Intertextuality and Early Modern Translation Theory

By Massimiliano Morini

Abstract: *Before the late seventeenth century, no one produced a full-blown, coherent theory of translation in English – the Earl of Roscommon and John Dryden being commonly assumed to be the first true explorers in this uncharted territory. While recently there has been some recognition that an absence of explicit theoretical pronouncements does not entail a lack of theory, one of the reasons why modern commentators do not envisage the existence of early English translation theory may be that much of it is intertextual. This article draws on twentieth-century notions of intertextuality to trace the diffusion of continental theories of translation in early modern Britain.*

1. An intertextual theory of translation

It has become a commonplace of early modern English translation theory that there is, in fact, no such thing as a theory. From Flora Amos to Massimiliano Morini, scholars in the field have had to wrestle with the difficulty of piecing together a coherent set of values from a rather scattered series of theoretical pronouncements, and a very diverse body of translations. In her 1920 monograph on *Early Theories of Translation*, Amos concluded that the Tudor theoretician's work is "largely incidental [...] applicable only to the work in hand", and that "There is no discussion in English corresponding to [Étienne Dolet's] *La manière de bien traduire d'un langue en au[l]tre*";[1] while in his 2006 overview of the period, Morini opined that some kind of unified theory, derived from the Italian humanists, shines through the prefatory materials and can be gleaned from the practice.[2] But despite these differences in emphasis, it remains the task of the historian to paint a well-ordered picture of what is essentially a disorderly field.

More recently, Neil Rhodes has revisited the problem, pointing out that "there is nonetheless a considerable body of dialogue about the nature of

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[1] Amos 1920, 98–99.
[2] Morini 2006, 13–24.

translation [...] produced in English during the *Renaissance* period".[3] If the statement in itself is in keeping with former views, the use of the Bakhtinian term "dialogue" in this context is very interesting. It presupposes, again, that a theory can result from the efforts of various experts and practitioners working in the same field, more or less at the same time – referring, overtly or covertly, to each other's work, or to precedents that may or may not be disclosed (or even consciously adopted). Rhodes immediately mentions the case of Bible translation, a field in which "that dialogue is intensely polemic" – then gets into the usual difficulties when trying to tease out similar results from its secular counterpart, whose practitioners "introduce their work with some consideration either of the competing claims of letter and spirit, or of the resources of English itself, or of the status of translation more generally".[4]

Whatever the inconsistencies of early modern translators, there is a very valuable suggestion in Rhodes' formulation on the intertextual nature of early modern translation theory. Even though, with the exception of Laurence Humphrey's Latin *Interpretatio linguarum* (1559),[5] English translators were unable or unwilling to produce a single full-fledged treatise, the very repetitiveness of their pronouncements demonstrates that there is some theory to their practice. It is only by comparing their efforts intertextually – as well as by building intertextual bridges between them and their continental counterparts in what was, at the time, a tightly knit intellectual European community – that one can hope to understand what translation meant to people in Tudor England.

The following sections apply the modern notion, or rather notions, of intertextuality to early modern English translation theory. In this sense, the present study can be said to follow in the wake of recent articles by Panagiotis Sakellariou and Lawrence Venuti: Sakellariou, in particular, has explored the ways in which both Gérard Genette's more restricted definition of the concept (texts as alluding to, and dependent on, other texts) and the post-structuralist, Kristevan (and, ultimately, Bakhtinian) sense of each and every text as an author-less 'mosaic of quotations', can be usefully employed in the service of theoretical translation studies.[6] Within the historical terms of this survey, this

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[3] Rhodes 2013, 4.
[4] Rhodes 2013, 4.
[5] Humphrey's Latin treatise, various passages of which are now available in English (Rhodes, Kendal & Wilson 2013, 263–294), is perhaps best considered as a contribution to an ongoing European debate: Humphrey, like other humanists who had written about translation, was mostly interested in Latin versions of Greek texts, though a short section on recent English translators (287–293) shows that he was aware of his fellow countrymen's work, particularly when it entailed translating the classics.
[6] Sakellariou 2015, 36–39.

means that the texts at hand can be studied both in comparison with similar texts, and as single manifestations of general theoretical tendencies. These tendencies, in this particular period, are not made explicit in any single translation but may become evident if the translations, and other relevant texts, are seen as an interdependent intertextual constellation.

In practice, this means that in what follows, the prefaces and the translations – as well as, occasionally, the books that keep those together in one material unit – will be sifted through not only for cross-references, but also for instances of similar behaviour or for hidden references to more general ideological positions. As Lawrence Venuti puts it, when a text is re-positioned in another culture a new set of intertextual relationships is created – with other translations, and with all cultural manifestations of the target culture: here, those intertextual relationships are analysed for what they reveal about translational ideologies in the sixteenth century.[7] Inevitably, in the limited space of a scholarly article just a few exemplary connections and interdependencies can be explored: Hoby and Harington's translations from the Italian, Grimald's and Chapman's classical versions, and a brief history of sixteenth-century English *Aeneids* are used as case studies to test the potentialities of an intertextual theory of translation.

2. Intertextuality and four sixteenth-century *Aeneids*

The simplest, most straightforward approach to intertextuality has been present for many centuries in the intellectual debate – in practice, if not in name. One might call this the 'moderate', or perhaps 'watered down' approach:[8] it has to do with the awareness that texts, and especially literary ones, depend on and allude to other texts. As George Steiner wrote in an attempt to dismiss the structuralist and post-structuralist theories that will be mentioned in the next few sections, "intertextuality" in this sense can be seen as "a [...] piece of current jargon which signals the obvious truth that, in Western literature, most serious writing incorporates, cites, denies, refers to previous writing".[9]

If, as Neil Rhodes recognizes, the field of Renaissance biblical translation is particularly rife with affirmative and polemical references,[10] the most significant source of intertextual connections in Tudor secular literature is certainly Virgil's *Aeneid*, alongside its many English translations and

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[7] Venuti 2009, 159.
[8] Haberer 2007, 6.
[9] Steiner 1989, 85.
[10] Rhodes 2013, 12–15; see also Bruce 1970.

refractions.[11] Even if one ignores all the dramatic renditions and manuscript versions, the great Latin poem was translated four times in the sixteenth century alone, with Gavin Douglas and Thomas Phaer/Thomas Twyne producing complete (Scottish and English) translations, and the Earl of Surrey and Richard Stanyhurst concentrating respectively on Books II and IV and I-IV.[12] Even aside from the sheer question of numbers, the interesting fact is that quite often these translators seem to be aware of each other's work.

The first translator to enter – or be entered – into the fray is actually from the fifteenth century. William Caxton had produced his own version of Virgil in 1490, but had done so by 'Englishing' a French one, the *Livre des Eneydes* (1483): this intermediary or indirect translation earned him the enraged spite of his closest successor, Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld. In the prologue to his own Scottish *Eneados* (1513; published 1553), he reviles the printer for bringing out "ane buke of Inglys gross, / Clepand it Virgill in Eneadoss, / Quhilk that he says of Franch he dyd translait".[13] As evidenced by the wording of his formulation, Douglas takes issue both with the idea of translating Virgil from "Franch", and with Caxton's chosen style. Caxton himself had voiced his preoccupation with finding a language which would be understood in all of England[14] – but for the later translator, his homely choices are evidently not good enough to reproduce the dignity of Latin verse.

These carpings may seem matter of fact to modern connoisseurs of translated literature, but it is worth pointing out that the position assumed by Gavin Douglas concerning the need to translate from the original language, and not an intermediary one, was relatively new in the field of secular translation. So far – particularly in Britain – the only books that had justified this form of intertextual debate were those in the biblical canon, or at most (but this had happened mainly in continental Europe) the great works of Latin and Greek philosophers. One is reminded, for instance, of Leonardo Bruni's fifteenth-century criticism of a former Aristotelian translator, whose knowledge of Greek was so inadequate that he produced a 'barbarian' translation.[15]

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[11] Lefevere 2004 (originally published in 1982). It is worth mentioning, as Stuart Gillespie does in a more recent monograph, that out of 1500 English translations from about 100 ancient authors in the 1550–1800 period (i.e., 15 books per author on average), 103 versions are from Virgil; Gillespie 2011, 4.

[12] On the history of the British *Aeneid* see Hager 1982, Morini 2013, Brammall 2015.

[13] Douglas 1950–1964, 7.

[14] Caxton 1890, 1.

[15] Robinson 1997, 58–59. Of course, even though his efforts were, strictly speaking, literary, Virgil had long been regarded as a sort of philosopher – and in England his works were regarded as much more than mere poems or stories because of "their place in Renaissance pedagogy" (Kilgour 2015, 517).

All the other sixteenth-century translators of Virgil are as aware of the tradition they are working in as Gavin Douglas – or, for that matter, Leonardo Bruni. They do not always show this awareness by mentioning their predecessors, but even when they are completely silent, there are intertextual details in their work which speak louder than any prologues or prefaces. Surrey, for instance, often reproduces Douglas's wording in his versions of Books II and IV – at the same time substituting many of the Scottish and generally Anglo-Saxon words of the *Eneados* with Latinate diction that he must have thought more dignified. Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne (1558– 1573) similarly show that they are following in the footsteps of both Surrey and Douglas, even when their hopping fourteeners would seem to distance them most from their predecessors' work. Finally, and most explicitly, Richard Stanyhurst prefaced his translation of Books I–IV with a rather suspect comment on his most commercially successful colleague. Those who will say that he has done nothing but follow Master Phaer, he says,

> are altogeather in a wrong box: considering that such woordes, as fit M. *Phaer*, may bee very vnapt for mee, which they would confesse, yf theyre skil were, so much as spare, in theese verses. Further more I stand so nicelie on my pantofles that way, as yf I could, yeet I would not renne on thee skore with M. *Phaer*, or ennie other, by borrowing his termes in so copious and fluent a language, as oure Englishe tongue is. And in good sooth althogh the gentleman hath translated *Virgil* in too English rythme with such surpassing excellencie, as a verie few (in my conceit) for pyekt and loftie woordes can burd hym, none, I am wel assured, ouergoe hym: yeet hee hath rather dubled, then defalckt oght of my paines, by reason that in conferring his translation with myne, I was forced, too weede owt from my verses such choise woordes, as were forestald by him.[16]

What he means by this very Anglo-Saxon apology is that Phaer's more Latinate diction would not have served his purpose in penning his own very Anglo-Saxon translation (which was also based on a rather curious prosodic theory). However, by protesting that not only did he not follow his fellow practitioner, but he actually tried *not* to follow him, Stanyhurst effectively admits that he had to confer his own translation with the most popular Virgil of his time. Even on those occasions when one of Phaer's words might have been acceptable for him, he was evidently compelled to stray from the beaten path in order to appear as his own man.

What all these cross-references and allusions amount to is a small intertextual history of the English *Aeneid* in the sixteenth-century – or, more

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[16] Stanyhurst 1582, Aii^v.

precisely, from 1485 to 1582. That such a history can be traced at all is in itself significant from the point of view of translation theory, because it shows that for such important works of literature, translators had to be aware of each other's work and/or to demonstrate that their version was at least as close to the original as any other. This, in turn, demonstrates an interest in reproducing the rhetorical texture of the source – at least from Gavin Douglas onwards. None of the sixteenth-century translators leaves out even a single line from Virgil's text – at a time when Harington could leave out hundreds of staves from his *Orlando furioso*, as we will see in Section 4.

Thus, in very general terms, these sixteenth-century *Aeneids* illustrate the slow penetration of continental ideas concerning the inviolability of the *inventio* and *dispositio* of the text (see Section 3 below). More specifically, Douglas's indignant comments betray an awareness that translating from an intermediary language is not always acceptable, although it was common practice, and held to be acceptable for lesser works; Surrey's invention of blank verse looks like a very early attempt at reproducing even the prosodic feel of the source poem (twenty years later, Phaer resorted to homely rhyming couplets), whereas Stanyhurst's strange Anglo-Saxon concoction represents one of the last purist stands in the old linguistic war between 'archaizers' and 'neologizers' (the latter won, as shown by Dryden's 1697 *Aeneis*). None of these theoretical points are made openly by the translators, who are sometimes surprisingly silent on the question of their art – but all of them can be construed by comparing their texts and looking at this aspect of the wider intertextual history of early modern translation.

3. Intertextuality and the rhetorical theory of translation

In *Introduction à l'architexte* (1979), Gerard Genette first proposed a distinction between 'intertextuality' and 'transtextuality'. The former is the traditional idea that texts quote and allude to each other; the latter is a more capacious concept, embracing all the ways in which texts depend on each other, so that each one can be seen as a reworking of existing texts – a unit which is able to produce meaning only in the context of an 'architectural' network. In the above section, all the ways in which the sixteenth-century translators refer and allude to each other can be seen as intertextual; while their relationship with the wider field of sixteenth-century translation, their awareness of what was allowed or forbidden in their specific field – and our ability to read that relationship and imagine their awareness – can only be defined as transtextual.[17]

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[17] Genette 1992, 83–84.

A theoretical aspect which can only be investigated 'transtextually', or 'architecturally', is the diffusion in England of a theory of translation first elaborated in Italy by humanist scholars (and Greek-Latin translators) such as Coluccio Salutati (in a 1392 letter to Antonio Loschi) and Leonardo Bruni. The first modern translation historian to identify the tenets of this theory was probably Louis Kelly, who wrote in 1979 that after Bruni, "the weight of translation theory lay in a contrastive rhetoric".[18] Massimiliano Morini further elaborated on this idea by specifying that this contrastive rhetoric involved the exact reproduction of the source text's *inventio* and *dispositio*, and the artistic reworking of its *dispositio*.[19] Since, as Gordon Braden writes, one of the main and more 'focused' forces involved in the 'Englishing' of foreign writing was the insular humanistic movement,[20] one would expect to find traces of Bruni's and Salutati's theories in the writings of English humanists such as Thomas More and Roger Ascham.

As a matter of fact, these great intellectuals are generally interested in either the devotional or the didactic aspects of translation, rather than in any theoretical considerations.[21] However, it is in a couple of classical translations – and more specifically, in the translators' paratexts – that some pronouncements crop up whose similarity with Italian ideas on translation is rather striking. The first of these is Nicholas Grimald's version of Cicero's *De officiis* (1556), where in his 'Preface to the Reader' the translator exhorts his fellow practitioners to behave as rhetoricians:

> Howbeit looke, what rule the Rhetorician gives in precept, to bee observed of an Oratour, in telling of his tale: that it bee short, and withoute ydle wordes: that it be playn, and withoute derk sense: that it bee provable, and without any swarving from the trouth: the same rule should be used in examining, and iudging of translation. For it is not as brief, as the verie authors text requireth: whatso is added to his perfyte style, shall appeare superfluous, & to serve rather to the making of somme paraphrase, or commentarie. Therto, if it be uttered with ynkhorne termes, & not with usuall words: or if it be phrased with wrested, or farrefetched fourmes of speeche: not fine, but harsh, not easye, but harde, not naturall, but violent it shall seeme to bee.[22]

Various 'transtextual' strands are woven into the fabric of this definition. On the one hand, Grimald is positioning himself in the very English debate on

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[18] Kelly 1979, 223.

[19] Morini 2006, 9-10.

[20] Braden 2010.

[21] See More's 1529 *Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion* (Robinson 1997, 76) and Ascham's 1570 *Scholemaster* (Ascham 1967, 126).

[22] Grimald 1556, CCv^v-CCvi^r.

"inkhorn terms" that is, on the necessity – or otherwise – to coin new terms for the (paradoxically) newfangled words and notions found in classical texts. On the other, he is also situating his work in a long tradition which, through the Italian humanists, harks back to the universally-mentioned example of Cicero. There is a new sense of the sacredness of the source text that had so far been reserved for the Bible: the original is seen as "the truth", and no "swarving" from it is to be allowed. A clear distinction is drawn between translation on one hand, and other practices like paraphrase or commentary on the other; and it is perfectly clear that in Grimald's opinion, the translator must keep the author's invention and disposition, while at the same time recreating (rhetorically) his "perfyte style", or elocution.[23]

Near the close of the century, in 1598, a much more famous classical translator echoes Grimald's pronouncements, with an even clearer reference to the humanist tenet of elocutionary recreation:

> The worth of a skilfull and worthy translator, is to obserue the sentences, figures, and formes of speech, proposed in his author: his true sence and height, and to adorne them with figures and formes of oration fitted to the originall, in the same tongue to which they are translated.[24]

This is George Chapman speaking to the reader as a translator of Homer, and perfectly translating Bruni's principles of rhetorical translation for late sixteenth-century England. Chapman's insistence on the source "sentences, figures, and formes of speech" mirrors the Italian humanist's provision, in *On the Correct Way to Translate* (*De interpretatione recta*, ca. 1426), that "one must carefully observe the cola, commata, and periods [...] figures of speech and figures of thought" of the original.[25] Also present in the fifteenth-century treatise is the idea that as regards elocution ("figures and formes of oration"), the translator can only re-create it by the idiomatic means of the target language ("in the same tongue to which they are translated").

Of course, two transtextual references to the humanistic rhetorical theory of translation that we have just discussed are not enough to demonstrate that it was indeed dominant in sixteenth-century Britain – and in fact it is very doubtful that it was, as many translators continued to deal rather freely with their sources. But other trans- and intertextual connections demonstrate that

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[23] On the centrality of elocution to the practices of imitation and translation, see Hermans 1992, 110.

[24] Chapman 1598, sig. A6ʳ.

[25] Robinson 1997, 59. "[...] necesse est per cola et commata et periodos incedere ac [...] duo [...] exornationum genera – unum, quo verba, alterum, quo sententiae colorantur," Bruni 1996, 162.

this kind of attitude towards rhetorical translating, whether prevalent or not, was becoming more and more influential. On the one hand, there were the translators of such important classical works as Virgil's *Aeneid*, who were so interested in the Latin poet's invention and disposition that they chastised other translators for failing to follow them (Gavin Douglas), or so enamoured of his elocution that they tried to recreate the feel of his syntax and verse in English (Surrey). On the other, there were those who were working on lesser forms of writing, such as Italian chivalric poetry – who had to admit, as Harington did in his 1591 *Orlando Furioso*, that they had cut some parts "impertinent to us".[26] The old freedom persisted in some of these cases, but the newly perceived sacredness of the source text, as proposed by some influential humanist translators and theorists, forced the freer translators to justify their alterations.

4. Intertextuality and the ideologeme of classical superiority

In his useful guide to twentieth-century theories of *Intertextuality*, Graham Allen draws a distinction between structuralist and poststructuralist approaches to the concept. In Genette's and Riffaterre's structuralist systems, (literary) texts are seen as part of a wider (architectural) whole which contributes to define their significance. In Barthes's and Kristeva's more open-ended theories, texts do not just interrelate with other texts, but with all previous discourses, in such a thorough way that each of them must be seen not as "an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality".[27] Kristeva's work is particularly radical in this sense, and her notion of 'ideologeme' (derived from previous work by Bakhtin and Medvedev, and developed in her 1970 book *Le texte du roman*) is very useful in the context of the present study. In Allen's crystal-clear definition of Kristeva's complex arguments:

> If we accept that words such as 'natural' or 'justice' are the subject of immense social conflicts and tensions, then their existence in a text will represent an *ideologeme*. One of the consequences of this way of describing texts is that we must give up the notion that texts present a unified meaning and begin to view them as the combination or compilation of sections of the social text. As such, texts have no unity or unified meaning on their own, they are thoroughly connected to on-going cultural and social processes.[28]

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[26] Harington 1972, 15.
[27] Allen 2000, 36.
[28] Allen 2000, 37.

Thus, translations and translators' prefaces must not only be considered for their intertextual (or transtextual) connections to other translations and prefaces, but also for the place they occupy in a cultural whole which they somehow represent and reflect. In this sense, each sign in each translational work must be seen as determined by – or at the very least connected with – the rest of sixteenth-century British culture.

A good illustration of this is the way in which most sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British translations, both in their main texts and their paratextual apparatus, embody the Renaissance ideologeme of classical superiority. The centrality of classical culture in sixteenth-century England can hardly be overstated: Latin authors such as Virgil, Cicero and Ovid, in particular, formed the staple of education in the grammar schools of the realm.[29] Accordingly, when translators worked on these authors, their practices were much more respectful and philological than when their sources were from contemporary continental Europe, as we saw in section two of this essay, and their prefatory materials were almost universally characterized by awe.

What is particularly interesting, here, is that the ideology of classical superiority was so strong that it carried over to non-classical translations. This is neatly shown in two of the most famous translations of the century, both from contemporary Italian authors: Thomas Hoby's *Courtyer* (1561) and Sir John Harington's *Orlando furioso in English heroical verse* (1591). In many ways, these two books and their authors are at opposite ends of the Renaissance translational spectrum: where Hoby is in awe of Baldassare Castiglione – and his version at times is so literal at the morpho-syntactic level that it makes for very hard reading – Harington produces a shortened version of Ariosto's verse which reads more like Harington's creation than Ariosto's. Notwithstanding this disparity, however, both practitioners are aware that their translations from Italian are, *per se*, inferior products if compared to versions of the classics, and that their work can only be defended (rather paradoxically) by referring to classical writers and classical translation.[30]

It may appear strange, from the vantage point of the contemporary reader, that Hoby and Harington felt it necessary to defend their versions of *Il cortegiano* and *Orlando furioso*: these, after all, were two of the greatest

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[29] Hay 1988, 226 ff.

[30] The following analysis concerns exclusively paratextual material, both because it is in the prefatory materials and other paratextual elements that the ideologeme of 'classical superiority' is found in its clearest form, and because the translations themselves have been discussed widely and variously (On Hoby see, among others: Matthiessen 1931; Nocera Avila 1992; Morini 2006, 77–83. On Harington: Rich 1940; Javitch 1991; Morini 2004).

works of the early sixteenth century, surely already accepted in the transnational canon of early modern literature (though the term 'canon' is anachronistic). Indeed, the centrality of Castiglione and Ariosto to early modern European culture makes it even more noteworthy that the two translators devote substantial portions of their paratext to finding classical parallels for them.[31] More specifically, since the two books in question are respectively a great compendium of courtly manners and ideals and a chivalric poem of epic proportions, the translators seek to align their aims and style with the two most renowned Roman writers in prose and verse: Cicero for Hoby's *Cortegiano*, and Virgil for Harington's *Furioso*.

Hoby's paratextual apparatus serves the purpose of demonstrating the greatness of the Italian book and its author – a sort of sustained *excusatio non petita* that betrays the translator's uneasiness about his modern source text. The translation itself is supplemented by a dedicatory letter, a letter to Hoby penned by his master, the renowned Greek scholar John Cheke, and a laudatory poem by Thomas Sackville. All these materials have the function of ennobling the enterprise, as neatly shown by repeated mentions of the adjective 'noble' itself – eleven occurrences just in Hoby's dedicatory letter.[32] Sackville's poem picks up the term in order to remind its readers that Castiglione's book is no mere handbook of manners, but a higher and more praiseworthy enterprise – the instructional analogue of aristocratic architecture:

> A rarer worke and richer far in worth,
> Castilios hand presented here to thee. [...]
> The prince he raiseth huge and mightie walles,
> Castilio frames a wight of noble fame:[33]

Here 'noble' has strong social connotations, inspired by the setting of the book at the Montefeltro court in Urbino. In Hoby's dedicatory letter, by contrast, it acquires moral and intellectual overtones, and an explicit link with the great men and writers of classical times. Hoby takes advantage of the dialogic form of Castiglione's treatise – the same employed by Cicero for many of his works – to draw a parallel between the Italian and the Latin writer:

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[31] Thus demonstrating a specialised form of what Neil Rhodes (2011) terms "Status anxiety".

[32] On Hoby's probable reasons for undertaking the translation at all – as reflected in the paratext – see Partridge 2007. See also Coldiron 2015 for the partial inclusion of Hoby's paratextual materials in a later trilingual edition.

[33] Hoby 1974, 1.

> Were it not that the ancientnes of time, the degree of a Consul, and the eloquence of Latin stile in these our dayes bear a great stroke, I know not wither in the invention and disposition of the matter, as Castilio hath folowed Cicero, and applyed to his purpose sundrie examples and pithie sentences out of him, so he may in feat conveyance and like trade of wryting, be compared to him: But wel I wot, for renowme among the Italians, he is not inferiour to him.[34]

To fully appreciate the value of this parallel, it is worth mentioning that the *Aeneid* translators never feel the need to extol the virtues of their writer – because they are so well known as to need no extolling. Here, Castiglione's greatness is not so much stated as demonstrated by association with a great Latin precedent (and a few lines further, Hoby adds a Greek reference when he writes that "many most excellent wittes in this Realme have made no lesse of this booke, than the Great Alexander did of Homer"). Even more interestingly, what follows is a plea for the Englishing of all Latin and Greek masterpieces – which feels perfectly at home here until one realizes that Hoby is not presenting a translation of a classical work.

A similar procedure is followed by Harington when he tries to justify his *Orlando furioso* by claiming that Ariosto has an impeccable Latin pedigree. In characteristically contradictory fashion, the courtier-translator claims that the Italian poem is both important enough to justify an English version, and not so important as to prompt him to "observe his phrase so strictly as an interpreter" – a euphemism for his cutting around 800 staves of the original.[35] On the other hand, for the benefit of those who will object to his choice of these "Italian toyes" as translation material,[36] Harington insists that the model for the *Furioso* is really Virgil's *Aeneid*:

> I will make choise of some other Poeme that is allowed and approved by all men and a little compare them together, and what worke can serve this turne so fitly as *Virgils Æneados*, whom above all other it seemeth my authour doth follow as appeares both by his beginning and ending.[37]

Some similarities in "his beginning and ending" seem scant evidence for the parallel – and yet Harington claims throughout that Ariosto is a modern Virgil. For one thing, he peppers the translation with notes that detail all the allusions to classical literature in the Italian poem – the vast majority of which, he says, are to the *Aeneid*. And in the introduction, he closes an

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[34] Hoby 1974, 13.
[35] Harington 1972, 15.
[36] Harington 1972, 14.
[37] Harington 1972, 14–15.

argument on whether poetic translators should be called poets or versifiers by mentioning the most famous translators of Virgil and Ovid of his era:

> least of all do I purpose to bestow any long time to argue [...] whether Master *Faire* translating Virgil, Master *Golding* translating *Ovids* Metamorphosis, and my selfe in this worke that you see be any more than versifiers.[38]

Harington is here asking a rhetorical question rather than really defending the position of poetic translators – but what is of interest is that in order to defend his own practice, he aligns it with the work of two classical translators who have produced English versions of the Latin poems most beloved of Renaissance culture. Once again, the ideologeme of classical superiority is demonstrated by someone trying to justify the translation of modern works, and finding no better strategy than establishing a parallel with some hallowed Latin text.

Again, it is worth pointing out that this ideologeme is pervasive in sixteenth-century culture – reflected not only in translations of classical and modern works (and those writing about them), but also in educational treatises, private correspondence, and more generally all the textual and paratextual expressions of British culture. When Roger Ascham wrote a manual for the elite *Schoolmaster* of his time, for instance, he proposed Cicero, Terence, Plautus, Caesar and Titus Livius as staple authors. The exiled Laurence Humphrey gave 'prime place' amongst secular writers to 'Cicero in Latin prose, Virgil in hexameter verse', and when extolling the virtues of his countrymen who had distinguished themselves as translators, he chose Surrey as his 'prime example' of excellence, even calling him 'a veritable Cicero and Virgil in his own language'.[39] More frivolously, but perhaps even more significantly, John Harington chose a frontispiece for his luxurious edition of the *Orlando furioso* that sums up both his character and his literary aspirations: the oval that contains his bust is much bigger than the one framing Ariosto's head, and is being gazed at by the translator's dog; both figures are enclosed within a bigger temple-like structure adorned with columns, classical statues, and a quotation from Horace. Though works like these would come to shape the British literature of the future, everything in them looks to the past for guidance and inspiration.

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[38] Harington 1972, 14.
[39] His phrasing, in Gordon Kendal's translation, makes one suspect that he had not actually seen Surrey's efforts: "He is said to have translated [*convertisse*] a good part of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English verse and measures, to the praise and admiration of all who have seen it," Rhodes, Kendal & Wilson 2013, 283 and 288.

5. Conclusion

In their general lines, if not in their terminology, sections two and three above would probably have been understandable to sixteenth-century English – or, for that matter, European – intellectuals. For Tudor readers, the idea that all texts are dependent on other texts would have been made materially evident by the wealth of marginal notes they would find in their reading material – most of these, as seen in Harington's version of Ariosto, being dedicated to tracing classical textual *loci* as precedents for the text at hand. The readers themselves, in fact, would fill those texts with further *marginalia*, whose content would sometimes be personal and often contain references to other texts. Classical allusions would be deemed to be particularly important: a reader of Spenser, for instance, would probably think it worthwhile to note the places in which the English author had followed Virgil.[40]

The matter in section four, on the other hand, would probably have been harder to grasp, both in practical and ideological terms. On the one hand, understanding a concept like 'ideologeme' requires a high degree of cultural relativism: and while that quality was arguably emerging in the European Renaissance (one need only think of Montaigne's *Essais*), it would have been very difficult for sixteenth-century Englishmen to cultivate the detachment necessary for a thorough cultural self-examination. Furthermore, even if someone had been capable of isolating them, such ideologemes as that of 'classical superiority' would have been meaningless to early modern Englishmen and Englishwomen: the idea that Virgil and Cicero were superior to Ariosto and Castiglione would have been so obvious as to deserve no analysis at all.

We must, however, shed light on one further intertextual aspect of the discussion before closing the argument – a rhetorical device that most Renaissance writers would have been able to identify. The three sections above are not just isolated examples of how intertextual connections can be used to understand the work of early modern translators: the sections themselves, in fact, are intertextual. The scattered evidence for the diffusion of a humanist, rhetorical theory of translation becomes more convincing when combined with the operation of those humanistic principles in classical translations such as the *Aeneids* of the sixteenth century. The reason why classical translations tended to elicit a closer adherence to those principles becomes more evident when one looks at what the 'modern' translators have to say about classical books. Moreover, the fact that some of those modern translators feel they have to justify their freer practices – by saying that their

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[40] See Kallendorf 2007, "Marginalia and the Rise of Early Modern Subjectivity", 121–2.

work is like, yet also unlike, that of their 'classical' colleagues – shows that some form of rhetorical adherence was now expected of all 'Englishers'.

Of course, these concerns do not exhaust the matter of early modern translation theory: in order to do that, much more would have to be said on genres, gender, the history and prestige of the English language, and many topics that cannot even be briefly touched upon within the space of an academic article. Those who have tried to consider all these topics together, however, have painted a picture of a fairly coherent (translational) culture, creating the impression that for all its cultural and religious wars, the British sixteenth century was a period of largely shared ideologies, discourses and practices.[41] Now, with a great mass of primary and secondary material at their disposal, the next step for the historians of early modern translation may be the creation of a fully intertextual account of their field of study.

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[41] See Matthiessen 1931; Lindeman 1981; Morini 2006; Braden, Cummings and Gillespie 2010; Rhodes 2013.

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