the original title of this chapter was (and should be):

Andrea Rizzi

'Interpretation and Translation: Leonardo Bruni and the Art of Translation in Quattrocento Florence'

Interpretation and Translation: Classical Influences on Leonardo Bruni and the Art of Translation in Quattrocento Florence

Andrea Rizzi

The Latin translations of Leonardo Bruni, one of the first and foremost humanists of Quattrocento Italy, were not only extremely successful but, I contend, also paved the way for the aggressive modernization of historical texts in both Latin and the Italian vernaculars of the same century. In the preface to his version of Plutarch's *Vita Ciceronis*, dedicated to Niccolò Niccoli (1413), Leonardo Bruni makes the following points:

So I started to salvage the text from the deformities of the Latin language, and, as soon as I got hold of the Greek text, begun to translate the whole work into Latin. As I was progressing with my work and examining every single aspect of the text diligently and thoroughly, I realized that also Plutarch's text did not please me. [...] As a result, I put Plutarch's text and its Latin translation aside and gathered information on Cicero from various Greek and Latin texts, and wrote Cicero's life not as *interpretes*, but following my judgement and will.¹

This statement, Ianziti argues, marks a key moment in Bruni's career, for it shaped his style and approach to history writing and divides Bruni's versions of Greek histories into two analogous but always distinct and separate practices: history writing and translation.² Such a view, however, hinges on a specific interpretation of the Latin word 'interpretes' — a word which was used extensively throughout the fifteenth century (and beyond) and normally denotes simply 'translator'.³ A closer examination of the source and context of Bruni's phrase (*non ut interpretes*) reveals, however, that Bruni is not primarily interested in establishing a fundamental opposition between translation and history writing, but rather in distancing himself from a *certain type* of translation. This chapter will demonstrate that Bruni understood translation as a complex process of

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¹ 'Huic ergo deformitati latine lingue pro virili mea succurrere aggressus, confestim greco volumine requisito traductionem ex integro inchoavi. Et opus sane ab initio satis luculenter procedere videbatur: mox vero ut progredior, et ob convertendi diligentiam singula queque magis considero, ne ipse quidem Plutarchus desiderium mei animi penitus adimplevit. [...] Nos igitur et Plutarcho et eius interpretatione omissis, ex iis que vel apud nostros vel apud Grecos de Cicerone scripta legeramus, ab alio exorsi principio vitam et mores et res gestas eius maturiore digestionem et plenior notitia, *non ut interpretes sed pro nostro arbitrio voluntateque, descripsimus*.' The Latin text is taken from Bruni, *La perfetta traduzione*, ed. by Viti, pp. 249–50. The translation and italics are mine. On Bruni's *Cicero*, see also Ianziti, 'A Life in Politics' and Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 44–60.

² Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, p. 15.

³ For a history of the terms 'translator' and 'translation', see Folena, *Volgarizzare e tradurre*. For the use of the word 'interpretes' in Quattrocento Florence, see Giannozzo Manetti's preface to his *Apologia*, book V in Manetti, *Apologeticus*, ed. by De Petris. See also Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance* and Baldassarri, *Umanesimo e traduzione*.

paraphrasing, rewording, and, where necessary, displacement of the source text. Bruni's views on translation relied heavily on Cicero, Quintilian, and Chrysoloras. This is hardly surprising given that some of the most influential works by Cicero — which Bruni refers to in some of his prefaces to translations — were discovered during the period the Aretine was practising translation. Further, a complete version of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* was made and sent to Bruni by Poggio Bracciolini soon after it was unearthed in 1416, thus influencing his understanding of the teaching and learning of rhetoric and translation. For Cicero, Quintilian, and Chrysoloras there was no dichotomy between translation and original composition, but different and gradual stages of learning, imitation, translation, and displacement of the source culture and text. One did not preclude the other. Furthermore, Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian did not see literal and free translations as equivalent options. Rather, they agreed on the educational and rhetorical use of translation as being separate stages and practices, as will be discussed below.

The freedom these ancient Roman authors bestowed upon the translator is bewildering from the perspective of the present day, where authorship and translatorship are defined and perceived as two discrete practices.⁴ This kind of separation did not exist in classical and early modern Europe, as demonstrated by recent scholarship.⁵ This chapter will reveal that for Bruni translation and history writing cannot be separated for they are two concurrent stages of the rewriting of past narratives.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first contextualizes translation in Quattrocento Italy and outlines some of the interpretive issues around translation. The second investigates translation and learning in Cicero and Quintilian, and the final two discuss Bruni's prefaces to his translations of Greek histories.

Translation in Quattrocento Italy

The Italian Quattrocento was a period in which the appreciation of languages was at the centre of cultural and political activities. Out of this interest came a substantial and compelling programme of renewal for Latin, while the vernacular languages permeated a growing number of cultural practices, such as oratory, preaching, political deliberations, and everyday communication.⁶ The renewal of Latin and the progressive dignification of the vernacular languages were enacted through translation. Indeed, fifteenth-century Italy was the age of translation par excellence.⁷ Much research has been carried out on fifteenth-century translations from Greek, and there is a growing interest in vernacular translations.⁸ However, few works address translation in Quattrocento Italy beyond the

⁴ See Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

⁵ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* and Copeland, 'The Fortunes of "Non Verbum Pro Verbo"'; Chiesa, 'Ad verbum o ad sensum?'; Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*; and Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance'.

⁶ For general appraisals of humanists' passion for and dedication to Latin, see Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*; Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance*; and Anselmi, *Umanisti, storici e traduttori*. Humanists also engaged in passionate debates about the history and uses of languages: see Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists*; Rizzo, *Ricerche sul latino umanistico*; Tavoni, *Latino, grammatica, volgare*; Tantarli, 'La Cultura fiorentina volgare del Quattrocento davanti ai nuovi testi greci'; and Bianca, *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'umanesimo*.

⁷ Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance', p. 162.

⁸ The most recent scholarship on Latin humanism and translation is Baldassarri, 'Amplificazioni retoriche nelle versioni di un best-seller umanistico'; Baldassarri, *Umanesimo e traduzione*; Bausi, 'Le due redazioni del "Dialogus consolatorius" di Giannozzo Manetti'; Valla, *Valla's Translation of Thucydides in Vat. Lat. 1801 with the Reproduction of the Codex*, ed. by Chambers; and Pade, *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-Century Italy*. The literature on vernacular translation is growing. Here is a short list of some of the most recent works: Merisalo, 'Translations and

study of specific authorships (e.g. Aristotile and Plato), translators (e.g. Leonardo Bruni or Giovanni Brancati), or disciplines (histories, philosophy, oratory, etc.). In this respect, the works by Alison Cornish on *15th-century* translators and Glyn Norton's appraisal of French Renaissance translators are pioneering, for they look at translation as a rich and all-encompassing medium used by diverse cultural agents: scholars, officials, professional translators, politicians, and rulers. Further, recent studies of medieval literature and language have advanced our knowledge of translation in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as a pedagogical, hermeneutical, rhetorical, and colonizing tool.⁹

It is unfortunate that the relatively recent discipline of translation studies has devoted little attention to classical and early modern translations, which usually occupy only the first few pages of recent histories of translation or translation studies readers. Horace's verses from the *Ars Poetica* and Cicero's passing statements on translation are the only premodern landmarks in these chronological and positivistic anthologies of translation theories.¹⁰ Such a cursory glance over the classical and medieval theories and practices of translation has endorsed a binary perception of premodern translation as either literal or free (*ad verbum* or *ad sensum*).

In order to understand the meaning and practices behind some of Bruni's prefatory statements about the translations, our discussion will have to look back at Cicero, Quintilian, and (briefly) Manuel Chrysoloras, Bruni's teacher of Greek.¹¹

Translation and Imitation

Histories of translation sweep through classical and medieval translation theories with little attention to the contexts and practices that influence such statements. An example: 'For Ancient Rome, translation was strict, slavish literalism [...]. Thus in his *Ars Poetica* (c. 20 CE, The Arts of Poetry, 133–4), Horace encourages the poet not to be like "the faithful translator" who sticks too closely to the original'.¹² Indeed, Horace does call for the abandonment of slavish imitation ('a debased form of imitation') when composing poetry,¹³ but this does not imply that literal translation was common practice in ancient Rome. There is little evidence that ancient Roman authors translated any work literally. The only known example of word-for-word translation from Greek to Latin is Attius Labeo's one line rendering of Homer's *Iliad* (1st CE).¹⁴ Thus, Horace is advising a

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Politics in Fifteenth Century Florence'; Tanturli, 'Marsilio Ficino e il volgare'; Acocella, *L'asino d'oro nel rinascimento*; Aprile, *Giovanni Brancati traduttore di Vegezio*; Bertolini, *I volgarizzamenti italiani degli apocrifi*; Bessi, *Umanesimo volgare*; Hankins, 'Humanism in the Vernacular'. Several editions of vernacular translations have appeared in the last ten years or so and the ongoing SALVIt project will assist with the deepening of our understanding of Renaissance *volgarizzamenti*: see <<http://www.salvit.org>>.

⁹ See the works of Copeland and Botley mentioned above and also Rankovic, *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages* and Ellis, *The Medieval Translator*.

¹⁰ See for instance Amos, *Early Theories of Translation*; Bassnett, *Translation Studies*; Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*; and Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*. A notable exception is Robinson, *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*.

¹¹ On Cicero I have followed closely the works of Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* and Cox and Ward, *The Rhetoric of Cicero*. On Quintilian and the tradition of his *Institutio*, see *M. Fabii Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae*, ed. by Colson. The key works that have informed the present discussion on Bruni are Baron, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*; Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*; Bruni, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. by Viti; Bruni, *La perfetta traduzione*, ed. by Viti; Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance'; Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*; Bruni, *Epistolarum Libri VII*, ed. by Hankins; Hankins, 'Humanism in the Vernacular'; Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*; O'Rourke and Holcroft, 'Latin and the Vernacular'.

¹² France, *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, pp. 15–16.

¹³ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages*, pp. 28–29.

¹⁴ Dominik and Wehrle, *Roman Verse Satire*, p. 157.

poet to discern between imitation and paraphrase, where the latter is a first step towards understanding the source text (through paraphrase and grammatical exercise) and the former is the technique used to displace the Greek text.¹⁵ Imitation is what Cicero refers to when, in the *De Officiis*, he draws the material for the discussion ‘non ut interpretes, sed, ut solemus, e fontibus eorum iudicio arbitrioque nostro’ (‘not as an interpreter, but, as it was customary, from the sources I deemed useful’).¹⁶

Paraphrase, rewording, and imitation were sequential and necessary stages of the exegesis and rhetorical production of texts. As Quintilian (1+CE) explains,

Their pupils should learn to paraphrase Aesop’s fables, the natural successors of the fairy stories of the nursery, in simple and restrained language and subsequently to set down this paraphrase in writing with the same simplicity of style: they should begin by analysing each verse, then give its meaning in different language, and finally proceed to a freer paraphrase in which they will be permitted now to abridge and now to embellish the original, so far as this may be done without losing the poet’s meaning.¹⁷

Pupils were asked to turn verses into prose (*versus solvere*) texts, to paraphrase the text by using different wording (*interpretari*), and finally to translate freely (*paraphrasi audacius vertere*). Quintilian’s precepts entail the intersection of grammar and rhetoric, for both paraphrase and translation are functional to the learning of grammar, but they also resemble the rhetorical exercises of *abbreviatio* and *amplificatio*. Quintilian suggests that translation should yield two distinct outcomes: on the one hand give pupils the necessary knowledge and understanding of the lexical, semantic, and morphological characteristics of the texts under examination (grammatical skills), and on the other prepare the students for the acquisition of the rhetorical tools needed for oratory and writing.

Ultimately, both Horace and Cicero consider the third stage in the rhetorical translation of a translated text as an active displacement of the Greek cultural prestige. Copeland explains this process as follows: ‘literary translation seeks to erase the cultural gap from which it emerges by contesting and displacing the source and substituting itself: it forges no synthetic links with its source. Thus in terms of an interior anatomy, translation can be distinguished from imitation’.¹⁸ It is in these terms that Cicero’s statement about his now lost translations of Demosthenes’ and Aeschines’ Greek speeches should be framed: ‘And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the ‘figures’ of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage’.¹⁹ Cicero’s cultural programme is to create a Latin model

¹⁵ See Rener, *Interpretatio*, pp. 306–17; McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance*; Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric*; and Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*.

¹⁶ I follow here the text and discussion in Rener, *Interpretatio*, pp. 90–91.

¹⁷ ‘Igitur Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supra modum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem stilo exigere condiscant; versus primo solvere, mox mutatis verbis interpretari, tum paraphrasi audacius vertere, qua et brevare quaedam et exornare salvo modo poetae sensu permittitur (*Institutio Oratoria*, I.9.2)’ {AQ: The citation is also part of Copeland’s quote, or move the closing quotation mark?}. Text and translation are taken from Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 30.

¹⁹ ‘Ne converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi’: Cicero, *De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica*. ed. by Hubbell, 5.14–15. The *De Optimo Genere Oratore*, from which this passage is taken, is now believed to be spurious, but Bruni and his fellow humanists certainly considered it to be Cicero’s. Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 20, believes that possibly by 1412 and certainly before the *Life of Cicero* was finished Bruni knew this work, which is an important detail for the discussion that follows. A similar statement is in Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, 2.6. The topic is ethics and duties: ‘Sequitur igitur hoc quidem tempore et hac in quaestione potissimum Stoicos non ut interpres, sed, ut solemus, e fontibus eorum iudicio arbitrioque nostro, quantum quoque modo videbitur, hauriemus’ (‘I shall, therefore, at this time and in this investigation follow chiefly the Stoics, not as an interpreter, but, as is my custom, I shall at my own option and

for oratory that builds on and surpasses the Greek authorities. The emphasis is on the rhetorical function of translation, not the reception and understanding of the Greek text. When compared with Quintilian's three stages of translative processes, Cicero's statement becomes even clearer. Quintilian explains that there are at least two stages in the interpretation of the source text. The first is the grammatical paraphrase, which requires a thorough understanding of the text and its lexical and syntactical features. This is the process Cicero refers to when stating that he is not translating as an interpreter. In the second stage, translation becomes an active process of displacement of the Greek source in which 'the language of the original is expected to inform, to shape the target language'.²⁰ Cicero's supposed critique of the *ad verbum* and *verbum de verbo* translations should not be seen as proof that this kind of translation was commonly practiced, for it is most likely that Cicero is exaggerating the tendency during his time to produce close renderings of Greek plays. Here Cicero is comparing his interpretations of Greek philosophical works, 'which were neither translations nor adaptations of particular Greek works',²¹ with close renderings of Greek theatre.

Seen through the lens of Quintilian's instructions on exegesis and production of oratory, Cicero's preference for an oratorical translation does not exclude the necessity for a first, literal translation that allows a thorough understanding of the translated text. The exegetical and heuristic functions of translation are therefore two different moments of the ancient Roman cultural programme of learning and cultural appropriation. This hermeneutical process of learning and upskilling of language competence is what Cicero refers to in the passage quoted above. He does not wish to be a *grammaticus* in the sense of an expert of language, but a creative and eloquent interpreter of Greek sources. He sought to displace, surpass, and appropriate the translated culture and had little interest in just interpretation and criticism. Cicero's statement affirms the classical understanding of grammar as a passive acquisition of knowledge as opposed to the active practice and production of eloquence. More to the point, Cicero is accentuating the boundary between classical grammar and rhetoric: grammar is restricted in its competences, rhetoric is not. The latter can interpret the text aggressively and colonize the source culture, whereas the former extols the stylistic virtues of the target text and trains the learner to learn and apply those qualities.

Not an 'Interpres' but a Translator

Thirteen hundred years after Quintilian, Manuel Chrysoloras (d. 1415), imparted some useful suggestions to his students, including Bruni. Cencio de' Rustici (c. 1416) describes them in a letter addressed to Bartolomeo Aragazzi.²² From this document it emerges that Chrysoloras considered translation *ad verbum* to be absurd and stressed the importance of the target culture and the active role of the translator:

Manuel used to say about translation that to translate *ad verbum* into Latin was wholly ineffective. It was not only absurd, he averred, but even, sometimes, perverted the sense of the Greek. One must translate according to the sense, he said; those who took pains with matters of this sort would in this way make it a rule for themselves not to alter in any way the propriety of Greek usage. For if anyone alter some [part] of Greek propriety with the object of speaking more clearly and brilliantly to his

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discretion draw from those sources in such measure and in such manner as shall suit my purpose'). Both the text and the translation are from Cicero, *De Officiis*, ed. and trans. by Miller, p. 9.

²⁰ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 34.

²¹ Powell, 'Cicero's Translations from Greek', p. 277.

²² On Chrysoloras's theory of translation, see Berti, 'Manuele Crisolora, Plutarco e l'avviamento delle traduzioni umanistiche'.

own people [i.e. to those who spoke his own language], he is playing the part of a commentator rather than of an interpreter.²³

From this passage it is clear that Chrysoloras followed Cicero's statements on his versions of Demosthenes' and Aeschines' speeches: the translator who embellishes and challenges the propriety of the source text is not an *interpretes* but, Chrysoloras tells us, a commentator. Chrysoloras's advice is interesting, for it provides a further clue to what Cicero meant in the passages from *De Optimo* and *De Officiis*. The work of the *interpretes* is the one of the grammarian who needs to explain and highlight the linguistic and stylistic features of the text and the lexical treasury (*proprietas*) of the translated language.²⁴ It is a technical and, in the case of literary writing, preparatory work before the translated text can be turned into Latin or vernacular. Thus, both Cicero and Chrysoloras point towards the distinction between the learning and the creative phases of translation. Chrysoloras's teaching makes another important connection with Cicero, who in one passage from the *De Finibus* criticizes what he calls the 'ineloquent interpreters'.²⁵ Why is Cicero so harsh on these interpreters? McElduff recently suggested that the adjective 'indisertus' used by Cicero reveals that the target is the *grammaticus*, that is, the student who did not go beyond the second stage of ancient Roman education. This stage, called the *schola grammatici*, entailed hours and hours of work on the grammar and 'line-by-line and word-by-word progress through the text'.²⁶ Chrysoloras, and Bruni as we shall see below, criticizes the word-for-word translation which in ancient Rome was merely a pedagogical tool and became a dominant translative practice only with the dissemination of Christian texts.²⁷ Chrysoloras's precepts reject the word-for-word translation of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages and call for the teaching and learning of Greek in which the focus is on both the accurate study of the qualities of the source language (*interpretes*) and the rhetorical translation of the source text (the work of the commentator and translator).

Bruni takes both Cicero's and Chrysoloras's precepts on board. The need to distance his translations from a strictly grammatical or scholastic production induces Bruni, it is suggested here, to look for different ways to describe exactly what he is doing. In a letter to Niccolò Niccoli, Bruni reveals that in his translations he does not wish to chase syllables and tropes. Instead, he will adhere to Plato's narrative by offering Niccoli great pleasure without annoyance (*summa voluptate sine molestia*) and 'I follow Plato closely, and pretend that he knows Latin so he can decide for himself; and I will call him as a witness to his own translation; and I translate (*traduco*) the way he would

²³ 'Ferebat Manuel conversionem in latinum ad verbum minime valere, nam non modo absurdam esse asseverabat, verum etiam interdum graecam sententiam omnino pervertere. Sed ad sententiam transferre opus esse aiebat hoc pacto ut ii qui huiusmodi rebus operam darent, legem sibi ipsis indicarent, ut nullo modo proprietatis greca immutaretur; nam si quispiam, quo luculentius apertiusque suis hominibus loquatur, aliquid grece proprietatis immutavit, eum non interpretis sed exponentis officio uti'. Both the Latin text and translation are taken from Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, I, 44–45. I have modified Hankins's translation of the word 'interpretis' from 'translator' to 'interpreter' for reasons that become clear below.

²⁴ See Chiesa, 'Ad verbum o ad sensum?', pp. 20–51. On the meaning of *proprietas*, see Renner, *Interpretatio*, pp. 38–41.

²⁵ Cicero, *De Finibus*, 3.15.10: 'nec tamen exprimi verbum e verbo necesse erit, ut interpretes indiserti solent, cum sit verbum, quod idem declaret, magis usitatum. equidem soleo etiam quod uno Graeci, si aliter non possum, idem pluribus verbis exponere' ('Nor is it necessary to render word for word, as ineloquent interpreters usually do, when there is a more familiar word which signifies the same thing. Indeed, I usually use many words to expose what is expressed by one word of Greek if I am unable to do anything else'). Both text and translation are taken from McElduff, 'Living at the Level of the Word', p. 138.

²⁶ McElduff, 'Living at the Level of the Word', p. 139.

²⁷ There is no room here to dwell on Jerome's ambiguous interpretation of Cicero's theory of translation and the development of the literal versus free translation paradigm. On this, see Copeland, 'The Fortunes of "Non Verbum Pro Verbo"'.

appreciate the most'.²⁸ *Traduco* is a neologism aimed at capturing Bruni's own work as a translator of Greek texts. Following from Cicero, Quintilian, and Chrysoloras, Bruni's prefaces to his translations reveal the function behind these works: sometimes mere exercises and at other times aggressive and creative rewritings of the source texts. Some of Bruni's early translations describe his efforts as *conversio* or *interpretatio*.²⁹ Instead, when engaging with historical texts demanding modernization and substantial changes, Bruni calls upon Cicero's statements about the *interpretes* and *orator* or Chrysoloras to impress upon the reader that these works are active displacements of the translated texts. This is precisely what Bruni does with the three historical works translated from Plutarch and Polybius. As soon as he realizes that the content of the source text needs modifications, Bruni declares emphatically and Cicero-style that this time he is not going to translate as a student or grammarian would but will actively displace the Greek text by bringing in other sources. This heavy-handed rewriting of the source text is, however, still a translation for Bruni, as much as it was for Cicero. Cicero's 'not as interpreters' adage is repeated by the Aretine literally this time both to distinguish his work from the source-based translations of medieval scholars such as Grosseteste,³⁰ and also to claim his and Cicero's right to embellish and improve ~~both~~ the content of the source text in order to fit the new culture and context. Therefore the grammarian becomes the translator-author and translator-commentator of different sources.³¹

It is time now to look at the other texts in which Bruni used the 'non ut interpretes' adage:

Preface to Bruni's version of Polybius's *Punic Wars* (1418–22)

As a result, I followed — as much as I could — the narrative of Polybius and other Greek authors, and offered as a substitute a commentary of this war for the public interest, with the rule that I would not add anything to the narrative that was not confirmed by these sources, and yet I related the History not by using only one source, as an interpreter, but several, based on my own judgement.³²

The *Life of Marc Antony*, *Life of Cicero*, *First Punic War*, and the *Italian War* (the last will be discussed below) are textual montages and aggressive rewritings of the Greek sources, as Ianziti remarks.³³ For instance, for the *De primo bello Punico* Bruni uses not only and mostly Polybius but also Thucydides and Strabo.³⁴ In these texts, Bruni does not wish to be seen as an *interpretes* but as more than that. It is not a coincidence that in the *Life of Cicero* and the *Punic Wars* the Aretine makes an explicit reference to Cicero's repeated statements about not being an *interpretes* in *De Finibus* 3.15, which he knew before 1412 and, possibly, also *De Optimo genere oratorum*.³⁵ Bruni's knowledge of Cicero's criticism against the *indiserti interpretes* and grammatical translation

²⁸ Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VII*, I, VIII, ed. by Hankins. The letter was probably written on 5 September 1404. Here is the Latin text: 'ego autem Platoni adhaereo, quem ego ipse michi effinxi, & quidem latine scientem, ut iudicare possit, testemque eum adhibebo traductioni suae, atque ita *traduco*, ut illi maxime placere intelligo'.

²⁹ See the prefaces to Bruni's *Phaedon* (Bruni, *La perfetta traduzione*, ed. by Viti, p. 237) and *Gorgias* (ibid., p. 247).

³⁰ See Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance', p. 155, and the relevant bibliography listed there.

³¹ Chrysoloras's distinction between the *interpretes* and *expositor* recalls John Scotus's (815–77 CE) passage in his preface to the *Corpus*: 'see me as an interpreter of the text, not commentator' ('videat me interpretem huius operis esse, non expositorem'). See Chiesa, 'Ad verbum o ad sensum?', pp. 36–37.

³² My translation. 'Quantum solerti lectione Polybii ceterorumque Graecorum consequi potui, commentaria huius belli pro communi utilitate suffeci, illa moderatione adhibita, ut nihil, quod non probatum a superioribus esset, huic operi insererem, et tamen non ab uno sumere, ut interpretes' (Baron, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, p. 123).

³³ Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, p. 15.

³⁴ See Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 30.

³⁵ Bruni certainly knew this work by Cicero as he sent for a copy before translating Aristotle's *Ethics* (1412). See Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VII*, IV, xiii, ed. by Hankins. It is also likely that Bruni was also familiar with Cicero's *De Optimo genere oratorum*, which spurred several humanists to practice their language skills on Demosthenes' masterpiece (see Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, pp. 61–62, and McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance*, p. 86).

suggests that he is reinstating the Ciceronian and classical translative practice of aggressive and rhetorical translation and at the same time putting the scholastic and learning-based translation where it should belong: the classroom.³⁶ This practice, which is directly taken from Chrysoloras and Cicero, does not exclude literal, paraphrastic, and grammatical translation. Interestingly, when more concerned with the language, style, and rhythm of the Greek prose, Bruni is at ease with describing himself as *interpretes* and his work as *interpretatus sum*. See for instance the preface to Demosthenes' *Pro Ctesiphonte*, where the text is presented to Francesco Pizolpalsso as a 'close rendering' (*fideliter interpretatus sum*),³⁷ or his version of Xenophon's *Hiero* whose task he describes as useful 'to train my ability'.³⁸ The last two examples show that Bruni, as most of his fellow humanists, used translation as a rhetorical and grammatical practice and therefore performed it as an *interpretes* before taking the step further and becoming a free translator, that is, both a translator and author.

Conclusion

Towards the end of his career, Bruni tried to convince his readership that the *De Bello Italico* (1441)³⁹ was his own and original work.⁴⁰ However, following hard-pressed criticism from Biondo Flavio, who publicly exposed the work as a close translation from Procopius, Bruni retraced his steps and reiterated his 'non ut interpretes' position. This confirms Bruni's eagerness to convince the readers and his fellow humanists of the power and superiority of his rhetorical, not grammatical, translation. The translator is not just the *grammaticus* or student giving voice to the author of the source text but a translator who has the freedom to change, restructure, and improve the text as he sees fit.

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³⁶ Bruni is probably concurring with Coluccio Salutati's 1390s criticism of medieval translation, which is seen as unattractive and unrefined. See Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 7.

³⁷ Bruni, *La perfetta traduzione*, ed. by Viti, p. 242.

³⁸ 'ingenii exercendi gratia': quote from Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 9.

³⁹ See Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 278–300, and Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, pp. 33–41.

⁴⁰ See Bruni's letter to Ciriaco d'Ancona (31 August 1444) regarding his version of Procopius's *De Bello Italico*: 'Est autem haec non translatio, sed opus a me compositum, quemadmodum Livius a Valerio Antiate, vel a Polybio Megalopolitano sumpsit, et arbitrato suo disposuit' ('This is, however, not a translation but a work composed by myself, in the same way Livy drew upon Valerius Antias, or Polybius, and then arranged the material according to his judgment'). Again, in 1442 Bruni wrote to Giovanni Tortelli repeating the same concept: 'Scripsi vero illos non ut interpretes, sed ut genitor, & auctor: quemadmodum enim, si de praesenti bello scriberem, noticia quidem rerum gestarum ex auditu foret, ordo vero, ac dispositio, & verba mea essent, ac meo arbitrato excogitata, & posita; eodem item modo ipse noticiam tantum rerum gestarum de illo sumens, in ceteris omnibus ab eo recessi' ('I wrote it not as an interpreter, but as an author and father; in the same way as if I were writing about a present war, the news would arrive from hearsay, the order, structure and words would be mine and the words thought of and put on paper following my own decision; similarly, while I took several facts of this war from him, I also departed from his work in several cases'). Finally, in a letter written to Francesco Barbaro on 23 August 1443 Bruni admits that the work is Procopius's and returns to the same position he asserted with his versions of Polybius and Plutarch: 'Scripsit enim hanc historiam, ut te non ignorare puto, Procopius Caesariensis grecus scriptor, sed admodum ineptus et eloquentie hostis ut apparet maxime in contionibus suis, quamquam Thucydidem imitari vult. [...] Ab hoc ego scriptore sumpsi non ut interpretes, sed ita ut notitiam rerum ab illo susceptam meo arbitrato disponerem meisque verbis non illius referrem' ('I am sure that you know that the Greek author Procopius of Caesarea wrote this History. However, his style is lacking and inelegant, even if he tries to follow Thucydides. [...] I sourced material from this author not as an interpreter, but, following my judgment, I rearranged the narrative of the historical events and wrote it with my own words, not his'). All of these texts and translations are taken from Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, p. 279.

Bruni's statements on translation are confirmed in his *De recta interpretatione* (1424).⁴¹ The translator needs to understand and know intimately the style and lexis of the author, which is the work of the grammarian, before the translator can adopt and adapt this style. In sum, the translator needs to be an extraordinary person, an artist, and most importantly an inspired author who 'can take liberties with the text'.⁴² These are the qualities Cicero and Chrysoloras demand of the translators once they have learned the style and propriety of the Greek author through the process of rhetorical practice and analysis described by Quintilian. In other words, the *interpretes* is just the interpreter of the Greek author, whereas the translator Bruni, like Cicero before him, wishes to be recognized equally as authors, commentators, and parents of the new Latin texts.

yes, thanks

{AQ: Attach this single sentence to the preceding paragraph?} There is no conflict between these roles, for they all share the same purpose: to colonize and adapt the translated text to the sensibilities and interests of the humanistic culture of fifteenth-century Italy.

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⁴¹ The most recent edition of this text is in Bruni, *La perfetta traduzione*, ed. by Viti. There is also an excellent Italian translation in Baldassarri, *Umanesimo e traduzione*, pp. 193–218.

⁴² Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 53.

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