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Renaissance Translators, Transnational Literature, and *Intertraffique*¹

Andrea Rizzi

‘Intertraffique’ is a word coined by late sixteenth-century English poet and historian Samuel Daniel to describe the safe passage from Paris to London of Michel de Montaigne’s celebrated *Essays*. They had first been published in French in 1580–88, and Daniel contributed a prefatory poem to John Florio’s translation of the collection into English, which was published in 1603.²

‘Intertraffique’ is perhaps one of the earliest descriptions of transnational literature. Daniel’s poetic phrase ‘th’intertraffique of the minde’ celebrates translation as a crucial means of exchanging ideas. By itself, the term ‘intertraffique’ also conjures up the business of book printing and selling, the materiality of texts, the agency of translators, and the dissemination of knowledge in the European vernaculars. Indeed, the example of *The Essayes [...] of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne [...] now done into English* shows an English-born son of an Italian (and ‘bilingued’) refugee playing an important role as a transnational and transcultural mediator for the English court: Florio was the first to translate Montaigne into English.

The flamboyant figure of Florio recollects that for centuries translators have crossed cultural and linguistic frontiers in exchange for material and social gains. Italian Renaissance studies (and European Renaissance studies more broadly) have only recently begun to investigate the role played by early modern translators in the dissemination of early modern culture across city-states and nations.³ To date, scholars have tended to focus on specific centres (such as Florence, Venice, and Rome), as well as individual translators. As such, the field of Italian studies is yet to bring a transnational perspective to considering early modern translators as cultural intermediaries who worked across political and linguistic boundaries.⁴ In this contribution, I examine a selection of statements written by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century translators in which their transnational mobility emerges strongly—as does the relational context for their work, and their self-awareness as agents of knowledge and culture.

¹ In this chapter I use early modern and Renaissance interchangeably. Since the Italian Renaissance is commonly believed to cover the period 1400–1600 and the early modern era the years 1500–1800, both terms are representative of the period under consideration here (1450–1600).

² Enza De Francisci and Chris Stamatakis (ed.), *Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange: Early Modern to Present* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 3–5. See also Warren Boutcher, ‘Intertraffic: Transnational Literatures and Languages in Late Renaissance England and Europe’, in Matthew McLean and Sara K. Barker (ed.), *International Exchange in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 343–45: 343.

³ See e.g. Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England. A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Anne E. B. Coldiron, *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Federico M. Federici and Dario Tessicini (ed.), *Translators, Interpreters and Cultural Negotiators: Mediating and Communicating Power from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁴ For recent, more global approaches to late medieval and early modern translators in the Italian peninsula see e.g., Andrea Rizzi, *Vernacular Translators in Quattrocento Italy: Scribal Culture, Authority, and Agency* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), and Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante’s Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Some further statements indicate ways in which Renaissance vernacular translators working in the Italian peninsula contributed to the development of ‘Italian’ as a transnational literary language with currency that extended into city-states and courts throughout Europe. As I seek to show in the following pages, Renaissance translators negotiated cultural, linguistic, political, and economic frontiers, while positioning themselves within the transcultural system of their time and states.

The aim is to address a challenging methodological question. How do we twenty-first-century scholars of Italian studies negotiate *our* disciplinary borders—so as to think about literary and translation history in both their local and transnational dimensions? Recent literary history contributions have suggested interdisciplinarity as the way forward.⁵ In this chapter I follow a similar direction, arguing the need for collaborative approaches to transnational literature that overcome the dichotomy between global, ‘distant’ reading on the one hand, and nation-based, intertextual reading on the other.

Multiple ‘Patrie’

Early modern translators were not ‘merely’ translators. That is, more often than not—like their medieval predecessors—they worked as teachers, diplomats, personal secretaries, or administrators for rulers and oligarchies of the ‘Italian’ peninsula. Most of these translators belonged to an elite community of highly educated men and women who were connected to trans-state political, cultural, and social networks of peers, patrons, and publics. Certainly, in Renaissance Europe the sense of ‘national’ community had a narrow basis. Nevertheless, the ruling communities of late medieval and early modern Italian city-states developed the ‘cultural building-blocks of the later devotion to a national community, or “patriotism”’.⁶ ‘Patria’ did not simply refer to a birthplace. Frequently the term also indicated ‘the point of origin for an individual’s public manifestation of personal traits’.⁷ Several literary texts from the Italian Renaissance make specific references to ‘patria’ as the author or translator’s place of origin.⁸

Early modern artists, authors, and translators often left their ‘patria’ to acquire specialized training and experience in other places. In an early modern peninsula divided into numerous locales, mobility of labour and expertise was almost inevitable. The production of culture in the Renaissance

⁵ See the discussion that followed the contribution by Karin Littau, ‘Translation and the Materialities of Communication’, *Translation Studies*, 9 (2016), pp. 82–96; also Guyda Armstrong, ‘Coding Continental: Information Design in Sixteenth-Century English Vernacular Language Manuals and Translations’, *Renaissance Studies* 29 (2015), pp. 78–102 (pp. 78–79). A call for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of early modern women writers is made in Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (ed.), *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2009), pp. 20–21. On ‘distant’ reading see Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), pp. 48–49.

⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation Made Real. Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 28.

⁷ David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 83.

⁸ See e.g., Annibal Caro *et alii*, *Apologia degli Academici di Banchi di Roma contra M. Lodovicho Castelvetro da Modena. In forma d’uno spaccio di Maestro Pasquino* (Parma: Seth Viotto, 1558), USTC 819038.

therefore almost always involved the confluence of goods, knowledge, and labour from different states, even different continents. This confluence followed both global and local patterns or routes. The routes by which early modern literature was disseminated trace a map that encompasses the localized ‘patria’ where an author or teacher was born or trained, the several routes taken by authors and translators in the course of their careers, and a global chart of trade and translation. The latter encompasses the sourcing of paper, ink, print technology, texts, and finance, as well as the production, distribution, and reception of manuscripts or printed texts. To be able to follow all of these routes one needs to take multiple approaches. Like the global positioning system (GPS)—which is based on multiple global perspectives (satellite signals) and a local system—the literary scholar needs to process coordinates and localized data from a range of different viewpoints: economic, political, and historical, among others.

David Wallace’s literary history of Europe demonstrates that late medieval and early modern texts and literary figures followed intricate routes of cultural trade and exchange, locally and beyond their ‘patria’.⁹ Sometimes the distances travelled were short. At other times they were long, as exemplified by Pier Paolo Vergerio the Younger, who was born in the Venetian Republic but settled in Tübingen as a religious refugee; Petruccio Ubaldini and Michelangelo Florio—Tuscan-born, they worked in early modern England; the missionary priest Giovan Battista Sidotti, who was imprisoned in Japan; Jesuit missionaries and translators who travelled to Japan and China; Hasan al-Wazzan (Leo Africanus), and Michel Angelo Corai, both diplomats and translators, who landed on the Italian peninsula from North Africa and Syria respectively. These well-known cases signal a complex, multi-directional trade of knowledge and skills, as well as goods.¹⁰

A Transnational Italian Renaissance

In 2014 Emma Bond described Italy itself as a case ‘perhaps, at once peculiarly trans-national and trans-nationally peculiar’, because historically the space of the Italian peninsula has been characterized by external and internal movement.¹¹ The key problem with this assessment for

⁹ David Wallace, *Europe. A Literary History*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ On Italian intellectuals, diplomats, and teachers during Tudor England see Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*. On European translators in early modern Japan see Rebekah Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). On Jesuit missionaries and translators in early modern China see Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *Matteo Ricci and the Catholic Mission to China, 1583–1610: A Short History with Documents (1583–1610)* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2016). For an assessment of Europe-China transcultural relationships in the early modern era see Mingjun Lu, *The Chinese Impact Upon English Renaissance Literature. A Globalization and Liberal Cosmopolitan Approach to Donne and Milton* (Farnham UK: Ashgate, 2015). On Ubaldini see e.g., Andrea Rizzi, ‘English News in Translation: The *Comentario del Successo dell’Armata Spagnola* by Petruccio Ubaldini and its English Version’, *Spunti e Ricerche*, 22 (2007), pp. 89–106, and Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*, pp. 127–28. On Hasan al-Wazzan see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (London: Faber and Faber: 2007), and on Corai see Federico M. Federici, ‘A Servant of Two Masters: The Translator Michel Angelo Corai as a Tuscan Diplomat (1599–1609)’, in Federici and Tessicini (ed.), *Translators, Interpreters*, pp. 81–104.

¹¹ Emma Bond, ‘Towards a Trans-national Turn in Italian Studies?’, *Italian Studies*, 69 (2014), pp. 415–24: 421.

medieval and early modern Italy is the fact that, as mentioned, no pan-Italian nation-state existed. Precisely because Italy did not exist politically, linguistically, and economically, ‘transnationalism’ can be called a condition inherent to the Renaissance, and thus one firmly established in the lives and work of Renaissance men and women.¹² Even as political, linguistic, cultural, and economic boundaries separated different Italian Renaissance communities, linguistic differences were not insurmountable. And by the early sixteenth century these were diminished by the adoption of the Tuscan vernacular as a standard literary language alongside Latin.¹³ Moreover, contracts and other notarial agreements between artists and patrons demonstrate that there were only minor linguistic and legal differences between Italian *signorie*, city-states, and kingdoms.¹⁴

Dominant powers asserted their difference by means of arts, social behaviour, and language. In the course of the fifteenth century, several ruling families and governments actively supported the production of histories aimed at underscoring differences between states, thereby potentially harming the reputation of other rulers.¹⁵ During the relatively peaceful period that followed the peace treaty of Lodi (1451), several states continued to experience domestic and transnational unrest. Nevertheless, the comparative peace before the Italian wars at the turn of the sixteenth century provided governments and rulers with the opportunity to develop common historical memories and values by means of literature and history writing.¹⁶ Intellectuals and translators (serving, for example, as teachers and diplomats) offered their skills to furnish updated narratives intended to cement a sense of common or shared heritage within a given community. These ‘professionals of the pen’ are commonly referred to as ‘humanists’.

The term ‘humanism’ was invented in the nineteenth century to describe a widespread cultural movement that celebrated classical antiquity, and involved a charismatic elite of literary scholars focused on Latin texts, translators rendering materials from Greek into Latin, and supporters of the growing vernacular culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This cultural movement was in constant flux. Notwithstanding traditional interpretations of ‘humanism’, the makers of this

¹² Among the extensive literature on transnational exchange and communities in early modern Italy and Europe see at least De Francisci and Stamatakis (ed.), *Shakespeare, Italy*; Christopher H. Johnson, David Warren Sabeau, Simon Teuscher, and Francesca Trivellato (ed.), *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences Since the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011); Campbell and Larsen (ed.), *Early Modern Women*.

¹³ There is a vast literature on the so-called ‘questione della lingua’; see at least Mirko Tavoni, *Latino, Grammatica, Volgare. Storia di una questione umanistica* (Padua: Antenore, 1984), and Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470–1600* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁴ This was in great part thanks to the persistence of ancient Roman protocols for work contracts: Michelle O’Malley, ‘Subject Matters: Contracts, Designs, and the Exchange of Ideas between Painters and Clients in Renaissance Italy’, in Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen Milner (ed.), *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 17–37: 19.

¹⁵ The publication of Leonardo Bruni’s first instalment of the *History of the Florentine People* (1428) raised concerns from humanist Bartolomeo della Capra that it would harm the reputation of the Duke of Milan; see Gary Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 91–92.

¹⁶ On ‘common historical memories’ see Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 21.

movement frequently crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries—these itinerant scholars were not just ‘Italian’. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, several Greek scholars, teachers, and merchants were forced to leave and find a ‘patria’ in one the many ‘Italian’ centres. The Italian peninsula was also a destination for Jewish communities following their expulsion from Spain in 1492.¹⁷

The rise of the print culture increased the possibilities for transnational communities in Europe. German Johannes of Spira was authorized to introduce printing technology to Venice, and Johannes de Colonia (Cologne) became the first successful entrepreneur in the newly established Venetian print industry. Peter Ugelheimer, originally from Frankfurt, set up a remarkable network of ‘transnational and interregional commerce in Venetian books’.¹⁸ Over the sixteenth century, German printers tended to entrust their book trade in Venice to local Venetian book merchants and entrepreneurs, or to those from France.¹⁹ Perhaps the most famous printer from Renaissance Italy, Aldo Manuzio (c. 1452–1515) moved to Venice later in his life, most likely because he was attracted to the thriving community of Greek scholars and the growing print industry.²⁰ ‘Merchant-capitalists’ did not confine their business activities to only one city or centre.²¹ Several established family businesses of printers had agents and headquarters in a number of locales. For instance, the distinguished Giolito publishing house operated in Trino, Lyon, and Venice; from the Gabiano dynasty, Baldassarre, Giovanni Bartolomeo, Lucimborgo, and Francesco da Gabiano in turn established their family business in Lyon, with operations also in Asti, Trino, and Venice.²²

In point of fact, there were Renaissance printers and agents who established multiple companies for the production and distribution of books. These enterprises took advantage of social relations spread widely across a different cities and states. Several languages would have been spoken to facilitate transactions. Key figures in these intercultural businesses were prospective buyers (including wholesalers and booksellers); patrons, business partners, and agents; printers, authors, editors, and translators. Translators moved in search of patrons and printers who would support and promote their intellectual skills, while printing firms actively sought out the expertise of multilingual scholars. For translators, as for other early modern professionals, mobility was a cultural practice that entailed ‘displacement, either voluntary or unwilling, from a homeland; confrontation with and work within an alien environment; and finally, the reception of that mobility by both foreign counterparts

¹⁷ Fiona Cassen, *Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy: Politics, Religion, and the Power of Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 98–99. See also Hans Lamers, *Greece Reinvented: Transformations of Byzantine Hellenism in Renaissance Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

¹⁸ Angela Nuovo, *The Booktrade in the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 21–36: 31. On German printers in Venice see Marino Zorzi, ‘Stampatori tedeschi a Venezia’, in *Venezia e la Germania: Arte, politica, commercio, due civiltà a confronto* (Milan: Electa, 1986), pp. 115–40.

¹⁹ Nicolaus Jenson, Vincenzo Valgrisi (Vincent Valgrise), Antonio Gardano (Antoine Gardane), and Giovanni Griffio (Gryphe) were among the most active French book printers and traders in Renaissance Venice.

²⁰ On Aldo Manuzio il Vecchio see most recently Guido Beltrami, *Aldo Manuzio: Il rinascimento di Venezia* (Venice: Marsilio, 2016).

²¹ Jane A. Bernstein coined ‘merchant capitalists’ to describe printers, booksellers, and scholars of print culture in her *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 10.

²² Angela Nuovo and Chris Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell'Italia del XVI secolo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005).

and compatriots'.²³ Of course such mobility did not suddenly develop at the turn of the fifteenth century. Whether as exiles or by choice, the four of the 'five crowns' of late medieval Italian literature (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Catherine of Siena) had travelled across the Italian peninsula, and the 'fifth crown', Birgitte of Sweden, had travelled to Rome in 1349, where she spent the remainder of her life.²⁴

Translators and *Intertraffique*

Humanistic internationalism—the mobility of scholars, educators, translators, and diplomats—generated 'sites of [cultural] exchange and merchandising'. Here knowledge and skills were offered and received as a commodity that furnished patrons with cultural capital.²⁵ 'Humanists' were extremely shrewd multilingual communicators. Most translators from Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew were trained in the five key disciplines of humanities: grammar, poetry, history, rhetoric, and moral philosophy. Such training (also called *translatio studii*) gave learners strong communicative skills that could be applied to oratory, diplomacy, governance, literature, philosophy, and history.²⁶ Translation was therefore part and parcel of humanists' background: the study and appreciation of languages such as Greek, Latin, and vernaculars was an essential aspect of their career. By their cross-disciplinary skills and versatility early modern translators were well qualified for positions in international governments, and in cultural institutions such as universities, schools, academies.

The number of early modern intellectuals engaging with scribal and printed translation for rulers, patrons, and readers is much more extensive than previously entertained. At least ninety vernacular translators are documented as active in Quattrocento Italy before the development of the print industry.²⁷ A study of the Torrentino press in Florence for the years 1547–63 shows that one quarter of the total output was comprised of translations.²⁸ The data shows the scale of sustained collaboration between translators, editors, printers, and patrons in the production of translations. In the printing business, translators worked closely with editors and printers, to the extent that it is not always possible to discern a clear division of labour between them.

How did these translators contribute to the Renaissance transnational 'intellectual community'—that is, to the flourishing of an autonomous group with a 'shared set of interests

²³ Kim, *The Traveling Artist*, p. 1.

²⁴ On the five crowns see Wallace, *Europe*, I, pp. xxxiii–xxxv.

²⁵ Jacques Lezra, 'Nationum Origo', in Sandra Berman and Michael Wood (ed.), *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 203–28. On cultural capital and humanism see Christopher S. Celenza, 'From Center to Periphery in the Florentine Intellectual Field: Orthodoxy Reconsidered', in Campbell and Milner (ed.), *Artistic Exchange*, pp. 273–92.

²⁶ See Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries. Humanism and Profession in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

²⁷ Rizzi, *Vernacular*.

²⁸ Dario Brancato, 'L'epistola dedicatoria della "Consolazione della filosofia" di Benedetto Varchi (1551) fra retorica e politica culturale', *Studi Rinascimentali*, 1 (2003), pp. 83–91: 84–85.

informed by common material for reflection’?²⁹ Understanding why certain texts were translated instead of others, for whom translations were produced, and by whom, illuminates the literary history of *intertraffique*—whether with reference to the sometimes peripatetic lives of translators, the entrepreneurship of master printers, or the dissemination of knowledge. Such understanding can be gleaned by studying the first-person prefatory statements that translators included in their publications. These nearly always underscore the wish of their elite patrons and readers to find literary context for the state’s geopolitical territory, historical memories, and traditions.

This demand for cultural capital stirred strong competition between nations and city-states. For instance, in the 1460s and 1470s the cultural relationship between Florence and Ferrara was driven by rivalry, emulation, and a strong concern for cultural difference.³⁰ Despite the political allegiance between the two city states, Ferrara-based orators, authors, and translators underscored the political contrasts between their own ruler and Lorenzo de’ Medici in Florence, depicting the latter as a *parvenu*, and the Florentine court as lacking a real princely leader. A passage from Ludovico Carbone’s account of the state visit, in 1473, of members of the Este court of Ferrara to Naples and Florence sheds light on the perceived dissimilarity between the two powers:

I believe you [Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino] have heard about how earnestly they maintain the new University of Pisa, so that they lure the most famous masters of learning from all over Italy with large sums of money. What more can I say? If my lord Ercole ruled over Florence, there is no other place I would live.³¹

Through irony, Carbone exposes the intense competition for cultural excellence that saw Lorenzo de’ Medici actively poach a number of professors and intellectuals from Ferrara and other Renaissance centres. This exemplifies one of the many ways in which cultural-political competition called for skilled professionals from neighbouring states, and, as a consequence, simultaneously broke down and exploited political and economic boundaries. In Ferrara during the same period, Florentine exiled families experienced a privileged condition that allowed them the status of respected citizens in the host state while also retaining strong connections with their city and ruler of origin. Hence, in the 1460s, the Lanfredini family of Florentine merchant bankers ran a banking business in Ferrara and Lendinara. While living and working in Ferrara, they became diplomatic agents for Lorenzo de’ Medici.³²

Their direct appeals for patronage often show translators working rhetorically with the same impulse to exceed and exploit geo-political and other boundaries. An extreme example is that of Cola de Jennaro, who dedicated his Neapolitan version of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum de Secretis* to

²⁹ Celenza, ‘From Center to Periphery’, p. 276.

³⁰ Stephen J. Campbell, ‘Our Eagles Always Held Fast to your Lilies’, in Campbell and Milner (ed.), *Artistic Exchange*, pp. 138–60: 147.

³¹ Campbell, ‘Our Eagles’, p. 149.

³² Campbell, ‘Our Eagles’, p. 152.

King Ferrante of Naples (r. 1458–94). De Jennaro took on the task while he was a prisoner of the King of Tunis. He decided to recast a Catalan version of the treatise into Neapolitan to garner support for his release from captivity; on the third folio of the manuscript, he drew himself kneeling before the Aragonese coat of arms while shackled and pleading for rescue. The painted image of abjection is complemented by the translator's written account of himself on the same folio. He notes that the coarseness of his prison clothes and his low social status match his unsteady translativ praxis and ill-refined lexical and syntactical choices.³³ Yet in the preface de Jennaro also emphasizes his work ethic, explaining how, as soon as he learned of the existence of the Catalan text, 'appi iudicio del tinore de quisto lo quale con bona deligencia et ingegnu procuray averlo' ('I assessed the quality of this work and used good diligence and effort to obtain it').³⁴ In this dramatic instance, rather than competitively seeking employment or intellectual recognition, the translator hoped to exchange his work for physical freedom.

King Ferrante of Naples was among several sixteenth-century rulers who increasingly cultivated interest in vernacular texts and culture. In the prefaces to his vernacular translations, Bartolomeo Fonzio (1446–1513) discusses a related literary struggle, which was shared by several other Renaissance translators. He fashions his challenge to trade the elegance of the ancients for the Tuscan vernacular. Fonzio's career led him to seek work in several European centres, from Florence to Rome, Ferrara, and Buda. This forced him to try to make his translations especially appealing to various prospective readers or employers. In 1467–68, Fonzio translated the second century BCE letter of Aristeas from Leonardo Bruni's Latin rendition (*Aristea de lxxii interpreti*), dedicating his work to Borso d'Este Marquis of Ferrara. Introducing the translation, Fonzio states that he does not wish his work to appear as a rough and inelegant exercise in which the source is translated literally. Nevertheless, he insists, he tried as hard as he could ('con summo studio') to translate accurately, while retaining the elegance of the start text. The 'elegance' to which Fonzio refers encompasses two key elements needed for vernacular translation to be positioned within a cultural trade that still favoured the linguistic and cultural Latin model: the textual virtue of elegance combined correctness and clarity with readability—making knowledge useful. Whether they attributed this model to ancient Roman authors or early fifteenth-century humanists such as Leon Battista Alberti, vernacular translators gave context to their achievements by invoking the much-vaunted elegance of Latin. Even when pronouncing such elegance difficult or impossible to attain (because of the instability or lack of prestige of a vernacular language), translators profess great concern about conveying this quality from texts by the ancients, and by their humanist counterparts.

In the sixteenth century, Antonio Brucioli took a flexible stance on vernacular. Brucioli dedicated his vernacular translation of Solomon's proverbs (1533) to Alfonso Marquis of Vasto,

³³ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Ital. 447, fol. 3v.

³⁴ Ms. Ital. 447, fol. 5r.

governor of Milan. Addressing the Marquis, Brucioli reveals that he had translated the work from Hebrew into ‘nostro vulgare Italiano’.³⁵ In 1529, Brucioli had been banished from his native city of Florence. Since then, he had acquired considerable experience as translator and editor. The reference to ‘our [...] Italian’ in his translation is an indication of the progressive establishment of a more standard literary Italian language that could be accessed across the Italian peninsula and beyond. In other words, Italian was gaining recognition as a language capable of facilitating the ‘intertraffique of the minde’ described by Daniel in his preface to Florio’s translation of Montaigne. Even so, five years later, in his edition of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Brucioli took a different approach: he produced notes at the end of each story, together with an index of the terms he had annotated. Evidently assuming that no reader would understand Boccaccio’s idiom, he felt compelled to explain terms such as *zio* or *lavandaia* for Veneto and Lombard readers unfamiliar with Tuscan literary language. As a Florentine, this was an effective means for Brucioli to assert his indispensable role in the dissemination of literature at a transnational scale. He fashioned himself as translator and editor either addressing transnational patrons and readers, or catering for local readers who needed guidance to understand the newly established *lingua franca* of Italian culture.³⁶

Pietro Lauro of Modena (Modena 1510–c. 1568) was likewise a prolific translator, whose texts enact comparable strategies to promote his services and role as intercultural mediator. As with Brucioli, Lauro was attracted to Venice for the city’s thriving printing business. Venice was also a reasonably safe haven for Lutherans, and it seems that Lauro belonged to this group.³⁷ His first two translations are dedicated to influential patrons working in Venice: the ambassador to the emperor Charles V in Venice, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, and Pietro Orio (deputy *podestà* of Vicenza in 1543).³⁸ Lauro underscores his cultural programme to produce translations for a transnational readership: the Latin or Spanish texts he agreed to translate were not yet known to ‘Italy’ (‘non fusse all’Italia ancora manifesta’) and deserved to be bestowed upon the Italian language (‘donarlo alla lingua Italiana’).³⁹

³⁵ Antonio Brucioli, *Annotationi sopra i Proverbii di Salomo. Tradotti dalla ebraica verità in lingua toscana* (Venice: Aurelio Pincio [Antonio Brucioli], 1533), USTC 802633—quotation at ii^a. On Brucioli see Eva Del Soldato, ‘*Illa litteris Graecis abdita*: Bessarion, Plato, and the Western World’, in Marco Sgarbi (ed.), *Translatio Studiorum. Ancient Medieval and Modern Bearers of Intellectual History* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp. 109–22, and Simona Brambilla, ‘Antonio Brucioli curator e traduttore di Plinio’, *Archives Internationales d’Histoire des Sciences*, 61 (2011), pp. 163–74.

³⁶ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone nuouamente stampato et ricorretto per Antonio Brucioli [...]* (Venice: B. Zanetti, ad instantia di G. Giolitto, 1538), USTC 814809. See Paolo Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), p. 237 n. 33. See also Richardson, *Print Culture*, pp. 98–100.

³⁷ See Gabriele Dini, ‘Lauro, Pietro’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 64 (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 2005), available at: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ricerca/pietro-lauro/>. In 1545, Lauro translated Erasmus’s *Colloquii famigliari* and dedicated his work to Renée of France Duchess of Ferrara, who was known for supporting heretics until her husband and the French Inquisition forced her to desist in 1554.

³⁸ On Pietro Orio see Luigi Forti, *Notizie statistiche della provincia di Vicenza per l’anno 1823* (Padua: Tipografia della Minerva, 1823), p. 36.

³⁹ Pietro Lauro, Constantino Cesare, *De’ notevoli et vtilissimi ammaestramenti dell’agricoltura, di Greco in volgare novamente tradotto* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito, 1542), USTC 802993, p. ii^b.

At times Renaissance translators declared their state of displacement and uncertainty. In his published letters Lauro confesses to fearing the dangers of being away from his motherland, and feeling ‘suspended and doubtful’ (‘sospesi et dubbiosi’).⁴⁰ In his 1554 translation and improvement (‘adornati’) of Boccaccio’s *De genealogia*, Giuseppe Betussi (1512–c. 1573) mentions a trip to England that kept him from fulfilling his patron’s wish to carry out the translation.⁴¹ The material texts of translations could also suffer precarious fortunes. Annibal Caro (1507–c. 1566) translated Virgil’s *Aeneid* from Latin into vernacular; his expressive rendition of the poem was published posthumously in 1581, and reveals the hazardous journey to publication of a work destined straightaway for transnational circulation and literary influence.⁴² Caro spent the last years of his life in Rome, and completed his *Eneide* just before his death. In 1581, a nephew Lepido dedicated the edition published by Bernardo Giunti and brothers in Venice to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Lepido apologizes for having been unable to produce the book sooner—plague in Venice and several family losses and incumbencies (‘travagli’) delayed the printing of his uncle’s translation.

Transnational translations often needed to be repackaged to suit new patrons, networks, and readerships. Published in Florence, the mid-sixteenth-century translation of Boethius’s *De Consolatione* made by Lodovico Domenichi (1515–1564) ensued from a literal and busy ‘traffic’ of translations within the Italian peninsula and to the court of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in Brussels. Domenichi was born in Piacenza, but worked in Venice and Florence. In 1550, he presented his translation of Boethius’s treatise to the Cardinal of Ferrara, published by Lorenzo Torrentino in Florence with the title *De’ conforti filosofici*. In the preface, Domenichi recounts that, following a request from Charles V, the same translation had been dedicated to Cosimo de’ Medici Duke of Florence. Upon receiving the request from the Hapsburg emperor, both Domenichi and Benedetto Varchi were asked by the Florentine ruler to translate Boethius’s work.⁴³ In effect, the latter mediated the Holy Roman Emperor’s patronage of the translation. Meanwhile, independently, Cosimo Bartoli (1503–1572) was translating the same text. Bartoli was the first to complete the task, but Domenichi’s version was the first to reach the emperor in Brussels. Unfortunately, the copy reached the emperor in poor condition, to the extent that another copy had to be sent. To make things worse, Domenichi could not find the first copy of his translation. By necessity Cosimo de Medici decided to send Bartoli’s version as soon as it became available, while Domenichi began compiling a second version. It is this version that was eventually printed in 1550, and dedicated to both the Cardinal of Ferrara and Cosimo de’ Medici. Domenichi’s preface emphasizes the importance of the Tuscan language as a key

⁴⁰ *De le lettere di m. Pietro modonese. Il primo libro* (Tramezzino, 1552), p. 2.

⁴¹ Betussi’s patron in this case was Count Collatino di Collalto. I used here *Geneologia de gli dei. I quindici libri di m. Giouanni Boccaccio sopra la origine, et discendenza di tutti gli dei de’ gentili* [...] (Venice: Comin da Trino, 1554).

⁴² See Diego Poli, Laura Melosi, and Angela Bianchi (ed.), *Annibal Caro a cinquecento anni dalla nascita. Atti del convegno di studi. Macerata, 16–17 giugno 2007* (Macerata: Eum, 2009).

⁴³ Dario Brancato, ‘Il Boezio (1550) di Lodovico Domenichi, le “traduttioni de’ begli ingegni” e il “loro nome” del Doni’, *Bollettino Storico Piacentino*, 110 (2015), pp. 38–55.

medium for the dissemination of knowledge ('sapienza') across the Italian peninsula and beyond. The emperor was therefore able to read this text in a language shared by all of Italy ('mosse la Maestà di tanto Imperatore a voler leggere questo libro in lingua commune a tutta Italia').

Conclusion

Inevitably, the translators' prefaces discussed above can only suggest partial insight into the intricate transnational and collaborative work of translators writing in the Italian vernaculars. Nevertheless, they offer an indication of the strategies, the self-aware agency, and collaboration enacted by translators in their *intertraffique* of texts and knowledge. As discussed above, Renaissance translators crossed political and linguistic borders, sometimes many, and their printed texts straddled other kinds of boundaries.

Returning to the methodological question mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the complex political, cultural, and linguistic factors underpinning the mobility of translators and the transnational trade of translations require a 'new inclusivity' in Renaissance studies and literary history. By this I mean an interdisciplinary approach to the social, cultural, political, linguistic, and material study of intellectual communities and their cultural trade. As Peter C. Herman remarked almost twenty years ago, 'just as the borders between theoretical approaches and disciplines have started to erode, so have the borders between the study of national literatures'.⁴⁴ Collaboration facilitates the erosion of borders and allows disciplines to situate themselves both locally and globally. As this volume and other recent projects in Italian studies attest, a fresh dialogue is a good way to begin.⁴⁵

Certainly, the study of Renaissance translators offers a deep perspective on transnational cultural exchange. In particular, Renaissance translators' versatility and self-avowed diligence seem to have been part of an ethos informed as much by rigorous respect for the salutary powers of linguistic precision, as by the more 'mercantile' ideals expressed by Daniel by means of 'intertraffique'.

⁴⁴ Peter C. Herman (ed.), *Opening the Borders: Inclusivity in Early Modern Studies. Essays in Honor of James V. Mirollo* (Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, 1999), p. 16.

⁴⁵ See e.g., Sergio Luzzato and Gabriele Pedullà (ed.), *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, 3 vols. (Turin: Einaudi: 2010). At a smaller scale see Wallace, *Europe*; McLean and Barker (ed.), *International Exchange*, and Andrea Rizzi (ed.), *Trust and Proof. Translators in Renaissance Print Culture* (Leiden and Boston, 2018).