

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



# Trust and Proof: Translators in Renaissance Print Culture

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Situating Conciliarism in Early Modern Spanish Thought  
Situier conciliarisme dans la pensée espagnole de la première modernité

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**Rizzi, Andrea, ed.**

***Trust and Proof: Translators in Renaissance Print Culture.***

Library of the Written Word 63. Leiden: Brill, 2018. Pp. 295 + 26 ill. ISBN 978-90-04-32388-9 (hardcover) €129.

This collection joins the ranks of several recent studies on early modern translation that examine the rapport between print and the translated text and between the translator and the various print-trade agents. The light it shines on the translators, their exploitation of the rhetoric of self-presentation and self-promotion, and the collaborative nature of their work is particularly welcome. Within this context, it is particularly concerned with the matter of trust, sorely tested when a text crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries, and with the burden of proof, needed to validate the translation and provided by both its reception and the intervention of the translator.

In keeping with the important changes that translation history and its methodologies have recently undergone, this collection “embraces agency” (the strategies that all those involved in producing translations employ to position themselves), “identity, and technologies of production” (2). It also demonstrates sensitivity to recent calls for an interdisciplinary approach that brings together translation studies and other related fields such as book history and literary, cultural, social, and art history.

The work is divided into three parts, the first being “Translators’ Rhetorics: Dedications and *Imitatio*.” Brian Richardson, in “The Social Transmission of Translations in Renaissance Italy: Strategies of Dedication,” discusses how early modern Italian translations and their dedications were published socially: the printed work would be presented to a first reader, usually the dedicatee and occupant of a higher social position, but would subsequently become available to a wide readership. Printed dedications, then, preserved their age-old purpose, to procure protection or financial support, but now also invited a greater number of readers to trust in the translator and translation, and offered, as textual proof, the “authorization” of the work.

Andrea Rizzi, in his wittily entitled chapter, “Monkey Business: *Imitatio* and Translators’ Visibility in Renaissance Europe,” argues that the presence of monkeys and dogs on the folios of several manuscript translations is illustrative of two kinds of translator: one, unskilled, “apes” the source text; the other, canine-like, imitates it in a “faithful” manner. Together, they bear witness to the

way in which, in the Renaissance, *imitatio* and translation are intertwined, and how in turn this relates to the questions of translation and authority and the visibility of the translator.

The third essay, Marie-Alice Belle's "Rhetorical *Ethos* and the Translating Self in Early Modern England," examines the liminal material of a dozen translations in order to discuss the importance of classical rhetoric for a translator's self-fashioning. In particular, Aristotle's notion of *ethos* as a most effective way of persuading one's audience of one's trustworthiness features in much of the paratextual discourse accompanying these English translations, manifesting itself in various ways.

In part 2, "Transcultural Translation," Belén Bistué continues her research into multilingual texts with "Multi-Version Texts and Translators' Anxieties: Imagined Readers in John Florio's Bilingual Dialogues." She argues that the increasing production of such texts began to pose problems for translators and printers regarding the nature of their imagined readers and the type of reading methods employed. Such anxiety is clearly articulated in the discursive paratexts prefacing John Florio's *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes* but also in a huge range of works, reflecting cultural, colonial, and commercial concerns.

Elena Calvillo explores cultural translation through the prism of visual art, both practical and theoretical. In "'No Stranger in Foreign Lands': Francisco de Hollanda and the Translation of Italian Art and Art Theory," she explains how de Hollanda presented Italian culture to the Portuguese court via his treatise, *Da Pintura Antiga*, and a collection of his drawings. He portrayed himself as a translator of foreign ideals absorbed during his time in Rome, offering portraits of famous Italian interlocutors, including Michelangelo and Victoria Colonna.

Albrecht Classen's "Authors, Translators, Printers: Production and Reception of Novels between Manuscript and Print in Fifteenth-Century Germany" argues that although the printing press was crucial in disseminating foreign-language medieval romances in Germany through multiple editions, they had already been popular in manuscript form. The printed translations by Thüring von Ringoltingen, Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, Eleanore of Austria, and Veit Warbeck nevertheless reflect the changing conditions for producing literature.

Finally, David Tavárez's "Reframing Idolatry in Zapotec: Dominican Translations of the Christian Doctrine in Sixteenth-Century Oaxaca" discusses the impact of colonial and evangelical linguistic control, through translations,

grammars, and lexicons, on Zapotec and Mixtec speakers. He focuses on Pedro de Feria's 1567 translation and edition of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologia* into Zapotec, especially the section on idolatry, which the Dominican adapted into a carefully reorganized and lexically appropriate narrative based on values shared by the inhabitants of Oaxaca and the Europeans.

The three essays in the third part of the collection, "Women Translating in Renaissance Europe," concern England, Germany, and France. In "Paratextual Economies in Tudor Women's Translations: Margaret More Roper, Mary Roper Basset and Mary Tudor," Rosalind Smith demonstrates how female agency in these Englishwomen's translations manifests itself in the translated texts and their material features: the woodcut on the title page of Roper's *A deuout treatise*, the printed marginalia in Basset's *Of the sorowe of Christ*, and Mary's lyric appended to her "prayer of Sainte Thomas Aquyne." Examining the paratextual material, Smith rightly claims a collaborative role for these women and describes their contributions as complex and significant. This is a far cry from earlier representations of women translators as submissively and privately producing second-order texts.

Hilary Brown opens her essay, "Women Translators and Print Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany," by in fact referring to such past and present views. She very questionably claims the former is "still dominant" in discussions of early modern English women translators and quite wrongly places Jaime Goodrich's eloquently and convincingly argued *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* in that camp. All this to note the absence of any sixteenth-century German women translators and, as a result, any similar research. However, Brown has discovered three in the 1620s, Eleanora Maria von Anhalt-Bernburg, Maria Fabry, and Martha Salome von Belta, thereby undoubtedly breaking new ground. Nevertheless, some of her explanations concerning these women and the situation in Germany rather eerily echo the early comments made about English women translators.

With Bronwyn Reddan's "Translating Eloquence: History, Fidelity, and Creativity in the Fairy Tales of Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier," we move forward in time. Reddan skilfully meshes discussion of Lhéritier's transformation of ancient oral fairy tales into modern literary texts (translation in its broadest sense) in her *OEuvres mêlées* (1696) and *La Tour ténébreuse et les jours lumineux* (1705) and her French translation of Ovid's *Heroides* (1732). Lhéritier successfully exploits paratextual space to present herself as a writer of authority by using the rhetoric

of fidelity: she is a narrator to trust (regarding the fairy tales) and a translator faithful in essence to her author (Ovid) but also creative in adapting his text to seventeenth-century sensibilities and translation practice.

This wide-ranging collection focusing on the early modern translator constitutes a significant contribution to our knowledge of what was translated in the period and equally important, of who was translating and producing it.

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**Shagan, Ethan H.**

***The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgment from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment.***

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv, 385 + 4 b/w ill. ISBN 978-0-691-17474-7 (hardcover) \$35.

Ethan Shagan's well-written and engaging book has three aims: First and foremost, he undertakes to prove that the epistemic status of belief and what it means to believe, as distinct from to know and to think, change over time. Second, he seeks to chart and explain the development of belief from the medieval period to the present. Third, he wishes, in passing, to offer a partial rejoinder to the assessment of modernity in Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation*, which Shagan feels presents too dismal a view of the modern world.

Shagan begins with a quick sketch of medieval notions of belief. He characterizes this period as stable. Christian thinkers wanted to make faith, and therefore belief, an objective epistemological category, inherently superior to other forms of knowledge. Faith was not an opinion. Shagan limits his discussion to belief only, which is understandable given the need for brevity. However, in avoiding related questions, such as what medievals understood by divine revelation and inspiration, some important complexities and developments within Christian thought in this era risk being overlooked. An engagement with the historical studies of Yves Congar might have provided Shagan with an interesting conversation-partner here.