

Towards a professional identity: Translators in the Victorian publisher's archive

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Article abstract

This essay situates itself at the intersection of book history and translation studies, and inquires how the archive, in this instance, those of British publishers, can help us chart the development of the professional literary translator in the nineteenth century. A key period in print culture, during which many cultural, technological and social shifts occurred, the Victorian era saw the rise of the literary profession, the relevance and impact of which on literary translation can be even better understood in the light of developments in British publishing practices. Using hitherto largely untapped primary sources and uncovering a number of significant processes in the publishing history of literary translation, the discussion offers fresh insights into the production of English-language translations in nineteenth-century Britain. Drawing on the archival records of Richard Bentley's publishing house, including translators' correspondence and the contractual agreements that underpinned the production and publication of translations, this study inquires into what may be termed the "proto-professionalization" of literary translators in the nineteenth century.

Towards a professional identity: Translators in the Victorian publisher's archive

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RÉSUMÉ

Au confluent de l'histoire du livre et des études de traduction, cet essai expose les diverses manières dont les archives, en l'occurrence celles de maisons d'édition britanniques, permettent de retracer l'émergence des traducteurs littéraires professionnels au XIX^e siècle. Période clé dans la culture de l'imprimé, marquée par de nombreux changements culturels, technologiques et sociaux, l'ère victorienne a vu l'essor de la profession littéraire, dont la pertinence et l'impact sur la traduction littéraire s'éclairent mieux encore à la lumière de l'évolution des pratiques éditoriales britanniques. À partir de sources primaires très peu exploitées à ce jour, et de l'observation de pratiques cruciales dans l'histoire de l'édition de la traduction littéraire, cet article aborde sous un nouveau jour la production des traductions en anglais dans la Grande-Bretagne du XIX^e siècle. Nourrie par les archives de la maison d'édition de Richard Bentley, qui comportent notamment des correspondances de traducteurs et les accords contractuels qui sous-tendent la production et la publication de traductions, cette étude examine la "proto-professionnalisation" des traducteurs littéraires au XIX^e siècle.

ABSTRACT

This essay situates itself at the intersection of book history and translation studies, and inquires how the archive, in this instance, those of British publishers, can help us chart the development of the professional literary translator in the nineteenth century. A key period in print culture, during which many cultural, technological and social shifts occurred, the Victorian era saw the rise of the literary profession, the relevance and impact of which on literary translation can be even better understood in the light of developments in British publishing practices. Using hitherto largely untapped primary sources and uncovering a number of significant processes in the publishing history of literary translation, the discussion offers fresh insights into the production of English-language translations in nineteenth-century Britain. Drawing on the archival records of Richard Bentley's publishing house, including translators' correspondence and the contractual agreements that underpinned the production and publication of translations, this study inquires into what may be termed the "proto-professionalization" of literary translators in the nineteenth century.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo se sitúa en la intersección de la historia del libro y los estudios de traducción, y pregunta cómo el archivo, en este caso, los de los editores británicos, puede ayudarnos a trazar el desarrollo del traductor literario profesional en el siglo XIX. Un período clave en la cultura impresa, durante el cual ocurrieron muchos cambios culturales, tecnológicos y sociales, la época victoriana vio el auge de la profesión literaria, cuya relevancia e impacto en la traducción literaria pueden ser aún mejor comprendidos a la luz de los desarrollos en las prácticas editoriales británicas. Utilizando fuentes primarias hasta ahora no aprovechadas y descubriendo una serie de procesos significativos en la historia editorial de la traducción literaria, la discusión ofrece nuevas ideas sobre la producción

de traducciones en inglés en la Gran Bretaña del siglo XIX. Basándose en los registros de archivo de la editorial Richard Bentley, incluida la correspondencia de los traductores y los acuerdos contractuales que sustentaron la producción y publicación de traducciones, este estudio indaga en lo que se puede llamar la «proto-profesionalización» de los traductores literarios en el siglo XIX.

MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS/PALABRAS CLAVE

traducteurs littéraires, édition du dix-neuvième siècle, édition britannique, histoire du livre, professionnalisation

literary translators, nineteenth century publishing, British publishing, book history, professionalization

traductores literarios, ediciones del siglo diecinueve, edición británica, historia del libro, profesionalización

1. Introduction: At the interface of book history and translation studies

This essay positions itself at the interface of book history and translation history, in which the archive plays a key role in helping us recover the material and socio-cultural history of, for the most part, little-known translators in nineteenth-century Britain. The nineteenth century was a crucial period in print culture during which many cultural, technological, and social shifts occurred. Improvements in transportation and communication, technological advances in printing, paper-making, typesetting, and book-binding, the gradual expansion of literacy and educational systems, the growth of the market for fiction and the periodical press—which proved critical to the development of authorship—and a number of attempts to change copyright laws (especially its international dimension) were all significant factors affecting the production and circulation of texts and the practice of authorship. Concurrent with the rapid growth in book production and an increased number of periodical publications, the Anglophone literary marketplace saw a proliferation of texts translated from European languages. While the social and material aspects of authorship in the nineteenth century have been closely investigated for the production and dissemination of original works (Sutherland 1976; Leary and Nash 2009; Finkelstein and McCleery 2007), discussion of the profession and professionalization of literary translators in the period, however, is currently mainly restricted to one chapter in the ground-breaking *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* (France and Haynes 2006). Although the latter's treatment of the subject has provided us with a varied and accurate representation of the nineteenth-century translator in Britain, there is still much to be learned and clarified about the contractual agreements that underpinned the production and publication of translations, as well as a need to give more prominence to lesser-known translators. This essay seeks to further this effort by offering fresh insights into the production of English-language translations in nineteenth-century Britain. It does so by investigating the relationships between a Victorian publishing house, Richard Bentley and Son, and their translators, thus inquiring into what may be termed the *proto-professionalization* of literary translators. Further, the study sheds light on the complex web of relations and transactions that surrounds the production and publication of translations in Britain at a time when international copyright was only at its early stages of development.

Although a number of translation historians have engaged in book history through archival study, bibliographical work, and quantitative surveys over the last few decades (Pym 1998; France and Haynes 2006; Milan 2013), only a few scholars have paid close attention to the full breadth of methodological approaches offered by book history (Bachleitner 2009; Littau 2011; Munday 2014; Belle and Hosington 2017, 2018). Other scholars have called for developing interdisciplinary approaches to translation, for example O'Sullivan (2012). The present study draws on research methods developed by book historians, notably Eliot (1994), St Clair (2004), and Sher (2006), for investigating archival records of translators. In the Victorian context, British publishers' archives are home to a whole range of documents, including letters, contracts, account ledgers, and various records of payment due to or made to authors, translators, and editors. The Bentley papers, the largest part of which is located at the British Library, London, provide the prime source of information for this essay. Due to its large timespan which covers several decades in the nineteenth century (details are provided further below), the wide range of materials concerning translations, and the combination of distinctive and customary features in Richard Bentley's handling of translation agreements, the Bentley archive holds immense interest for an investigation of translator-publisher relations and translation agreements.¹

Using archives to (re)construct a history of translations and translators certainly does not come without its own caveats and challenges, which this paper will outline. Publishers' archives often reflect the "invisibility" of translators, not just due to the scarcity of data but also through various issues of authorship, recordkeeping, labeling, and so forth. By turning the spot light on the translator, but also on the publisher and other actors in the process, this essay adopts and combines an agent-centred approach and a socio-historical framework with an archival-based micro-historical study. Agent-grounded approaches have developed in translation studies in recent decades, notably through an increased interest in the translator and other "agents of translation" (editors, publishers, and so forth) as social agents (Milton and Bandia 2009). This approach has led to a rich variety of studies that aim to construct a sociology of translation and of translators, some of which also aim to apply methods directly from the broader field of sociology (Gouanvic 1999; Wolf and Fukari 2007; Blakesley 2018). Indeed, important theoretical work and empirical studies on the publishing of translations have been produced within the field of sociology using bibliographical research and statistical data, most notably by Bourdieu (1999), Heilbron (1999), and Sapiro (2008). By way of understanding the idea of a proto-professionalization of literary translators in the Victorian era, the discussion will also touch on the subject of professionalization before moving into the archival realm of publishing records and translator-publisher transactions. Here, evidence drawn from the publishers' correspondence and contractual records will illustrate significant features of the translation market and the working conditions of translators, such as patterns of remuneration and copyright agreements. While bearing in mind the problematic yet interdependent relation between historical disciplines and the archive, this essay will conclude that nineteenth-century archives of publishers such as Bentley's are critical to documenting the proto-professionalization of translators in the period, thereby also shedding new light on the complex relationships that surround the production of translations in the Victorian literary marketplace.

2. A tale of two turns—the professional and the archival

2.1. *The professional turn*

To speak of a “professional turn” may be somewhat presumptuous, for it has so far rarely been discussed as such in the self-reflective literature in the broad field of the humanities. The main purpose here is to point to the growth of scholarship on the profession and professionalization of authorship in the field of book history on the one hand, and a parallel but dissimilar growth of scholarship on the profession and professionalization of translators and interpreters in the field of translation and interpreting studies.² The concepts of a profession and of professionalization are difficult to define and historicize. General discussions can be found, for example, in Billett, Harteis, *et al.* (2014) and Dent, Bourgeault, *et al.* (2016). Ultimately, we must allow some latitude to avoid the exclusion of certain working practices or the inclusion of too many. Broadly speaking, there is usually a sense of professionalization when a practice leads to and incorporates within its own field several of the following aspects, which are driven by interdependent dynamics and processes: the idea of service provision, remuneration, increased social and legal regulation, development of training, certification, whether academic- or non-academic based, institutionalization, and a sense of being a collective body, indeed a general sense of social recognition.

The Victorian era may be described as a time characterized by emergent literary capitalism, the growing commodification of writing, and the professionalization of authorship, which becomes particularly apparent in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Law (2012: 37-39) outlines some of the changes that occurred in the latter period of that era and are key to the professionalization of authorship in Britain and Ireland. These include: 1) The foundation of the Society of Authors, “the first body to represent the collective interests of professional writers both in negotiations with the publishing industry and in discussions of public policy”; 2) The emergence of literary agencies; 3) The rise of “royalty-based publishing contracts directly linking authors’ incomes to the commercial success of their works,” in other words, directly linking literary productions to sales and profits; 4) The Married Women’s Property Act, for the first time allowing married female authors “to own literary property and negotiate contracts in their own right.” Such signs indicating processes of modernization of print culture and the book trade on the one hand, and the development of professional authorship on the other, could already be noticed in other countries. The Société des Gens de Lettres in France was founded in 1838, preceded by the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques (SACD), formed in 1829. In France also, as well as in Germany, a notion of intellectual property known in French as *droit d’auteur* had developed, and societies of authors sought to protect both the moral and economic rights of authors. Intrinsically connected with the emerging literary marketplace and the professionalization of authors was the development of copyright legislation, initiated in Britain with the Statute of Anne in 1710 (considered to be the first of its kind for textual products). The fact that authors were now the copyright holders of the text by default (as opposed to the prior system of state monopoly and the powerful role of the Stationers’ Company) means that the development of copyright law throughout the period and the professionalization of authorship are mutually and necessarily interrelated.

Discussions about translation as a profession and the professionalization of translators and interpreters have focused on the modern era, from the twentieth century onwards. In particular, recent work in translation and interpreting studies demonstrates that theoretical frames on professionalization can help us better understand the working conditions and social status of translators and interpreters today (Hoyte-West 2020). Work carried out on the professionalization of translators—and on the sociology of translators at large—has remained focused on modern-day society, thus overlooking the vital dimension which the nineteenth century can bring to our understanding of this development. Two reasons for this may be that the “nineteenth-century translator” is arguably a more nebulous concept than that of a modern-day translator, and that relevant data are just scarce. The concept of the “nineteenth-century translator” certainly refers to a mixed group of “professionals” and “amateurs” (Lesser 2006: 85)³. Also, as Lesser notes,

[f]ew professionals translated full-time before the latter part of the century. Fewer still placed their major ambitions in translation: they often saw themselves as novelists, poets, or dramatists who translated to supplement their incomes. Alternatively, translation might be the more creative leaven in lives otherwise occupied by teaching or the law. (Lesser 2006: 85)

The complex but overall low and uncertain status of translators in the literary marketplace on the one hand, and a likewise nebulous but progressively developing copyright legislation on the other, means that an accurate description of the material and social conditions of translators and their professional activities in the period is difficult to achieve.⁴ We do of course get glimpses of the state of affairs and of the multi-faceted figure of historical translators, from secondary accounts, translators’ prefaces, biographical accounts, famous authors’ biographies and correspondence, and so forth. We must also bear in mind that many translators authored their own works as well and/or worked as journalists in an increasingly important marketplace for periodical literature. The professionalization of translation and of translators is generally regarded as a twentieth-century phenomenon, and even more so a post-World War II phenomenon (Brisset 2003). The earliest known association that included “translators” in its title was the Society of Greek Playwrights, Musicians, and Translators (Εταιρεία Ελλήνων Θεατρικών Συγγραφέων Μουσικών και Μεταφραστών), founded in 1894; the British Chartered Institute of Linguists was initially established in 1910 (Pym, Grin, *et al.* 2013). In the nineteenth century, there was nothing in the line of professional certifications or professional associations for translators. Yet, translators—who were frequently also poets, novelists, playwrights, historians, clergymen, academics, scientists, and so forth—had been receiving payments for their work for a very long time. With respect to nineteenth-century Britain at least, it would therefore seem appropriate to speak of the “proto-professionalization” of literary translators, as a process of professionalization in its prior or early stages of development.

Fragmented documentation and a risk of over-reliance on secondary sources, at least for a social history of translators prior to the twentieth century, greatly complicates the task of documenting such a process. For this reason, the archive has increasingly become a key resource for more in-depth studies of historical and contemporary translators.

2.2. *The archival turn*

While publishers' and authors' archives have proved invaluable resources for research in book history for decades now, the idea of an "archival turn" in translation studies has only emerged in recent years, following a number of studies and articles. These, for the most part, draw attention to translators' archives as critical sites of research and insights into the working lives and literary activity of translators (Munday 2014; Zanotti 2018). In translation studies, the archive becomes a site of reconstruction and recovery, that of translators' lives and the individual stories of translations ("the story of a book"), the search for texts and other signs revelatory of past translators' experiences. For this reason, the archival turn is often associated with the idea of microhistory, and its attention to neglected subjects, which in turn can help establish a connection between the micro- and the macro-narratives (Adamo 2006; Milan 2013: 12; Munday 2014). Archival research has been particularly developed in the area of literary and translation "genetics." In recent times, research carried out in English, French, and other languages, on the genetics of translation has demonstrated the importance and usefulness of the "translation archive" in allowing scholars to trace and record the creative processes behind the final product that is a translation (Cordingley and Montini 2015; Hersant 2018). Such work is principally based on the premise that private and business papers related to translations may have preserved various elements of interaction surrounding the production of translations, including but not limited to author-translator and translator-text interactions (authorial interventions, translator's drafts, revisions etc.), thus shedding crucial light on the modes of development and creation of translations. Such genetic criticism is, however, difficult to conduct in the context of nineteenth-century translation in Britain unless we focus on well-known individuals whose private papers have survived. In this context, therefore, and especially if we wish to take a broader look at translators beyond canonical literature, the publisher's records, rather than the translator's archive, becomes a crucial resource for research into the "genetics of translation." This is, indeed, if we can think of a genetics of translation as a broader frame of research on authorship that would also include the contractual relationships and initial stages of decision-making in the production of translations.

The *archive* as a concept, a knowledge space holding material traces of the past and a focus of academic enquiry, has generated rich discussions ranging from practical, theoretical, and philosophical questions of conservation, accessibility, location, and belonging to those of memory, possession and dispossession, interpretation, representation, diasporic expression, identity, and power—who decides to keep what, and to exclude what? A fascinating, complex, and sometimes challenged philosophical and psychoanalytic view of the archive is that of Derrida in *Mal d'archive: une impression Freudienne* (1995), cited here in translation (Derrida 1995/1996, translated by Eric Prenowitz).⁵ Indeed, like the mind, the archive is a place where things are stored, recorded, organized, ordered, dis-ordered, closed, thrown, repressed, reopened, recovered, and indeed probed so as to trace back events, memories, and stories. The archival journey in academic inquiry, and perhaps even in private research such as genealogy, evokes the tracing back of events in human experience from the moment of their inception, if there is such a thing as a *commencement* (Derrida 1995/1996: 9). It is generally accepted that archives hold records of events

that have shaped human experience; they are institutions of social and cultural memory. For the historian or the genealogist, the archive allows a close encounter with the past. In his essay, Derrida invokes the etymological roots of the word *archive*, and notes that it shelters notions of *commencement* and *commandment*, as well as the idea of a house or domicile. The Ancient Greek *arkheion*, he points out, was “the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded” (Derrida 1995/1996: 9; italics original). Because public authority was vested in them, it was at their home that official documents were filed and stored. In the light of this, perhaps it would be fair to see the publisher’s archive, such as the Bentley papers discussed in detail further in this essay, as the house of the *archon*-publisher, in whom a certain social authority in the literary marketplace was vested.

Arguably the “archival turn” and the “professional turn” have in common their reflexive nature. The latter points to a self-reflective investigation of (working) practices, be that of authors, artists or translators, with considerations of social status, legal rights, economic benefits (or lack of), historical developments, institutionalization, and so forth. The “archival turn,” argues Buchanan (2011: 51), likewise points to a “reflexive turn”: “The self-identification of its participants as researchers has shifted the epistemological debate from ‘What is history/literary studies/art?’ to ‘What are we doing when we do history (etc.)?’” In fact, the “archival turn” offers a dual “reflexive turn.” On the one hand, scholars reflect on how the archive can enhance their research and contribute to their fields; on the other, the archive is being scrutinized for its effectiveness to serve its purpose as well as for its ability to construct knowledge.

3. From a literary to an archival invisibility: The translator in the archive

Salmon (2013: 1) noted that the Victorian era saw the emergence of dictionaries of “living authors,” “marking an awareness of professional identity and solidarity” along with dictionaries of “dead authors,” engaging in an act of memorialization. The separation of the living from the dead is itself of great interest (if we think of copyright terms for example), but will not claim our attention at this time. It is worth pointing out, however, that there were no such dictionaries for translators (dead or living). In fact, it seems that to date, China is one of the rare places where such a publication⁶ exists.⁷ Dictionaries of authors nevertheless include many translators, whether they have authored original works as well or translations only. The invisibility of translators has been discussed and documented at length by many translation scholars, most notably Venuti (1995). It is also aptly reflected in Bensoussan’s (1995: 13) pun “l’auteur se crée, le traducteur secret.” One of the main reasons why translators have traditionally worked in the shadow of authors lies in the perception that translators are conveyors and mediators, “copiers” even, rather than producers of knowledge or creators. Relatedly, another reason has been the “regime of fluency,” as Venuti (1995: 2) puts it, that self-effacing pursuit of transparency as a result of which “the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator.” Without going into much detail, it is however fair to say that from a historical perspective, there are also occurrences of “translator’s visibility.” While many literary translators were never named anywhere in their works, others were rather prominent on title pages. In nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland, this was often the case with, for example,

translations by well-known authors, graduate clergymen, and other scholars. Additionally, paratextual (translator's prefaces, translator's notes) and metatextual practices (reviews, advertisements) often provided some form of visibility (Tahir Gürçağlar 2011; Batchelor 2018).

With these considerations in mind, it should be no surprise to anyone that archives can pose real challenges to the translation scholar. Several book historians and literary scholars have pointed to the various methodological challenges awaiting researchers in publishers' archives. Copyright issues, access, availability, and organization are but some of these challenges, as demonstrated in Wilson (2014), Bode and Osborne (2015), and Nash (2018). The way archives can be accessed and are organized has potential implications on literary scholarship and on the way scholars research, collect, interpret, and report the data. Moreover, as Nash (2018: 115) points out, literary archives are often diasporic by nature, notably "because of the necessary involvement of multiple hands in the production of texts and the formation of literary lives." The Bentley archive, from which the present study draws its data, is a massive collection of manuscripts which the researcher needs to first approach using the British Library's catalogue and the collection's finding aids or microform indexes. The ways in which records are labeled, listed in the corresponding aids, and presented in publishers' archives are mainly publisher- and author-driven, which obviously poses a real challenge to translation historians who approach the topic from a broad perspective, that is, when not looking for just one particular individual. Unless translation researchers already know the materials from another source, it is likely that they will need to forage through the files to find translators. Thankfully, in one of the finding aids available for the Bentley papers, over a hundred folios are under the names of individuals who are presented as translators (for example "Charles William O'Reilly, translator"), or as both authors and translators (for example "Mrs. Anne S. Bushby, translator and author").⁸ Relatedly, this means that they are listed in the same way authors are, which renders research easier than if they were not listed at all. Yet, to name but one or two examples, Frederic Shoberl, one of Bentley's better-known translators, is presented as "author and editor." Shoberl is mostly remembered for having translated Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (Hugo 1831/1833). This is despite the fact that two of his records are for translation. While Shoberl's name would have easily drawn the attention of most translation historians with some prior knowledge of English translation in the nineteenth century, the name of "Franz Demmler, Professor at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst," would probably not.⁹ Demmler's Germanic name might perhaps alert the archive researcher to the possibility of this being a translator, but for all we know upon entering the archival realm, he could have been an author writing in English. Ultimately, either such hidden information will be discovered at random, or the researcher is able to read through each manuscript carefully—no doubt a time-consuming endeavour.¹⁰ With this in mind, it is hoped that the following presentation and analysis of archival data from the Bentley papers will effectively contribute to enhancing the translator's visibility in publishers' archives.

4. Translators in the archives of a Victorian publisher

The Bentley archive holds the records of the publishing house known successively as Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley (1829-Aug. 1832), Richard Bentley (Sept. 1832-Feb. 1871), and Richard Bentley and Son (Feb. 1871-Aug. 1898). The present study draws on their publishing records from 1830-1888. Covering the first five decades of the firm, the timeframe is workable considering the sheer amount of material, yet well suited to the task of shedding light on the proto-professionalization of translators and the production of English-language translations in Victorian times. Scholars have also acknowledged the significant role Bentley played in the Victorian literary marketplace. This is particular true of his *Standard Novels*, a series of revised and more affordable editions of major contemporary authors (Gettmann 1960: 45-47). However, while remaining the most valuable and comprehensive study of Bentley's publishing house and of the Bentley papers to date, and apart from a handful of translation- and translator-related facts,¹¹ Gettmann's study (1960) does not pay much attention to translation. The 1830-1888 timeline covers Richard Bentley's entire "tenure" in the firm. His son George, who had started working on and off at the office in New Burlington Street from the mid-1840s, took over the main responsibility in 1867 and continued the business after Richard passed away in 1871 (Gettman 1960: 26). A focus on Richard Bentley's tenure is useful. Some of the hitherto unnoticed strategies of translation publishing which emerge from his records are certainly noteworthy both for the history of British publishing and for the social history of translators. Further, there is both consistency and diversity in the archival data belonging to Bentley's enduring firm. In addition to a number of general patterns in publishing and author-publisher contractual relationships (the height of the three-decker novel, half-profit agreements, emergence of the royalty system, and so forth), these five decades are marked by increased attention to copyright issues at the national and international levels (Seville 1999, 2006; Alexander 2010). As often noted, translation was, at least for a great part of the nineteenth century in Britain, a rather grey area of copyright (Seville 1999: 245; Bassnett and France 2006: 55-56). The general consensus was that translations had the same legal status as original works at the national level. However, there was a growing sense that copyright holding of translations was not limited to those who wrote the translation or published the English edition, but that the copyright should be on the side of the original work in the first place, either with the author or the publisher of the original work (Seville 1999: 245-247).¹² And as these developments were spurred by a desire to protect the copyright of the original work in whatever form, both home and abroad, the main difficulty was to obtain reciprocity for such protection across nations. The international copyright movement initially started with various (often inconsequential) international copyright acts and bilateral treaties between countries (Seville 2006: 23; Bachleitner 2009: 432; Feather 2007/2019: 752-753), leading to the Berne Convention in 1886 (ratified in 1887).

Lastly, Bentley's publications between 1830 and 1888 are interesting because they show a relatively diverse range of literary interests as regards translation and international literature, from the well-known figures of French Romanticism—Chateaubriand, Hugo, and Lamartine—to the popular Hans Christian Andersen, through a myriad of historical memoirs and nineteenth-century travelogues by

authors almost as “obscure” as their translators today, as well as the works of key historians of the era—Guizot, Mignet, Mommsen, Ranke, and Thiers. The following discussion outlines some key features of translator-publisher relations, copyright arrangements for translations and remuneration, and the documentary evidence of a process of proto-professionalization of literary translators in the period. The discussion is structured as follows: 4.1 Decision-making; 4.2 Types of agreements and remuneration.

4.1. Decision-making

In examining Bentley’s correspondence, contracts, and other production papers, we get a general sense of the process of publishing translations in Victorian Britain, including the type of texts chosen for publication, the communications that were exchanged and other key features of decision-making. This is, of course, from the archival perspective and not from the perspective of print runs or lists of published translations as in, for example, France and Haynes (2006). Within the timeframe of 1830–1888 chosen for the present study, the total number of translations for which the archive holds at least one record comes to well over a hundred. For the purpose of quantitative analysis, it was decided to remove from the list a few translation projects which were cancelled or simply rejected. However, they have been taken into account for the purpose of qualitative analysis inasmuch as they can shed some light on the working conditions of translators and their relations with publishers. The total number of titles for this study is thus 104. From the archival and publishing perspective, we may refer to these published titles as *stories*. This is because behind each title there is a story shaped by various relationships and transactions between a publisher and other actors in the process, a story that tells us something about the production and publication of the book. With some titles, we only have one document to help us find that story, for example the receipt of a payment to a translator or a page of accounts in a ledger or a contract; for others, there is more abundant information and the story unravels to reveal a complex web of communications and contractual relations.

The ways in which translations came into being in Victorian Britain are more complex than we have so far allowed. Bentley’s records show a variety of communications, actors, and practices in the process. Occasionally, we see translators approaching Bentley with a translation project, or offering their services. This may be seen as indicating a professional outlook, especially in cases where they continued to offer their services following some initial work with Bentley. In 1839, a Miss Elisa Allen presented her compliments to Richard Bentley, acknowledging the receipt of a £5 note for the translation from the French of (possibly) Charles Reybaud. To this she added, “Miss Allen will be happy to employ herself in the same way if Mr Bentley has any work that he wishes to be translated” (MS 46650:f.43). Her translation, *Claude Stocq: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (Reybaud 1837/1840), was published in the same volume with an original story entitled *Cousin Geoffrey, The Old Bachelor: A Novel* (Smythies 1840). On this occasion, the archive has proved helpful in helping us identify an otherwise anonymous (and entirely unknown) translator. The title story, *Cousin Geoffrey*, was written by Mrs. Harriette Maria Gordon Smythies. Neither Smythies’s nor the translator’s names appear in the front matter, the only

name appearing (prominently) being that of the editor, Theodore Hook. In the book's "Advertisement," Hook (1840) asserts his editorial authority by assuring readers that like the title story, *Claude Stocq* has equally undergone his revision.¹³ From the perspective of historical research, the value of the archive as a site of possible reconstruction and recovery is clear in this case. Arguably, the archive may also be seen as a process of deconstruction, that is, a process of destabilizing the apparent anonymity of the translator. This is not a unique example among the one hundred and four stories in this archive. On the contrary, Elisa Allen is but one of many anonymous and unheard-of translators. A focus on known and famous individuals in book- and translation-historical research runs the risk of constructing a skewed view of the past and of our social and cultural history. In this regard, the publisher's archive can serve the micro-historical purpose of discovering or rediscovering neglected and minority subjects (Adamo 2006: 85). Even the most humble documents—in this case, two small receipts of payments for Allen's work—may turn out to be of value to the historian and to our public history at large.

It is not known whether Elisa Allen initially approached Bentley with her translation or if Bentley or Hook asked her to translate the story for them. Hook's prefatory remarks mark his own agency and authority in the process. Interestingly, the editor's words also point to the publisher's perspective and decision-making: "When I undertook to edit the following Novel, called 'Cousin Geoffrey,' [...] I find I miscalculated its extent. I have, therefore, added another Story, to complete the prescribed three volumes, of which modern works of fiction are generally composed" (Hook 1840: np). On the one hand, the editor foregrounds the decisive part he played in the production of the book. Based on this it would seem that the publication of Allen's translation in this volume was his decision. As a result of his own "miscalculations," *he* added the story. On the other hand, another decisive factor is clearly implied here: the translation was needed to fill in a space and make up the "prescribed three volumes" because that is what a "modern work of fiction" should be in the 1840s. To understand this, one needs to be aware of the importance of what is commonly called the three-decker novel. Following the success of Walter Scott's novels in the three-volume format, at a hefty 31 shillings and 6 pence, the three-decker became standard for works of fiction. Eliot (2001: 38) notes that not only the three-volume set remained "the fashionable, respectable, and high-status way of publishing the first edition of a novel" for the greater part of the century, but "between 1821 and 1894, despite inflation and deflation, criticism and attack," the typical price of a three-decker remained at 31s. 6d—indeed the price of the three-volume set formed by *Cousin Geoffrey* and Elisa Allen's translation. Consequently, it may be fair to say that the decision-making process was also greatly influenced by publishing economics.

Allen's offer to work again with Bentley appears to have been successful. In February 1841, she received a check for £20 on account of a translation of what Bentley (or his assistant) refers to as "Gerfaut" in his business records (MS 46650:f.153). The three-volume publication to which he thus referred comprised two novels by Pierre Marie Charles de Bernard du Grail de la Villette, including *Gerfaut* (rendered as *The Lover and the Husband* in Bentley's edition; Bernard 1838/1841). The volumes were edited and possibly also partly translated by the novelist and playwright Catherine Grace Frances Gore (née Moody). Based on Bentley's draft, Mrs. Gore was due £80 for the entire English copyright of "Gerfaut" (MS 46649:f.30). Mrs. Gore was

better-known than Allen, and editors were usually better paid. Still, Allen's payments must have been welcome. There is no biographical information available for her, but we know that her address, and that of a Joseph Allen who signed her receipt, was Greenwich Hospital. This institution served as a home for retired seamen of the Royal Navy and provided support for their widows and children. One suggestion would be that Elisa and Joseph may have been the children of a Tom [Thomas] Allen, who died at Greenwich Hospital in November 1838—not long before Elisa received her payment of £5.¹⁴

As the century progresses, letters from translators approaching Bentley for work seem to be more detailed about their offers. In October 1876, an unheard-of translator named Lily Wolffsohn wrote to Bentley and Son with an offer for a translation from a new German work, which was already proving very successful on the Continent (MS 59633:f.55-56). In the letter she immediately informs them that she is authorized both by Breitkopf & Härtel, a music publishing house in Leipzig, and by the author, Professor Felix Dahn, to translate and publish in England the English translation of the latter's work, a historical novel called *Der Kampf um Rom* (Dahn 1876). She describes the work and provides factual evidence of its success by informing them that the four-volume work has reached three editions within four months of its publication. Finally, she also reassures Bentley that not only is she a native of England, but she also has three referees, including two clergymen. Seeing this today, one cannot help but think that Wolffsohn could as well be a translator in twenty-first century Britain, sending job applications with two or three named referees. It would be fair to suggest that Wolffsohn's letter gives a more developed sense of modern professionalism and self-marketing than earlier correspondence such as Elisa Allen's above. In June 1887 (at the end of the period under study), the terms employed by Laura Ensor in a short letter to Bentley likewise support the idea that translation was going through a process of professionalization, when she writes that she is "continuing the translation at the remuneration mentioned in our interview viz. £30 and will send it to you at the time you specified" (MS 46622:f.243).

A further element in Wolffsohn's letter seems to point to a development in the profession of translator. The fact that she immediately informs the publisher about her status as authorized translator points to the development of an intellectual property regime which was not in effect, or at least not much of a concern, in Elisa Allen's day. In regard to intellectual property, copyright, and translation, we need to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, the copyright of (and in) the translation, which provides copyright protection nationally, if not internationally, and is subject to national copyright legislation, and, on the other hand, the idea of an "authorized translation," which is often given directly to a translator by the author. The notion of copyright in the translation, or exclusive right of translation, is not always expressed separately from the author's sanction, but it has a more material and legal meaning. It is generally accompanied by a contract (or at the most a letter of agreement) and a form of remuneration, be that a share of profits, royalty or a fixed and agreed sum in one or several installments (on this, see next section, below). We can also make a small distinction between the purchase of copyright from a foreign publisher or author and that from a translator or editor. In the case of the latter, it often translates as "Purchase of the English Translation" or "Copyright and all interest in the translation;" whereas in the case of an author or foreign-based publisher, the terms would

be along the line of “Sole right of publishing an English Translation,” “Exclusive right of English translation,” “Entire Copyright in England,” and so forth.¹⁵

Data drawn from the Bentley papers show a few but subtle changes in copyright behaviour across the five decades under study, and this itself may be an indication of slow developments in international copyright legislation. The 1844 International Copyright Act (which repealed and replaced the 1838 International Copyright Act) did not specify any protection of translations (Alexander 2010: 143), and a chapter on translation had to be added in 1855 to the bilateral treaty (1846) between Great Britain and Prussia (Bachleitner 2009: 432). Great Britain and France only signed a convention in 1851, but further amendments were required due to differing national laws. Thus a further Act was passed in 1852 to bring the French convention into effect (Alexander 2010: 143). In many cases, Bentley’s translation-related copyright agreements were very similar to those made for original works published in Britain. These reasons may explain why there were, overall, more outright sales of copyrights and profit-share agreements with translators and editors of translations than with the publishers or authors of original works. Based on a large sample of 85 titles (having removed those for which there is not sufficient information), there were, for example in the 1850s (out of 32 titles), three half-profit agreements drawn with authors, one quarter-profit agreement with a publisher, and eight half-profit agreements with translators or editors of translations. The trend is similar with outright sales of English-translation copyrights, with, for example in the 1830s (out of 10 titles), about two agreements with authors, two with foreign publishers, and six with translators or editors. By the 1850s, there are at least 18 such agreements with translators/editors, but the number of such agreements with authors had by then increased (11). In some cases, there were two agreements—one with the translator and the other with the author or publisher of the original work. Occasionally, half-profit share agreements were later superseded by the outright sale of the translation and the copyright therein. From thereon, it appears that the gap between translators’ agreements and those with authors and publishers narrows down, reaching a one-to-one ratio in the 1870s (based on 8 titles). Likewise in the 1870s, there is one profit-share agreement with a translator, one profit-share agreement with a publisher, none with authors—but about three royalty agreements with authors. It appears also that translators were overall excluded from the emerging profit-based royalty system.

The notion of *authorized translation* or *author’s sanction* may be seen as a moral or intellectual right. It was often given free of charge. Using again the data from our 85 *stories*, we find evidence of such sanction or authorization by the author in seventeen cases.¹⁶ The records only show one occurrence from 1830-1849, and we begin to see more authorizations from the early 1850s onwards. It would be fair to suggest that such progression reflects the increased value given to authorized translations—at least commercially if not intellectually or legally.¹⁷ Wolffsohn’s proposition was accepted and the translation was published in three volumes as *A Struggle for Rome* (Dahn 1876/1878). Another translator’s proposition in the same year was, however, not as successful. Writing from Russell Square in London, a likewise unknown translator named Marguerite Vandenbrande asked Bentley and Son if they would be inclined to purchase the translation she had planned to write of a French work of fiction (MS 59632:f.46). She, too, informed them that she was authorized by the author. Despite having the author’s permission and assuring the publishers that this

was “a good moral tale” and “well suited for translating into English,” Vandenbrande’s offer was declined. We do not have the exact reasons why it was declined. Based on our list of 104 translations, we may suggest, however, that the brand of Catholic fiction, which was what Raoul de Naverly (the male-sounding pseudonym of a prolific female novelist from Brittany, Eugénie-Caroline Saffray, later Chervet) was essentially known for, does not appear to have drawn much interest from the Bentley firm. As we will see from the “Guidelines” described below, the foreign author’s reputation and standing were also important matters of decision. Indeed, from Bentley’s viewpoint, this was business above all. Ultimately, decision-making was in the hands of the publisher.

By the 1880s, Bentley and Son were not only getting more organized and structured as a publishing firm, they were also issuing guidelines to authors. A document entitled “Manuscript Department,” printed for the firm in July 1883, contains a section on “Authors’ Guidelines.” These house rules included specific provisions for translators, providing one of the most telling evidence from the archive that a process of professionalization of translation was underway in the nineteenth century. In particular, the document shows an increased concern in regulation and quality, placing emphasis on training, competency, and professionalism. After complaining that applications often come “from persons who have had no previous literary or technical training,” they provide a list of important matters to attend to when translating: “to see that all technical phrases or slang expressions are equivalently rendered, foreign weights and measures, moneys, dates, &c., have their English value appended,” and so forth.¹⁸ Moreover, propositions for English translations were required to be detailed, and preferably for leading books or books by well-known authors. The publisher requested that translators obtain the necessary sanction from the foreign author or publisher, and that all formalities necessary to protect the copyright in England were likewise complied with. In other words, not only was the request for copyright formalities a crucial matter in the decision-making and selection of translations, but the publishers’ complaints about the quality of applications and their guidelines on quality and style of translations appealed for greater professionalism among applicants. It appears from this that the publishers were encouraging a process of professionalization as they also clearly implied a need for literary and technical training among aspiring translators.

4.2. *Types of agreements and remuneration*

It is not certain whether the translator named Sir John Byerley¹⁹ approached Bentley in the same manner as Wolffsohn and Vandenbrande with a proposition to publish an English edition of Alphonse de Lamartine’s well-known work *Voyage en Orient* (1835).²⁰ Documents in the Bentley papers are not particularly revealing on this matter. Lamartine being such a well-known figure in his day, this work would have been a “leading book” as the publisher’s guidelines would put it in 1883, thus a promising translation project for a publisher. What the archive reveals to us is that in the case of Lamartine’s *Voyage en Orient*, another actor in the process appears to have played an important role, both in the decision-making process and in the series of agreements associated with the English translation of this work. Paris publisher Charles Gosselin, known for having published some of the best-known romantic authors of

the day (Lamartine, Fenimore Cooper, Victor Hugo) appears to have been the copyright holder of the work in 1835, when he wrote to John Byerley with business in mind (MS 59626:f.18). The purpose of the correspondence was two-fold: Gosselin officially authorized Byerley to negotiate the terms relating to the publication and sale of an English translation of Lamartine's work (and corresponding copyright questions) on his behalf with Bentley. Further, Gosselin advised Byerley in detail on how he should negotiate the terms of this agreement with Bentley, so that the French publisher could fully benefit from the transaction. "Bentley ne peut-il pas me donner 5 à 6 shillings par exemplaire vendu?" [Could Bentley not give me five-six shillings per sold copy?] asks Gosselin for example in the letter. "Enfin faites pour le mieux," [Anyway, do what you can] he then advises. Various matters of copyright and money had to be discussed along the way, which even led to a meeting with London lawyers on the question of copyright in April 1835 (MS 59626:f.18b). The document points out the thorny question on the legal status of translations, and in 1835 there was little certainty about this matter. Bearing in mind the slow and complex developments in international copyright legislation discussed above, the Bentley archive is therefore useful in providing important material evidence about the concerns publishers had regarding copyright of translations.

What appears to be the first translation agreement in the archive—signed when the firm was still under the name Colburn and Bentley—is dated from July 1830. In this case, the proprietor of the English copyright and editor of the translation was a British man, Edward W. Percy Sinnett, who resided for a time in Hamburg, and whose wife Jane, née Fry, was known as a translator from German. It is not known whether Edward himself or Jane Sinnett (or both), translated *A New Voyage round the World, in the Years 1823, 24, 25, and 26* (1830/1830) from the German of Otto von Kotzebue.²¹ In the first decades of the firm, agreements with "Editors" of translations tended to be relatively vague on this question (MS 46611:f.162).²² The agreement made between Sinnett and Colburn and Bentley was the sale and purchase of the entire copyright, one of the main types of contracts offered by publishers at the time (Gettmann 1960: 78-84; Bassett 2020: 117). In this case, Sinnett agreed to dispose of the entire copyright of the work to Colburn and Bentley for the sum of forty pounds. Aside from the outright sale of copyright, the other most common type of agreement for translations was the shared-profit arrangement, usually half and half, but after deductions of all expenses from the profits, including for translation in certain cases (Gettmann 1960: 103-107; Bassett 2020: 117).²³ As noted above, the archive shows that Bentley entered into both types of arrangement with a number of translators or editors of translations. In the case of Lamartine's work, the half-profit agreement was made with the Paris-based publisher and copyright holder (Charles Gosselin, *libraire*) in 1835. After two editions of Lamartine's work under this half-profit agreement, Bentley purchased from Gosselin the entire copyright of the English translation of Lamartine's work, both for the two editions already published, and for any subsequent edition. The sum due was £200, paid in two instalments of £100 in 1836 and 1837 (MS 46612:f.160). But what of the translator?

There was an undated memorandum of agreement between John Byerley and Richard Bentley for a part-translation of *Voyage en Orient*, copied on the same file as Gosselin's agreement (MS 46612:f.158b). Bentley agreed to place one half of Lamartine's work, consisting of two volumes of the Paris edition, in the hands of

John Byerley for the purpose of translating. For this, Bentley agreed to pay Byerley at the rate of one guinea (21 shillings) per French sheet. However, Bentley reserved the right to place Byerley's work "in the hands of a competent person to correct and revise" should the translation not appear satisfactory. The publisher was at liberty to deduct from Byerley's payment any expenses so incurred. From thereon, the archive shows a number of piecemeal payments made to Byerley. In particular, one of the receipts shows deductions made for revisions (MS 46649:f.68). The receipt, dated in May 1835, was for the payment of 23 sheets and 14 pages of French matter, paid at the agreed one guinea per sheet, which amounted to £25. 1s. 6d. After the deduction of £10 for the revisions, the translator only received £15. 1s. 6d. The rate of pay of one guinea per sheet (21 shillings) assigned to Byerley's work was in fact commonly used by Bentley for translation projects, especially where several translators were commissioned for the same book. What may be confusing, however, is that this rate of pay sometimes applies to English (translated) sheets, and sometimes to original sheets. Of special interest to us here is the fact that Byerley was far from being the sole translator commissioned for the translation of Lamartine's work. In gathering other papers under various individuals' names across Bentley's archive, as well as loose pages of accounts which Bentley used to calculate the costs of translating Lamartine's book, the story has further unraveled to reveal that eight individuals in total (including Byerley) were commissioned to work on *A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* (Lamartine 1835/1835).²⁴ In addition to those who worked on translating portions of the text—William Andoe, John Byerley, Charles Seymour Dubourg, Anne Innes, Isabel Hill, James Ollier, and Thomasina Ross—the group also includes the poet L. E. Landon who translated all the poetical passages in the work.²⁵ James Ollier was also the person who was employed to make the revisions on John Byerley's portion. He was the recipient of the above-mentioned sum of £10. In addition, he received the sum of £3. 15d. for his own work—3 sheets of 24 pages at 25 shillings per sheet (MS 46674:f.84). This shows that other rates of pay were used in addition to that of one guinea per sheet.

Three of the above translators (Andoe, Dubourg, and Hill), with the addition of a J. F. Gérard (Gerard on some of the records), were commissioned for another work, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy* (Godoy 1836/1836). Dubourg, Gérard, and Hill, who translated the smallest amounts of text, were all paid the standard rate of one guinea per sheet of 16 English pages.²⁶ William Andoe was paid at the higher rate of 25 shillings per sheet of 16 English pages, but the reason why he was paid a higher rate is not obvious from these records. The costs of translating Lamartine's *Travels in the East* are much less straightforward because they show a range of varying rates of pay. This includes rates of (among others) one guinea per sheet of 24 English pages and one guinea per sheet of 16 French pages. Landon's verse translations were naturally paid at a higher rate, on this occasion a rate of 13s. 6d. per English page (equal to about £10. 16s per sheet of 16 English pages). There is obviously one major issue with this—there is no clear French/English page ratio that we can rely on across the various works. Based on the two above works only (and those mentioned below), we see that sometimes there is an increase of text in translation, and a decrease at other times.²⁷

Richard Bentley thus contracted the above-named translators (as well as others) for a number of works, usually French historical-bibliographical writings with two

or more volumes. They included the *Memoirs of the Duchess d'Abrantès* (1831-1835/1831-1835), published in eight volumes, and *Memoirs of General Lafayette and of the French Revolution of 1830* (Sarrans 1832/1832). No doubt this meant that translations of larger works could be completed at a faster pace and in a timelier manner (at least in principle), and that should a translator fail to complete his/her work, then others could take it over. While there is a sense of modern professional work and identities arising from such commissioned work, the publisher having to some extent control over the transactions, these collective translations arguably still point to an earlier phase of the professionalization of translation. As we can see, all the above titles were published in the 1830s, and there were in fact very few other Bentley translations which were produced collectively in this manner from 1840-1888.²⁸ The length of the books and the publisher's wish for a speedy production may have been a factor, but cannot be the reason why this would have been limited to the early years of the firm. Sarrans' *Memoirs of General Lafayette* had only two volumes, yet it was translated by six people (MS 46674:f.80).²⁹ Many later titles in Bentley's list were at least two-volume long and were usually produced by one or two people at the most. In addition to the evolution of intellectual property, an increased concern with copyright protection and a development of international copyright agreements, we can suggest two factors or implications, if not actual reasons, for the decline in multi-handed translations. The first implication of such collective work is a risk of inconsistency of style between the various portions and volumes, at a time when publishers did not hand out guidelines such as those issued by Bentley & Son's Manuscript Department in 1883. Further, looking at all the various papers related to the above-mentioned works—individual accounts and receipts, bank drafts, letters, the publisher's own accounts used to figure out the costs of translation—it would be fair to say that the amount of administrative work for just one translation must have been quite overwhelming at times. It would be fair to suggest that, as the century progressed, more attention was paid to minimizing both textual and linguistic inconsistency and the amount of administrative work, and to that purpose, Bentley would increasingly rely on single-handed translations. *The History of Rome* (1854-1856/1862-1876) by German historian Theodor Mommsen, for example, was translated with the author's sanction and additions, by William P. Dickson, D.D. Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. The first edition was published in four volumes crown octavo from 1862-1876.³⁰

In contrast, for most translations from François Guizot published by Bentley in the 1850s, there was at least one copyright agreement with the French historian, and typically only one translator (usually Andrew R. Scoble). In these cases, the translator was rarely paid per sheet but his copyright in the English translation was thus purchased with a fixed amount of money.³¹ To name but one example, Guizot's *History of Richard Cromwell and the Restoration of Charles II* (1856/1856), published in 1856 in two volumes, demy octavo, was the subject of a copyright agreement with the author, as well as an agreement with Scoble. Guizot's contract was signed by his London-based literary agent, Comte Guglielmo Libri, who thus acted on behalf of the author on several occasions.³² They agreed to dispose of, and Bentley agreed to purchase the exclusive right of preparing and publishing for his own use and benefit an English translation of Guizot's work. Bentley agreed to pay Guizot the sum of £250 at the rate of £125 per volume (MS 46617:ff.1,2.). Scoble agreed to the sum of

£100 for his translation, at the rate of £50 per volume. However, he had to agree to the deduction of £15 “on account of the heavy expenses for corrections” incurred by Bentley in printing his translation of M. Guizot’s previous work on Charles I and Cromwell (MS 46617:f.25). It is clear from this that in the case of the historian’s work, the price of the right of English translation was higher than the price of the actual translation. Overall, as Lesser (2006: 87) noted, translators who were better known would usually have a better chance of a reasonable remuneration. For example, Mary Howitt née Botham (1799-1888) received one of the highest payments recorded in this archive for an outright sale of copyright by a translator. Mary Howitt and her husband William were both well-known in their day as authors, and as translators of Northern European literature, and they signed many contracts with Bentley. She received the sum of £350 for the copyright of a three-volume edition (1000 copies) of *Only a Fiddler!*, published in 1845 together with *O.T. or, Life in Denmark*, both from Hans Christian Andersen (MS 46614:f.274). For the purpose of comparison with other rates mentioned above, the rate would be equal to about £6 per sheet of 16 English pages.

Signs of change are noticeable in other types of documents found at the archive, as demonstrated above with Bentley & Sons’ “Guidelines.” In particular, Bentley’s printed half-profit share agreements, which form an important part of the publisher’s archive, show some signs of an increased visibility of translation in the formal aspects of the publishing world. Bentley’s early pro-forma printed (half-profit) agreements in the 1830s and 1840s were relatively simple, filling up less than a full page, and with a large space left blank for the publishers to fill it in with names, addresses, title of work, and indeed, details about the type of work. As the century progressed and the business was developing—as were other matters such as copyright legislation, technology, and so forth—the text in these printed agreements became more substantial and detailed. However, the wording was also increasingly more focused on original authorship and as a result for a while, less adapted to translation. Thus, on April 1, 1857, Mrs. Georgiana Malcolm (1807-1886) entered into a shared-profit agreement with Bentley for *Debit and Credit*, a novel translated “with the sanction of the Author,” Gustav Freytag (Freytag 1855/1857). There was still a blank space in the agreement for the specific details of the work, but this was followed by the following printed words, “~~of which Work the First Party hereto is the Author,~~” now crossed out to adjust to Georgiana Malcolm’s undertaking (MS 46617:f.125).

The printed shared-profit agreement signed by William Conn on October 16, 1882, was very different and more elaborate than earlier contracts. The blank spaces were arranged so as to allow for other types of writing without having to cross out words. The work was presented thus (handwritten additions in italics):

The said Mr William Conn having translated a Work at present entitled “*Cinq mois au Caire et dans la Basse Egypte*” which is understood to be equal in extent to two volumes Crown 8vo, and being fully possessed of all legal rights in the said Work prior to the signature of this Agreement, hereby agrees to the publication of such Work on the undermentioned terms. (MS 46620:ff.240-242)

As well as integrating the publishers’ approach to guarantee copyright protection, the new template thus helped to formalise other types of authorship and writing such as translating and editing. The work was published as *Five Months at Cairo and in Lower Egypt. Authorized translation from the French of Gabriel Charmes by William*

Conn (Charmes 1880/1883). The process of thinking about translation and adapting publishing practices to copyright developments is noticeable in various types of contracts and publishing transactions, both in form and in content, as the publishing business develops and adapts to changing legal, social, and economic conditions. Finally, we should add that the second half of the century saw the emergence of the royalty system (Gettmann 1960: 115-118). The first recorded occurrence is in 1865, for an author. The royalty is 6d. (sixpence) per sold copy, and it appears under the form of an added handwritten inscription on the translator's (Fanny Cecilia Tubbs) own agreement (MS 46618:f.1).³³ Within the 1830-1888 timeframe, no translator royalties have been found.

5. Conclusion

The last decades of the century would see the burgeoning of professional literary agencies in Britain and abroad, mediating between authors and publishers, between translators and publishers, and indeed between copyright holders and publishers of translations to sell or obtain translation rights (at home or abroad, depending on whether the translation was out of English or into English) (Finkelstein 2007/2019: 523). Further work should focus on the last decade of the century and the beginning of the twentieth century, to investigate the impact of the expansion of the literary agency on translators, as well as examine other aspects in the professionalization of translators which we can see emerging in the second half of the century—a decrease in copyright and profit-based agreements with translators, international legislation further developing, and so forth. Taking the above findings into consideration, it is possible that a development in the professionalization of translation and in the copyright legislation related to translation may not have been entirely favorable to translators despite increased visibility of translation in the contracts and publishing guidelines. Indeed, notes Venuti:

The history of copyright shows that earlier translators did not suffer the same legal limitations as their successors today. On the contrary, translation was advantaged by the centuries-long, sometimes contradictory development of authorial rights in copyright law. (Venuti 1998: 49)

There is still much to be done and discovered at the archive. The house of the *archon*-publisher is rich in materials for (re)constructing a history of translators. However, it demonstrates that a lot also needs to be done outside the publisher's archive, especially if we wish to further the "history from below" which Darnton (2007: 496) mentions when he recalls the kind of book history that was conducted in the 1960s, as well as his own early work on eighteenth-century publishing at the archives in Neuchatel. Biographical research, for example, should be combined with archival research. If we should mention but two examples of what the archive of Bentley's publishing house has given us, it should probably be, on the one hand, discovering the existence of rates of pay for translators, notably the rate of one guinea per sheet, and on the other hand, the new insights into literary anonymity in nineteenth-century translation. The *Memoirs of Godoy*, *Memoirs of General Lafayette*, and *A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* were not necessarily anonymous for reasons of political or religious safeguard or due to the gender or social class of the translator.

They were anonymous principally because they were written by several translators. Of course, this was not necessarily the case for all anonymous translations published by Bentley at the time. But without research into the publisher's records, the multi-authored translations of a Victorian publisher—and with them a number of little-known free-lance translators and correctors of the Victorian era—may have gone largely unnoticed.³⁴ The idea that history should turn to those who have for a long time remained the “faceless masses” and that “the past should be studied from above, from margins on the side, from every possible angle” (Darnton 2007: 496), indeed the idea of a *histoire totale*, certainly resonates and fits well with archival studies of past translators. In fact, one may argue that this is achievable by implementing also a kind of *histoire croisée*, one which would emphasise cross-cultural interchange and cross-national intersections in the history of the book and of communications. Further, it is hoped that the methodological approach adopted in this essay for the study of translation in Victorian Britain will be useful to other translation scholars and book historians, and that it may be further adapted to other contexts and perspectives. In keeping with this essay's commitment to interdisciplinary work and to foster a dialogue and interchange between translation studies and book history, it may be worthwhile considering, for future purpose, Buchanan's (2011: 55) suggestion that beyond the archival turn, “the archive is, or could be, the shared territory in which scholars make encounters, across which bridges can be built to mutual benefit.” Seen from this new perspective, the archive is very much like translation.

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NOTES

- * Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, London.
- 1. This study only looks at Bentley's books, and does not include translation in the magazine *Bentley's Miscellany*.
- 2. The best-known work on the question being Pym, Grin, *et al.* (2013).
- 3. On this, see Part 3 (“The Translator”) in its entirety in France and Haynes (2006: 85–131).
- 4. For a tentative discussion on women poet-translators and publishing in mid-nineteenth century Ireland (then under the Union with Great Britain), see Milan (2018).
- 5. The work is often simply referred to as *Archive Fever*.
- 6. WRITING GROUP OF THE “CHINESE TRANSLATOR'S DICTIONARY” (“中國翻譯家詞典” 編寫組) (1988): 中國翻譯家詞典 [A dictionary of translators in China]. Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation.
- 7. The author of this essay has been compiling a bio-bibliographical database of several hundred historical translators active in Ireland in the nineteenth century (and to a lesser extent, before), some of whom are discussed in Milan (forthcoming). Although it will be primarily available as an online resource, it is also hoped to have the data presented in dictionary format in the future.
- 8. Some translators have several folios under their names.
- 9. The contract between Demmler and Bentley was cancelled (Bentley Papers, BL, Add MS 46615:f.48). From hereon MS references will be given with MS and folio numbers only.
- 10. This was the approach taken for the present study, including browsing through numerous papers that are not translation-related.
- 11. Useful mentions in the book include the copyright agreement and related profits for Mommsen (1854/1862: 104, 137).

12. It may be worth stressing here that despite a rich and substantial literature on copyright, literature devoted specifically to translation remains scarce, the most comprehensive work to date being Venuti (1998). The author of this essay therefore hopes to contribute further to the literature with this study, as well as in future work.
13. The only indication that this is a translation is the phrase “from the French” on the translation’s own separate title page (Reybaud 1837/1840: 135).
14. *Tom Allen, The Faithful Servant of Lord Nelson. Born at Burnham Thorpe in The County of Norfolk. 1764. Died at the Royal Hospital Greenwich Nov 23. 1838 Tom Allen, AE 67 (ca. 1839):* Royal Museums Greenwich. Consulted on 24 March 2021, <<https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/107608.html>>.
15. All foregoing expressions are based on the Bentley papers.
16. And/or (though less often) by the foreign publisher. No doubt a minimal figure, as it is likely that several records of authors’ sanctions have not survived.
17. The specific subject of authorized translation is an underresearched area to which the author hopes to contribute further in future work.
18. MS 59626:f. 134-137, “Manuscript Department” (July 1883):6-7.
19. Quite possibly Sir John Scott Byerley, a scientist, inventor, translator and poet, who had literary and scientific connections with France.
20. See Appendix for references to this work and its translation. The original work and the translation are sometimes referred to in the archive as “Voyage en Orient” and “Lamartine’s Travels in the East,” respectively
21. There are some papers for Jane Sinnett as well. MS 46651:f.202 is a £40 receipt for her copyright in a translation from German (Mügge 1847/1848).
22. The agreement omits to specify that this is a translation.
23. There were occasionally other arrangements. In the case of *Natural Religion* (Simon 1854/1857), in 1856, Paris-based publishers Hachette & Co agreed to receive only a quarter of the profits (MS 46617:f.93).
24. In addition to Byerley’s record, as well as several other individual papers, the key documents relating to the costs of translating Lamartine’s work are in MS 46674:ff.82-84.
25. Only two from this cluster of translators have their own biographical entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* – Letitia Elizabeth Landon, better known for her original poetry (Byron 2004), and Isabel Hill (Wilkes 2008), known for her translation of Mme de Staël’s French novel *Corinne, ou, L’Italie* (1807). James Ollier and his brother Charles were publishers and book-sellers. James is mentioned in his brother’s DNB entry. Further work will examine these nineteenth-century “free-lance” translators in more detail.
26. MS 46674:f.86, titled “Distribution of Translation of Memoirs of the Prince of Peace.”
27. Looking at the data from Bentley’s accounts and, where available, the printer’s records, it has been possible to determine an increase in translation of around 13%-16% for Godoy (1836/1836). Andoe’s contribution shows a much higher increase, which leads us to suggest that he may have contributed editorial materials such as notes, corrections, etc. as well.
28. Only very occasionally works were shared between two or more translators. For example, for Mignet’s *History of Mary Queen of Scots* (1850/1851), Sir Andrew Scoble asked Thomasina Ross to translate two chapters for him.
29. MS 46674:f.80. The main translator was Thomasina Ross, having translated 39 ½ sheets, and the other five were: Anne Innes (11 ½ sheets), Frederic Shoberl (3 ½), and four sheets shared between Benson Hill (though possibly translated with or by his sister, Isabel Hill), a person (Dr?) whose name is too unclear, and another person named Gattie. This could be Maria Gattie, married to publisher-bookseller Charles Ollier and sister-in-law of James Ollier.
30. Related papers can be found in MS 46617:ff.265-266.
31. The Guizot translations include at least seven books and one pamphlet. It seems that only the pamphlet was translated by a female translator, a “Miss Bentley,” possibly a daughter or other relative of the publisher.
32. Also known as a scientist, book collector, forger and thief. On this, see his biographical entry (Harris 2004). The records don’t tell whether Guizot paid Libri to act on his part, but we can safely speculate that this must have been the case. Research outside the Bentley archive will be required to shed further light on this matter.
33. The (faded) *ms* inscription appears at the top left corner.

34. The most detailed information on Bentley's collective translations had been a series of catalogues published by Bentley and Son. See BENTLEY, Richard and BENTLEY, George (1893-1923): *A List of the principal publications issued from New Burlington Street*. London: Richard Bentley and Son.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Biographies

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Appendix 2: Literary and historical works

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