

*Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe.* José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee, eds.

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The sixteenth century was a great age of migration: of peoples, of texts, and of ideas. Such a phenomenon was not new; medieval Europe also witnessed major movements of peoples. But now the density of such exchange was vastly increased by the agency of print. In this subtle and sophisticated collection, the role of translation in creating transnational reading communities and international bestsellers is tested and explored.

As so often when a project like this succeeds, a clear sense of direction is offered by the editors, both in a profound and incisive introduction and in two penetrating essays of their own. José María Pérez Fernández considers the international success of romantic prose fiction, in quantitative terms far less important than chivalric texts but nevertheless a significant phenomenon in its own right. Such texts were at the heart both of the development of the book market and the debate about books, a point neatly made when the eponymous hero of Juan de Flores's *Grimalte y Gradisa* presents his love with a copy of another international bestseller, Boccaccio's *Fiammetta*. This strand of the book is supported by Miguel Martínez's consideration of translation in Antwerp, the most multilingual marketplace of the era; Guyda Armstrong's consideration of Boccaccio; and Louise Wilson's review of the peregrinations of the two great chivalric cycles, *Amadis* and *Palmerin*, bestsellers in virtually every major print domain. In both this case and that of Boccaccio, translation into English was remarkably late. Until this point, Boccaccio and *Amadis* remained the property of elite readers, in the case of Boccaccio those who could read Latin, French, or Italian.

Translation thus played a vital role in defining the canon, the second major theme of the book, explored most systematically by the second editor, Edward Wilson-Lee. In a shrewdly conceived discussion, Wilson-Lee highlights the role of paratextual agents — annotators, commentators, translators, editors, and printers — in shaping the literary canon. In other words, translation was only one of a number of interventions that shaped the market, as for instance the entrepreneurial activities of printers like John Wolfe, who

made it their business to seek out texts attractive to an audience. Stewart Mottram, writing on the four translations of *A Theatre for Worldlings*, demonstrates the extent to which the various migrations of people and texts converged. Immigrants and refugees provided a crucial reservoir of both customers and skilled workmen, vital for a book like *A Theatre for Worldlings*, where the copperplates were of a quality and sophistication not often seen in the contemporary English market.

Censorship presented a further challenge, but also, as Simona Munari's incisive contribution makes clear, a stimulus to fruitful reflection on the nature of literature and the interpretative scope of translation. Reflections on the proper limits of good reading were a staple of humanist educational tracts, and Juan Luis Vives was among those who offered extensive lists of books to be condemned. This exposes the dual face of chivalric fiction, simultaneously wildly popular and equally widely condemned. Munari's conclusion, that proscription ultimately had less importance than preemptive alterations in the course of cautious translation, is important. So too was the educational infrastructure. In his consideration of language manuals, Rocío Sumillera reminds us that training in foreign languages was exclusively a matter for private tuition. The appearance of printed handbooks revolutionized language instruction, and some of the most widely bought titles became international bestsellers. But trends in language training — the languages paired together — also depended to a large extent on geopolitical factors; in this age of great international conflicts, soldiers provided a significant new market.

The flow of texts considered in this collection is predominantly south to north, a point underlined by Daniel DiMassa's reflections on the German reception of Dante. Balance is restored by Paul White's imaginative consideration of the marketing of *The Book of Fools*. In White's argument, it was no accident that Badius's texts traveled so well: he designed them "to be as open as possible to adaptation and repurposing to serve a variety of reading communities" by exploiting the modularity of the printed text (23). In a stimulating afterword, Neil Rhodes points out that while translation was an instrument of liberation from the hegemony of Latin, the advance of the vernacular introduced new complexities in the movement of texts and ideas. Translation was simultaneously a tool of both emulation and competition. It is a good note on which to end a splendid volume.

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