

S. K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington, eds. *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473–1640*.

Library of the Written Word 21; The Handpress World 15. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xxix + 254 pp. \$146. ISBN: 978-90-04-24184-8.

This essay collection marks the completion of the Renaissance Cultural Crossroads project, based at the University of Warwick. Begun in 2007, this project aimed to capture the print history of translation in England up to 1641. Its online catalogue contains over 6,000 items, encompassing all translations printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and all translations into English printed abroad. This was launched in 2011 (<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/rcc/index.php>) and the essays gathered here offer an inspiring taster of the kinds of research it can prompt and support. The generic and linguistic range of material covered is impressive: works on navigation and warfare, prose romances, and medical, military, and pedagogical texts, translated from sources in Dutch, Italian, Latin, and Spanish — although often via intermediary French translations. Importantly, the authors consider these translated works in their European contexts, attending, for example,

to multilingual editions (as Boro, Taylor, and Verbeke do) or comparing the choices made by French and English translators, as Pantin does.

The collection is arranged into four parts: translation and early print; translation, fiction, and print; instruction through translation; and “shaping mind and nation through translation.” The first section kicks off with Brenda Hosington’s comprehensive analysis of English incunabular translations in the neglected early period 1473–1500. A. S. G. Edwards’s essay focuses on the innovations in, and reception of, John Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*, his translation of an early fifteenth-century French version of Boccaccio’s *De casibus virorum illustrium*. Joyce Boro’s essay on the English and European reception of the Spanish romance *Grisel y Mirabella* rounds off this section. It deftly locates the text and its translations in relation to the *querelle des femmes*, arguing that it facilitates both pro- and antiwomen readings.

The second part is comprised of two essays focused on Spanish works. Barry Taylor analyzes translations — primarily of fiction — from Spanish into English in order to explore the extent of their stylistic influence. Guyda Armstrong examines a little-known 1597 English translation of Boccaccio’s *Ninfale fiesolano*, first discussing the intermediary French source edition and its paratexts, then the material implications of its compilation alongside six English romances, in the sole surviving copy.

The third part, under the rubric of education, assembles a thought-provoking group of materials. Robert Cummings’s essay on Blundeville’s Plutarch makes a persuasive argument for the translator’s pitching of his work at Queen Elizabeth and Roger Ascham, reading the text as exemplum of metaphrase. Fred Schurink’s essay on sixteenth-century translations of ancient war-related texts reaps historicist rewards by reminding us of the activist intervention entailed in translating specific works at particular moments. Demmy Verbeke’s study of translations of the *Dicta Catonis*, central to the English school curriculum, reveals a high degree of variation and manipulation for divergent audiences.

The final section is conceived more broadly and contains some rich studies. Isabelle Pantin examines the early career of John Hester, a London apothecary. His selective approach to translating the medical writings of the Italian physician Leonardo Fioravanti is shown to be motivated by professional commitment to the campaign to destabilize the authority wielded by the College of Physicians. De Schepper’s essay on navigational works centers on dedications in order to unpack their methodologies and motivations for such translations. Hoftijzer’s essay on Henry Hexham is fascinating. A soldier who spent most of his adult life in the Low Countries, Hexham translated many works from English to Dutch and vice versa. He is best known for compiling and publishing the first English-Dutch/Dutch-English dictionary in 1647–48. Finally, Barker’s essay identifies an important and neglected area amid current scholarship on news: the translation of European newsbooks (mainly French and Dutch) into English.

The obvious — and acknowledged — exclusion here is the Bible, by far the most translated text in this period. But this is liberating, making space for these more unusual transmission tales of less familiar texts. Time and again, the central

role of the intermediary translation emerges, often raising further questions about authorial attribution (whether of original text or translation). Paratexts — so useful in hinting at audience, method, and even intention — are a recurrent concern. The Renaissance Cultural Crossroads catalogue has already stimulated this diverse body of research; this volume should drive many more to plunder and ponder its riches.

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