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Ariosto in Scotland by Way of France John Stewart of Baldynneis' *Roland Furious*

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Abstract

The article discusses John Stewart of Baldynneis' version of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* as a case study for early modern indirect translation. Written in the 1580s, this translation precedes John Harington's, and was composed at the court of James VI of Scotland. The young king had promoted a vernacular revival through a group of poets, translators and musicians; he himself translated a number of works by Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, such as *L'Uranie*, while Thomas Hudson translated another work by Du Bartas, *La Judith*. In this perspective, a translation of an Italian epic poem might seem to run counter to the prevailing fashion at court; but this translation owes much to intermediary French versions, such as Philippe Desportes' *Roland Furieux* and *Angelique*. My analysis proceeds through the examination of individual passages that reveal the interplay of original text, intermediary translations, and final version.

Keywords: *James VI/I; John Stewart of Baldynneis; Ludovico Ariosto;* Orlando Furioso*; Philippe Desportes*

1. *A Translation of Ariosto in Early Modern Scotland*

Elizabethan translations and adaptations of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* have been often studied; the only complete translation, John Harington's *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse*, published in 1591, has been the object of special attention. Harington's version paralleled another poetic enterprise greatly indebted to Ariosto's poem, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, first published (though in a version limited to books I-III) in 1590. The two works, supreme examples of translation and appropriation, ideally project for us a twin image of the magnitude of Ariosto's influence in the British Isles. They were surrounded by partial translations, allusions, rewritings, or versions of individual tales, beginning with Peter Beverley's *Historie of Ariodanto and Ieneura*, printed in 1566, and with a witness as late as 1607, Gervase Markham's *Rodomonths Infernall or the Diuell Conquered*. Pas-

sages from the poem were set to music, or constituted the basis for theatrical performances, such as Greene's popular stage adaptation *The Historie of Orlando Furioso* (1592). An Ariosto canon developed in early modern England, to the point that the pioneer of Anglo-Italian studies, Mary Augusta Scott, could state that 'Ariosto was far and away the most popular Italian poet with the Elizabethans' (1896, 378).[1] The existence of a Scottish version of the *Furioso* is often overlooked, yet this version, probably composed in the mid-1580s (McDiarmid 1948, 12-18; McClune 2013b, 122), precedes Harington's and constitutes the first English-language rendition which attempts to take stock of the poem as a whole. It is, however, difficult to gauge the place of this translation within this very special canon. This is not only due to the persistent marginality of Scottish writing before the Union of the Crowns, but to the impossibility of applying to the progress of Scottish literature between the fifteenth and the sixteenth century the traditional medieval/early modern categories (Johnson and Petrina 2018, ix-xiv). The trajectory of early modern writing in Scotland follows very different paths from those travelled in England. This translation of Ariosto is a case in point.

The Scottish version of the poem, *Ane abbregement of roland furiovs translait ovt of Ariost*, was undertaken by John Stewart of Baldynneis (*fl.* 1539-1607), and composed at the court of James VI. It survives in a presentation manuscript (now Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 19.2.6), presumably prepared for the King, which includes other poems by Stewart.[2] Unlike Harington's translation, it did not respond to the Elizabethan fashion for Italian writing. Rather, it was the product of a different perspective. A copy of the *Orlando Furioso* in an Italian edition was in the library of Mary Queen of Scots; this, possibly the first copy of the poem in Italian recorded in Scotland (Purves 1946, 72), may have been available both to King James and to some of the members of the court. The young King, recently come out of his tutelage and educated by the humanist George Buchanan about classicism and Calvinism, had promoted a vernacular revival at his court, through a group of poets, translators and musicians. This literary activity appears to have been marked by his desire to continue to enfranchise Scottish literary writing from its dependence on the English model – hence his relying preferably on French contemporary references. James himself, beside writing poems and composing a short treatise on poetics, *Reulis and Cautelis* (1584), which acknowledged its debt to Joachim du Bellay's *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*, translated a number of works by the Huguenot courtier and poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, such as *L'Uranie*, while Thomas Hudson translated, at the King's bidding, another poem by Du Bartas, *La Judith*. Contemporary French literature appears to have been the prevailing model at court.

[1] For early surveys of the influence of Ariosto in English literature, see Benedetti 1914; Sammut 1971. More recent and detailed overviews can be found in Johnson-Haddad 1994; Scarsi 2010; Hiscock 2019. An edition of early modern English translations of Boiardo's, Ariosto's and Tasso's epic poems is forthcoming for the MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translation Series, edited by Joshua Reid. My warmest thanks to Anna Bettoni, Oscar Meana, Massimiliano Morini, and Telmo Pievani, who discussed with me various points of this article and contributed ideas and help. This article began its life as a paper delivered at the RSA international conference, 2021, and I wish to thank the panel organizers and participants for the ensuing discussion. Alasdair A. MacDonald and Joshua Reid read drafts of this article and offered invaluable suggestions, for which I am profoundly grateful. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful insights.

[2] No other work by Stewart of Baldynneis has survived, which leaves us with the puzzling image of a writer producing an impressive body of poems and translations in his mid-forties and perhaps not writing anything else before or after. The fact that the same apparently happened to another poet and translator who worked within the King's circle, Thomas Hudson, suggests that this activity of translation and poetic composition was more strongly linked to royal command or royal expectations than has been supposed.

In this perspective, a translation of an Italian epic poem might seem to run counter to the dominant fashion. However, Italian literature did play a role at King James' court: another member of this literary circle, William Fowler, completed in 1587 a translation of Petrarch's *Triumphi*, dedicating it to Jean Fleming, Lady Thirlestane, and would then go on to translate Machiavelli's *Principe*. As for Stewart of Baldynneis, his literary enterprise appears different from the efforts of both the translators from the French and William Fowler, since his very free translation of Ariosto, though often relying on the Italian original, owes much to intermediary translations in French: scholars agree on identifying these intermediary texts with Philippe Desportes' *Roland Furieux* and *Angelique*, as well as with the translations of Jean Martin (1543) and (less probably) Gabriele Chappuys (1576) (Dunlop 1915, 303-310; McDiarmid 1948, 16; Jack 1972, 60-63).

Stewart's achievement is then a classic instance of translation through one or more intermediary versions, and it is presented here as a complex case study, both of early modern intellectual attitudes and of later responses to the practice of literary translation through or with intermediary texts. Its analysis prompts the question of what should be our approach to indirect translation in early modern Europe, an approach that still awaits a systematic attempt at a theoretical definition. My study proceeds through the examination of the overall structure as well as of individual passages that reveal the interplay of original text, intermediary translations, and final version.[3]

2. *From Ariosto to Desportes to Stewart of Baldynneis*

As happened with a number of Italian writers, from Petrarch to Machiavelli, Ariosto's name and fame had reached France before arriving in the British Isles, and the extremely high number of Italian editions published in the sixteenth century helped this circulation. Joachim Du Bellay proclaimed Ariosto a model for contemporary writers, explaining how only in his case 'j'oseroy (n'estoit la saincteté des vieulx poëmes) comparer à un Homere et Virgile' (I would dare (were it not for the sanctity of the old poems) compare to a Homer and Virgil; Helgerson 2006, 378-379). French writers undertook translations or imitations of Ariosto's poem, beginning with an anonymous prose version published in Lyon in 1543, generally attributed to Jean Martin and preceding the first Spanish (1549), English (1591) and even Paduan (1558) versions (Cioranescu 1939, 76-86). It was subsequently reprinted, and other complete translations, such as the already mentioned one by Gabriele Chappuys (in effect a revision of Martin's 1543 translation), were undertaken throughout the sixteenth century (Gorris 2000, 173-174). Then, as the Italian editions of the poem multiplied (the third, definitive version of the poem was reprinted at least 136 times between 1532 and the end of the century), there followed translations of individual cantos, or episodes of the poem (Javitch 1991, 10-20). A notable instance of this selective reception is the volume *Imitations de quelques chans de l'Arioste, par divers poetes François*, published in Paris by Lucas Breyer in 1572. It included adaptations or rewritings by Mellin de Saint-Gelais, Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Louis d'Orleans and Philippe Desportes. Desportes (1546-1606), one of the members of the Pléiade and the author of an incredibly high number of imitations from Italian poetry, then revised and re-published his *Imitations de l'Arioste* in 1574 (Cameron 1935; Cioranescu 1936; Purves 1946, 69-70).

[3] As far as the intermediary translations are concerned, my main focus is Philippe Desportes; I make only passing references to the prose versions of Jean Martin and Gabriele Chappuys. It should be noted that, in his discussion of the literary activity at King James' court, J. Derrick McClure (1991) proposed the use of the word *transcreation* as a more satisfactory alternative to *translation*; I find that this neologism, though suggestive, still awaits a full definition.

Desportes' contribution strikes at the heart of Ariosto's narrative innovation, subverting it radically. Like other French versions, it presents the reader with what has been called a 'fractured' Ariosto, observed through a series of selective readings (Gorris 2000, 180). These are translated into poems, each dedicated to a single character (Orlando, Rodomonte, Bradamante and Angelica).[4] Desportes does not attempt to find a continuum in Ariosto's narrative, offering instead a series of *tableaux* focused on individual characters, trying to bring them back to a linear development. While this entails a radical pruning of much of Ariosto's material, it also gives him the opportunity to expand on individual portraits, freezing characters in a single attitude whose description is often enriched by classical allusions. Occasionally he expands beyond the limits of Ariosto's poem, showing for example the journey of Rodomonte's soul in the otherworld (while Ariosto stops at the character's death), or offering a continuation of Angelica's adventures. This freedom, as we shall see, also inspired Stewart of Baldynneis.

Stewart's debt to Desportes has been analysed before, and it has been shown that it concerns not only his translation of Ariosto, but also other poetic compositions such as his sonnet 'Of ane Fontane', which might go to show his greater familiarity with French than with Italian (Dunlop 1915, 303-310). Possibly on the basis of this compositional background, most studies of Stewart's translation of Ariosto, taking into account Desportes' role, consider it part of a linear sequence from Italian to French to Scots. The usual approach to Stewart's reworking of Ariosto's material has been coloured by the expectation of finding a form of imitation at one remove, a hyper-simplified version of *Orlando Furioso* (Jack 1972, 57-71). But what we find as we look more closely at Stewart's poem is a more articulated approach. The double influence of Ariosto and Desportes (as well as the possible influence of Jean Martin) works at a micro-level (words, individual lines, images, the creation of neologisms), but also at the level of structure, and in this case the intermediary translation does not simply create a model but rather suggests a creative solution. The result is a poem with a complex and individual agenda, a text which fascinates scholars but remains impervious, as shown by the difficulties its editors have experienced.[5] Much of this obscurity is due to its relationship with its sources, which forces us to reassess our expectations concerning literary translation and imitation.

The first hypothesis we form when we approach the Scottish poem is that Stewart was working on Desportes' basic structure, and wanted to build something more complex, though short of Ariosto's original. Reduction is one of the organizing principles, and Ariosto's 46 cantos become 12. The work is introduced in the manuscript's opening folio as *Ane abbregement of roland furiovs translait ovt of Ariost*, leading readers to expect not only a physical shortening but also simplification. Yet such an approach would be not only reductive but misleading. Scholarly evaluations may be equally misleading: John Purves called it 'a cento or pastiche built up round certain episodes of the Furioso, especially those in which Orlando and Angelica appear' (1946, 75), but this dismissive assessment is not only influenced by a mental attitude that sees any alteration of a supposed literary original as a diminution, but also, evoking the usefully confusing image of the pastiche, discourages any attempt at retracing Stewart's narrative structure.

[4] For ease of reference, throughout this article I shall refer to the characters in the spelling used by Ariosto. Translations into modern English are mine, unless otherwise noted.

[5] There are two editions of the text: Crockett 1913 presents only an accurate transcription, and is printed as volume 2; volume 1, which should have contained an introduction and notes, was never published. This is the edition used here. A more recent edition is Heddle 2008, which, however, leaves a number of questions open. For an assessment of Heddle's edition, see Elliott 2010. A new edition by Kate McClune, for the Scottish Text Society, has been announced.

Stewart eliminates a large number of Ariosto's characters and plot lines, and finds help in Desportes' choice of individual characters, further narrowing the focus on two characters, Orlando and Angelica; Desportes' *La mort de Rodomont* and *Complainte de Bradamant* do not appear to have been used. The Scottish writer interlaces his cantos, of very unequal length, according to a simpler pattern than Ariosto's; yet the end result is far more complex than the collection of individual scenes favoured by Desportes. The Scottish poem can be read as a continuum, but Stewart allows also (and perhaps prefers) a reading of individual scenes. The overall structure of his poem departs significantly from the original Italian and from Desportes' version, as the following table shows:[6]

Stewart of Baldynneis	Ludovico Ariosto	Philippe Desportes
canto 1 (84 lines)		
How Cupid wounded Orlando (1-16)	--	*Roland Furieux* 1-28
Orlando's fame (17-84)	--	*Roland Furieux* 29-76
canto 2 (516 lines)		
Dedication to the Muses (1-3)	--	--
Presentation of Angelica (4-16)	--	*Angelique* 1-18
Orlando loses Angelica in the Pyrenees (17-32)	I.5-7	--
Angelica assigned to the Duke of Bavaria (33-64)	I.8-9	--
Angelica pursued by Rinaldo and Ferrau (65-177)	I.10-29	--
Angelica and Sacripante (178-347)	I.41-58	--
Duel between Sacripante and Bradamante (348-422)	I.60-67	--
Baiardo (423-468)	I.73-76	--
Rinaldo pursues Angelica (469-516)	I.77-81	--
canto 3 (440 lines)		
Invocation to Love (1-8)	--	--
Duel between Rinaldo and Sacripante (9-59)	II.3-10	--
Escape of Angelica (60-76)	II.11-12	--
Angelica and the hermit (77-345)	VIII.47-50	--
Comparison with Jupiter and Europa (113-120)	--	--
Comparison with Chaucer's Emelie (232-239)	--	--
Biblical references (*passim*)	--	--
Angelica's exposure to the Orc (346-440)	VIII.62-63	--
Invocation to Fortune (406-416)	VIII.66	--
canto 4 (172 lines)		
Dedication to Melpomene (1-18)	--	--
Orlando's grief (19-94)	VIII.73-78	--
Orlando's dream (95-108)	VIII.80-83	--
Orlando's awakening and renewed grief (109-120)	VIII.85	--
Orlando's rescue of Olimpia (121-172)	IX.5-6	--
canto 5 (152 lines)		
Apology for his method (1-22)	--	--

[6] The edition used for all quotations and references to the Italian original is Caretti 1966. For Desportes' version I have used Michiels 1858. This table owes much to Purves 1946; Sammut 1971, 35-39; Heddle 2008, 141-264.

Angelica rescued from the Orc (23-72)	X.95-98; VIII	--
Ruggiero and the Hippogriff (73-108)	X	--
Angelica's escape from Ruggiero (109-148)	X; XI.6-9	--
Orlando's plight (149-152)	--	--
canto 6 (116 lines)		
Wanderings of Orlando (1-46)	--	--
Orlando's arrival at the palace of Atlante (47-116)	XI.81-83; XII.1-16	--
canto 7 (252 lines)		
Dedication to the Muses (1-12)	--	--
Angelica and the shepherds (13-29)	XI; XII.67	--
Angelica's arrival at the palace of Atlante (30-100)	XII.24-36	--
Orlando's duel with Ferraù (101-240)	XII.39-46	--
Angelica's escape (241-252)	XII.23-66	--
canto 8 (168 lines)		
Orlando's grief (1-8)	--	*Roland Furieux* 335-448
Author's decision to compress his story (9-17)	XII.67-85; XIII.1-44	--
Summary of events concerning Orlando (18-116)	XII.67-80; XIII.33	*Roland Furieux* 65-70
Zerbino and Isabella (117-125)	XII.91-93; XIII.3-31; XX.132-137, 140-141; XXIII.54, 63-64, 67-69, 97	
Orlando and Mandricardo (126-168)	XXIII.39-91	*Roland Furieux* 81-88
canto 9 (76 lines)		
Angelica falling in love (1-68)	XIX.17-20	*Angelique* 19-28
Comparison with Criseyde (69-71)	--	--
Comparison with Thisbe (72-76)	--	--
canto 10 (244 lines)		
Angelica and Medoro: marriage and departure	XIX.24-41	--
Angelica compared to mythological figures (1-22)	--	--
Ultimate fate of Angelica (23-40)	--	*Angelique* 13-16
Pastoral idyll with wounded Medoro (41-144)	--	*Angelique* 191-212
Lovers compared to famous women and men (145-212)	--	--
Departure (213-244)	--	*Angelique* 85-110
canto 11 (630 lines)		
Lament of the author on his shortcomings (1-20)	--	--
Indictment of Fortune (21-152)	--	--
Orlando sees names carved on trees (153-194)	XXIII.102-106	*Roland Furieux* 95-112; *Angelique* 122-138
Events leading to Orlando's madness (195-410)	XXIII.99-136	*Roland Furieux* 113-144, 177-182; *Angelique* 139-150
Madness of Orlando (411-600)	XXIII.126-128; XXIV.1-13	*Roland Furieux* 449-518; *Angelique* 151-152
Orlando meets Angelica and Medoro (601-614)	XXIX.57-64	*Roland Furieux* 145-164
Conclusion (615-630)	--	--

canto 12 (88 lines)		
Dedication to Clio (1-6)	--	--
Moral reflections and Biblical allusions (7-20)	--	--
Prophecy: Orlando healed by Astolfo and St John (21-88)	--	*Roland Furieux* 519-522
Orlando contrasted with Joseph, David, or the Bethulians (43-58)	--	--

This list, highlighting the influence of the French intermediate source mostly at the beginning and at the end of the poem, shows Stewart's use of the texts at his disposal. Of course, it does not mark amplifications or condensations with any exactitude, it does not note individual images or metaphors that are transposed from one section of the narration to the other, nor does it take into account borrowings from sources other than Ariosto and Desportes, but it helps understand how Desportes would have been useful to give Stewart's work a sense of direction and of closure, since the Scottish writer was obviously uneasy with Ariosto's inventive roaming. It also gives us a glimpse of Stewart's freedom in transposing and transforming his material, an attitude which helps us regauge our notion of indirect translation, as I hope to show in the concluding section.

This overview can be complemented with some instances of close reading. An analysis of individual passages and of their change from the source text to one and the other translation will make Stewart's technique clearer.

3. *Instances of Close Reading*

R.D.S. Jack proposes an interesting example of the Scottish writer's borrowing technique, taking the instance of this passage from Ariosto:

perché né targa né capel difende
La fatal Durindana, ove discende. (XII.79) [7]

Desportes offers this rendition:

car rien ne les deffend,
Maille ny corselet, quand Durandal descend. (*Roland Furieux*, 55-56)[8]

Stewart, probably borrowing directly from Desportes, inserts the passage in the opening section, as a part of the description of Orlando's prowess in battle:

As lustie falcon litle larks dois plume,
So harneis flew, Quhair DVRANDAL discends. (I.53-54)[9]

The comparison shows Stewart's deviation from both Italian and French versions. In Ariosto, this is an incidental element in a description of a battle; Desportes, instead, chooses accumulation as a way of delineating character, and Stewart follows him in this choice. Jack thus concludes that 'The inference is clear. Desportes borrowed this instance from Ariosto as a means of quickly bolstering the character of his hero, while Stewart in his turn followed Desportes. Such explicit description was, of course, unnecessary for Ariosto, who could assume that his readers were already familiar with Orlando's character' (1972, 59). However, having accepted Desportes'

[7] (because neither shield nor helmet can defend the place where Durindana descends).
[8] (because nothing can defend them, neither armour nor chain mail, when Durindana descends).
[9] (As a bold falcon plucks the feathers of the little larks, so the armour flies away, where Durindana descends).

transposition of the passage to a different section of his poem, and with a different purpose, Stewart goes further, transforming the brief enumeration of defensive pieces of armour into an equally short list of animals that creates an imaginative simile.

A further instance makes this point clearer. A longer simile appears in Ariosto's canto I and in the opening section of Desportes' *Roland Furieux*, but Stewart moves it to a very late stage of his translation. Ariosto, in his turn indebted to one of Horace's amorous poems (*Carmina* I.xxiii.1-10), inserts this simile in the scene in which Angelica is first seen fleeing from her suitors, particularly the persevering but irreproachably chaste Rinaldo, and uses it to express the anxiety of the young woman:

Qual pargoletta o damma o capriuola,
che tra le fronde del natio boschetto
alla madre veduta abbia la gola
stringer dal pardo, o aprirle 'l fianco o 'l petto,
di selva in selva dal crudel s'involà,
e di paura triema e di sospetto:
ad ogni sterpo che passando tocca,
esser si crede all'empia fera in bocca. (I.34)[10]

For a moment this Chinese beauty, exotic and remote like an early modern Turandot, becomes endearingly fragile, thanks to the feminization of the animals evoked in the simile. Angelica's helplessness had been emphasized also in previous passages in which she was referred to as 'timida pastorella' (I.11: a fearful shepherdess) and 'donzella ispaventata' (I.15: a frightened maid); thus the image is part of a careful construction of Angelica as a potential victim (Cavallo 2013, 28-32). Philippe Desportes re-orients it by transposing it to the opening section of *Roland Furieux*, a poem only tangentially concerned with Angelica. Here the passage is used to describe the terrified people who disperse upon the arrival of the mad Orlando:

Comme un jeune chevreuil, qui dedans son bocage
A veu le fier lyon, chaud de soif et de rage,
Qui massacre sa mere et, convoiteux de sang,
En deux coups la déchire et luy mange le flanc;
Craintif, il prend la fuite, et d'une course isnelle
Eschappe et se dérobe à la beste cruelle;
Une branche, une feuille, une halaine de vent
L'horreur du grand lyon luy remet au devant. (*Roland Furieux*, 65-72)[11]

Desportes consciously chooses and manipulates some of the elements contained in Ariosto's simile. The change of gender in the young defenceless animal, the new relevance and the grisly details given to the predator, the maternal image no longer used to emphasize the victim's tenderness but the predator's cruelty – all this suggests a new use of the simile, which is concluded by recalling the setting: 'Ainsi devant Roland la tourbe espouvantée / S'enfuit' (73-74: So the

[10] (Like a fawn, or a kid, who has seen through the branches of her native woods her mother, whose throat is pressed by the leopard, or whose side or breast is torn open, and flies through the forest to escape the cruel predator, shaking with fear: each time a twig snaps she feels she is already devoured by the beast).

[11] (Like a young roe deer, who from inside a bush has seen the fierce lion, hot with thirst and rage, kill his mother and, greedy for blood, rip her in two and devour her side; terrified, he escapes and, with a quick flight, eludes the cruel beast; a twig, a leaf, a breath of wind bring back to him the horror of the great lion).

terrified crowd flew from Orlando). This is no elegant amorous chase, ironically underlined by the contrast between the image of the fearful youngling and the boringly honourable intentions of Rinaldo; it is rather the frightful apparition of a bloodthirsty warrior, scattering a terrified crowd in front of him. In this light, every detail radically changes its role and importance.

Stewart of Baldynneis follows Desportes in that he is here summarizing the events accompanying Orlando's madness. So the image once again describes the terrified people:

As litill lambe, The quhilk had sein percace
The Radgeing lyon In ane bocage greine
Ryfe and deuouir hir mother in that place
Vith bluidie mouth And fyrie creuale eine,
Vill, till eschew the bittir beist in teine
As it best may, fast skip away vith speid,
Absconding it in busse not to be seine (VIII.81-87)[12]

The debt to Desportes is evident, and includes semantic calques such as *bocage*;[13] but at the same time the changes are significant. Desportes' young roe deer is transformed into a lamb, evoking connotations of fragile femininity that hark back to Ariosto's *pargoletta*, and is *skipping* rather than simply escaping; Stewart also brings back from Ariosto the image of the temporary refuge of the young animal, *absconding* in a bush. While the narrative choice is indebted to Desportes, Ariosto lends further nuances to Stewart's passage, which re-focuses our attention upon the victims' defencelessness. As in the case of the first example, while Stewart follows Desportes in the collocation of the passages, he also goes back to Ariosto to gather further details that will enrich the combination and modify it.

The last, vastly different instance I would adduce is the scene in Ariosto's canto I featuring Sacripante, and his famous complaint 'la verginella è simile alla rosa', as it appears in Ariosto's (I.41-44) and in Baldynneis' (II.178-256). The changes in both structure and mood are striking. In Ariosto the lament begins in a Petrarchan vein, evoking the topos of burning and freezing as the effects of love, but we soon discover that what causes these states is not love but *pensier*, the thought that Angelica might belong to somebody else. Sacripante is one of the many knights in love with her, but he is also persuaded that there is no honour among men: any man who can approach Angelica will *ipso facto* have her. This ironically reduces the loved woman to a rich prize, a fruit or a flower. Sacripante's obsession is that somebody else will pluck the rose before he does, so that, should he find her once she has been plucked, she would have lost her value. At the same time, he cannot stop desiring her, which prompts a question that, once again, seems to have Petrarchan overtones in the two opening lines, until we look closely into it, and see how *pensier*, thought, is soon turned into *far*, action:

– Pensier (dicea) che 'l cor m'aggiacci et ardi,
e causi il duol che sempre il rode e lima,
che debbo far, poi ch'io son giunto tardi,
e ch'altri a côrre il frutto è andato prima? (I.41)[14]

[12] (Like a little lamb, who from inside a green grove has seen the raging lion rip and devour her mother, with a bloody mouth and fiery, cruel eyes, will skip away as fast as possible so as to avoid the cruel beast, hiding in a bush so as not to be seen).

[13] Both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* mention this word as first appearing in English with Stewart's poem (Heddle 2014, 65).

[14] (O thought, he said, who freeze and burn my heart, and give it a gnawing pain, what should I do, since I am too late, and others have plucked the fruit before me?).

Sacripante's plight is preceded by another, apparently unrelated episode: Ferraù, another Saracen knight, is fruitlessly searching in the river for a helmet he has lost, but as he lingers on the river bank a ghost appears: it is the ghost of Argalìa, Angelica's brother, killed and robbed by him. Argalìa berates Ferraù for wishing to keep what is not rightfully his (I.24-28). The episode casts some light on what is to follow: desire does not obey rules, yet regrets the lack of rules when such a lack becomes an impediment to desire. Later in the canto, Sacripante will declare his plan to rape Angelica, since, he says,

So ben ch'a donna non si può far cosa
che più soave e più piacevol sia,
ancor che se ne mostri disdegnosa,
e talor mesta e flebil se ne stia (I.58)[15]

Ariosto presents this contrast by introducing Sacripante with all the accoutrements of the Petrarchan lover, yet making him a determined and self-justifying would-be rapist. The irony therefore does not invest only the character: Petrarchism is made gentle fun of by contrasting Sacripante's portrayal with the utterance of his real desire.

Little of this irony remains in Baldynneis. The episode of Ferraù's helmet is eliminated, so the arrival on the scene of Sacripante is introduced only by various knights fighting for Angelica and by the lady escaping them. Her temporary escape is underlined by a long anaphoric passage in which the pleasure of her restful solitude evokes a pastoral idyll (II.145-151). This passage has the function of highlighting the appearance of the sobbing and sighing Sacripante as he and Angelica, one weeping and the other resting in separate parts of the wood, are for a moment wholly static, symmetrical figures. Sacripante's lament, in the Scottish version, is more than twice as long as in the Italian, incidentally giving the lie to the word *abbregement* which Stewart uses to define his work. As is true of most Petrarchist poetry, Sacripante's lament, in this version, is almost solely concentrated upon himself: his obsessive repetition of the word *thocht*, with an anaphoric shift between lines 180-182 and lines 185-187, turns his regret at an action he has not performed yet (the taking of Angelica) into self-reflection:

'O thocht,'[16] Sayis he, 'that both dois birne and freis
My blaiknit brest, Quhilk may No mirth Imbrace.
O Thocht Inchantit be my vickit eis,
O frounyng Thocht, Thocht fauor fremdlie fleis,
O Thocht, that thinks all vther thochts bot vaine,
Except the Thocht, Quhilk vith my Thocht aggreis,
To Think on hir, Quha Thochtles maks the paine.
This onlie thocht dois all my Thochts constraine,
This onlie thocht dois gnaw my hart in tuay,
This onlie thocht, Quhilk I may not Refraine,
Dois duyne my dayis In deedlie deip decay (178-188)[17]

[15] (I well know that nothing sweeter or pleasanter can be done to a woman, even though she appears to disdain it, and to look sad and downcast).

[16] I have followed Heddle's edition in the reading of the first two words ('O thought'). Crockett's reading is 'I thought', which seems nonsensical in this context.

[17] (O thought, he says, that both does burn and freeze my pallid breast, which may receive no joy. O thought, my wicked eyes are enchanted, o frowning thought, thought escapes all friendly favour, o thought, who think all other thoughts are vain, except the thought, which agrees with my thought, to think of her, which makes the pain thoughtless. This one thought constrains all other thoughts, this one thought tears my heart in two, this one thought, from which I may not refrain, drives my days into deep and deadly decay).

Such introspection completely does away with Ariosto's irony: this knight is never going to turn his static thought into action, and the climactic cascade of plosive alliterative Ds in the final line underlines this. Timothy Nelson comments on the changes adopted by Stewart, noting the insistence on decorum on the part of the Scottish poet, his proposing a love complaint in aureate diction, 'a genre in which humour and irony normally have no place' (1968, 107). He then continues:

> But the most remarkable difference between the Italian and the Scots versions of Sacripante's complaint is in the ending. Ariosto's prince – though moderately certain that all hope is past, and that the prize has already been carried off by another – resolves to go on loving in spite of all. Stewart's, by contrast … finally reaches the solution adopted by every mediaeval lover worth his salt when confronted with unpalatable rumours about his lady – he simply refuses to believe them. (108)

The contemplation of the effects of love prompts a regretful moralizing upon its dangers. Rather than inviting readers to share an ironic enjoyment of the absurdity of love, Stewart turns the lament into a reflection that invites readers to set themselves at a safe distance from such a dangerous and self-destructive state of mind, even if this risks altering the narrative structure (Nelson 1968, 111; McClune 2013a, 338).

This is an instance in which Stewart's freedom with the Italian original owes nothing directly to any French intermediate version: Desportes does not translate this episode, while both Jean Martin and Gabriele Chappuys offer a literal translation that preserves Ariosto's irony, often adopting semantic calques. Though we might reasonably suppose that Stewart might have used one or the other of the prose translations to obtain some help in understanding the *littera* of Ariosto's poem, they did not offer him the freedom of interpretation that might take him to this startlingly new interpretation of Sacripante's lament. On the other hand, the shift in tone might have been suggested, indirectly, by Desportes. The latter's insistence on individual portraits introduces an element of reflection in the observation of each character that in the case of Ariosto was lightened by the never-ending evolving of the plot. Once the reader is no longer drawn irresistibly in the convoluted adventures of knights and ladies, their actions are seen in all their paradoxical nature. This is evident in the case of *Angelique*: though lavish in his praise of the beauty of Angelica and Medoro, the French poet cannot help reflecting on the woman falling in love with such a lowly infantryman as a form of *contrappasso*: the very observation of the absurdity of her situation prompts a reflection on what is perceived as her error, her inability to join mercy to beauty. Angelica almost becomes cunning in the use of her attractions, as shown by terms such as *receloit* in this passage:

Celle qui receloit des attraits pour surprendre
Les braves, qui pensoient contre Amour se deffendre,
Qui surmonta Renaud, Ferragut et Roland;
Mais, sans aucun soucy de leur mal violant,
Ni de tant de combats qu'ils avoient pour elle,
Se fist tousjours connoistre aussi fiere que belle. (*Angelique*, 5-10)[18]

Stewart makes use of this suggestion by insisting on the connection between contemplation and reflection, and in this sense Sacripante's lament offers an ideal opportunity. As we shall see in

[18] (She who makes use of her charms to surprise the brave ones, who think they can defend themselves against Love, she who conquered Rinaldo, Ferraù and Orlando; but, without suspecting the strength of their pain, or the fights they had for her, always showed herself as bold as she was beautiful).

the following section, this moralizing tendency becomes also one of the fundamental elements in the construction of the Scottish poem's structure.

4. Roland Furious *'Translait out of Ariost'*

It is difficult to discern an overarching pattern in *Roland Furious*. The poem has been assessed as both an abridgement and an elaboration upon the original; for some scholars, it is an attempt to imprison the Italian poem within a conventionalizing structure that greatly reduces Ariosto's variety, as well as his panoply of characters and stories, to a more regular and systematic frame (Nelson 1968, 106). Rather than either translating closely or excerpting, Stewart prefers to impose a new order, that requires him to compress or expand as the case may be. This order is generally symmetrical: laments follow one another (Sacripante in canto II, Angelica in canto III, Orlando in canto IV), while the translator attempts to maintain the alternation of the two stories of Angelica and Orlando (Jack 1978, 22). Stewart may have proposed the twin development of these stories as a spiritual journey, which moves from the helplessness of all characters, lost in a *selva oscura*, in canto II to the Biblical overtones and prophetic mode of canto XII; such a reading is confirmed if we chart the increasing presence of Biblical allusions from the initial to the final cantos. These elements show that Desportes did not offer Stewart a model to imitate (save perhaps in the drastic reduction of the number of characters), or a new structure to copy, but rather a stimulus to the rethinking of his narrative strategy. At the same time, both translators could rely on Ariosto's vast canvas: there are passages in both versions in which the reader is simply sent back to Ariosto for further information. One such instance is the final couplet of Desportes' *Roland Furieux*, in which, having described the hero's madness, he concludes: 'Le vaillant Mirthe anglois, sur un coursier qui vole, / Luy rapporta son sens dedans une fiole' (*Roland Furieux*, 521-522: The valiant English myrtle, on a flying steed, brought back his wit inside a vial). The reader is given no explanation about the mysterious *myrthe Anglois*, who is Astolfo, transformed earlier in Ariosto's poem into a myrtle bush, and who will subsequently fly to the moon to recover Orlando's wit. All this explanation is deemed to be unnecessary, since the reader will be aware that Desportes' poem operates within a larger palimpsest. Stewart offers similar passages, explicitly asking the reader to go back to the Italian original for more information, as he does for instance in the course of a long summary of Orlando's adventures: 'Bot to declair mair amplie of this rout, / As Ariost my author dois report' (VIII.113-114: But to speak more at length of this rout, as Ariosto, my author, reports). The reader is expected to find in the translation not an equivalent and a substitute of the original, but a rewriting to be approached in full consciousness of the existence of the Italian poem.

The Scottish translator operates a further change that draws him apart from both Ariosto and Desportes: he radically rethinks the role of the narrator, who explicitly guides the narrative and does not exhibit the *sprezzatura* or the ironical overtones so frequent in Ariosto. Desportes' narrator tends to disappear behind the contemplation of his characters; Stewart's narrator instead often explains his modus operandi and bewails the obstacles he meets. He also introduces instances and episodes from classical and Biblical mythology, asking the reader to pause and reflect on the meaning of the story. To both Italian original and French intermediary, Stewart, acting as a translator and glosser, adds a literary patina that is sometimes systematic (as in the dedication of individual cantos to one or the other classical figure), sometimes merely incidental, being inserted in specific passages. In the Scottish poem, Ariosto's characters are often compared to characters drawn from a wide library: from Chaucer's Criseyde to the Biblical David, from Thisbe to Boccaccio's Emilia. *Roland Furious* thus becomes a literary experiment, that inventively uses Ariosto's polymorphous palimpsest with the partial guidance of Desportes' free imitations.

In so doing, Stewart marks a radical departure from Scotland's translation practices. For late-sixteenth-century writers in Scotland, one of the great models for translation was Gavin Douglas' *Eneados*, a rendition of Virgil's Latin epic into the 'Scottis' tongue, completed in 1513. Douglas employed a complex system of paratexts not only to defend his work, but also to explore the issue of translation, through references to established *auctoritates*, from Horace's *De arte poetica* to Gregory the Great, explicitly setting his own faithful rendering of Virgil's text against William Caxton's much freer version (Petrina 2018). In the Direction inserted at the end of the work, Douglas explicitly clarified his interpretative choice, pointing out not only that he had translated word for word, but that such faithfulness would make his version a very good introduction to Virgil for schoolchildren:

Ane othir proffit of our buke I mark,
That it salbe reput a neidfull wark
To thame wald Virgill to childryn expone;
For quha lyst note my versys, one by one,
Sall fynd tharin hys sentens euery deill,
And al maste word by word, that wait I weill.
Thank me tharfor, maisteris of grammar sculys,
Quhar ȝe syt techand on ȝour benkis and stulys. (Direction, 41-48, Coldwell 1956-1960, vol. IV, 189)[19]

He might even have resented the constraints imposed by this choice, since in the Prologue of Book I he describes the faithful translator as 'attachit ontill a staik' (l. 297: tied to a stake). The same image would be used by James VI of Scotland to describe the risks of literary translation and imitation in his short poetic treatise, *Reulis and Cautelis*, written in 1584, and often associated to the activity of his literary coterie: 'Especially, translating any thing out of uther language, quhilk doing, ye not onely assay not your awin ingyne of inventioun, bot be the same meanes ye are bound as to a staik to follow that buikis phrasis, quhilk ye translate' (James VI 1997, 468: Especially as you translate from another language: doing which, you do not only not test your power of invention, but by the same means you are tied, as to a stake, to follow the phrases of the book you translate). This detail, as well as a number of images in Stewart's *Roland Furious* which appear to derive from Douglas' poem (Heddle 2008, 42, 45), show the importance Douglas' model had for the King's literary coterie. In this perspective, Stewart's translation choices seem to be the result of a conscious reflection on the model offered by Douglas and on the kind of quasi-philological adherence to the original that he promoted. As noted above, much of the activity of James VI's literary coterie was focused on translation, and to judge from the extant examples, it largely followed Douglas' example: it is the case, for instance, of William Fowler's translation of Petrarch's *Triumphi*, remarkably faithful to the original but incorporating a glossing function, expanding on Petrarch's words whenever an explanation is deemed to be necessary or an allusion needs clarification. On the other hand, the monarch's own words on translation in his literary treatise, quoted above, challenge this practice in the light of a Scottish literary renaissance.

We are faced with an interesting paradox, since the King himself practises and encourages an activity he feels bound to condemn in his theoretical treatise. At the same time, we are made aware of the extent to which translation is a central concern for the group of writers surrounding

[19] (I note another good effect of this book: it shall become known to those who want to explain Virgil to children. Because those who read my lines, one by one, shall find his meaning there, almost word by word, I know that well. Thank me therefore, masters of grammar schools, where you sit, teaching, on benches and on stools).

King James, whose relationship with French models (not only the epic poems he translated, but also the poetic treatises that served as reference for his own *Reulis and Cautelis*) underlines his problematic approach to the issues of translation and imitation. Within this group, a translator dealing with Ariosto's immense poem faced a special challenge, not only because *Orlando Furioso* is as long as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* put together, but also because its extraordinary wealth of episodes, characters and plots makes any summarizing attempt extremely difficult: the Italian writer himself referred to his work as 'la gran tela ch'io lavoro' (XIII.81: the great canvas I am working on). Modern scholars evince some surprise at Stewart's freedom in his approach to Ariosto: 'One might have expected that, after so influential a figure as Gavin Douglas had publicly savaged Caxton for producing a mere travesty of the *Aeneid*, a scholarly approach to translation would have become the rule in Scotland' (Nelson 1968, 105). Yet this choice might find its explanation in the source text. The overarching characteristic of *Orlando Furioso* is well summarized by Alexander Cioranescu who, discussing the freedom of French translators and imitators of the poem, notes that Ariosto's excess, his labyrinthine construction and dazzling variety of modes and tones, were impossible to reconcile with the taste of contemporary French poetry (1936, 36). Stewart's decision to translate Ariosto thus found in the French imitators the authorization to move away from the reverent, faithful translating and glossing that we find in Scottish translators of Virgil (such as Douglas) or Petrarch (such as William Fowler).

It has been a matter of discussion among scholars whether Stewart was following his king's advice, or even request, while translating Ariosto: in spite of the closeness of poetic models, connections between *Reulis and Cautelis* and *Roland Furious* are hard to assess, since the dating of the two works does not seem to allow for any profound influence of the one on the other. Stewart does make reference to the king on a number of occasions in the course of his translation, but it may be persuasively argued that these were later additions to an already finished work (Heddle 2008, 33-39; McClune 2013b, 119-122). What seems beyond doubt is that there is an articulate reflection on the activity of the translator behind the whole enterprise: *Roland Furious* is as much a translation as a meta-translational act. Stewart describes his approach as an unravelling of an intricate original:

This vork of myn behuifs me schers it so;
Quhyls heir, Quhyls thair, Quhyls fordwart and behind,
The historie all Interlest I find
Vith syndrie sayings of so great delyt,
That singlie most I from the rest out spind. (V.7-11)[20]

Elsewhere, he describes Ariosto's *copia* as a matter of concern:

As Ariost in hich and vordie verse
The circumstance moir copius hes compyld
Than I may retche with rasche and ruid reherse (VI.98-100)[21]

This concern appears to prompt the decision, half-way through the translation, to summarize the rest of the poem with a wholemeal compression of the narrative:

[20] (It is necessary for me to scrutinise this work of mine: now here, now there, now forward and behind, as I find the story all interlaced with sundry sayings of great delight, so that I merely spin them out from the rest).

[21] (As Ariosto has written in magnificent verse, describing the story with greater abundance than I may reach with my rash and rude attempt).

The rest I sall compact it in ane mass
Vith nales speid than this my pen may sprent (VIII.13-14)[22]

The reflection on his work is taken up once again at the beginning of the long and radically innovative canto XI, which appropriately opens with the words 'Perplexit Pen', followed by an invocation to Ramnusia (or Nemesis, one of the three Fates),[23] introducing a long indictment of Fortune. This is by far the longest section, in which Stewart draws away from his habitual sources and indulges in a complaint that *prima facie* has nothing in common with Ariosto's lightness. While lamenting his shortcomings, he inserts an interesting passage:

Vold god Bocace mycht in my place repair
This tragedie perfytlie to compyle;
Or Reuerent Ouid vold the sammyng spair
In Metamorphois of his steitlie style (XI.9-12)[24]

By mentioning Ovid and his *Metamorphoses*, Stewart evokes also a text that, like Ariosto's, was often mined, a rich repository of individual fables and striking images. But the passage is especially problematic in that it suggests not only other possible literary *auctoritates* for Stewart's effort, but also a leaning towards a different genre. Boccaccio is here referred to as the author of *De Casibus*, the work that became famous in England and Scotland thanks to John Lydgate's much-amplifying translation, *The Fall of Princes*. These allusions then give us an interesting indication of the direction Stewart is taking, since his innovation does not only concern the plot but also the genre. If Desportes explored Ariosto's poem to develop his own inclination toward lyric poetry (Cioranescu 1936, 36), the Scottish poet appears interested in the possibilities of moralizing poetry along the lines of the *de casibus* tradition (McClune 2013a). After this allusion to literary *auctoritates*, Stewart inserts a long passage that has no correspondence in either Ariosto or Desportes, consisting of a list of heroes of antiquity who fell victims to fate. Ostensibly they are proposed as counterparts of the mad Orlando, but they prompt reflections on the fickleness of Fortune:

No force auails thy fikilnes to bind.
Dame Indiscreit, I sute of the no grace;
Thow art my fo, for I culd neuir find
No kynd of fauor in thy fenyeit face. (XI.49-52)[25]

The introduction of the first-person pronoun turns this passage into a moment of self-introspection: the reader is asked to identify no longer with Orlando, but with the narrator. This change of genre also indicates a reference to much older models, from Geoffrey Chaucer to John Lydgate, as if the meeting with Ariosto and the intermediary translation had allowed Stewart to look back at a poetic tradition that appeared to be concluded in other national literatures, but, it would appear, not yet in Scotland.

[22] (I shall compact all the rest in one mass, with no less speed than this pen of mine may run).

[23] By choosing to address one of the Fates rather than one of the Muses, Stewart appears to be following the example of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, a poem he shows himself acquainted with also elsewhere.

[24] (I wish Boccaccio could take my place, in order to write this tragedy perfectly; or the revered Ovid would perform the same, turning it into a Metamorphosis, in his stately style).

[25] (No force is enough to constrain your fickleness. Indiscreet Dame, I ask you no favour; you are my enemy, since I could never find favour in your deceitful face).

The experimental nature of this translation becomes more meaningful when we consider the cultural context in which it was undertaken. The carefully prepared nature of the codex, its obvious destination as a presentation manuscript, and the circumstances that are known of Stewart's life, clearly indicate that the whole enterprise should be seen as an instance of coterie writing, as convincingly argued by Katherine McClune:

> As a handwritten text, its circulation is more limited than that of a printed book; it is directed at an exclusive audience (James VI); certain poems allude to events which presumably might have been familiar to a contemporary audience … In this presentation manuscript for the literary connoisseur James VI, the contents presumably comprise a selection of what Stewart perceived to be his most successful pieces of verse. (McClune 2013b, 121)

The recent editor of the *Roland Furious* shares the conventional scholarly opinion that this text is part of the literary activity promoted and supported by King James VI in the 1580s, an activity that allegedly prompted the creation of a circle of poets, translators and musicians, known in some modern scholarship as the Castalian band (Heddle 2008, 12-14).[26] Yet the very nature of the manuscript offers controversial evidence. The paratextual apparatus is imposing and perhaps slightly excessive, with 'a large number of prefatory, dedicatory, introductory, and even valedictory poems all flattering James and deprecating [Stewart's] own skill' (Spiller 2010, 62). The fact that Stewart, because of his peculiar life circumstances, was not actually part of the courtly coterie, throws new light on the work as an attempt on the part of the author/scribe to ingratiate himself with the King, and to enter a circle in which he did not belong (McClune 2013b, 124-126). Michael Spiller's careful examination of the manuscript leads him to suggest that it was not only put together but also physically written by Stewart, and that the choice of texts was completely his, not prompted by the King. The order in which the texts are presented is the result of a progress from lighter to graver subjects, 'from romantic action to pious moral reflection' (Spiller 2010, 63). At the same time, the whole collection may be read as a 'Stewart sampler', along the lines of the needlework samplers young ladies used to present in later times: 'a composed piece (or pieces) that showed mastery of a variety of stitches, a competence in colour, an ability to represent different shapes and even scenes' (64). This might explain why, after this one act of scribal publication, we have no further trace of Stewart of Baldynneis writing or circulating his poems. If the 'Stewart sampler' might be read as the nobleman's bid to obtain a place at court, once this attempt failed, as shown by the lack of advancement at court for Stewart, and the lack of response on the part of the King (Verweij 2016, 47-50), there was no further attempt on Stewart's part to promote his literary efforts.

The very nature of this manuscript offers an explanation and a raison d'être for Stewart's attitude towards Ariosto's poem. Approaching the Ariosto translation from this perspective, what changes for us is the *intentio auctoris*: we might read *Roland Furious* as a literary game for the cognoscenti, remembering that the intended reader, James VI, had access to Ariosto's original thanks to his mother's library, and could look at this translation as an experiment upon Ariosto. This gave Stewart extraordinary freedom in the treatment of his material, and also invited him to impose on his manipulation of Ariosto's poem a moralizing, ascending order that would mirror the larger structure of the manuscript as a whole, in a sort of *mise-en-abyme*.

[26] The notion of a Castalian band was first prompted in Shire 1969, and later discussed and made almost canonical in Jack 1972, 54-89. The first scholar to voice doubts on the composition and role of this coterie was Bawcutt 2001. See also Van Heijnsbergen 2013.

5. *Indirect Translation: A Theoretical Model*

Indirect translation, as this analysis has shown, may denote a much more complex progress than the simple passage from one text to the other. Not only can we state with a fair degree of assurance that Stewart had occasion to look at the Italian original and to alter his own text accordingly; we may also hypothesize that the very fact of having French intermediary text(s) at his disposal allowed him to take into consideration the original, which in its daunting monumentality might have proved impossible to approach on its own, and to manipulate it freely. An investigation of the work of indirect translation is often vitiated by a sense that a translator who is not looking directly at the original is in some sense diminished, but in this case we might posit instead that the use of intermediary sources created a network filiation that is far more complex than direct translation.

One major issue when we approach this topic is the shift in the critical responses to the whole issue of early modern translations and imitations of Ariosto. One of the first scholars who dealt with Stewart of Baldynneis' work, Geoffrey A. Dunlop, celebrating in 1915 the publication of first printed edition of the Scottish poet's works and focusing his attention on the *Roland Furious*, used this instance to reflect on comparative studies at large:

> The study of comparative literature is often looked upon as rather barren employment. But it is by no means such a superficial and vain study as at first sight appears. An intelligent student realises that the results obtained by such research form an important part of the history of the development of expression, which in turn must form an important chapter of the history of civilisation. (1915, 303)

Dunlop's plea helps us understand the prejudices the scholarly community had to overcome in order to approach translation with an objectively critical eye. Twenty years earlier, an Italian scholar, Francesco Flamini, had been particularly abrasive in his discussion of Desportes' imitations from Italian poetry, calling him 'un poeta italiano camuffato alla francese' (1895, 347) (an Italian poet dressed up as a Frenchman). Equally dismissive was Cecilia Rizza when, assessing French poetry in the early years of the seventeenth century as 'espressione di un momento di transizione confuso e contraddittorio' (1958, 431; the outcome of a confused and contradictory translational moment), linking such confusion and contradiction to its being strongly influenced by Italian poetry, and thus deviating from the true development of French poetry. Interestingly, different poetic traditions excite different critical responses on the subject of literary imitation and foreign influence. In the same years in which Rizza was condemning French poetry for not being true to itself, Ian Ross, discussing the development of Scottish literature in the late sixteenth century, identified the strength of poets at King James' court with their very dependence on foreign models: 'Their work is nourished on European civilization: in no sense is it provincial. But once King James took his Court to England in 1603, he abandoned Scottish poetry to the assaults of a narrow theology and to a lamentable diminution of contacts with foreign literature' (1962, 267).

Statements of this kind may strike us today as naive, since in early modern studies the cultural turn has become a dominant form of approach, yet there are still traces of this attitude in our study of texts such as the translation under examination here. Even the recent editor of *Roland Furious* had some difficulty in accommodating the concept of translation as a form of invention: discussing the work of the Pléiade, Heddle calls their literary efforts a 'necromantically creative imitation of Greek, Latin, and Italian sources', then contradicts her former statement by claiming that these writers 'painted a new picture of the poet as Orpheus reborn; an interpreter of God's ways to man, a man with a vocation, inspired by the neo-Platonic idea of "divine fury"

or inspiration' (2008, 16). Beyond any stylistic or aesthetic consideration, we feel bound to measure the closeness or distance of the Scottish poem from an *original*, in this case Ariosto's text, which acquires merit by the sole virtue of being, supposedly, original. By the same token, we measure the role of Philippe Desportes or Jean Martin as links in a chain of influence in which the passage from one text to the next is by definition a matter of descendance, as if the chain of transmission could be represented through the image of a genealogical tree whose root acts as *fons et origo* of everything that is artistically valuable in any of the deriving branches. In this attitude, there is undoubtedly at play what Joshua Reid calls 'the Romantic veneration of the original author' (2014), a veneration that has coloured our approach to the Renaissance over the past two hundred years.

In this context it is easy to see why, in spite of a recent surge of interest in translation studies, indirect translation may still lack a systematic approach and even a recognizable terminology.[27] Its role and its relation with imitation in late medieval and early modern Europe is now being approached as a subject of critical enquiry, and individual case studies may be illuminating. It is the case of A.S.G. Edwards' examination of John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, the already mentioned translation of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* via the French version by Laurent de Premierfait. After analysing the role of the two translators and of Lydgate's erudite patron, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, as well as William Calverley's sixteenth-century manipulation of Lydgate's work, Edwards acknowledges the difficulty of defining the final result:

> it is, in effect, a form of retranslation, a strategic redeployment and amalgamation of Calverley's main source text with other materials. This is, then, a curiously hybrid literary form in which different portions of Lydgate's work and elsewhere are blended in ways that become stylistically and tonally indistinguishable. (2013, 30)

The scholar goes on to note that this instance is not unique, and indeed, upon reflection, it seems an inevitable outcome of a century in which manuscript and print culture fruitfully intermingled, while the concept of author had not yet developed to the point of acting as a straitjacket to the text's mobility.

We should perhaps find a different metaphor for our reflections on the progress of translation and imitation. The wealth of interlacing stories offered by Ariosto makes selective reading and transformative translation easier than it would be with a more tightly-knit narrative. This examination of Stewart's approach to *Orlando Furioso* has highlighted the role of the Italian poem as a quarry, whose very open structure offers subsequent writers the possibility of mining, of identifying an individual path to retrace themes, characters, plots, or symbols. This is confirmed by the existence of fragments of Ariosto's poem being embedded in texts so far in time and cultural space as John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Giacomo Leopardi's *Canti*. The dividing line between original work and translation becomes blurred, to the point that we might apply to a poem such as Stewart's *Roland Furious* Warren Boutcher's provocative question: 'What, though, if we read Renaissance translations as "original" works by authors who happen to be translating?' (2000, 46).

Such a reading might be supported by early modern literary theory. In his *Deffence et Illustration de le Langue Françoise*, du Bellay urged contemporary poets to follow the examples of Roman writers, who became great by imitating:

[27] Some attempts have been made, especially as concerns contemporary translation. For a recent appraisal of indirect translation and the critical response to the phenomenon, see Assis, *et al.* 2017. This is an introduction to a special issue of *Translation Studies*, entirely devoted to indirect translation. See also <http://www.indirectrans.com/index.html>, accessed 1 February 2022.

Si les Romains (dira quelqu'un) n'ont vaqué à ce labeur de traduction, par quelz moyens donques ont ilz peu ainsi enrichir leur langue, voyre jusques à l'egaller quasi à la Greque? Immitant les meilleurs aucteurs Grecz, se transformant en eux, les devorant, et apres les avoir bien digerez, les convertissant en sang et nouriture, se proposant, chacun selon son naturel, et l'argument qu'il vouloit elire, le meilleur aucteur, dont ilz observoint diligemment toutes les plus rares et exquises vertuz, et icelles comme grephes, ainsi que j'ay dict devant, entoint et apliquoint à leur langue. (Du Bellay in Helgerson 2006, 336-337)[28]

The discussion on the merits and characteristics of translation was of central interest among French intellectuals in the mid-sixteenth century; the nutritional metaphor, expressing the connection between imitation and mimesis, became especially meaningful (Trotot 2019). In the same year, 1549, in which Du Bellay published his *Deffence*, Thomas Sébillet published his translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia*, inserting in the preface a defence of his work as a translator who would not follow the original *verbum de verbo*:

Si ie fay moins pour moy en traduisant anciens auteurs qu'en cérchant inventions nouvelles, ie ne suy toutefois tant a reprendre que celuy qui se vante d'avoir trouvé, ce qu'il ha mot a mot traduit des autres (1549, n.p.)[29]

The previous year, in his *Art Poétique*, Sébillet had also explored the concept of translation:

La Version ou Traduction est aujourd'huy le Poëme plus frequent et mieux receu dés estimés Pöètes et dés doctes lecteurs, a cause que chacun d'eus estime grand oeuvre et de gran pris, rendre la pure et argentine invention dés Pöètes dorée et enrichie de notre langue. Et vrayement celuy et son oeuvre meritent grande louenge, qui a peu proprement et naïvement exprimer en son langage, ce qu'en autre avoit mieux escrit au sien, aprés l'avoir bien conceu en son esperit. (1988, 187-188)[30]

At a time in which the idea of plagiarism had not yet entered the consciousness of intellectuals, the discussion on the difference between authentic or servile translation and free adaptation called into question the whole relationship of writers with ancient or contemporary models, among whom Ariosto's poem had made a belated but triumphal entry.

The Scottish courtly coterie, with its interest in contemporary French poetry, was of course aware of the debate. King James had summed up the whole issue very briefly in *Reulis and Cautelis*, partly through his strictures against close translation, partly by insisting that by using images that were frequently to be found in older poets 'it will appeare ye bot imitate and that it cummis not of your awin inventioun, quhilk is ane of the cheif properteis of ane poete' (James 1997, 468; it will appear both that you imitate and that it does not come from your own invention, which is one of the chief traits of a poet). Yet James' treatise, youthful and

[28] (If the Romans, someone will say, did not devote themselves to this labor of translation, then by what means were they able so to enrich their language, indeed to make it almost the equal of Greek? By imitating the best Greek authors, transforming themselves into them, devouring them, and, after having thoroughly digested them, converting them into blood and nourishment, selecting, each according to his own nature and the topic he wished to choose, the best author, all of whose rarest and most exquisite strengths they diligently observed and, like shoots, grafted them, as I said earlier, and adapted them to their own language).

[29] (If I do less for myself in translating ancient authors than in looking for new inventions, nevertheless I am less to blame than he who brags of having invented, while he has translated literally from others).

[30] (The version or translation is today the most frequent poem, and the best appreciated by estimable poets and learned readers, since each of them believes it a great and worthy enterprise to translate the pure and silver invention of poets, made golden and enriched by out tongue. And really we should praise the writer whose work can properly and ingenuously express in his language what others have written in theirs, after having conceived it well in their spirit).

derivative, finds little correspondence in the actual work of the poets at his court – and Stewart, in particular, was exploring a far more sophisticated possibility of interaction with his sources.

Moving from early modern to contemporary responses, the theoretical model I propose to use to describe indirect translation as practiced in early modern Europe is indebted to a theory recently proposed in the field of biological science. I refer to David Quammen's fascinating book on evolutionary biology, *The Tangled Tree*. By applying molecular phylogenetics as a method, Quammen proposes a new, post-Darwinian mode of reading evolution, eschewing the simple linear descent based on the survival of the fittest and proposing instead horizontal gene transfer:

> Evolution is trickier, far more intricate, than we had realized. The tree of life is more tangled. Genes don't move just vertically. They can also pass laterally across species boundaries, across wider gaps, even between different kingdoms of life. (2018, xi)

As summarized in a recent interview,

> the limbs and the branches on the tree of life don't always diverge, diverge, diverge into a great crown, but sometimes they come together and converge; lineages on the tree of life converging to create new possibilities undreamed of by Charles Darwin and by all classical Darwinian evolution … we need quite a completely different theory of evolution, also in philosophical terms … a theory of evolution not so focused on competition and struggle for existence but focused on cooperation and symbiosis … partnerships among lineages and different organisms, one organism within another, endosymbiosis. (*Interviste impossibili* 2020)

Endosymbiosis seems an excellent category to describe literary enterprises such as John Stewart of Baldynneis' poem, travelling through Ariosto and Desportes to evoke the forgotten models of Boccaccio, Chaucer, Lydgate, Ovid. By so doing, as I have attempted to show here, Stewart does not simply add new episodes or images to the bare bones of his most direct source, but also contaminates it, practising a form of endosymbiosis that results in the interaction between different genres and poetic modes. From the genre to the vocabulary to the stylistic choices, everything is enriched and refined by the partnership between disparate texts. A model based on cooperation and contamination rather than competition and individuality may be better suited to understand the nature of early modern indirect translation than any linear model.

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