source text (Eco 2003: 16), is likely to be established following this first step. This leap of faith “means taking on trust not only the expertise but also the honesty of the person translating.” (Bassnett 2011: 22). It presupposes the suspension of doubts and uncertainties and is necessary to build this “pact of translation” that further determines the translator’s relation with the commissioner of the translation and enables the success of the translation process (Olohan and Davitti 2017).

3.1. The Queneau-Wright relationship

Barbara Wright, in the second half of the twentieth century, was an active agent in presenting French culture to English-speaking readers. She was a major translator of experimental French writing, authoring over 90 published translations. She contributed to making the French literary avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s known in the UK and US. Wright was also a regular contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement* and she also adapted plays and poems for BBC radio.

Wright translated into English most of the works of French writer Raymond Queneau (1903-1976). Queneau was a French experimental novelist, poet, critic and editor with Gallimard, a prestigious Paris-based publishing house. In 1959 he authored *Zazie dans le métro*, a book written in a form of witty colloquial French, which brought him international acclaim

when it was adapted for cinema by Louis Malle in 1960. He is also known for his *Exercices de style*, a retelling 99 times of the trivial story of a man on a bus in Paris, originally published in 1947. He entered the *Collège de Pataphysique* in 1950 and founded the *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle (OuLiPo)* in 1960.

The collaboration between Wright and Queneau began in 1954 when they corresponded briefly over her translation of “At the edge of the forest” and “The Trojan horse”, two short stories written by the French writer. Wright, who was a professional pianist, had not originally trained as a translator and started translating Queneau “by accident”⁵ when she was commissioned to put into English these stories for Gaberbocchus Press, a small London publisher she had cofounded.

Wright sent Queneau her two translations successively, a rather bold move for a relatively inexperienced translator, and for someone who had trained as a musician in Paris, not as a writer. Wright had previously translated into English Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu roi* (London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1951) and collaborated on the translation of a children’s book the previous year. This seems to prove she both trusted in her own skill as a translator and in the author’s willingness to collaborate with her in a benevolent and helpful way. She was right: Queneau wrote back respectively in May and July of 1954, each time commending her “excellent” work.

At the same time, he also very politely and sensitively entered into a conversation about the translated text, asking her if she might reconsider the rendering of one word for which he offered a possible alternative:

J'avoue que je ne suis pas absolument satisfait par cold meat, puisque ce terme peut s'appliquer à l'homme. Carrion serait peut-être trop fort? En français (familier), charogne peut s'appliquer aussi à l'homme, mais désigne spécifiquement le cadavre d'un animal (et notamment d'un cheval). Mais carrion est-il possible en anglais, dans ce cas?

Quant à ce qui fit, je crois que qqe chose de simple comme, and there was, ferait tout à fait l'affaire.⁶

[I must admit I am not totally satisfied with cold meat, since this term can apply to man. Would carrion be too strong? In (colloquial)

⁵ Barbara Wright, “Bergens Letter,” The Lilly Library Online Exhibitions, accessed April 22, 2023, <http://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/lilly/exhibitions/items/show/1641> (henceforth, “Bergens Letter”).

⁶ Raymond Queneau, letter to Barbara Wright, 28 May 1954 (Wright, B. mss, folder individuals, Raymond Queneau, Correspondence, Lilly Library, Indiana University).

French, charogne can also apply to man, but it specifically designates an animal carcass (and notably that of a horse). But is carrion possible in this case in English?

As to ce qui fit, I believe sth simple like, and there was, would do just fine.]

Interestingly here, one can note how Queneau suggests rather than imposes; he is addressing a peer, placing himself under the linguistic authority of the translator, and thereby putting himself on the same footing as her. Contrary to Morante, Queneau knew English very well; he was himself a translator who authored many French translations of Anglophone texts.⁷ What is more, he knew many writers and translators: at Éditions Gallimard, he was in charge of the translations department and had many dealings with translators. For all these reasons, perhaps, he did not consider Wright in any way as his subservient double but as an author in her own right, despite her relative inexperience.

Their nascent friendship and intellectual collaboration were confirmed in 1957 when, of her own accord this time, Wright started the translation of Queneau's *Exercices de style*. Queneau reacted very positively to the initiative. Wright recalls: "I was very lucky because once I confessed to [Queneau] that I had translated more than half of [the *exercices*], he asked me to send him each further variation as it was done" ("Bergens Letter": 4).

Wright sent the French author a first batch of 'exercices' and Queneau wrote back that he was very impressed, as well as intrigued, by her enterprise. He wished to study Wright's whole translation closely, "impatient" to know "how [she had] resolved the translation problems that were raised" by his French text (13 August 1957, letter quoted and translated in Bellos 2013: 70). Three months later, he wrote again, telling Wright this time how much he admired her work: "It seems to me that all of this is excellent. I should even say that I am seized with an inexpressible astonishment at the result of this work. Please accept my immense compliments" (13 November 1957, letter quoted and translated in Bellos 2013: 71). In the same letter, he further commended Wright's humour, her command of languages and her technical skill as a translator, noting that

⁷ He is the author the French translation of Sinclair Lewis's *It can't happen here* as *Impossible ici* in 1937; by G. du Maurier, he translated *Peter Ibbetson* (1946), and by Amos Tutuola, *The palm-wine drinkard* (1952) as *L'ivrogne dans la brousse* (1953). In 1947 he also published a pseudotranslation that Wright was later to translate back into English: *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* by fictive Irish writer Sally Mara. On his career as a translator, see Federici 2009: 99-106.

“rien n’est intraduisible” [nothing is untranslatable]. As before, he added that he might have a “few (minuscule) remarks” to make, but did not include them in the letter.

Wright sent further queries to the writer in the spring of 1958, to which Queneau diligently replied, explaining for instance that “outisse” – present in the exercise titled “Hellénismes,” (“Hellenisms”) – meant “nobody”: “Outisse ← οὐτις, personne. C’est le nom que se donne Ulysse lorsque le cyclope l’interroge...” Outisse ← οὐτις, nobody [It’s the name Ulysses uses when the Cyclops questions him...] (15 April 1958, letter by Raymond Queneau to Barbara Wright). Wright, who had originally envisaged the term *anthropoid*, meaning “shaped like a human,” changed her translation to “outis”, the English transliteration of the Greek word.⁸

3.2. Enhancing the translator’s creativity

Wright was not only ‘assisted’ in her task of translation by the author, she was also ‘encouraged’ in her own creativity. After reading Wright’s adaptation of his macaronic “Dog Latin” episode, Queneau congratulated her on her translation of two specific occurrences: that of “hatto”, which Wright had chosen in place of the French “chapito” (for “chapeau”, meaning “hat”), and that of “jungum”, chosen in place of “junum” (for “jeune”, meaning “young”). He also courteously but firmly recommended that she reconsider her rendering of “ferocaminorum”. She had rendered the pseudo-Latin word (coming from the French *chemin de fer*) as the too common “railway”. Wright followed Queneau’s piece of advice and coined “ferreamuiam” instead.⁹

In the same letter, the French writer quoted famous examples of nineteenth-century English macaronics, an unnecessary addition which testifies to his interest in the matter and to the constructing of the intellectual relationship between the two in the epistolary mode. Later, he would send her poems he had penned, not for her to translate, but as a token of their friendship (see for instance 31 October 1967, letter by Raymond Queneau to Barbara Wright).

Even when Queneau was unable to help her, Wright’s agency was stimulated by his input. This happened with the incipit of the “Modern

⁸ Barbara Wright, “EXERCISES II”, Wright, B. mss, folder Raymond Queneau-*Exercices de styles*, 4 Notebooks, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

⁹ Raymond Queneau, “Pataphysique letter”, letter to Barbara Wright, 9 May 1958, *The Lilly Library Online Exhibitions*, accessed April 22, 2023.

style” exercise. Queneau was incapable of remembering what he meant by this style: “je n’arrive pas à me souvenir de ce que représentait pour moi Le Modern Style lorsque j’écrivais le dit exercice.” [I can’t remember what The Modern Style represented for me when I was writing that exercise.] (9 May 1958, letter by Raymond Queneau to Barbara Wright). Maybe as a result of this, Wright extemporized upon the French source text, imparting the target text with intercultural humour, when she added a playful game with the Anglophone reader, as in the following sentence:

Dans un omnibus, un jour, vers midi, il m’arriva d’assister à la petite tragi-comédie suivante. (Queneau 1947: 140)

In a bus one day it so happened that I was a witness of the following as you might say tragi-comedy which revealing as it does the way our French cousins go on these days I thought I ought to put you in the picture. (Queneau 2012: 166)

That both agents shared authority over the published text, and that Queneau gave Wright authorial credit for this, are further demonstrated in the fact that he accepted her reinvention of otherwise untranslatable exercises that presented “hybridized prose” that mixed French with Latin, Italian and English (exercises 70, 81, 83 and 84). Wright “followed her own natural and stupendously witty bent” (Bellos 2013: 72). As a result, this trust was doubled by pleasure and contentment on Wright’s part: “I am somewhere, somehow, on Queneau’s wavelength” and “this is why, in translating him, I think less of the difficulties, and more of the fun and the rewards”, she wrote to Andrée Bergens (“Bergens letter”: 2).

The relationship between the two continued over the years. In 1960, she put into English Queneau’s *Zazie in the metro*. By 1964, Queneau was addressing her as “Chère Amie” [Dear Friend], instead of using the formal “Chère Madame” [Dear Madam], and they met in Paris whenever Wright was visiting over from London. In 1967, he congratulated on her success with the translation of *Les fleurs bleues* (London: Bodley Head): “d’après les coupures de presse, je vois avec plaisir que vos talents de traductrice sont massivement acclamés” [from press releases, I am delighted to see that your skills as a translator are massively acclaimed] (24 February 1967, letter by Raymond Queneau to Barbara Wright). The previous year he had helped her understand the meaning of “pallas”, slang for an emphatic and boring speech. And he commented upon the phrase “haute et basse justice”,

quoting both the *Littre* and the *Petit Larousse* (15 April 1966, letter by Raymond Queneau to Barbara Wright).

As evidenced from material kept at the Lilly Library, the process of translation seems to have benefitted from both parties' mutual trust, which was based on reciprocal 'admiration' and 'respect' for each other's work, rather than suspicion. When this trust is verbalized, a gratifying exchange can take place between translated author and translator, as happened with Queneau and Wright, and trust can lead to mutual admiration. Incidentally, the rapport between suspicion and admiration is suggested in the double meaning of the Latin root of the former word, as *susplicere* originally meant both "to look from beneath" and "to look at with admiration", as if suspicion were a prerequisite to admiration and that these were interconnected feelings.

3.3. Final disrespect of the translator by a publisher

The relation of trust thus established between Wright and Queneau lasted well into the 1970s, with Wright publishing by Queneau *Between blue and blue* in 1967, *The bark tree* in 1968, and *The flight of Icarus* in 1973. After he died in 1976, she put into English *We always treat women well* (1981) and *Pierrot mon ami* (1987). But although Wright continued to translate books by Queneau, the relationship with his Estate was not as solid as it had been with the author himself and her position and legitimacy as his translator was fragilized, as seen in her dealings with editors and publishers.

Like Weaver, Wright was much more suspicious of publishers than she was of the writers she collaborated with: "in my experience publishers either have practically nothing to say [about a manuscript before publication], or else argue over trifles, and press me to change things that I am sure are right." ("Bergens Letter": 5). Such misgivings were justified, as proven by the disregard for her rendering of the Queneau *Exercises* that Oneworld Classics was to use in a thoroughly revised version published in 2009, years after the death of the author. At the time, the Queneau Estate felt that some of the exercises were "free adaptations rather than translations" and asked that they be rewritten so that they "correspond more closely to the original."¹⁰ Wright was adamantly against such revisions. Speaking under the aegis of the Estate, Alessandro Gallenzi, who was head

¹⁰ "Gallenzi letter", *The Lilly Library Online Exhibitions*, accessed April 22, 2023, <http://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/lilly/exhibitions/items/show/1649>.

of the publishing house, tried to placate her, writing to her at the time: “I realize that it may be frustrating that they should demand this after the book has been in print for so many years and your translation has been widely acclaimed.” But while he insisted that he greatly “admired” Wright’s translation, trust was transferred to other in-house translators: “Our *trusted* translator J. G. Nichols adapted your old translation [of ‘Alexandrines’ which was to be changed to iambic-pentameter couplets] to the new form, trying to be as respectful as possible.”¹¹ Ironically, the rhetoric of trust and respect was reversed here and was utilized to disrespect the translator’s work and the author-translator relationship of trust built during the author’s lifetime.

4. Conclusion

“Whether visible or not, trust is in every relation that translators and interpreters enter into with texts, and with those people around them.” (Rizzi *et al.*, 2019: 34). In this paper we explored the potential of the archive as a source of insight into the pact of trust in translation. Examining a translator’s archive makes it possible to unveil dynamics of trust and distrust between author and translator, the negotiations that take place behind the scenes, and how this process influences the finished product. While the Wright-Queneau correspondence is indicative of a relationship that rested on mutual trust (and perhaps of the author’s deep faith in translation), the material from the William Weaver collection analyzed here sheds light on the “conflictual” (Hersant 2017: 108) nature of translation collaboration while at the same time pointing to suspicious views of translation shared by literary writers. The Weaver-Morante case points to the fact that, when editorial intervention is pervasive and occurs under the author’s eyes, it is likely to question the translator’s authority, putting at risk the relationship between the translator and the author. By contrast, the Wright-Queneau case shows that lack of editorial interference can contribute to establishing a trustful relationship between author and translator. This was probably made easier as the power relationship was more balanced than in the Weaver-Morante case, due to Wright’s being part of the editorial process as

¹¹ “Gallenzi letter”, *The Lilly Library Online Exhibitions*, accessed April 22, 2023, <http://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/lilly/exhibitions/items/show/1649> – our emphasis.

a cofounder of the publishing house that introduced Queneau to the English public. Indeed, the translator's negotiation capacity over editorial interventions depends, first and foremost, on their status. As Paloposki (2009: 205) points out, "[t]o be able to negotiate, a translator needs certain credibility and trust." The minute credibility is lost, then suspicion takes over. The often invisible role of editors and copyeditors should thus be included among the factors that may contribute to jeopardize the "pact of translation". In the cases analyzed, trust and distrust function together to establish the "pact of translation", a fragile balancing act that is necessary for the translation process to take place and be successful. This "pact of translation" can be defined as an act of faith which means the commissioner of the translation will believe in the skill and honesty of the person translating and the translator that their work will be respected.

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Showcasing Australian literature in China

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Abstract

This paper explores how literary translations from Australia make the passage to mainland China. It looks at institutions and individuals as well as the interpersonal relationships that contribute to this collaborative process. In exploring mainland China as the target market for translations of Australian literature, this paper maintains that the translations themselves support a so-called Australian 'national archive' or canon, directly addressing perceptions of nation (in this case, Australia and Australianness) held by overseas audiences. Furthermore, it examines the extent to which the presence of certain economic-support mechanisms for the translation of Australian literature, in the form of government funded literary events or translations, fostering of translator-writer relations, as well as the support provided to Australian Studies centres in mainland China, impact on the creation of social, economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977) and ultimately affecting the dissemination of Australian literary texts in China.

Keywords: Australian, literature, translation, China, archive.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the understanding of literary translation as a market-driven enterprise has seen its definition broaden. Following Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur* (1827), which considers the exchange of literature around the globe (Apter 2001; Moretti 2003; Damrosch 2003; Casanova 2004), there is increasing awareness around the "global textual mobility" of literary translation (Damrosch 2003). As Heilbron and Sapiro assert, the view of translated literature as "goods which circulate across the borders of states and the boundaries of languages" causes translation flows to "depend on the relations between languages and language groups" (2016: 376). Through translation, and often via the intervention of agents, literary objects gain currency as a form of 'cultural diplomacy' (Wilson 2013: 179), whereby texts act to reinforce a particular, often positive image of a nation. As Benedict

Anderson has claimed, “Nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse” (Anderson 2016: 3), and with China’s interest in world literature having gained momentum in recent years (Helgesson and Vermeulen 2016: 8), this paper seeks to explore how literary translations from Australia make the passage to mainland China, thus shaping a particular image of Australia. It looks at institutions and individuals central to this act of migration, as well as the importance of interpersonal relationships that contribute to this collaborative process. It presents research conducted as part of a project funded by the Australia China Council (ACC) in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) from 2018–2019, which sought contribution to only a handful of studies into the translation of Australian literary texts in a series of national (French, Chinese, Italian, Japanese and German) markets (Wang 2000; Frank 2007; Cain Gray 2008; Jose 2009; Formica 2011; Wilson 2013; Tobias, Gerber and Sell 2013; Gerber 2014).

In exploring mainland China as the target market for translations of Australian literature, this paper maintains that the translations themselves support a so-called Australian ‘national archive’, directly addressing perceptions of nation (in this case, Australia and Australianness) held by overseas audiences. Not only are literary translations (re)created by translators, but the selection, commission, publication, circulation and reception of a translated work materialises only via human interaction between various agents (Qi 2018). The extent to which the presence of certain support mechanisms impact the creation of social, economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977), ultimately affecting the dissemination of Australian literary texts in China will also be explored, whether in the creation of economic capital (government-funded literary events or translations), or in social capital (fostering translator-writer relations), or cultural (through the institutional support provided to Australian Studies centres in mainland China). This research investigates the minutia of these considerations: what is the nature of Australian literary translation in China and why are certain authors/genres/themes/translators favoured by Chinese publishers? Does the dissemination of cultural goods via events supported by the Australian government such as the DFAT-sponsored Australian Writers’ Week (AWW) in China influence the formation of attitudes towards Australia in the Chinese market? What do publishers in both China and Australia think about the current state of the market? The initial research phase surveyed the market by tracing the tradition of Chinese translations of Australian literature, followed by interviews with key figures

in the field, including Chinese translators and both Australian and Chinese publishers in order to examine whether situational factors, such as author/translator collaboration and agency, affect the translation outcome. Part of the project also placed researchers in situ at AWW in China, where they observed how various players (authors, moderators) interacted with the public, how events were run etc. The results of this study will help us to gain a more enhanced understanding of (a) how to promote Australian literature to Chinese publishers and Chinese readers, and in turn (b) how Australian publishers can market their texts for translation into Chinese.

1.1. Australian literature in the world

A handful of studies focus on the mobility of Australian texts in different national contexts (Wang 2000; Formica 2011; Wilson 2013; Gerber 2014). Commenting directly on the idea of ‘mythmaking’ as significant to the Chinese view of Australian literature, Wang writes that Australians are generally represented as “homogeneously simple, innocent, friendly and helpful people who address one another as mates” (Wang 2000: 126), labelling both the omission and inclusion of certain writers for translation into Chinese a form of “critical selectiveness” (126). Formica, writing on Italian translations of Australian literature, suggests that the selection of texts may represent

the symbolic capital of a particular author or a specific literary tradition and the commercial interests of publishers [...] Perhaps more significantly, the selection process reflects the complexity of the relationship between translated literature as cultural artefact and commodity. (Formica 2011: 11)

Wilson (2013: 178) also emphasises the importance of understanding what is being translated, which agents dominate and furthermore, what readers expect. This enables us to understand that “Australian texts in translation constitute an extension of a national archive” and

the translations of contemporary novels, together with the paratexts (e.g., critical reviews, promotional materials) that accompany them, contribute to shaping the image of Australia and its culture. (Wilson 2013: 179)

Within the more specific setting of Australian children's literature in translation, Leah Gerber similarly argues that

a range of aspects combine to impact on the translation of literature in general, with particular external influences (the development of national book markets, past and present publishing trends, as well as the notion of national identity) influencing both the creation of the source text and the manner in which the text is translated and received. (Gerber 2014: 299)

Furthermore, Wilson maintains that Australian literature remains “a relatively peripheral subsystem within the literary world system” which

has gone hand in hand with shifts in the international perception of Australia itself: from colonial backwater, to destination of economic migration and, subsequently, with the changing international status of Australia, from a destination for economic migration to a destination for lifestyle migration or tourism. (Wilson 2013: 180)

Equally, Gerber asserts that, while expressions of Australian identity have literally ‘travelled the world’, the images have altered very little over time (2014: 300-301).

As part of the ‘transnational turn’ in Australian literary studies (Gelder 2005, 2010; Dixon 2007; Carter and Galligan 2007; Carter 2016; Mead 2009; Huggan 2009; Jacklin 2009), scholars attempted to re-position the traditional image of Australian literature in a global world. Following studies into world literature (Moretti 2003; Damrosch 2003; Casanova 2004) at the beginning of the 21st century, the transnational turn signalled a shift “away from a localised, Anglocentric approach to Australian literature and its writers, and a necessary extension beyond national and Anglo-Saxon traditions” (Ommundsen 2011: 83). Scholars questioned the very notion of ‘Australian’ writing, with Jacklin (2009) positing that the lack of non-Anglo-Saxon writers in the Australian literary canon was just one of the factors limiting a truly global understanding of Australian literature. Dixon called for a “transnational Australian literary practice” that would encompass, amongst various things, a consideration of how Australian writing responds to the economies of the international publishing industry, as well as the reciprocity of literary translation (Dixon 2007: 18). The lack of indigenous voices in Australian (and New Zealand) literature was also identified

(Wevers 2009: 6-7). Wevers paints a damning picture of the way in which judges act as agents in the awarding of literary prizes, relying on a carefully curated shortlist of titles that inescapably represents the “geopolitical aesthetic” of a nation, e.g. one Indigenous author, one female, one debut novelist, etc. (2009: 3).

Yet while the complexity of defining Australian literature from within has been well-documented, it is equally important to present a comparison from beyond its national borders. Following Zhang’s definition of world literature, we argue that

the ‘world’ in world literature has to be truly global [...] it should be planetary, in a geographical sense. That is to say, when discussing world literature, the sampling of literary works must not only cross over languages and cultures, but also regions and continents, beyond Eurocentrism or any other ethnocentrism. (Zhang 2014: 517)

By focussing on mainland China as the receiving culture and exploring Australian literature as a ‘peripheral literature’ that traverses both national and international borders, we first address the initial ‘canon’ of 20th century Australian literature in Chinese translation. Secondly, we explore translation as a social, collaborative activity, whereby the translator is an active agent in the translation process (Wolf and Fukari 2007; Milton and Bandia 2009). Finally, we look at the emergence of a canon of Australian literature translated into Chinese. We may then begin to understand the degree to which this selection is motivated by agency plus the desire to present a particular canon of Australian texts to Chinese readers.

1.2. The circulation of Australian texts in China

Texts from Australia first began to move beyond national borders in the mid-19th century, when early Australian novels circulated in Britain. These texts, which were traveller’s or emigrant’s tales, held immense exotic appeal for overseas audiences. Early settler novels were popular too, published from the 1830s onwards and aimed primarily at readers abroad who were eager to hear about life in the colonies (Webby 2000: 51). Carter claims, “Convicts, bushranging, searching for gold or settling the wilds remained popular themes in fiction through to the end of the century” (Carter 2016: 354), feeding overseas readers’ expectations about a ‘strange’ and ‘distant’ Australia, and presenting what Huggan terms a “highly selective, even myopic view of Australian colonial literature” (2007: 48).

As is so often the case when exploring national literatures in translation, it is near-impossible to locate one single comprehensive list of the titles that have been translated. In the case of Chinese translations of Australian literature, this holds true, due to the haphazard way in which cataloguing of translations is often undertaken. The AustLit database, housed in the National Library of Australia, is a vital touch point for those working in this field (Dixon 2007: 18) and provides a useful starting point for this kind of bibliographical research. However, there are many gaps in the recording of information about translations; publication information such as the name of the translator or the source text title might be missing and translated titles are incorrectly recorded, most likely by library staff who are unable to understand or interpret information contained in foreign language editions. Thus, the first aim of this project was to consolidate information about the authors, titles, translators and publishers of all Australian literary texts that have been translated into Chinese from the start of the 20th century to the present.

Our database study indicated that in 1906, within the first fifty or so years of Australian texts in global circulation, Fergus Hume's hugely popular *Mystery of the hansom cab* (1888) became the first Australian novel to be translated into Chinese. It was released in England in 1889, followed by a US edition and German translation in 1900. Interestingly, this crime fiction text, set in the former penal colony of Australia, was considered an "international blockbuster" and a "generic innovator" (Sussex 2019: 23). As Christopher Pittard argues, it "would have appealed to an audience raised on sensation fiction, throughout which Australia features as a geographical other, a site of unknown adventure and mystery" (Pittard 2011: 38). Hume's depiction of iconography closely associated with Jack the Ripper's 'Whitechapel' murders in London during the late 1800s (Pittard 2011: 42) sold the text to audiences already invested in this narrative. While Hume was the first Australian author to be translated into Chinese, Guy Newell Boothby was the first one to have his work published in China, albeit in English. In 1898, Boothby's short story *Uncle Joe's legacy* was published in an English journal *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* in Shanghai. The first Chinese translation of Boothby's novel *The viceroy's protégé* appeared only a few months after Hume's *Mystery of the Hansom cab*. Within the following decade, six novels and short stories by Boothby, ranging from adventure stories set in Australia to horror and gothic fiction, were translated into Chinese, including *A sailor's bride* (1907), *Farewell Nikola* (1908), and *The marriage of Esther* (1914), with some of these translations

reprinted several times.

Over the turn of the century, which marked the demise of the imperial Qing dynasty and the rise of the Republic of China, a more significant number of Australian texts were translated into Chinese. Boothby, with a total of 14 novels and short stories, was arguably the most-translated Australian author during this time. However, as alluded to above, locating precise information about other Chinese translations of Australian texts from this period is a challenging task. For example, it is not always easy to identify the authors of the STs by looking at the bibliographic details of the translations alone. The authors' names were transliterated into Chinese characters in these translations but there was no established convention for the transliteration of Anglophone names in China at the time. More often than not, multiple transliterated names of the same author were used by different translators and publishers. Furthermore, many Australian authors translated in the first few decades of the 20th century were incorrectly presented as either British or American, more than likely due to the fact that the translation rights would have come from British or American publishers (there were very few Australian publishing houses in operation during this period).

Following the establishment of the socialist People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, an alternative canon of Australian texts began to form in China. During this period, a number of Australian social-realist writers were translated into Chinese, including Cristina Stead, James Aldridge, Frank Hardy, Wilfred Burchett, Jack Lindsay and Katherine Prichard.¹ With their links to the Australian communist movement, at its peak in Australia during the 1940s, these writers were presented in China as both left-wing and progressive. It is interesting to compare the situation in the PRC with the movement of Australian literature into East Germany, during the founding years of socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Moore and Spittel 2016), where the state actively pursued a political agenda via cultural means, i.e. through the translation of particular authors with socialist leanings. Nicole Moore comments that the GDR regime

¹ Among others, James Aldridge: *The diplomat* (1953), *The sea eagle* (1955), *The hunter* (1958), *Signed with the honour* (1959), *Heroes of the empty view* (1959); Frank Hardy: *Journey into the future* (1954), *Power without glory* (1957), *The tracks we travel* (1959); Wilfred C. Burchett: *Changing tide* (1956); Mona Brand: *Better a millstone* (1957); Katharine Susannah Prichard: *The roaring Nineties* (1959); Judah Waten: *The unbending* (1959), *Alien son* (1960); Jack Lindsay: *Betrayed Spring* (1960); Henry Lawson: *Send round the hat* (1960). In addition, a handful of poems and novellas were published in literary magazines during this period.

favoured highly critical books from Australia's then disenfranchised cultural left, especially early on, often indicting Australia as an imperial gulag and racist colonizer, exploitative industrialist economy or a sexist slum. From this failed utopia came a string of popular titles, while the ironic parallels for GDR readers were manifest, in their utopic prison state, even when refused and reframed by the authorities. (Moore and Spittel 2016: 2)

We can argue that the same occurred in the PRC. James Aldridge, for instance, had five of his novels translated into Chinese within a matter of a few years (see footnote 1). Writers such as Hardy, Aldridge and Prichard, with their firm communist party affiliations, contributed to what Jennifer Wawrzinek has called, in the context of East Germany, a particular "social imaginary", that was adopted or subsumed, via translation, into the East Germany socialist idea of nationhood (Wawrzinek 2016: 74). Furthermore, with recreational travel practically non-existent in China prior to the 1980s, and international movement beyond the Chinese borders under tight state control, reading the world via translated literary works served as an important means of education. Thus, through the establishment of an independent social-realist canon of texts translated into Chinese, Australian literature undoubtedly contributed to Chinese nation-building in the early years of the PRC, where, according to Nick Jose, the canon's origins were "partly in Australian socialist and nationalist traditions and partly in China's own socialist construction of culture (Jose 2009: 3). Hardy, Aldridge, Prichard and others were championed not for their 'Australianness', but for their critique of Australian society, which rested almost solely on their representation of the working class and their ability to support socialist ideology (Moore and Spittel 2016).

However, interest in translated foreign literature decreased significantly during the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s. Indeed, almost all aspects of social life were slowed during this time, giving way to the political class struggle advocated by Mao Zedong. In the 1950s, fifteen Australian literary works were rendered into Chinese; the number dropped to five in the 1960s and only three in the 1970s (Peng 2014: 27). The Australia-China relationship normalised in 1972 and, in the following year, Australian author Patrick White won the Nobel Prize for literature, generating a new interest in Australian literature amongst Chinese audiences. 1978 marked the beginning of a new 'Open-up and Reform' era in China, during which period the Australian government actively promoted cultural exchange between the two nations. For example, the Australia-

China Council (ACC) was established in 1978, which proved instrumental in strengthening understanding and engagement between China and Australia.²

Through the creation of institutional initiatives such as these, as well as the establishment of Australian Studies Centres and Associations in China during the 1980s and 1990s, there was a period of rapid growth in the translation of Australian literature. In Australia, government funding for Australian literature had also increased (Huggan 2009: 5), while in China, by 1987, the Chinese government became increasingly tolerant of foreign literatures, which resulted in a “near obsession with Western (especially American) culture” (Ommundsen 2011: 85) and a further rise in the translation of Australian literature.

2. Institutions and translators as agents

The institutional support of Australian literature in China during the 1980s cemented the understanding of “Australian literature as a collective national project” (Huggan 2009: 5), which could then be exported internationally. At the same time, various individuals were working as active agents within these Chinese institutional frameworks.³ For example, alongside prolific Chinese translator and scholar Li Yao, Australian writer, translator and scholar Nicholas Jose played a crucial role in the development of Australia-China cultural exchange, first travelling to China in 1986 to teach the earliest courses in Australian literature at Beijing Foreign Studies University and East China Normal University, Shanghai.⁴ As a writer of Australian literary works, and a translator of Chinese literature, Jose was instrumental in

² The ACC closed at the end of 2019, and was replaced by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations in 2020.

³ Formica also details how one translator, Franca Cavagnoli, similarly shaped the archive of Australian literature in Italy, through translations of David Malouf (Formica 2011: 8).

⁴ In Jose’s own words, he became “an Australianist by accident, out of sheer love of the material” (2009: 1). In Shanghai, Jose met two Professors, Hu Wenzhong and Huang Yuansheng, responsible for setting up China’s inaugural Australian Studies Centres. Hu and Huang became part of the so-called “Gang of Nine” – the first Chinese scholars permitted to study abroad following the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s, who read Australian Literature at Sydney University. In 1987, Jose was tasked by then Education Minister Susan Ryan and Ambassador Ross Garnaut to help develop Australian Studies in China and was appointed ‘Cultural Counsellor’ at the Australian Embassy in Beijing (Jose 2009: 2).

championing the migration of literature in both directions. In 1987, he was tasked to help develop Australian Studies in China. After the first Chinese Australian Studies conference took place in 1988 in Beijing, Chinese scholars researching Australian literature were funded by ASAL to attend conferences in Australia throughout the 1980s (Jose 2009: 2). Professor Hu Wenzhong, whom Jose met in Shanghai, was pivotal in introducing translator Li Yao to Australian literature; Li would later become known in China as “the pioneer of Australian literature in translation” (Australian Embassy 2016). When Li embarked on his translation enterprise in late 1970s, Hu not only introduced him to Australian literature, but also co-translated *The tree of man* by Patrick White. In the following decades, Li translated over 30 Australian titles and it has been claimed that “without him, the works of some of Australia’s most famous literary icons would be out of reach for international audiences” (Sandham 2018: n.p.). Writer, translator and scholar Ouyang Yu, who also took part in these early exchanges and went on to undertake a PhD in Australia, is another formidable agent in Australian-Chinese literary relations. Ouyang is a well-regarded Australian author who has translated prominent novels by Cristina Stead, Jessica Anderson and Alex Miller into Chinese and has written many scholarly articles on the representation of China in Australian literature.

Subsequently, in the 1990s, globalisation signalled a shift towards a so-called “global translation economy” (Heilbron and Sapiro 2016: 381), leading to exchanges that were decidedly “asymmetrical”, with the effect of increasing the supremacy of English via a steady increase in the translation of Anglophone texts into other languages (Heilbron and Sapiro 2016: 378-381). By the 1990s in China, postmodernist and postcolonial approaches had replaced the social-realist voices of the 1950s, accompanied by an interest in “the Chinese presence in Australian writing” (Jose 2009: 3). In Australia during the same period, the Translation Grants Program, run by the Literature Board of the Australia Council for the Arts from the early 1990s up until 2000, actively supported the translation of Australian books into other languages (Gerber 2014: 18). Today, the Translation Fund for Literature offers support to overseas book publishers, who may apply to the Australia Council for the Arts for assistance (AUD 5,000 per title to assist with translators’ fees) with the translation and publication of the work of living Australian writers. While the number of Australian literary works translated and published in China between 1949 and 1999 was “over sixty titles in all” (Pugsley 2004: 89), the first two decades of the 21st century, from 2000 to 2018, has seen the rate of translated works soared to over 600.

A range of genres has undergone translation into Chinese, including fiction, poetry, non-fiction and children's literature.

2.1. Publishers as agents

As part of this project, interviews were conducted with 5 major Chinese publishers and 2 Australian publishing houses, including: Yilin Press in Nanjing, the People's Literature Publishing House and the Foreign Languages Teaching and Research Press in Beijing, the Shanghai Translation Publishing House, the Changjiang Children's Publishing Group in Wuhan, and Text Publishing and Giramondo in Australia, both of which publish works in translation. The Chinese publishing market underwent a dramatic restructure over the last decade, forcing new competitiveness between publishing houses. Previously, Chinese publishers tended to work within clearly defined speciality areas; however today, most publishing houses have repositioned themselves as generalists, in order to compete for a greater variety of titles. Yet the growth in the publishing industry has not translated into a proportional increase in the importation of foreign works, which was particularly evident recently when the Chinese government decided to limit the importation of foreign rights. Previously, publishers were able to purchase the rights of as many books as they liked, but in recent years the percentage of foreign titles has been capped. Today, China vigorously promotes a nationalistic stance towards the concept of 'cultural confidence' (文化自信 *wenhua zixin*) which, in the publishing industry, requires publishers to produce original Chinese works, rather than translations. One interviewee disclosed that in 2016, more than 70% of children's books published in the first half of the year were foreign titles in translation, which prompted the regulators to block the publication of any imported children's books in the second half of the year. While the result is a more equitable balance between original Chinese works and translated books, it also means that quality books from overseas markets may be overlooked in favour of home-grown titles, causing the rate of translations to plummet. The economics of translation also come into play, with interviewees consistent in their claim that the rate for literary translation in China is very low – between RMB 60-80 (i.e. AUD 12-16) per 1000 Chinese characters. This figure has been corroborated by other publicly available sources (Yang 2014), which means that most translators of Australian literature into Chinese do it out of a passion for translation, not for the money.

All publishers interviewed mentioned the crucial role played by individuals (rights agents) and the importance of cultural events (such as the AWW) in improving the visibility of Australian literature and Australian authors. There is also a tendency to favour particular genres of Australian literature, including non-fiction (particularly popular science), self-help and parenting books. Children's picture books are also highly sought after (Scribe), confirming findings of other studies (Gerber 2014) that Australian children's titles do extremely well in foreign markets. Another Australian publisher noted that Chinese audiences are interested in "big names", as well as authors with Chinese descent (Giramondo). Australian publishers revealed that face-to-face meetings with publishers at book fairs (Scribe) and personal connections (Giramondo) are vital to the dissemination of Australian titles in China, confirming the important brokering role played by agents such as writers, translators and academics, as well as social networks linked to the publishing industry. Rights agents also play an important role, as they provide a

direct link to the Chinese market. They have extensive knowledge and expertise and can target specific publishers on our behalf. They are very familiar with the publisher's lists, know the editors personally, and handle all negotiations and administrative tasks. (Scribe)

Australian publishers believe that

Any event or marketing opportunity can only help to boost the profile of Australian books and authors in China. Having a presence at the Beijing and Shanghai Book Fairs is of enormous benefit to the individual publishers and helps to foster greater awareness of Australian books. (Scribe)

However, Australian publishers overwhelmingly agreed that "Chinese publishers are acquiring fewer foreign books now" (Scribe), and that the interest in Australian literature has waned (Giramondo), therefore the projection of growth is low. Publishers have also told us that they face insurmountable challenges while operating in the Chinese book market, particularly in "understanding the government regulations and controls on publishing foreign books, the differences between the state run and private publishing companies and how they operate in the marketplace" (Scribe).

2.2. AWW, selection of authors and other cultural or institutional agents

The roles played by cultural and government agencies such as the ACC, ASAL and the Australia Council are central not only to the promotion of Australian literature in China, but also in connecting Australian authors with influential agents in the Chinese publishing industry. Perhaps the most influential cultural event is AWW, which forms part of the ACC's 'Australian Writes' platform. AWW, beginning in 2008, aims to support the dissemination of Australian literature in China. It has operated for the past 12 years, as part of the Australian Embassy's scheme to increase the number of Australian literary voices in China.⁵ 'Australia Writes' operates around several key literary platforms in China, such as the Shanghai International Literary Festival and Bookworm Literary Festival in March, Beijing International Book Fair in August, and China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair in November. AWW, managed by the Australian embassy in Beijing, has helped to raise the profile of 72 Australian authors in the Chinese market, facilitating stronger relationships between Australian writers, Chinese publishers and readers. AWW literally makes Australian literature mobile, flying a number of Australian writers per year to China, promoting their works and inviting them to participate in literary events in several major Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Xi'an, Wuhan, Chengdu and Guangzhou. Australian publishers have confirmed the magnitude of AWW, "first in giving visibility and authority to the writer, and second in arranging meetings with prospective publishers" (Giramondo). AWW is intended, however, to be a strictly asymmetrical exchange – AWW events feature Australian writers, although Chinese writers do take part, often as interviewers or in the form of a panel discussion. Yet while the overwhelming aim is to showcase Australian culture, it does not always work out in this way. In observing AWW events, we noted that panel discussions usually (as expected) included Chinese writers from the same literary genres, areas or themes. Panel discussions were organised around the themes of participating Australian authors, but the invited Chinese writers were encouraged to participate equally and fully in the discussions, and indeed, in some cases, they contributed more than their Australian counterparts.

⁵ The annual AWW is usually in March each year, but in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was moved online in November as "Australia Writers 2020", featuring Tom Keneally, Alexis Wright, Peter Carey, Gail Jones, John Marsden and Graeme Base (<https://china.embassy.gov.au/bjng/AustraliaWritesonlineliteraturefestival.html>).

At the very juncture of exchange around Australian literature and its place in the world, and following discussions on the transnational turn, Jose has questioned the national image of Australia represented in our literature, which both embraces and moves beyond the past, with new voices from around the world contributing to the Australian canon (2009: 5-6). The selection of writers invited to take part in AWW since 2008 (see Table 1) is carefully curated to review a range of ages, genders, genres and ethnicities.

2019 Graeme Simsion, Julie Koh, Morris Gleitzman, Richard Fidler
2018 Richard Flanagan, Charlotte Wood, Alexis Wright, Fiona Wright
2017 Tom Keneally, Bronwyn Bancroft, Geraldine Brooks, John Marsden
2016 Robert Drewe, Clare Wright, Graeme Base, Jane Godwin
2015 A.J. Betts, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Tim Cope, Brooke Davis, Zohab Zee Khan, Paul Kelly, Jennifer Mills, Damon Young
2014 Ali Alizadeh, Jenevieve Chang, Benjamin Law, Alison Lloyd, Oliver Phommavanh, Gabrielle Wang, Pamela Williams, Leanne Hall, Dominique Wilson
2013 George Megalogenis, Meredith Badger, Ambelin Kwaymullina, Alison Lester, Pam Macintyre, Robert Newton, Ann James, Anne Spudvilas
2012 Tim Flannery, Janette Turner Hospital, Margo Lanagan, Maria Tumarkin, Ouyang Yu, Mark McKenna.
2011 Brian Castro, Kate Jennings, Mabel Lee, Julia Leigh, Jessica Rudd, Craig Silvey, Shirley Shackleton, Christos Tsiolkas
2010 Linda Jaivin, Robert Dessaix, Graham Freudenberg, Les Murray, Alice Pung, Alexis Wright
2009 Jane Godwin, Kate Grenville, Lucinda Holdforth, Mara Moustafine, Henry Reynolds
2008 Lily Brett, Anna Funder, Gail Jones, Nicholas Jose, Christopher Koch, Christopher Kremmer, Ouyang Yu

Table 1: Authors participating in AWW 2008-2019

In the list of writers featured in Table 1, over 10% have Asian-Australian heritage, including Ouyang Yu, Alice Pung, Brian Castro, Mabel Lee, Gabrielle Wang, Jenevieve Chang, Benjamin Law, Leanne Hall, Oliver Phommavanh, Zohab Zee Khan and Julie Koh. As Heilbron and Sapiro point out, “migratory phenomena” can play “a role in the circulation of works, depending on the socio-economic and cultural status of migrants”

(2016: 394). With 595,630 Chinese-born people living in Australia by June 2021, migrants from the PRC make up the third largest migrant community in Australia (Australian Government 2023). Within this migratory setting, and despite many Australian writers offering the experience of what Ommundsen calls “‘Distant reading’ – reading texts from cultural traditions very different from one’s own” (2012: 4), there has been a firm attempt by the ACC to prioritise the work of Australia’s talented writers who hail from an ethnic Asian background. Giramondo suggested that authors published in China “[...] have to be iconic names. Chinese descent is also useful”. However, Chinese publishers were somewhat ambivalent about the attraction of writers with Asian background. On the one hand, they harboured the hope that the authors’ Asian heritage could make their works resonate easily with the Chinese readers. On the other hand, they appeared very reluctant to run any commercial risk by selecting an author purely due to heritage, especially if the author in question enjoys no established reputation. Generally speaking, the literary reputation of the author creates a large amount of capital and takes priority over ethnic background. In interviews conducted with Chinese publishers, it was revealed that one of the key challenges in publishing Australian literary works is that, unlike the literary market in the U.S. or the U.K., a literary award of significant and symbolic international influence is missing in Australia, and thus selection of authors and works has no solid and convenient evidence base.

Chinese readers – many of whom may travel to Australia for the purpose of study, tourism or to visit relatives who have migrated – do appear drawn to Australian writers. But despite the apparently deliberate selection of many authors with Asian ethnicity featured in AWW, the list is unambiguously representative of many other migratory voices as well: authors who write about otherness, place and space within Australian culture and society such as Ali Alizadeh, Maria Tumarkin, Lily Brett, Christos Tsiolkas, Mara Moustafine and Maxine Beneba Clarke, or those who write from a transnational perspective, such as Nick Jose, Linda Jaivan, Anna Funder and Gail Jones. Whilst a range of genres is represented, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, journalism and children’s literature, the most notable gap is in Indigenous voices; only three Indigenous writers – the highly successful Alexis Wright (translated by prominent Chinese translator Li Yao), Ambelin Kwaymullina and Bronwyn Bancroft – are on the list. Here, it is the absence of writers like Tara June Winch, Anita Heiss, Melissa Lukaschenko, Bruce Pascoe, Kim Scott, Sally Morhand, Larissa Behrendt, Tony Birch, Boori Monty Pryor, Nakkiah Lui, Jackie Huggans

and Marcia Langton that appears particularly palpable and it would seem that a rise in Indigenous representation on the AWW list would further diversify this canon of Australian writing for Chinese audiences.

3. Key findings and conclusion

Just as individuals are instrumental to the creation of literary networks across Australia and Mainland China, the AWW clearly acts as an important cultural driver for the selection of Australian works in translation.

One key finding was that literary works penned by writers featured as part of AWW were more often or more likely to be selected for translation into Chinese. For instance, with the assistance of the Australian Embassy in Beijing, Australian children's author Graeme Base was introduced to the editors of Changjiang Children's Publishing Group in Wuhan, who subsequently purchased the Chinese rights of all of Base's children's titles and planned for their systematic publication. An Australian writer invited to the 2019 event was, as a result of meeting authors, publishers and translators at AWW in China, in discussions with translator Li Yao about the translation of her latest novel. Australian writers also emphasised the importance of a dialogue and true cultural exchange between Australia and China: by taking part in AWW, they viewed themselves not only as ambassadors of Australian literature in China, but of Chinese literature in Australia.

The professional and inter-personal relationships that developed between writers and translators were also interesting to note. All writers stressed the crucial role played by translators and translation in this exchange: translators would often act as agents in the Chinese market, taking the writer to meet with Chinese publishers, for example, and providing interpreting. One writer expressed how important it was to him that his translator understood the 'voice' of his narrator and the humour of the text, without which, the translation would have fallen flat. The case of Alexis Wright and her translator Li Yao was particularly interesting; a firm friendship had formed between the two, hinging partially, it seemed, from Li Yao's keen interest in Wright's Chinese ancestry. As a translator and prolific agent of Australian literature in China, Li appears to be a particularly instrumental force, with considerable institutional sway. He has almost single-handedly introduced various Australian texts into China, beginning with his self-funded translation of Brian Castro's *Birds of passage* in 1991.

With the help of Nick Jose, Li Yao has translated Australian writers Kim Scott, Anita Heiss and Alexis Wright, aided in part by subsidies granted by the Australia China Council.⁶

Australian writer Graeme Base presents one of the best examples of success in the Chinese market. His children's titles have led to not only the purchase of the Chinese rights to his whole oeuvre by Changjiang Children's Books Company, but also the co-production of new titles, such as 龙月 (Long yue, or *The dragon moon*), whose Chinese translation was published in China in 2017, while the English-language version published later in Australia as *Moonfish* (2019). The conventional sequence of publication is clearly disturbed in this case, which also calls into question the concepts of translation and translator.⁷ As part of this project, we joined Graeme Base for three days on one of his book tours in China in 2019, during which the Chinese translations of his titles sold an average of over 2,000 copies per day. By contrast, Chinese translations of most Australian titles would usually only undergo one print run of between 2,000-4,000 copies (Lawrence 2002: 46). Both Scribe and Giramondo cited the interest in children's books as particularly notable in the Chinese market, with Scribe claiming that "That sector of the market has definitely grown in recent years".

Scribe also noted that "Chinese publishers are acquiring fewer foreign books now, so I don't anticipate huge growth over the next few years". With China increasingly restricting the number of imported titles and encouraging exporting of Chinese works, what Scribe has observed might also be shared by other publishers attempting to get into the Chinese market. Base's Chinese publication, *The dragon moon*, was actually the Chinese publisher's effort to circumvent the governmental restrictions. By packaging the book as a co-production rather than a 'translation', the Chinese publisher effectively turned itself into an author and owner of the title. In other words, *The dragon moon* could be promoted by the Chinese publisher in China not as an imported title, but as an original work, which then had to be 'translated' into English in order to be published in Base's home country, Australia. Whenever the title is introduced into another language,

⁶ He has translated, as part of an Australia Council and UWS grant, various classic Australian children's texts, including Ethel Turner's *Seven little Australians*, Dorothy Wall's *Blinky Bill*, May Gibbs' *Snugglypot and cuddlepie*, Ruth Park's *The muddle-headed wombat*.

⁷ This is an interesting phenomenon worthy of further exploration, which is nevertheless beyond the scope of this paper.

the Chinese publisher could therefore claim that it has successfully exported the book to the international market.

As Zhang (2014: 521) writes,

From Goethe and Marx to Casanova, Moretti, and Damrosch, the concept of world literature has been theorized mostly in the context of Western literary studies. Today, in world literature's tendency to go beyond Eurocentrism and any other ethnocentrism, the question necessarily arises: Is world literature to expand not only its coverage or reading materials to a global dimension, but also its critical and theoretical horizon to embrace the entire world, beyond the great East-West divide?

In conclusion, it appears that the national archive as represented in China, speaks to a much more diverse canon of Australian literature that embraces our migratory voices, although it quite clearly omits those of our Indigenous peoples. Thus, the canon of Australian literature as emerged in Chinese translations in the 21st century does appear to come some way to responding to a transnational literary practice, perhaps more so than Australia's own national canon.

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Interview with Giramondo Publishers, August 13, 2019.

Interview with Scribe Publishers, September 12, 2019.

Mapping collaboration and communication practices in the French subtitling industry

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Abstract

This study explores collaboration practices among English-French subtitlers in the audiovisual translation (AVT) industry in France. By adopting a human-centred approach, the study identifies two types of collaboration: formal and informal, and examines subtitlers' communication with colleagues, clients, and external agents in the subtitling production network. The research sheds light on the impact of collaborative practices on the subtitlers' workflows and roles, as well as on the profession's working conditions and its sustainability. The data were collected with seven subtitlers who each participated in two interviews and a direct non-participant observation of their workday. The participants were affiliated to ATAA, the association for audiovisual translators in France, and as such, benefited from opportunities for collaboration provided by this well-established community. This study contributes to a better understanding of collaboration in the French subtitling industry, highlighting its benefits and limitations.

Keywords: AVT, subtitling industry, subtitlers, collaboration, communication.

1. Introduction

Within the audiovisual translation (AVT) industry, French subtitling production networks have received little scholarly attention. Production networks involve a complex system of organisations, individuals, and technologies that collaborate in the creation, distribution, and consumption of subtitled audiovisual content. Understanding social dynamics within AVT production networks is important, because this can have a significant impact on translation processes and product quality (Abdallah 2012). However, little is currently known about how French subtitlers interact with each other and with other agents in the subtitling process. The purpose of this study is to address this gap by investigating the human collaboration patterns of seven English to French subtitlers, who each participated in two interviews. Specifically, the study aims to address the following research

question: How do French subtitlers exchange information, communicate and collaborate among themselves and with other stakeholders in the process?

The conditions and environments in which subtitlers work are often considered to be “veiled in mystery” because nowadays professionals often work independently as freelancers (Kuo 2015: 163). Since previous studies have acknowledged that subtitlers “hardly ever work alone” (Di Giovanni 2016: 6) and that “the conditions in which they are working can influence the outcome of the process” (Silvester 2022: 401), it is necessary to understand which forms of collaboration and communication occur and what influence they might have on subtitling processes. Therefore, by adopting a Translator Studies approach (Chesterman 2009), this study places the human translators at the centre of the research and recognises the importance of understanding the experiences and perspectives of the subtitlers themselves. The study allowed for an identification of various types of collaboration in three main areas of their subtitling production networks: colleagues, clients and other agents. O’Brien (2011: 17) defines collaborative translation as a context in which “two or more agents cooperate in some way to produce a translation” or “two or more translators work together to produce one translated product”. Both kinds of collaboration were identified in this study and the findings reveal the interconnection between collaboration, working conditions, and the sustainability of the profession. The findings also include community collaboration with ATAA, the association for French audiovisual translators (*Association des Traducteurs/Adaptateurs de l’Audiovisuel*), as well as collaboration in globalised settings.

The study emphasises the importance of collaboration among stakeholders in subtitling and identifies barriers to effective collaboration, contributing to a better understanding of the French AVT industry and the roles and practices of subtitling professionals. The paper begins with a comprehensive review of the literature on collaborative practices in subtitling and provides background information on the French audiovisual translation industry. The paper then outlines the methodological framework used to explore the subtitlers’ practices. The findings report on the subtitlers’ profiles, as well as their collaboration and communication in three key areas of their production networks, and within the ATAA community. Finally, this article discusses the challenges of globalisation and its implications for collaboration in the subtitling industry.

2. Collaboration in subtitling

Collaboration between agents has primarily been studied in amateur subtitling environments (e.g., Massidda 2015; Orrego-Carmona and Lee 2017) and has received less attention in professional settings (Zanotti 2020). AVT production networks involve a complex web of interconnected stakeholders, yet our understanding of the various workflow steps, processes, and the agents involved remains limited. As highlighted in a study of French translations of TV series, the multiple stakeholders involved in the translation workflow have an influence on the product, which is thus not always the sole labour of the person officially commissioned for the translation (Loison-Charles 2022: 17).

Romero-Fresco's (2019) study highlights the crucial role of collaboration in the production of accessible films, emphasising the need for translators and filmmakers to work together during the production process, to consider the challenges of translation and accessibility issues and their effect on the final product. In her study of six English subtitlers of French *auteur* cinema, Silvester (2022) identified a high degree of collaboration between subtitlers, but surprisingly also with producers and directors, facilitated by the higher status of subtitlers working for independent French films compared to mainstream subtitling. She identified different power dynamics at play in the processes of translating *auteur* films, where subtitlers were found to lead the collaboration with directors, who, for their part, were available to answer questions and attend in-person simulations (*ibid.*). In contrast, the simulation process for quality control in mainstream subtitling involves subtitlers presenting their work only to clients and simulation operators (Gourgeon 2014). Zanotti's (2020) study on Stanley Kubrick's interventionist approach into the Italian dubbing and subtitling process of *Full metal jacket* (1987) also presents a different picture from the collaboration processes in mainstream subtitling identified in this study, with a notably higher degree of production involvement in the AVT process. Similarly, when sharing his experiences in the French subtitling industry, Eisenschitz (2013) noted that in addition to collaboration with colleagues and agents, subtitling *auteur* films could involve more (sometimes 'forced') collaboration with filmmakers.

In his study of labour division in English-Polish subtitling and voice-over, Aleksandrowicz (2022) mentioned that the new distribution and consumption trends on platforms have shortened deadlines and impacted the translators' division of labour. Despite frequent changes in translators,

the findings showed that their collaboration had a positive effect on consistency throughout translation modes and seasons, thus suggesting that a “lack of communication between translators is detrimental to their work” (Aleksandrowicz 2022: 29).

3. The French subtitling industry

French subtitling has been primarily analysed alongside dubbing, in terms of norms, challenges, and shifts in AVT trends (Cornu 2014), whereas few studies have looked at the processes or the translators from a social perspective. While Eisenschitz’s (2013) personal perspective highlights instances of collaboration with various agents involved in the subtitling process in a similar *auteur* film context to Silvester’s (2022) study, collaboration in French mainstream subtitling remains underexplored.

Studies on professional and amateur subtitling have mentioned the negative repercussions that the proliferation of fansubbing teams had on professional practices in the French industry (Genty *et al.* 2021: 8), leading to shortened deadlines for subtitling tasks (Loison-Charles 2022: 17). Marignan (2019) describes the negative developments and acceleration of processes in the subtitling industry as an “uberisation” that impacts working conditions, remuneration, and the quality of the subtitles. The increase in French audience demands has also led to the emergence of the US+24 model, where the aim is to broadcast series on TV with subtitles within 24 hours of their original US broadcast, thus shortening deadlines for subtitlers (Bréan 2014; Marignan 2019). Further shifts in subtitling practices include Video On Demand (VOD) platforms releasing all episodes at the same time, resulting in a rise in subtitling volumes and significant changes to the traditional workflows (Aleksandrowicz 2022; Massidda 2022).

Despite the challenges facing subtitlers, the French industry remains one of the most rewarding, as highlighted by Kuo’s (2015) worldwide study comparing 39 subtitling markets. Her findings revealed worrying trends, including an increased vulnerability of subtitlers, and a high level of disparity in rates between and within countries (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the French subtitlers reported the highest average rates, which may be explained through the support of ATAA and the union for French authors and composers (SNAC – *Syndicat National des Auteurs et des Compositeurs*). In contrast to disparate practices observed in other contexts, Kuo (*ibid.*) found that such strong unions and associations resulted in a homogenisation of

working conditions, such as rates, royalties, and credits. Therefore, the involvement of ATAA in the industry is particularly interesting to study because it greatly benefits French AVT professionals, as will be highlighted in section 6.3. on community collaboration.

4. Background

As the French AVT industry involves many stakeholders and processes, ATAA proposes a glossary of terminology in the field (Gourgeon 2014), which helps to define the stakeholders and their collaboration, as well as to clarify the terminology used in this study.

For clarity reasons, the terminology I use here to describe the practitioners is ‘subtitlers’. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that in the French context, audiovisual translation is also called ‘adaptation’ and therefore translators also refer to themselves as ‘adapters’, ‘translator-adapters’, or ‘author-adapters’, according to their claims and preferences (*ibid.*). The varying designations for audiovisual translators stem primarily from their legal recognition under the author status. This status ensures copyright protection for their translations and entitles them to receive royalties for their subtitles (Genty *et al.* 2021: 8), thus making the French industry a unique context (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 58).

To gain insight into with whom and how subtitlers collaborate, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of their clients. As has also been observed in other contexts, clients for mainstream subtitling projects can be divided into two levels: primary and secondary clients. On the primary level, there are production companies that are sometimes major companies; distributors; TV channels (Ferrer Simó 2021); and VOD platforms. Production companies are the creators and producers of the audiovisual content (*ibid.*), also called ‘majors’ in the case of big studios based in the US (Gourgeon 2014: 25). Distributors purchase the rights to distribute the audiovisual content in France (Ferrer Simó 2021), and also oversee legal aspects. VOD platforms¹ and TV channels can have the same tasks as majors or distributors. Primary clients will generally be the first to decide

¹ In this study, I use ‘Video on Demand (VOD) platforms’ to encompass a large spectrum of platforms without distinction, to reflect the hybridity of systems: VOD streaming platforms accessible online (e.g., Netflix, Disney+, etc.), also referred to as OTT (Over-the-Top) systems or Subscription VOD (SVOD); Transactional VOD (TVOD) systems; and TV Channel VOD platforms (e.g., Canal+, M6, TF1, ARTE, etc.).

about the commissioning of subtitling. The secondary level is composed of post-production companies, also called ‘laboratories’ in the French context, who can either be in charge of commissioning subtitles from freelance subtitlers themselves or be used as technical intermediaries by the primary clients who have already commissioned projects from the subtitlers of their choice. Nowadays, laboratories are not always French companies, but are often multinational Language Service Providers (LSPs) with a French branch, who are typically multilingual vendors (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 33), hired as “intermediaries in the business chain” (*ibid.*: 55).

In the globalised chain of LSPs, ‘templates’ are often sent to subtitlers to centralise subtitle creation (*ibid.*: 43), as well as to reduce time and costs (Nikolić 2015: 196). Templates are files that already contain subtitles, usually in English, with their corresponding entry and exit timecodes (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 43). These can be created for content with English as the source language, but can also “be used as a first or pivot translation in the subtitling of an audiovisual programme originally shot in a third language” (*ibid.*). These files will subsequently be used to translate all languages, thus not leaving subtitlers much room for flexibility in adaptation, notably with non-editable pre-established segmentation in the case of locked templates. Thus, any error or misunderstanding in template files will then “most likely be replicated in the other languages too” (*ibid.*). In French cinema, subtitlers also work with ‘spotting files’ (*repérages*), which can be considered “blank templates” (Nikolić 2015: 193). These files are created by spotters (*repéreurs*) and can be edited by the translators to suit their needs, thus highlighting “two very distinct activities: technical spotting and linguistic translation” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 43). In this study, the three subtitlers working for cinema noted that they enjoy working on pre-spotted files as they can focus on the creative translation process. In other studies, professionals have reported that these files slow down and complicate the process (Nikolić 2015: 197) or decrease quality (Oziemblewska and Szarkowska 2022: 450). For some, separating these tasks is not the norm and leads to a fragmentation of processes, and more competition on the market “as no specialist knowledge of subtitling is required anymore” (Künzli 2023: 13). In the French industry, an additional file that is usually sent by the client is the ‘script’, also called ‘dialogue list’, or ‘spotting list’, which contains the dialogues in the original language and is sometimes accompanied by comments on elements such as idiomatic expressions, context, etc. (Gourgeon 2014: 33). In ‘video’ subtitling, which encompasses VOD platforms and TV, as opposed to cinema subtitling, subtitlers tend to

carry out the spotting themselves. Two participants in this research project expressed enjoyment of the technical aspects of this task. In this study, the distinction between cinema and video is also reflected in collaboration, as well as rates and working conditions, with more positive reports in cinema subtitling than in video projects. Recently, a professional subtitler stated that there are between 400 and 500 French subtitlers, but only about 20 of them work exclusively for cinema (Boiron and Syssau 2020: 18). As Genty *et al.* (2021: 8) note, AVT professional practices are far from homogeneous despite being governed by many traditions and conventions.

5. Methodology

The data for this study consist of preliminary and retrospective semi-structured interviews, carried out between March 2021 and January 2022. These interviews focused on the subtitlers' backgrounds, their subtitling projects, practices, habits, and clients. They also investigated the subtitlers' role, as well as their communication and collaboration patterns with other agents within the production networks. The complete dataset for this case study also included a passive observation, which focused more on the subtitling processes, but is beyond the scope of this paper. A thematic analysis was then performed, and the data was coded using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. I employed a 'theoretical' approach, as I set up preliminary research questions linked to work processes, collaboration, and communication, combined with an 'inductive' approach as some themes were established after data analysis and not beforehand (Braun and Clarke 2006). This allowed for the emergence of themes that were not solely based on predefined aspects, but also on the participants' contributions. The analysis thus reflects the focus on the subtitlers, which permits conclusions to be drawn based on their experiences and perspectives.

Participants were recruited through a variety of methods. An initial email explaining the research project was sent to ATAA through the contact form on their website. Additionally, I used social media platforms, in particular Facebook groups for audiovisual translators, to advertise my study. Further recruitment was conducted by individually emailing subtitlers. Ultimately, the most effective recruitment strategy proved to be a combination of personal email outreach and snowball sampling, facilitated

by the first participant who was enthusiastic about the research and recommended colleagues to participate.

The sampling design for the data collection was based on specific criteria:

1. The subtitlers needed to be based in Paris and produce subtitles for a European francophone audience.
2. All subtitlers needed to translate from English into French.
3. Each subtitler needed to have a minimum of 1.5 years of experience in the subtitling industry. This ensured that participants had worked in the subtitling industry before the COVID-19 outbreak, because collaboration and communication are areas of interest in this research and these work patterns might have changed due to lockdown.
4. The subtitlers' activity had to constitute remunerated employment formally commissioned by a client.

The methodology employed in this study presents both advantages and limitations that have been carefully considered. Introductory interviews were used to collect data related to the participants' opinions and thoughts; however, the weakness of this method is that there might be differences with their practices (Saldanha and O'Brien 2013: 170). To address this bias, direct observation was used to give access to the subtitlers' processes and allow for the triangulation of data. The Hawthorne effect was also taken into consideration, as participants' behaviour might be affected if they are aware of being observed (*ibid.*: 222). In order to mitigate these biases, I avoided disclosing to the participants which aspects were being observed or what results were expected, and carried out retrospective interviews to allow them to reflect on the tasks produced. These interviews highlighted that the subtitlers generally followed their usual workflow but tended to take fewer breaks and be more focused on their work due to my presence. The limitation of this study is that the findings are based on a small sample of subtitlers in different production networks of the French subtitling industry and cannot be generalised to the entire francophone market nor to other linguistic areas.

This study was granted ethics approval by the Social Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork (Log 2019-219), as well as by the Comité d'Éthique de la Recherche at Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, where the research was carried out.

6. Findings

In the first instance, the participants and their projects will be introduced. This will be followed by a proposed classification of collaboration patterns in three areas and two modes. This section also examines the opportunities they have for community collaboration.

6.1. Participants

The table below offers an overview of the participants' demographics, background, and the nature of the subtitling project(s) undertaken during the observation. The study involved a diverse group of seven subtitlers, with professional experience ranging from 1.5 to 28 years, working on projects for TV, cinema, and VOD platforms on the day of the observation.

Participant	Gender	Experience in the industry	Subtitling project(s) observed
A	F	20 years	Film for cinema
B	F	1.5 years	Series for VOD platform
C	F	28 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Film for cinema ▪ Film for VOD platform
D	M	19 years	Italian film for VOD platform (with English as pivot language)
E	F	21 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Film for TV channel ▪ 3 Series for VOD platform²
F	F	13 years	Series for TV channel and VOD platform
G	M	18 years	Series for VOD platform

Table 1: Information on participants.

² On the day of the interviews, Participant E showed me these projects, but did not work on them as she had a quiet day after submitting her latest subtitles. Feedback and new bonuses to subtitle would come in the following days.

It should be noted that some participants were working on multiple projects at the time of data collection, which allowed for the investigation of different patterns across diverse clients with the same subtitle. These subtitles may also work on translations intended for different distribution mediums or clients than those observed during data collection. For instance, Participants A and G reported that prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, they primarily worked on cinema subtitling. However, with the closure of French cinemas due to the pandemic, they exceptionally accepted different projects, such as for VOD platforms. Therefore, it should be noted that the subtitlers' practices may differ for other projects intended for different distribution mediums.

6.2. Classification of collaboration

Collaboration, which encompasses both communication and cooperation among team members, is a crucial aspect of subtitling workflows. While communication involves the exchange of information and ideas between individuals, collaboration allows for a more comprehensive and efficient approach to subtitling tasks through a collective effort. The subtitlers' collaboration practices can be categorised into three distinct areas: with clients, with colleagues, and with other agents. These can then belong to one of two modes: formal or informal. While the first area of collaboration (with clients) is formal because it is part of the subtitlers' brief, collaboration with colleagues and other agents can be classified as either formal or informal, as it is not always required by clients, nor officially part of the brief, but can be encouraged or even entirely voluntary. In this section, I will consider each area of collaboration in turn, including the prevalence of the formal and informal mode in each case.

6.2.1. Collaboration with clients

While there are some similarities depending on distribution medium, collaboration and communication can vary considerably from one client to another, and some clients are more organised than others, which can impact workflows. Subtitlers who often work for cinema distribution, such as Participants A, C, and G reported that they communicate mainly with the primary clients, such as the technical directors of distributors or majors. They usually communicate via email or telephone, depending on the formality of the relationship between them. In cinema subtitling, there are

no intermediaries in these discussions, as secondary clients provide solely technical services. Therefore, the communication of project details, as well as negotiation of deadlines and rates, are conducted directly with the primary client, which is consistent with findings from previous studies that have shown this approach to be more rewarding than working through intermediaries (Abdallah 2012: 46; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 55). In the project under investigation, Participant G was working for a VOD platform, but was also able to collaborate with the primary client, which allowed him to negotiate good rates and “comfortable working conditions”. Apart from him, the five other subtitlers who work on video projects reported that their interactions are generally limited to French post-production laboratories or the French branches of LSPs. They do not communicate with the primary client directly, because the laboratory requires all communication to go through them. Instead, they liaise with a project manager or a subtitling manager who oversees the projects, commissions the translations, and provides feedback. In confidentiality-driven contexts, most subtitlers reveal communication challenges due to incomplete information from clients regarding processes and broadcast dates, resulting in shorter deadlines and constant rescheduling, impeding effective collaboration. Participant E shared that her experience differs between her VOD clients’ global approach and her TV projects, which are more organised and offer better communication. For TV projects, she usually receives detailed information, a purchase order, and all the video files in advance, which is crucial for efficient subtitling. As previous studies have highlighted, missing or asymmetrical information is a potential factor impacting the processes and quality of subtitling (Abdallah 2012; Artegiani 2021). Participant F who works for TV and VOD platforms reports that communication can be challenging when she is not informed about where her subtitles will be broadcast. This can later result in a necessary conformation of her subtitles to a specific destination broadcaster’s subtitling norms. This has already generated problems with copyright declarations, as she declared subtitles for one medium, which in the end had been done by a different translator, while her subtitles ended up elsewhere. Di Giovanni (2016: 6) highlights that this is due to the ease of reproducing subtitles compared to purchasing copyrighted files and reusing them, as well as to a “lack of communication/collaboration among the operators”. These issues are compounded by the absence of client archiving, which in Participant F’s case could be mainly attributed to her laboratory acting as an intermediary

to a major client, who then redistributes the subtitles to various media (TV channels or VOD platforms).

6.2.1.1. *Collaboration in quality control*

Subtitling quality control processes are another important form of collaboration with clients. These processes are needed to ensure the accuracy and quality of subtitles, and are another area in which the study revealed significant variations between distribution mediums. The three participants working for cinema can often attend in-person simulations, whereas participants who work on video projects rarely or never attend simulations at laboratories. Only Participant E reports that the quality control processes of her VOD and TV projects involve a commissioned simulation, which is arranged by the post-production company who appoints an external subtitler. Whenever she can, she prefers to attend in-person with this simulation operator and her co-subtitlers. Subsequently, she mentions an additional simulation done internally by her TV client “who has an in-house simulation operator”.

When working for video, the other subtitlers carry out their simulations themselves or remotely with their co-subtitler(s). They receive written feedback, usually via email, following an internal quality control process by the project or subtitling manager in the post-production company. Some believe that this feedback is followed by a simulation or verification from the primary client, but they cannot all ascertain whether this step happens. During these ‘quality checks’, subtitlers sometimes receive a second round of feedback. However, it is not always clear whether the feedback is from a subtitling reviser or a project manager at the primary clients’ company. This indicates a lack of synchronous collaboration between subtitlers and revisers in the quality control process. It therefore remains unclear whether the revisers are themselves subtitlers, which could potentially bring two sets of translation competences into the process, as suggested by some studies (Di Giovanni 2016; Menezes 2022). Nevertheless, this supports Menezes’ (2022) suggestion that further investigation is needed into the roles and responsibilities of subtitling revisers. Regardless of the source of the feedback, subtitlers are responsible for addressing it and making the requested changes to the subtitles. Occasionally, Participant F disagrees with the edits and changes made by clients, leading her to remove her name from the credits. This raises

concerns over copyright and recognition, given that in France it is a legal requirement to credit subtitlers.

The quality control process thus highlights a range of collaboration patterns with clients, which are far from homogenous and vary between in-person simulation, remote simulation, or written feedback. It aligns with Beuchert's (2017: 141) finding from a study of Danish subtitlers' working practices that "all respondents ensure the quality of their subtitles in some way, but that some agencies may not have a procedure in this regard". While in cinema subtitling practices seem to be harmonised and to encompass the highest degree of collaboration, in most cases, in video subtitling there seems to be a lack of collaboration between translators and primary clients, and of consideration of the subtitlers in the quality control process. In-person simulations are preferred by most participants as they provide an opportunity to correct errors, discuss translation strategies, and improve the quality of subtitles. Nevertheless, written feedback and remote communication are often privileged by clients, indicating a divergence in preferred approaches to quality control between the two parties involved.

The responses from most of the subtitlers seem to reveal a lack of transparency regarding workflow, quality control, task assignments, and the overall subtitling process. This lack of transparency can lead to a decrease in the subtitlers' status, pushing them further down the post-production chain. Beyond the dichotomy between collaborative processes in cinema and video subtitling, when asked about their role in the subtitling production network, the majority of participants expressed a lack of comprehensive understanding and shared that they were unfamiliar with the processes preceding and succeeding their file submissions. For many, the challenges of flawed collaboration patterns highlight a lack of consideration for their profession and its creative process, which negatively impacts its sustainability and the quality of subtitling. Nevertheless, these subtitlers generally express high job satisfaction, which is closely linked to collaborative practices with colleagues.

6.2.2. Collaboration with colleagues

This form of collaboration consists of communication with a diverse range of colleagues through formal or informal modes, and can be required or encouraged by clients, or may be voluntary.

The first colleagues that are generally formally involved are co-subtitlers, with whom video subtitlers tend to split series in half. Participants

B, E, and F, who work on series, are required to collaborate with a co-subtitler, to harmonise the translations across seasons and proofread each other's episodes. This collaboration may also be voluntary, as for Participant E who requested to add a third subtitler to one of her VOD projects. In addition to proofreading, she meets in person with her co-subtitlers to do simulations, they exchange ideas via group emails, and collaborate on a glossary. All video subtitlers reported exchanging ideas with co-subtitlers on a regular basis to harmonise their translations with respect to terminology, relationships between characters, and language register. The exception was Participant G, who translated a mini-series for a platform by himself as it only contained 6 episodes. In contrast to Aleksandrowicz's (2022) findings, which often highlighted inconsistencies due to changes in translators between modes, seasons or individual episodes, in the present case study, the episodes are usually shared among the same teams from season to season. They agree from the outset to ensure consistency between episodes and maintain it throughout.

Formal collaborations required by the client commonly involve the dubbing team, to ensure consistency between both versions. They usually collaborate on shared documents, through emails, or send each other their translated files. In her VOD series, Participant B was required to collaborate with the dubbing team prior to the translation process to deliver files containing terminology and forced narratives, i.e., textual elements that appear on screen (Georgakopoulou 2019: 153). Subsequently, however, she was disappointed by the lack of communication with the dubbing team, because she would have liked to be included in the discussion of some translation choices that were made without consulting the subtitlers. On her series, Participant B thus collaborated retroactively with the dubbers, which was similar to Participant G's collaboration patterns on his mini-series. They were sent the dubbing files after their submission and could only check for consistency between the two versions, ensuring there was no major difference in meaning or terminology. This allowed them to review important translation decisions made in the French version, as clients require consistency. Nevertheless, Participant B reported inconsistencies in the dubbing dialogues, which could be corrected in a second recording session, thus highlighting the advantage of collaborating synchronously between translation modes. While cinema subtitlers work alone on the subtitling of their films, they usually are encouraged or required to consult with dubbing teams to harmonise their versions. For her VOD film, Participant C reported that collaboration with the dubber presented

challenges, because the LSP's cloud-based platform does not allow them to export their files in order to share them with one another, despite their translations "being their property". This phenomenon has been highlighted by Boiron and Syssau (2020: 19), and presents legal and ethical issues that would warrant investigation. Nevertheless, the client asked Participant C to communicate with the dubber and follow their choices for important catch phrases, as the dubbed version is the reference "that will be remembered by audiences". A similar request was also made of Participant E by her VOD client, who required collaboration with the dubbers to agree on terminology and forced narratives. As the dubbing was already done, she had to change her subtitles to match what is said in the French audio to avoid inconsistencies, despite sometimes disagreeing with the translation. Although this is frustrating, she acknowledges that she needs "to put [her] ego aside". This highlights a power dynamic in which dubbers hold more decision-making power than subtitlers, which can be linked to consumer preferences as France is traditionally a "dubbing country" (Díaz Cintas and Zhang 2022: 12; Gambier 2012: 46).

For the medical series she is working on, Participant F is not required to work with dubbers. Nevertheless, she was surprised to learn about a 'forced' passive collaboration with dubbers that she had previously been unaware of. She found out about this "when a dubber recently wrote to [her], [about] a typo in a subtitle". The laboratory had shared her subtitling files with the dubbing team without her knowledge, which she finds disrespectful. The unauthorised sharing of copyrighted content not only highlights communication issues and raises ethical and legal concerns for intellectual property rights but also has significant implications for the professional status of audiovisual translators, as it undermines their copyright ownership and rightful recognition for their work.

These collaborations with dubbers highlight the importance that clients place on consistency between modes. Three participants mentioned a 'bible', provided by the clients or self-made, to harmonise terminology. The 'bible' is a list of translations for character names, recurring places and events that appear in the series, as well as the characters' relationships with one another throughout the episodes, including forms of address such as *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement*,³ which is shared with dubbing teams to avoid

³ Translating from English into French presents the challenge of choosing the appropriate form of address between the formal *vous* and the informal *tu* when translating the word 'you', which "must be evaluated carefully" (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2020: 187). Many factors must be considered and therefore, "subtitlers have to resort to other visual,

continuity errors (Loison-Charles 2022: 14). Another form of collaboration that is required by clients, and can be defined as passive, is to collaborate globally through filling out multilingual files with previously established translations, forced narratives, or Key Names and Phrases (KNPs) in every language, which was the case for Participants B and C's VOD projects. This highlights wider formal collaboration and centralisation of translations as a new area of exploration. Although his study focuses on the Polish context specifically, Aleksandrowicz (2022) identifies that, when translators collaboratively edit KNP files, consistency is improved throughout the content. However, within the French context, the proliferation of such supplementary tasks has been identified as problematic due to the increased workload they impose, without corresponding remuneration or extended deadlines (Penot-Lenoir and Renard 2023), thus constituting "free work" (AVTE n.d.).

As regards informal collaboration, voluntary pre-simulations were reported by four participants, who enjoy inviting colleagues over to carry out an informal viewing, despite not always being possible with short deadlines. This step is listed in Gourgeon's (2014: 30) glossary as a preparatory step to refine the text before the official simulation, although here it was sometimes the only in-person simulation. Most subtitlers enjoy sharing their work and exchanging thoughts about translation because, as stated by Participant A, "subtitling is a rather solitary job", and professional growth is fostered through discussions with peers. Participant D also regularly voluntarily engages in informal collaboration with another translator, with whom he either splits episodes and films, exchanges ideas, or condenses and synchronises his first drafts. Many informal exchanges among colleagues also take place on social media, notably on Facebook groups, which aligns with findings in other linguistic contexts such as Denmark (Beuchert 2017: 138).

To summarise, in formal collaboration, film translation is primarily performed by a single subtitler, whereas in the subtitling of series, splitting seasons between two (or more) subtitlers seems to be the norm, except for mini-series. In these collaborative settings, subtitlers agree on terminology and forms of address between characters, discuss solutions, and give each other feedback. Apart from Participant D's Italian film, for which no dubbing seemed to be planned to date, all participants also highlighted collaboration with dubbers, to varying extents. This collaboration is mainly

linguistic and narrative clues in the source film to determine relationships between characters" (*ibid.*).

requested by clients, and, in some cases, may require further investigation into legal and ethical considerations. Informal collaboration, on the other hand, occurs frequently when translators voluntarily decide to engage in collaborative practices, proofreading, or simulations with colleagues who are external to the project.

6.2.3. Collaboration with other agents

Where the subtitlers' collaboration with other agents is concerned, this is often informal. Six subtitlers mention informal collaboration with experts on specialised forums and through calls to associations, when working on projects requiring specific terminology. Participant C mentions that she also often contacts experts through social media to ask questions or recruit them for later projects. Sometimes, she collaborates financially with the dubber to pay these external consultants, and in rare cases she makes a request to her primary clients to pay them, thus officialising the collaboration in the process. The only other occurrence of formality in such exchanges is in Participant F's medical series, in which she collaborates with a doctor hired by the client, who provides feedback and suggestions on the translation of terminology.

In total, three participants collaborate informally with English-native colleagues or friends that they regularly consult for proofreading or to ask questions. The same number of subtitlers also informally collaborate with other language consultants when translating from English as a pivot language. Among them, Participant G specifies that he pays these consultants a daily rate, while Participant D mentions a friendlier exchange with translators and friends who are native speakers of other languages than English, who proofread or contribute to his translations.

Cinema subtitlers report that they are only rarely in touch with film directors or producers, who do not come to simulations and do not interact with post-production as opposed to the case of French to English subtitlers (see Silvester 2022). Occasionally, subtitlers may be able to email them questions if the distributors have put them in contact. In the French industry, subtitling for mainstream distribution thus reveals a lack of inclusion of the subtitlers during the pre-production or production phases. As Participant C states, "Tom Cruise doesn't come to check the subtitles", and subtitlers primarily collaborate at post-production level with clients, colleagues, and experts.

6.3. Community collaboration

Participants in the study highlighted ATAA's role in promoting fruitful collaboration among subtitlers. ATAA⁴ is a community in which members can build networks and collaborate with colleagues, including through peer-recommendations and informal pre-simulations. Participant B, who was new to the market, also reported that the ATAA community provided her with a mentor who recommends her for projects, proofreads her work, and includes her in collaborations. This illustrates the effectiveness of the community in supporting effective collaboration and promoting knowledge sharing between established practitioners and newcomers to the profession.

ATAA also has a forum, which is a valuable space for peer recommendations, discussing technical and linguistic issues and seeking advice on specific terminology from subtitlers with expertise in particular fields. The association's members interact through various channels: the Discord forum, the ATAA blog, social media, or the committee. Furthermore, ATAA aims to create connections between clients and members, providing a database for clients containing the translators' contact information, language pairs, and any other information they wish to display, as well as a section to make job offers.

ATAA's guidelines and reference documents, particularly the subtitling and dubbing guide (ATAA 2019), have been recognised as essential in promoting best practices in the industry. The association notably advocates for greater recognition and visibility of AVT professions and promotes unity among translators in the community. ATAA monitors the AVT industry in order to provide valuable information and insights, while also supporting French audiovisual translators by defending their rights and ensuring proper working conditions and fair rates (e.g., Blake *et al.* 2023).

Community collaboration has proven to be effective in enhancing working conditions in the AVT industry, as seen in the online collaboration among subtitlers in the Finnish industry that resulted in harmonising their working conditions (Tuominen 2018), and in the SubComm proposal by Silvester and Tuominen (2021), aiming to bring together subtitling practitioners and academics to increase subtitlers' visibility and recognition. The importance of community collaboration has also been recognised in a recent survey of AVT stakeholders (Nikolić and Bywood 2021), which identified the need for greater cooperation and standardisation in the

⁴ ATAA (n.d.). <https://beta.ataa.fr/>

industry. Widening the scope of collaboration could improve the working conditions of subtitlers (Kuo 2015: 190), and as such, it is clear that cooperation between subtitlers, academics, and other industry stakeholders could also improve recognition, visibility, and ultimately the sustainability of the profession.

7. Collaboration in the globalised age

The globalisation of processes has generated changes to the subtitlers' traditional workflows, leading to a "cloud turn" (Bolaños-García-Escribano and Díaz Cintas 2020), in which social dynamics have shifted. Research conducted in other contexts has indeed shown that the primary change in collaboration occurred due to the shift from traditional face-to-face interactions to online collaboration (Artegiani 2021; Künzli 2023), particularly when working for VOD clients. In this study, the clients' need for confidentiality has been reported to create challenges in processes, such as LSPs typically sending episodes one by one, thus limiting the subtitler's ability to watch the final episodes before submitting the first ones and make changes if inconsistencies are discovered in previous episodes. Similarly, as a result of the increasing demand for simultaneous translation across multiple languages, Participant E reports being frequently tasked with translating episode summaries and titles for VOD projects prior to viewing the content. Four out of seven respondents mentioned globalisation and automation as decreasing the quality of collaboration. They reported experiencing challenges in regard to the imposition by LSPs of non-user-friendly cloud-based subtitling platforms, including the need for high-speed internet to work; locked templates; lack of rights on their copyrighted translations; no systematic access to the full and final video content before subtitling; replacement of in-person simulations; and monitoring of the subtitlers' progress in real-time. Künzli (2023: 9-10), who has identified similar evolutions in German-language subtitling, notes that collaboration on subtitling platforms has been "marketed as an advantage for subtitlers", when in reality it has increased anonymity and the monitoring of productivity, thus generating further ethical challenges. While Massidda (2022: 27) states that "[t]he future of subtitling is in the cloud", Artégiani (2021) argues that cloud subtitling platforms are unsustainable, because they isolate subtitlers and decrease visibility, communication and collaboration between agents in the network. Her study analysed platforms that

automated many processes, including task assignment, which did not allow for much collaboration outside the platform. In contrast, the present study found that despite reduced collaboration in cloud-based environments, participants also communicated externally to the platforms, e.g., via emails, with project and subtitling managers, notably regarding information on the project, deadlines and rates negotiations, as well as with dubbing teams and other agents.

Oziemblewska and Szarkowska's (2022) survey of 344 subtitlers provided insight into their opinions on templates used in cloud-based subtitling and highlighted that the subtitlers did not all welcome this trend and that templates can negatively impact rates and professional status. Nikolić (2015: 201) argues that "templates are here to stay", but that better communication and understanding between subtitlers and clients could result in better products for viewers. Improving template files and understanding the needs of the translators could thus increase quality. Guidelines for improving templates have notably been suggested by Georgakopoulou (2019) and Oziemblewska and Szarkowska (2022). In this study, two participants deplored that templates and other tasks are often outsourced to countries with lower labour costs, which impedes the improvement of skills and the exchange of knowledge between generations through interactions. Participant A agrees with the idea that "to exchange ideas and debate with a fellow translator will most likely lead to higher quality translation" (O'Brien 2011: 19). Decreases in collaboration thus challenge the subtitlers' workflow and can subsequently hinder the quality of the final product. In this study, over half of the interviewees expressed concerns about the decrease in subtitling quality and reported a lack of interest from LSPs in producing quality content. These findings are consistent with other studies that have highlighted concerns about declining quality as a result of deteriorating working conditions (Künzli 2023). By prioritising speed over quality and accelerating processes, LSPs create challenging time constraints that reduce possibilities for collaboration. Nikolić's (2021) investigation found that deadlines are often too short for quality control, and that not all clients prioritise this step. Abdallah (2012) also emphasises that translators are not solely responsible for quality, as it depends on collective decisions and the involvement of multiple agents and factors that can influence the outcome. This highlights the need for further research exploring the link between collaboration and the quality of subtitles.

In this study, it is important to note that the majority of participants had extensive experience in the industry and had been following the well-established French guidelines and processes for decades, before encountering significant changes due to globalisation. From their perspective, these changes might have significantly altered their workflows. However, investigating the attitudes of new subtitlers towards globalised practices would be insightful, as those who have not experienced different working conditions may express less concern. Participant B, for example, expressed overall satisfaction with the processes and collaboration with globalised clients. Nevertheless, she expressed concern over decreasing rates and tighter deadlines, a common attitude shared by all subtitlers, highlighting an overall decline in compensation across all areas of the profession. Despite these challenges, six out of seven subtitlers expressed their enjoyment in collaborating with colleagues and the satisfaction derived from engaging in the creative process of translating subtitles.

Conclusions

This research has demonstrated the value of adopting the Translator Studies paradigm in exploring the perspectives of subtitlers and their roles in the AVT industry from a sociological approach. This study has filled a gap in the existing literature by undertaking a comprehensive exploration of the collaborative dimension of subtitling. By examining the perspectives and experiences of French subtitlers, it has identified three key areas of collaboration within production networks, thereby providing valuable insights in response to the research question.

By highlighting the challenges and benefits of collaboration and their variations in different settings, the study has demonstrated that it is an essential factor to consider for processes, working conditions, and product quality. Collaboration can significantly benefit the subtitlers' job satisfaction, can help to mitigate the sense of isolation that subtitlers can feel from working as freelancers, and can improve their skills and productivity. However, this study has also identified areas where the lack of collaboration, such as with primary clients and revisers, as well as globalised and virtualised practices, negatively impact the production networks and ultimately the quality of subtitles. Moreover, inadequate transparency and communication within the workflow may give rise to ethical concerns regarding copyright and translation ownership.

The findings of this small-scale, in-depth study provide valuable insights into the importance of collaboration within subtitling production networks. These can be used to inform future research in the AVT industry by encouraging further investigation into the relationship between collaboration and subtitle quality, or the ramifications of global collaborative files on final products, and exploring the attitudes of new subtitlers towards globalised working conditions. Furthermore, this study's findings can inform industry practices by emphasising the need for greater transparency and communication within the workflow in order to address ethical concerns. This study ultimately emphasises the importance of fostering community collaboration among subtitlers, as well as with the various stakeholders involved in the AVT industry.

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Love it, hate it, tolerate it: Translators' experiences with concurrent translation on collaborative platforms

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Abstract

Collaborative translation has evolved significantly over time, especially in the last 20 years, driven by advancements in digital communication technologies. The evolution of technology contributed to the changes in the collaborative processes and enabled collaboration to assume different forms in terms of proximity of collaborators (on-site/remote), time factors (synchronous/a-synchronous), and configurations of collaborators (horizontal/vertical). This article aims to contribute to the understanding of the nature of collaborative translation as affected by evolving technologies and how translators are adapting to these changes. The focus will be on Concurrent Translation (CT), i.e., synchronous translation production activity carried out for commercial reasons on cloud-based collaborative platforms by multiple, predominantly trained translation professionals and on translators' experiences with this new workflow based on a qualitative analysis of a survey of 804 translators.

Keywords: Collaborative translation, concurrent translation (CT), cloud-based translation, translation workflows, translation platforms, collaborative technologies.

1. Introduction

Collaborative translation has a long history and has evolved significantly over time, especially in the last 20 years, driven by advancements in digital communication technologies (Alfer 2017; Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017; O'Brien 2011; O'Hagan 2011; Trzeciak-Huss 2018).

In the past, collaborative translation involved teams of translators, scribes or scholars who worked manually on sections of religious, scientific, or philosophical texts and then combined their work into a final translation by collaboratively reconciling discrepancies. In order to collaborate, the

translators had to be physically co-located and work together more or less synchronously. So, the early days of collaborative translation were synchronous and horizontal, i.e., amongst translators. In addition, although the distinction between the roles (e.g., editor, reviser, project manager) was not very clear, it can be assumed there was an a-synchronous vertical collaboration between the translators and other agents in the translation process (i.e., editor, reviser).

This process remained virtually unchanged until the invention of the computer and the Internet which allowed for horizontal and vertical collaboration to be carried out online. Multiple translators no longer had to be physically co-located, and in the early stages of Web 1.0, they could work with computer-aided-translation (CAT) tools and contribute to the same document by sending it back and forth via email or other means remotely. This removed the location restrictions but the limitations of desktop CAT tools, and file sharing and storing, made the horizontal collaboration a-synchronous. In the early 2000s, the emergence of Web 2.0 and cloud computing prompted the development of web-based collaborative platforms which enabled simultaneous, non-linear, and fast collaboration (CSA 2021: 5-6). With them, new forms of collaboration in translation appeared, thus bringing back the element of synchronicity, this time at scale. The new collaborative platforms enabled online and real-time horizontal collaboration with potentially unlimited translators being able to contribute simultaneously to the same document. Furthermore, they introduced the possibility of synchronous and real-time vertical collaboration in which translators can collaborate with project managers, editors, subject matter experts (SMEs), and clients. Apart from the enhanced collaborative environment, these platforms support production through the sharing of translation memories (TM) and glossaries, deployment of machine translation (MT), and increasing workflow automation tools. Concurrent Translation (CT) is a workflow model that can be executed on these platforms and can be defined as a translation production activity carried out for commercial reasons, by multiple, predominantly trained translation professionals, using technologies that enable horizontal and vertical collaboration, but only in a synchronous way, i.e., working on one text concurrently (Gough *et al.* 2023: 47).

This evolution of technology has arguably allowed translators to work more collaboratively as well as more efficiently and effectively (Smartcat 2013; Smartling 2013; Motaword 2013). The selling points usually associated with the strengths of this new form of platform-mediated collaborative

translation include reduced translation cost and increased speed whilst maintaining quality due to the real-time TM updates from all collaborators, and integrated chat tools to facilitate communication and query resolution in real-time. Combined with other benefits such as fast and flexible onboarding and increased control of data and processes, the demand for this type of service increased, and the number of collaborative platforms has risen exponentially in recent years (Nimdzi Language Technology Atlas 2022).

Although it is clear that the technologies supporting collaborative translation have evolved towards supporting faster text production and reducing the turnaround time, we do not yet have enough evidence as to whether the process and the nature of collaborative translation performed using these technologies evolved as well toward supporting collaborative work. Especially, little is known about how the element of synchronicity in collaborative translation has affected the translation process and the product in terms of translation quality, and the translators themselves – particularly when it involves a large number of collaborators who rarely know or trust each other (Gough *et al.* 2023: 63). This article aims to contribute to the understanding of the nature of collaborative translation as affected by evolving technologies, with a focus on Concurrent Translation (CT), and on translators’ experiences with this new workflow based on qualitative analysis of a survey of 804 translators.

2. Collaboration in translation and translation technologies

The translation process is generally conceptualised as focusing “unduly on a single individual as translator regardless of the fact that there is ample historical evidence to show that translation is often a collaborative process” (James 2017: 282). For centuries, translation has been practiced as a collaborative activity; therefore, “the popular image of the lonely translator is strikingly at odds with the reality of his or her work within the profession” (Cordingley and Frigau-Manning 2017: 1), both in the past and now.

Collaboration in translation can take different forms, happen at different stages of the translation process and at different levels of intensity, and include different agents in the continuum of processes in translation. Understood as a broader process, collaborative translation happens “not just between multiple translators but also between translators, authors, clients, project managers, editors, and myriad other (both human and

textual) stakeholders” (Alfer 2017: 2). A similar view by O’Brien (2011) sees collaboration as a broad concept going beyond cooperation among teams of translators and/or crowdsources and exists in all types of translation scenarios and across the whole process of translation between two or more translators or between translators and other agents such as authors, publishers, and translation agencies. In their seminal work on the history of collaboration in translation, Cordingley and Frigau Manning (2017) trace the evolution of collaboration, discuss the concept of collaboration between the translator and the author, and finally explore how current translation practices are influenced by the contemporary environments of collaboration.

Those contemporary environments are now predominantly affected by the “technological turn” both in the practice of translation and the discipline of Translation Studies (Cronin 2003; Jiménez-Crespo 2020; O’Hagan 2013; Zhang and Cai 2015) and have led to a remarkable change in collaboration in the translation practice. O’Hagan (2013: 503) argues that the advancements in technology have affected both translators’ microcosm (the immediate local work environment being shaped by the development of translation tools and platforms such as CAT tools, TMs, terminology management, and MT systems), and their macrocosm (global operating contexts being affected by the creation of new content requiring translations and affording new ways of doing translation, e.g., crowdsourcing). The technology-instigated rise of new digital products such as software and websites as well as globalisation, and the resulting need for companies to sell their products to global markets in multiple languages at the same time on a global scale, have not only created new content and text types to be translated (e.g., localisation of websites, software and other technology- and marketing-related content) but also required new solutions to manage high volumes of translations within shorter turnaround. This engendered new translation practices such as localisation and crowdsourcing or concurrent translation, within which the impact of the technological turn on the translators’ immediate and extended work environment has clear repercussions for collaborative work.

Another influence of the technological turn on the translators’ macro environment is the rise of bilingual, non-professional translators and their involvement in professional translation (O’Hagan 2009, 2013). Thus, it could be said that the evolving technologies have altered and redefined the profiles and roles of the translator and changed the way they collaborate. The emerging concepts of volunteer translation, social translation,

community translation, fan translation, fansubbing, and crowdsourcing (O’Brien 2011: 17) facilitated new forms of collaboration for translators allowing them to work with a larger number of bilingual/multilingual volunteers creating their own models of collaboration (Orrego-Carmona 2019). This led to the development of new platforms and tools to support these particular types of collaboration (O’Hagan 2013: 506). Furthermore, cloud-based translation tools and platforms, unlike computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools that were mainly designed for professionals, became accessible to a broader range of bilingual/multilingual web users, thereby influencing the broader context in which professional translators collaborate with non-professionals.

Referring to these new kinds of solicited and unsolicited collaborative translation efforts, Zwischenberger (2021) uses the umbrella term “online collaborative translation” which can be performed with personal, social, and commercial motivators (O’Brien 2011: 18). Jiménez-Crespo (2017: 194) explores a specific collaborative phenomenon, translation crowdsourcing, and argues that the most important feature of crowdsourcing is “its dependency on collaborative web-mediated environments, pointing to the importance of the technological environment in collaborative work.” In order to distinguish between various forms of collaborative translation activities, Gough *et al.* (2023) provide a categorisation of these activities based on key features (Table 1) such as the commissioning agent (self-commissioned vs. externally commissioned), sector (commercial vs. non-commercial), motivation (monetary vs. non-monetary), type of worker (professional vs. non-professional), process-collaboration configurations (horizontal vs. vertical) and process-time configurations (synchronous vs. asynchronous). This allowed to place concurrent translation on the map of collaborative translation activities and emphasise its distinctive features:

Features		Types of Collaborative Translation							
		Online Collaborative /Community /Fan/ Volunteer Translation		Unpaid Crowdsourcing		Paid Crowdsourcing		Concurrent Translation	
Commissioning Agent									
Self-commissioned (SC)	Externally commissioned (EC)	(SC)			(EC)		(EC)		(EC)
Sector									

Commercial (C)	Non-commercial (NC)		(NC)		(NC)	(C)		(C)	
Motivation									
Monetary (M)	Non-monetary (NM)		(NM)		(NM)	(M)		(M)	
Type of Worker									
Professional (P)	Non-professional (NP)		(NP)		(NP)	(P)	(NP)	(P)	(NP) ₁
Process – Collaboration Configurations									
Horizontal (H)	Vertical (V)	(H)		(H)	(V)	(H)	(V)	(H)	(V)
Process – Time Configurations									
Synchronous (S)	Asynchronous (AS)		(AS)	(S)	(AS)	(S)	(AS)	(S)	

Table 1: Types of collaborative translation and their features

The main distinctive feature of CT is the synchronous, i.e., concurrent, nature of the translation activities and the fact that potentially an unlimited number of collaborators could be involved at the same time in both horizontal and vertical configurations. It is important to note that not all collaborative translation platforms are used in concurrent mode. Many are also used in the more traditional Translate-Edit-Proofread (TEP) delivery (Gough and Perdikaki 2018) or by splitting texts into smaller chunks for non-synchronous translation and delivery by individual translators. In CT workflow, collaboration happens in a scenario where one text is simultaneously translated by a number of translators – whether by splitting a text and assigning segments to individual translators (split and assign) or by allowing translators to select segments on a first come- first served basis (first come-first served).

Thus, Concurrent Translation can be seen as a form of collaborative translation which is a direct ‘product’ of the technological turn as it has been enabled by, and now solely depends on, the cloud-based infrastructure, super-fast telecommunication networks, and collaborative translation technologies.

¹ CT is performed predominantly by professional translators. However, due to the recruitment methods of some platforms, non-professionals might also be involved.

3. Previous studies on online collaborative translation

The accelerating technological developments and globalisation, challenge and change the conventional modes of operation in many business practices, including translation. In order to understand and assess the implications of these new approaches and workflows on the translators, translation process, product, and practices, and find the best way to implement them, research is much needed.

In Translation Studies, research carried out on online collaborative translation has so far focused on the conceptual, social, and ethical dimensions (Morera-Mesa, Collins and Filip 2013; O'Brien and Schäler 2010; O'Hagan 2009 and 2011; Orrego-Carmona 2019; Zwischenberger 2021). More recently, academic research has also focussed on the working conditions and ethical issues of commercial online collaborative translation (Firat 2021; García 2015 and 2017; Moorkens 2020), whilst the industry surveys (CSA 2021) examined the uptake and features of the collaborative translation practices. Heinisch and Iacono (2019) analysed the attitudes toward translation platforms among translators at different professional stages and with varying length of experience. They found that professional translators who have already gained ground in the translation sector and are satisfied with their order management (coordinating more than one translation project from ordering to invoicing) are sceptical about platforms providing order management features, whereas students, regardless of their practical translation experience, have a more positive attitude towards these platforms.

The literature dealing specifically with translation in concurrent mode is scarce despite the fact that this commercial practice has recently gained more ground (Gough and Perdikaki 2018; Gough *et al.* 2023). The pilot study by Gough and Perdikaki (2018) focussing on the nature of work in CT found that CT had an impact on “many dimensions of the translation product and process” including cognitive aspects and technology-mediated social interaction (Gough and Perdikaki 2018: 85). Further, translators acknowledged the benefits of working concurrently with peers, found the fellowship aspect of the workflow attractive and appreciated working in an intuitive streamlined environment with integrated TM, glossaries and MT (Gough and Perdikaki 2018: 85). However, the translators also expressed reservations related to the many challenges presented by CT. They seem to have decreased autonomy and responsibility for the overall translation, and this has implications on the translation quality or poses challenges related

to the interpersonal dynamics. For example, the proximity and instantaneity of the editor might lead to discomfort and a feeling of relinquished responsibility among the translators or increase competition among the peers. Transparency of the environment was also reported to be an issue as some translators did not want others to see their work in progress, leading some to translating segments outside the platform environment and then pasting them back (Gough and Perdikaki 2018: 85-86). Further, the changed translation process in CT is reported to present a challenge, especially for those translators who prefer end revision (Carl, Dragsted and Jakobsen 2011).

Based on the above pilot study, Gough *et al.* (2023) further examined the perceptions of translators regarding the CT workflow and its possible influence on the translation process, the output and the translators themselves. The main findings suggest that whilst some translators identified positive elements of working in CT mode such as peer learning, positive competition, speed and flexibility of the volume of work and working time, as well as reduced responsibility and reduced stress, many mentioned the adverse effects such as excessive time pressure, negative competition, translation process-related issues, lack of control over the workflow and on the final quality, translating out of context, quality (as perceived by the participants) compromised for speed, trust and remuneration issues. Heinisch and Iacono (2019: 78-79) report on similar advantages and disadvantages of platform-mediated workflow. Among the advantages are facilitation of exchange and collaboration with colleagues, the possibility of discussing issues related to translation with other translators or forwarding inquiries to colleagues, helping translators get translation jobs, facilitation of project management, increasing productivity, and saving time and costs. As for the disadvantages, the same study reports on competition among translators, dependency on the platform, less control over decisions, e.g., on time, work and accepting or refusing a translation assignment. A recurrent theme was also translations offered by non-professional translators on these platforms. However, their study focussed on management and coordination of translation jobs (from receiving an order to invoicing) as facilitated by platforms, not on the translation process in its narrower sense (i.e., during the act of translation), as is the case with the present study where the focus is on CT.

The aim of the present article is to extend the reporting of the findings by Gough *et al.* (2023) by elaborating on the translators' experiences of CT by means of a qualitative analysis of a survey of 804 translators working in

CT mode across 49 platforms (for the list of platforms, see Gough *et al.* 2023: 70-71). The findings tell a story of collaborative translation in the age of globalisation and acceleration where translators mainly work together, but do not necessarily collaborate in pursuit of a common goal; where they compete rather than cooperate, and where they produce translations where the perceived quality is often compromised for speed.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample

An online survey designed in Qualtrics was distributed via snowball sampling to translators, using professional networks and social media. The questionnaire was piloted and reviewed by experienced researchers in Translation Studies. Following an approval of the project by the University of Surrey Ethics Committee, data from 804 participants was collected (March-June 2020). Participants were given identity numbers to ensure anonymity during data analysis.

Due to the snowball sampling method, it was not feasible to control the number of participants working with a particular platform, and this has impacted the representativeness of the sample and limited the claims and generalisations that can be made. We had a high response rate (70%) from one platform (Motaword). However, at the same time, 46% of the translators working with this platform reported also working with other platforms. In order to consider potential bias in the sample, we conducted a sub-sample analysis of participants who reported using only Motaword (n=303) and those who reported using platforms other than Motaword (n=236). This analysis helped to ensure that any observed relationships between variables were not solely attributable to this one platform. Significant relationships ($p < .05$) between several variables and the platforms used by participants (Motaword vs. other platform users) were revealed by Chi-square tests of independence. The association/effect size (Cramer's V) for the Chi-square tests was low ($< .3$) in most instances; however, some moderate to high associations (.3 to .5) were identified, and these are reported where relevant in the quantitative analysis presented in Gough *et al.* (2023). In the present paper, which focuses on the qualitative data, we took this sub-sample analysis into account as well in order to provide a balanced representation in terms of quotations from the qualitative data.

4.2. Data analysis

Data was cleaned and analysed quantitatively using SPSS. Participants who indicated no prior experience with CT as well as those who answered less than half of the questions in the survey (n=27) were removed from the sample. This resulted in a total sample size of n=804. The survey data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, and the main findings were reported in Gough *et al.* (2023). These results will be referred to where relevant. However, the present article will focus on qualitative, in-depth analysis of the qualitative questions and free text responses.

The free text responses were provided by 605 out of 804 survey participants, which accounts for 75% of the total sample. The qualitative data was analysed using MAXQDA and subjected to thematic content analysis. This allowed us to identify patterns as well as main and subsidiary themes that emerged from the participants' responses, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives related to the CT workflow. So, unless we specifically refer to the quantitative data of 804 participants, all the percentages mentioned in the present article comes from free text responses provided by 605 participants.

4.3. Sample profile

The sample deviates slightly from other surveys of translators in terms of age (relatively younger), gender (more balanced), professional experience (fewer years of experience) and formal training in translation (higher percentage with formal training). The sample included a total of 84 languages, 233 language pairs, and 365 language directions. More details about the sample and methodology in general can be found in Gough *et al.* (2023).

5. Findings

The qualitative data was grouped under three broad themes: 'affordances', i.e., advantages of CT workflow, 'issues' participants encountered when working in CT mode, and 'consequences' of these issues. A total of 8% of the participants expressed only positive opinions (affordances), while 76% mentioned only negative aspects (issues and consequences) of this workflow. A total of 16% expressed both positive and negative thoughts.

Participants (referred to as ‘P’) reported working on a broad range of platforms (n=49), the classification of which poses challenges due to their diversified nature and constant evolution. We retrospectively decided to focus on two types of approaches to task allocation in CT on these platforms (Gough *et al.* 2023): (1) ‘split and assign’ where a project manager splits a text and assigns it to a limited number of translators; and (2) ‘first come-first served’ – a more automated approach – where a text is made available to an unlimited number of translators who pick segments on the ‘first come-first served’ basis (Table 2). To the best of our knowledge about the platforms, 30% of our sample worked with ‘split and assign’ workflow only, while 38% of the sample worked only with ‘first come-first served’ approach. The remaining 32% of participants used both workflows (Table 2). Although either of these workflows seem to be adopted by the relevant platforms as the main approach, some workflows might contain both configurations, which makes a categorisation challenging. In order to get a more balanced picture of the data, we made an analysis by taking this variation in the sample into account. When presenting the findings, the quotes by the participants working with ‘split and assign’ approach are indicated with (SA), i.e., P1 (SA), and those reported by the participants working with ‘first come-first served’ approach are indicated with (FF), i.e., P2 (FF). The quotes by the participants working with both workflows are indicated with (SA+FF), i.e., P3 (SA+FF). We acknowledge that the 99% of the data belonging to ‘first come-first served’ approach in the present sample comes from the translators who use Motaword. Therefore, whenever a relationship between these two approaches is mentioned, the relevant result related to the FF approach comes mostly from Motaword users.

Approach	Types of the platforms in the sample based on the approach to task distribution	Examples of platforms	Distribution of the participants across the platforms in the sample %
‘First come-first served’ (Automated approach)	‘First come-first served’ platforms for translation	Unbabel, Motaword, Flitto	38%
‘Split and assign’ (Managed by a project manager)	Language Service Provider (LSP) with their own translation technology platform / TMS	SDL Trados Groupshare, Gengo	30%

	Translation Management Systems	CrowdIn, Memsource, MemoQCloud, Lingotek, Smartcat	
	Cloud-based CAT Tools with collaborative functions	Matecat, Wordfast, Dejavu	
	Language/multilingual content-related businesses who own/developed translation technology for translation-related tasks (transcription, media localisation, AI data)	Agito/Language Wire, Appen, Rev.com, Sfera	
	Non-language related businesses who own/developed translation technology for their own needs	SAP, Pixelogic, QT	
Both and 'First come-first served' and 'Split and assign'		All of the above	32%
Total			100%

Table 2: Distribution of the participants (n=804) across the types of platforms in the sample

A quantitative representation of free comments reveals that negative free comments regarding the CT workflow outweigh the positive ones regardless of the two different workflow configurations. For example, in the FF approach, 6% of the comments represents affordances, while 76% represents issues and consequences. In the SA approach, these figures are 12% and 68%, respectively (Table 3). Overall, despite the negative comments and attitudes toward CT outweighing the positive ones, the negative attitude seems to be more prevalent for the users of platforms with FF approach compared to the users of SA approach.

Positive and negative comments distributed across workflows in the sample			
	FF %	SA %	SA+FF%
Positive only	6	12	6
Positive & Negative	18	20	12

Negative Only	76	68	82
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Table 3: Positive and negative comments distributed across the workflows. Split and Assign (SA) and First-Come-First-Served (FF)

5.1. Affordances

The theme of ‘affordances’ highlights four main sub-themes: a sense of community, friendly competition, increased translation speed and greater flexibility of work. The ‘community aspect’ stands out as the main reason why some translators like working in CT mode. According to P20 (SA), concurrent workflow stimulates collaboration and teamwork, and provides opportunities for learning together in an encouraging environment where they can benefit from each others’ comments and help. P20 says they “feel the support and feel a little more comfortable because other experts will contribute” whilst P8 (SA) thinks that “collaborative online translation platforms are a great asset, as sharing translations has always been done.” In addition, according to the quantitative data, 62% of the participants think that, when they work in concurrent mode, translators can learn from one another, while 23% remained neutral and 15% disagreed with that statement.

Those mentioning the community aspect as an affordance also emphasise that they enjoy a friendly competition, and they find CT workflow motivating to work faster and produce higher-quality output. Also, they say that it is fun working with others as a team, and more interesting to solve problems through communication. Although they find CT challenging and stressful, they also think that it helps them to work faster and produce higher-quality translations. P10 (FF) states that “sometimes I am more motivated to produce great quality because I don’t want other people to see my potentially embarrassing errors.” For P22 (SA), CT “is very stressful because someone is watching my work but also can be helpful to get good quality of result.”

Speed is the third sub-theme under affordances, and it is claimed to be facilitated by CT mode. Some participants think they work faster in CT and at the same time produce higher quality translations as compared to translating outside the platforms. According to P40, “it’s the way forward: it helps with speed, quality, communication, and quality assurance.” P799 (FF) reports that CT “enables faster translation process and quality work and gaining experience”, while P152 (SA) mentions that in CT mode “the

end-result is a translation of higher quality, completed in less cumulative time spent for translation and editing.”

The flexibility of volume and timing is also a factor that creates positive views of concurrent translation on platforms especially in the FF approach. According to the responses, concurrent workflow helps translators manage their own workload and schedule as they are free to decide when and what portion of the translation assignment they will take. The opportunity to choose the segments they feel comfortable with seems to be a factor affecting their preference for this workflow. In addition, not having to commit to the whole translation assignment adds to this positive perception of CT. P723 (FF) prefers CT “because there’s no obligation to complete the entire assignment. I can do as much or as little I like, without pressure. If I am committing to completing the entire translation, I look through the entire document to be sure I feel comfortable with the topic, content, writing style, etc. as well as the deadline.” P734 (FF) says, “it’s the ability to work whenever and as much as I want. Less time pressure.” Flexibility is also extended to involve the relinquishment of responsibility and ownership of the translation assignment as a whole, which brings together the reduced level of stress. “It can be less stressful because it is non-binding – you can decide at any point that you don’t want to continue and just leave the platform”, P334 (FF) says.

Our data reveals that the technological environment provided by the platforms brings together affordances for translators which have potentially enhanced the collaborative processes in translation by means of promoting community aspect, friendly competition, increased speed and flexibility of the volume of work and working time. The affordances provided by the SA paradigm focus more on the community aspect of collaboration by facilitating friendly competition and mutual learning, whereas the affordances provided by FF approach are more related to the flexibility of the volume of work/working time, relinquishment of responsibility, ownership, and the corresponding lower level of stress. Research into CT exploring the possibilities of how to capitalise on these affordances is necessary to improve CT workflows.

5.2. Issues

Whilst 8% of the participants mentioned only the affordances of the CT workflow, 16% expressed both positive and negative thoughts, and 76% of them mentioned only negative aspects and the resulting unfavourable

consequences. The main highlighted issues include time pressure, translation process-related changes (limited self-revision during the drafting phase, precluded end-revision due to confirming segments sooner, less time on research), ineffective use of built-in communication tools, divergent translation styles and competences, and insufficient remuneration.

Time pressure is the most prominent problem, and it seems to be the root cause of many other issues. More than half of the participants (56%) state that they feel the pressure to work faster in order to get more segments to translate and this makes them feel as if they are in a race. This enforced pace is reportedly adding yet another hassle to the time pressure that might be otherwise part of any translation assignment outside of the CT workflow, leading to extra mental stress and discomfort for translators. Unlike 1.3% of the participants who think that concurrent workflow on platforms stimulates friendly competition, 36% say that working concurrently under time pressure engenders negative competition and makes them feel stressed. This is reportedly because of the need to rush to secure the next segment to translate, restricting translators' freedom to work at their own pace and to take breaks when they need to. Referring to the time pressure, P616 (FF) says, "what I dislike is that sometimes it feels like a *shark tank*² where you need to be fast in order to make a reasonable amount of profit." P76 (SA) compares working in CT to a *horse race* where "all translators [are] typing and running to confirm segments, more segments more money." According to P673 (FF), "the nature of the platform means that segments are only *up for grabs* until someone has done them. I think this encourages people to work faster, without revising the context of the segment." Referring to the prevalent time pressure, P746 (FF) says that "to be able to get paid you need to *beat* the other translators to the segments, it's a ridiculous way of working." P619 (FF) mentions that in CT mode, "the more you grab of the cake before other translators, the more you earn, so work fast and don't look back... bad quality." Time pressure is inherent in almost any translation task; however, it seems to be more pertinent in CT workflow, especially in the FF approach, where competition seems fierce.

In addition to time pressure, concurrent access to the source text by many translators is reported to have multiple implications for the translation process. Based on quantitative data, more than half of all the participants (59%) think that their translation process is different when they work in CT. One of the frequently mentioned changes was related to translators' self-

² *Emphasis* in the original quotes by the participants.

revision during different phases of the translation. Carl, Dragsted and Jakobsen (2011) identify three types of self-revision: ‘online revision’ (during the translation drafting phase), ‘end-revision’ (after the drafting phase is completed, and ‘constant revision’ (a combination of online and end-revision). In CT workflow, translators’ self-revision changes in a way that end-revision is precluded due to having to confirm segments sooner. This makes translators who normally prefer end-revision focus more on self-revising their work during the drafting phase, changing their style to online revision. This confirms the findings by Gough and Perdikaki (2018: 83). However, the present study reveals that CT not only shifts the focus from end-revision to online revision but also leads to a limited online revision or replacing it with a rather superficial drafting phase without a proper online revision. P815 (FF) says, “my translation cannot mature as it should, I cannot revise it thoroughly enough as a comprehensive text at the end [...] I need to produce a more solid first version and not revise it, if possible, instead of my preferred method of producing a fast draft and reworking it maybe even several times.” Time pressure and superficial drafting make translators confirm the segments they translate sooner than they would have done in a non-concurrent workflow, leading to the perception that their “unfinished work is regarded as finished”. The CSA Research (2021: 18) also reports on this phenomenon by calling it a “premature review step”.

The final time-pressure-related change in the translation process in concurrent workflow is the time and effort spent on research and revision while translating. The participants report spending less time on researching and revision, and they also admit to “cherry-picking of easy segments” to be able to secure a larger part of the translation assignment. P717 (FF) suggests that “pushing anything but the most basic translation through a process aimed principally on low cost and translation speed inevitably eliminates proper revision and [...] removes contextual revision as well.” P5 (SA) says, “I translate faster and revise less”, while P74 (SA) states that “I definitely revise less because I feel less responsibility/ownership for the quality of the finished translation.”

Apart from working against the time, translators also reported being conscious that their translations can be seen, as they unfold, by other translators and the editor working on the platform, which also alters their normal translation process, especially the self-revision pattern. P40 (SA) says that “I spend more time the first time round in case I’m being checked already. When I work alone, I spend less time on the first round and more

time going over it all at the end because they only see the final version.” This also confirms findings by Gough and Perdikaki (2018).

Participants’ responses to the question of whether they can go back and self-revise the segments they translated and submitted/confirmed draw an unclear picture as their responses are split between ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ across the platforms. Overall, 56% say they cannot go back and revise their own segments, while 44% said they can. Some report that in cases when they realised they had made a mistake and would want to go back, they choose not to because this might be regarded as “correction of a wrong translation” and this would set them back in getting new translation jobs. When translators were asked whether and how concurrent workflow differs from non-concurrent workflow, a comment by P513 (SA+FF) sums it up as follows: “Of course, it’s completely different! We work under great pressure to be fast and fluent at the same time! We need to work as fast as we can as there are few segments available compared to the number of translators joined online.” Moreover, participants feel anxious about being unable to manage their own time, having breaks when they need them, and having to be on call 24/7.

Our data reveals that instant, flexible communication required for CT workflow is either not fully supported or that translators are not aware of the existing possibilities. When asked whether the platforms they work with have a live-chat feature, 53% of the whole sample said that such a feature exists, whereas 47% said it does not. This suggests that the translators working on those platforms do not have a clear idea of the features offered by the platform they work with. Communication is an important component of a collaborative environment, and most of the available platforms promise the means for effective communication. However, our findings point to a lack of information/briefing regarding the communication features of the available technology to ensure their effective use. P8 (SA) says, “I’m not sure if any of the platforms I’ve used offer chat features, but if they do, I’ve never used them.” Another related finding of the study is that participants feel that the availability and development of effective communication among collaborators can contribute to building trust relationships on platforms because familiarity with collaborators, which is reported to be facilitated by effective communication, is found to be the most notable factor affecting trust among collaborators as represented by the qualitative data. However, the majority of the participants in our study do not know how or with whom they could

communicate on platforms, or, even if they know that, they might not prefer to do so due to time pressure.

Regarding familiarity with collaborators and trust among them, the quantitative data suggests that a total of 52% of the sample reported they never know their collaborators on the platforms, while only 11% mention they know them (6% often, 5% always), and 23% said they sometimes know them (14% said it varies) (Figure 1). When we look at the sub-sample analysis representing SA and FF approaches, we see a noticeable difference between the participants working with these approaches with regard to the familiarity with their collaborators when they work in CT mode. A total of 75% of the participants working with FF approach report to have never known their collaborators when they work in CT mode on platforms, whereas this figure is 31% for those working with SA approach (Figure 2). As for trust, 7% of the whole sample said they never trust their collaborators on platforms, while 32% mentioned they trust collaborators (23% often, 9% always), and 19% said they sometimes trust them (42% said it varies) (Figure 3). The subsample analysis for trust does not reveal a striking difference between the SA and FF approaches although participants working with SA approach seem to trust their collaborators more than those working with FF approach. A total of 39% in SA approach report that they trust their collaborators, (27% often, 12% always), while this figure is 27% for FF approach (19% often, 8% always) (Figure 4).

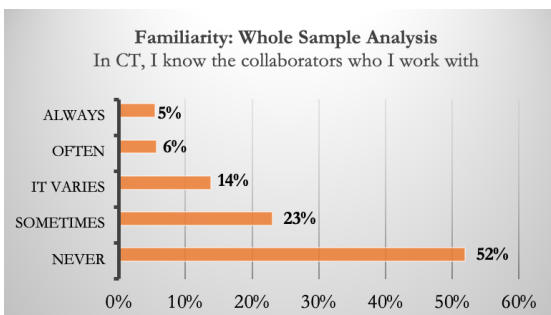


Figure 1: Perception (by the participants) of familiarity with collaborators in CT: whole sample analysis

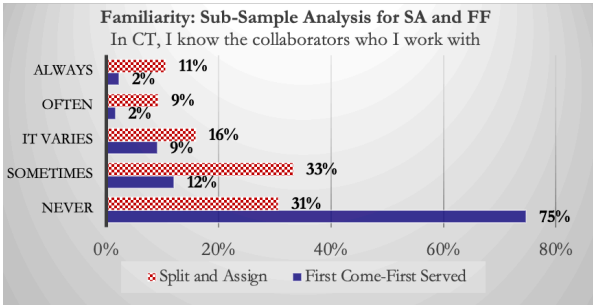


Figure 2: Perception of familiarity with collaborators in CT: sub-sample analysis for Split and Assign and First Come-First Served

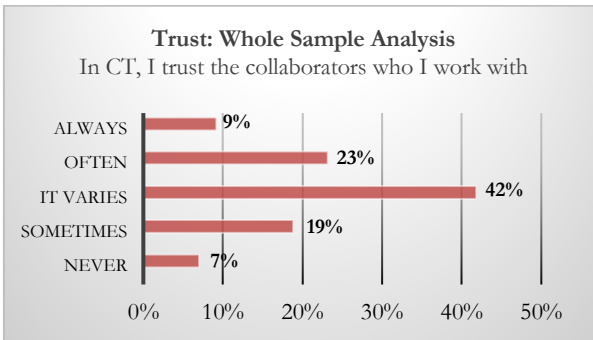


Figure 3: Perception of trust among collaborators in CT: whole sample analysis

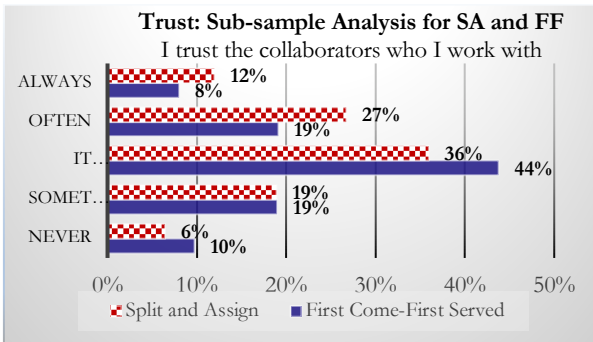


Figure 4: Perception of trust among collaborators in CT: sub-sample analysis for Split and Assign and First Come-First Served.

The interaction between effective communication and trust highlights the importance of briefing and training translators on the available

communication opportunities. Further, the lack of training and briefing about the basics of the concurrent workflow and the resulting lack of knowledge are other issues highlighted by the participants not only in terms of communication opportunities available but also in terms of when the final revision takes place or whether they can revise their own or others' segments.

The existence of many different translation styles is regarded as another issue related to working in CT. P351 (SA) mentions that "the style compatibility becomes a major issue as each translator has his (*sic!*) own style and choice of words." Some participants think that, in CT workflow, they need to compromise their unique style and adopt a more standard one. P167 (SA) says they "begin to try and match the other translators' style", while P135 (SA) mentions they "spend less time on stylistic choices and try to keep it as straightforward as possible, given that we all have different styles that have to gel in the end." It seems that finding a balance between using their personal translation style and making their translations consistent with the translations of others is a struggle for translators. They also feel it slows them down and is detrimental to the feeling of ownership of their work.

There is also a general agreement among the participants that their work on platforms is underpaid. P517 (SA) says, "it is impossible to make one's living in such a way. The money one can get there is really chicken feed." The impact of the lower rates on translators' income is compounded by the smaller share of jobs per translator due to the involvement of many translators. P70 (SA+FF) says, "you aren't paid enough and there are so many translators who work on a text that if you want to earn something you have to produce the translations at light speed." The lower rates on platforms also have implications on the quality as translators report that they do not invest much time and effort in the quality of their work for such low per-word rates. P759 (SA) says, "concurrent jobs make you translate in a rush, to get more segments and be paid more. Having said that, it also promotes bad translations for the same reason."

The participants also report the disparity across the competence of the translators working on the platforms as an issue. They state that translators' competence varies from excellent to very poor. Some suggest that translators working on the platforms are less qualified than their colleagues who do not prefer to work in this mode.

To sum up, in addition to the affordances, CT workflows come with a number of problems adversely affecting collaboration. Although the technologies supporting collaborative translation have arguably evolved, as

reflected by the participants' experiences, this evolution does not necessarily apply to the collaborative work processes and potentially makes it more complex and cognitively demanding, leading to undesirable consequences, as will be discussed below.

5.3. Consequences

The issues reported above lead to a number of negative consequences as identified by the participants. These include the perceived quality compromised for speed and lack of consistency; lack of control over the schedule, workflow, and assignment as a whole; low level of job satisfaction and ownership, and the resulting devaluation of translation as a task and translator as an agent.

More than half of the participants (59%) think that quality is negatively affected. Almost half of them (41%) point out that the perceived translation quality is compromised for speed as they are forced to translate under extreme time pressure which leads to less revision, less research and less thought devoted to the translation. This implies that the contexts where the concepts 'good, fast, and cheap' are claimed to converge are not reflected in the experiences of the participants of the present study.

Participants (37%) think that consistency is threatened in the concurrent workflow, and this is another factor affecting quality. Participants report working out of context focussing only on the segments they deal with. Even if the whole text is accessible, they do not tend to consult it as they see it as a lost time and income. The existence of many different translators, hence many different styles, also impacts consistency. Although this could be potentially dealt with by the editor/proofreader at the end of the translation task, the more translators are involved, the more difficult the task for the editor/proofreader is.

Further, in the first-come-first served approach (FF), the availability of the segments to many different translators on a non-linear, random basis contributes to inconsistency as one segment that is being translated by one translator can be surrounded by other segments that have already been translated by others and locked by the editor. So, translators cannot maintain consistency even if they become aware of a problem. P23 (FF) says, "translation is not a linear and segment-by-segment process, sometimes you need to join segments and change the word order, and you cannot do it if the next segment is already locked by another translator working on the same file". P100 (SA) complains, "I can't revise previously

translated parts of the text even if I see from the new context that I have translated something wrong.” Even if it is possible to contact the editor to propose the revision, translators refrain from it for time reasons and, as mentioned above, to avoid any risks of being penalised (being set back from getting new translation assignments). P513 (SA+FF) says, “we have to provide very good accuracy to avoid account removal. If we take our time, we will not translate more than one segment. And if we work fast, we will receive many edits by the reviser, and after a few overall edits, we will face account removal.” This implies that communication between the translators and the reviser and the coordination of how the translators’ edits are managed need to become more effective in CT workflow. P305 (SA+FF) explains the interplay between the issues related to the concurrent workflow and the quality-related consequences:

Working in concurring (*sic!*) mode is like running a marathon. Everyone is working as fast as possible to ‘earn segments’, as translation is divided into sentences that you are paid for if you confirm the segments. The tendency is towards loose quality and focus. You hardly have any time to review your work and many times you translate texts out of context, because the segments around have already been confirmed by another translator. It is the worst method to attain quality although it is probably fast and cheap.

Lack of control over the schedule, workflow, and assignment as a whole are also consequences of the issues raised by the participants. Some feel that they have very limited – if at all – control on the final quality of the work they are involved in. They cannot see the final version of the translation and feel that even if their translation is “good to go”, the impact of their translation quality on the overall translation quality is limited. The feeling of lack of control over the text as a whole is extended to the involvement of many translators with varying levels of expertise and experience, having to confirm incomplete segments due to time pressure, and limitations related to revision, as already mentioned. A total of 26% of the participants state that they do not feel ownership and pride in their work, and therefore have low levels of job satisfaction when they work in CT. Since they do not translate from the beginning to the end and contribute to the small and dispersed bits of the whole translation, they do not feel that they own the end product. As P54 (SA) explains, “I don’t have the same feeling of ownership of a translation or pride regarding it. A bit like a cog in a wheel. The motivation is not the same because the work feels more mechanical. The feeling of duty is there, but not the drive to creativity.” This feeling of “cog in a wheel” also leads to the devaluation of translation as a profession

and as a creative task and implies that the workflow ignores the human factor making them feel unimportant and devalued.

Lack of satisfaction brought about by the consequences of working in CT described above is summarised by P335 (SA+FF): “There is no respect for your work, no communication, no care from the client’s end, and basically, I cannot do a job while people are changing it when I am still working on it, I cannot do a good job (no one can) without time and care. It’s just disrespectful, soul-destroying, and completely unacceptable.” Feeling uncomfortable due to being monitored, lack of control and ownership of their work, and the unfair remuneration for their work are expressed as the factors leading to low levels of satisfaction. The quantitative data suggests that 48% of the participants do not prefer to work in the concurrent mode as opposed to the traditional one-translator job (35% remain neutral, while 17% prefer to work in CT mode). Further, 15% of those providing free comments either do not prefer to work in CT mode or they do not prioritise CT, treating it as a ‘spare tyre’ to deal with when they have nothing else to do or “to fill the gaps between larger projects” (P92, SA+FF).

Furthermore, participants report that they feel more stressed and judged due to being monitored by the “big brother” (P103, SA) because other translators and the editor can see their translation as it unfolds. “I feel more judged”, says P101 (SA), whilst P110 (SA) admits to feeling “more nervous and more watched, more likely to be judged for certain translations.”

The issues identified by the participants related to the CT workflow seem to be detrimental for both the translation as a product and the translators as agents. These issues seem to create an environment which is not conducive to cooperation and the collaborative spirit; rather, it seems to promote negative competition leading to lower-quality translations (as perceived participants) and lower levels of job satisfaction.

6. Discussion

The findings of the present study contribute to the understanding of the nature of collaborative translation as affected by the evolving technologies and innovative workflows. Although the technologies that support collaboration have evolved to enable translations at scale to be produced almost in real time due to technology-supported, collective human effort, our research shows that the change, on the whole, has not had a positive

impact on the collaborative translation work and the agents involved in it. Participants' experiences paint a picture of collaborative translation in the age of globalisation, technologisation and acceleration, where the traditional definitions of collaboration do not seem to align with those experiences.

Beyerlein and Harris (2003:18), who work in the areas of collaborative work from the organisational perspective, define collaboration as the “collective work of two or more individuals where the work is undertaken with a sense of shared purpose and direction, that is attentive, responsive and adaptive to the environment.” A similar definition provided by Andriessen (2003: 7), who works in evaluation and design of groupware technology, defines collaborative work as “situations where two or more people act together to achieve a common goal, but the actual extent of ‘togetherness’ can vary substantially.” In Beyerlein and Harris’s (2003: 18) definition, we see elements of collective work, shared purpose and direction as well as immersiveness and responsiveness, i.e., being able to act quickly or react appropriately within the environment, including technology environment. Andriessen (2003) also emphasises acting together and the common goal and that this togetherness can vary, depending on the circumstances.

The main impression from the survey responses is that translators do work together in a shared technological environment but, contrary to the definitions of collaborative work, not necessarily in collaboration to pursue a common goal. The affordances of CT workflow (Section 5.1.) indicate that participants mentioning peer-learning as an asset appreciate the feeling of togetherness (8% based on the free-text responses, and 62% based on the quantitative responses of the whole sample, i.e., n=804). However, the issues raised by 76% (Section 5.2.) point towards dissatisfaction due to the absence of a common goal, shared purpose or direction. The right working environment seems to be the key to unlocking the power of collaborative work, and in the case of concurrent translation, it is the technological and organisational environment provided by digital platforms or tools. Based on participants’ responses, the technological environment supporting CT is designed to provide the capacity to be productive, responsive, and fast, as this is the main ‘selling point’ of the concurrent workflow. However, in translation practice, it looks like this very design might go against some of the principles of collaborative work.

When it comes to the design of collaborative technologies, Fuks *et al.* (2008) proposed a 3C Collaboration Model, which breaks down the collaborative environment into three components – Communication,

Coordination and Cooperation – against which the nature of collaborative work can be evaluated. Communication refers to the communication channel enabling the exchange of messages and information amongst collaborators. Coordination is a mechanism enabling the management of people, their activities, and resources and it may be viewed as the link connecting the other two Cs in order to enforce the success of collaboration. Lastly, Cooperation is the joint operation – the production taking place in a shared workspace. Group members cooperate by producing, manipulating, and organising information and by building and refining cooperation objects such as translation documents.

Based on the three elements of the 3C Collaboration Model (Fuks *et al.* 2008), CT workflow does not seem to be fully supporting an authentic collaborative work environment. In terms of Communication, platforms do not seem to be well supported regarding built-in communication tools. Even if such communication features are available, they are not always effectively used due to translators' lack of knowledge of them, and this is detrimental to the productivity, quality of work and authenticity of collaboration in CT workflows. Our findings call for better design and management of communication, which would also improve the 'responsiveness' of the environment as advocated by Beyerlein *et al.* (2003). As for Coordination, our data reveals inefficiencies in the management of people, workflows, privacy as well as resources. Also, lack of training, knowledge of the features available to translators or best practice guidance for translators, project managers and translation buyers seem to result in CT workflow not being used to its full potential. Cooperation seems to be partly enabled in CT workflow as, based on the quantitative analysis, more than half of the participants (62%) mentioned peer learning as a benefit of CT. However, the qualitative analysis reveals that only 8% consider a positive collaborative spirit to be part of the CT workflow. 'First come-first served' workflow seems to be less conducive to cooperation and collaborative spirit as it promotes negative competition leading to quality issues, stress and overall dislike of the workflow. Despite the emphasis on Collaboration in the commercial platform discourse, translators working in CT mode still feel isolated while they work, and overall, they do not feel that they work towards a common goal, mainly due to negative competition.

As mentioned before, the biggest understudied technological change that has affected collaborative work in translation is the synchronous aspect of it. With the main aim of producing more translations faster, content is made available to multiple translators to be translated synchronously. This

synchronicity also applies to editors' actions. As reported in our study, the proximity and instantaneity of the editing process lead to the submission of the translated segments before they become 'mature enough' as suggested by the participants. This synchronicity seems to be the root cause of the excessive time pressure which changes the translation process, limiting translators' time on self-revision and research while translating, which eventually impacts the final perceived quality of the translations. Consideration of the context (full-text reference) and timely and effective communication are also the elements being affected negatively by the time pressure caused by the synchronous elements in the workflow. Finally, the fact that a number of translators take up small parts of the translation assignment leads to relinquished responsibility on the translation quality and delimits the ownership of the task as a whole.

The second most important aspect afforded by modern technologies that affects collaboration in translation, is the distributed nature of the collaborators who, more often than not, do not know or trust each other. This changes the relationship between the text and the author, and the co-creation, co-authorship and co-ownership become problematic as decision-making becomes distributed across many agents. Such decision-making, which is required to happen in real-time in CT workflow, requires robust and sophisticated communication supported by communication tools, which, as we have seen in our data, is not always well-supported or effectively encouraged. Further, the transparency of the environment and data-driven approaches to monitoring and selection of collaborators bring their own issues that affect translators, mainly negatively.

Given the two salient aspects of CT – synchronicity and its distributed nature – the translation process seen as a writing process (with orientation, drafting and revision phases) dramatically changes. It becomes more akin to producing TM-ready segments with little opportunities or options for self-revision. As such, it is always locally oriented in its approach (focusing on individual segments) rather than globally oriented first, as it would be in a more traditional, non-concurrent workflow. As a result, translators have less freedom to make decisions and to change their minds as the process becomes non-iterative. As such, this changed translation process is an area that remains wholly unexplored and requires robust empirical research to understand better its nature and the consequences of its adoption.

Overall, based on the experiences of translators working in concurrent mode, the collaborative process leaves a lot of room for improvement in terms of Cooperation, Coordination and Communication

– the main building blocks of a collaborative environment. Based on the principles of collaboration, it should evolve from an environment in which translators compete to one where they cooperate and from a place where the perceived translation quality is compromised for speed to one where the very essence of collaboration – working towards the common goal – is put at the heart of the design. Coordination and Communication features need to be designed to support all aspects of collaborative work and communicated to the users prior to commencing collaborative work.

In essence, it looks like the general idea of broadly understood collaborative technologies was to support the human work processes, make them more efficient, and ultimately result in better outcomes. The main problem at the heart of collaborative translation on platforms in concurrent mode seems to be the fact that the main purpose of introducing these technologies has not been to enhance collaborative work, but to increase productivity and enable large volumes to be translated by the human workforce in a shorter period of time. This has caused the enforced speed to be the number one factor that affects collaboration and hinders many activities associated with collaboration such as communication, discussion or decision making. Rather than supporting the human translation processes, the main design principle of collaborative technologies seems to be to benefit the client so that they get translation faster and cheaper using methods akin to human computation at the expense of the workforce and their wellbeing.

7. Limitations

Methodological limitations, the multifarious nature of collaborative technologies and continuous evolution of the collaborative workflows made the analysis challenging. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalising the results of the study to all translators working in CT workflow. Additionally, the study found that the experiences of translators varied depending on the specific platform or approach participants were using (first come-first served or split and assign), which makes it difficult to draw overarching conclusions. Finally, some platforms may have different workflow options that could impact the results, but it was not always possible to know which options were being referred to by the participants in their free text responses. These limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of the study.

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