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Making the Classics Belong: A Historical Introduction

One of the oddities of the way the academic disciplines of English Literature and Classical Studies have developed, especially given early connections between them, is that translation history, an area which could in principle be of equal interest to each field, has been largely ignored by both.[1] The book you are now reading is a sign of change and has affiliations on both sides: it is published within a series falling under a 'Classical Studies' rubric, while looming large in its immediate background is the ongoing *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, the first full-scale history of English literary translation and a publishing project of Oxford University Press's Literature (not Classics, not Modern Languages) department. But these are very late omens and much remains to be done. Just as we are becoming used to reception moving towards the forefront of the study of ancient literatures,[2] my view is that translation should move towards the forefront of the study of reception. The increasingly monoglot nature of the Anglo-American academic world might provide some excuse for the neglect of translations within the study of English literature, but it cannot do the same for Classics.

What follows in this chapter is a historical sketch designed to provide an overall context for the discussions of individual periods and works that follow. But its further purpose is to suggest in brief compass the scale and centrality of translation from ancient Latin and Greek works in the literature of the anglophone world over the centuries. Its scale and centrality are the reasons why, as I argue from

1. A strong connective link around the time of the beginnings of English teaching in the mid-eighteenth century was the study of rhetoric. See Rhodes (2004), 189–208; Crawford (1998). A recent call for full incorporation of the analysis of translations into Classical Studies is Armstrong (2007).
2. Literally so in the case of Charles Martindale's *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, 1997, and even more pronouncedly in certain other recent Cambridge Companions when the proportions are weighed.

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various angles below, a change in the way we write the history of this literature is needed. As things currently stand, 'translation' is not a heading with a lot of entries below it in literary historians' indexes. Within the current *Oxford English Literary History*, for example, the first volume to be published, on the period 1350–1547, offers four index entries on 'translation' to a 600-page study. The work of Chaucer, who was thought of even by his contemporary Deschamps as a 'grand translateur', falls entirely within this period. The *Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* has no entry for 'translation', though there are entries for 'tragedy', 'epic' and even 'imitation'.[3]

The activity of translation had, of course, been at the centre of western culture well before the arrival of the earliest forms of the English language. Translation was fundamental to Roman literature: it is taken for granted as much in modern as in ancient times that Latin letters grew expressly out of translations from works in the Greek epic and dramatic tradition. Livius Andronicus (*c.* 284–204 BCE), sometimes claimed as the 'father of Roman literature', introduced Greek writing to the Romans by translating the *Odyssey* into the Italian Saturnian metre and adapting Greek tragedy to the Roman stage. Others soon followed with closer or looser forms of translation and adaptation: Gnaeus Naevius with plays on the Trojan War; Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius with tragedy; Caecilius Statius with comedy. Translation, that is, had the effect of directly inaugurating Roman epic and drama at a time when these genres were barely emergent in their own right.

As a cultural phenomenon in antiquity, the history of translation is every bit as diverse as it will later become in the anglophone world. Horace's famous claim about rendering Greek lyrics into Latin (*Odes* 3.30.13) covers what is in almost every respect a different kind of thing from the exotic Latin framing by 'Lucius Septimus' of the Greek *Diaries of the Trojan War* by 'Dictys'.[4] The Roman experience is likewise an emphatic but not unique instance of the centrality of translation. In the European Renaissance the medieval literary tradition was invigorated and the literary idiom much enriched by fresh contact with classical sources through translation and imitation, sometimes of a directly experimental kind. It can be said without qualification that in every phase of English literature, and for that matter many phases of other western literatures too, much of the innovative impulse comes directly or indirectly through translation from ancient Greek and Roman texts, and in some eras their impact is fundamental. The effect is often one that is hidden or hard to discern, partly because of the frequent difficulty of determining whether originals or translations were being used in a given instance – did Shakespeare know Ovid's Latin epic, Arthur Golding's English *Metamorphoses*, or

3. Simpson (2002); Ousby (1993).

4. 'Lucius Septimus' is the name attached to the fourth-century CE Latin rendering of an earlier Greek prose narrative purporting to be an eye-witness account of the Trojan War by Dictys of Crete, supposedly the companion at Troy of the Cretan hero Idomeneus. For an English translation, see Frazer (1966).

both? (The answer here happens to be 'both'.) What is certain is that translations from the classics have been enormously widely read in the West, and that their readers and their creators have over the centuries included the most influential of figures (not only artistic figures). Today more than ever, the number of individuals who will read a classical text in one of the readily available series of modern English translations (Penguin Classics, Oxford World's Classics, Everyman's Library, and so on) is many times the number that will read it in Greek or Latin, whether as part of an educational programme or not.

It's a good question what continuity might be said to exist in terms of individual translation practice between, say, Livius Andronicus' Latin rendering of the *Odyssey* and a popular twentieth-century English version of the Homeric poem.[5] In respect at least of how translation has been theorized in the West, continuity over the centuries has been ensured by the influential, though hardly extensive remarks on the subject by Cicero in *De oratore* and *De optimo genere oratorum*, Horace in the *Ars poetica*, Pliny the Younger in the letter *To Fuscus*, Quintilian in the *Institutio oratoria* and Aulus Gellius in the *Noctes Atticae*.[6] Much Renaissance thinking on translation was done around Horace's and Cicero's brief statements especially; their drift is against over-scrupulous, word-for-word translation.[7] But Christianity has successfully intervened in this tradition, with St Jerome and St Augustine, in particular, battling over the translatability of the Word in a fourth-century controversy. Many of the subsequent striations of western theory derive from Augustine's promotion of the idea of a single, true translation.[8]

Because of its sheer scale, the growth and development over time of the corpus of classical texts translated into vernaculars is still imperfectly documented. By as early as the seventeenth century, publishing activity in this area had become so voluminous that a comprehensive bibliographical record even of translations of classical texts into English has not yet been assembled.[9] But perhaps a few statistics will be suggestive. The latest bibliographies of English classical translations for the 250-year period 1550–1800, a period which might be held to constitute the golden age of the tradition, run to some 1,500 items for about 100 ancient authors.[10] These are not comprehensive listings of every individual translation, but

5. For Livius' *Odusia*, see Conte (1994), 40–1; Mariotti (1952). For the acclaimed twentieth-century version of the *Odyssey* by Robert Fitzgerald, see Chapter 11, below.

6. These texts are conveniently assembled in English translations in Weissbort and Eysteinsson (2006), 20–33.

7. For continental Renaissance translation theory as derived from classical sources, see Rener (1989), esp. 261–326.

8. For the 'striations', see Robinson (1992).

9. There are, however, currently research programmes undertaking the cataloguing of translations, as for instance for early modern translations into English at the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance at the University of Warwick. Earlier bibliographies covering classical translation in the more manageable period to the first half of the seventeenth century are Palmer 1911 and Lathrop (1933); Bolgar (1954) is supplemented for English by Nørgaard (1958).

10. Cummings and Gillespie (2009); Gillespie (2009).

records of the more substantial and significant for these years. They may represent the complete works of an ancient writer, a selection, or a single text; the single texts may range from an epic poem to a satire, but are usually substantial enough to have been printed as a book, whether long or short, in themselves. Virgil, for instance, collects 103 entries, 95 of which are in verse. The most substantial of these are half-a-dozen complete *Works* and the same number of separate *Aeneid*s, followed by nine or ten complete translations apiece of the *Georgics* and *Eclogues.* Most of the remainder are selections of one kind or another, frequently one or more Books of the *Aeneid*, with a few 'translations' into burlesque or parodic form thrown in. Naturally enough, because the originals are of a more manageable average length, Horace attracts more translations: some 160 are listed, with interest taking off after 1650, and with satires as popular as odes during the eighteenth century. Ovid's total is about 100 translations for the same period. But a checklist for Ovid continuing on to the present finds a similar total again for the years 1800 to 2004, even with the more routine prose translations and school texts excluded for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also records a further 37 English translators who were responsible for short excerpts or individual items such as elegies.[11] That's almost 250 Ovid translations all told, many of them by very recognizable English literary figures, and including 28 complete *Metamorphoses.* All these totals are confined to printed works, whereas I will be suggesting later that texts remaining in manuscript often made up a significant part of translating activity too. There is absolutely no shortage of material to address here.

But there is no difficulty in sketching out a general history of classical translation in post-classical times, thanks not least to the pioneering work of the *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* (soon to be joined by the *Oxford History of Classical Reception in English*). Such a narrative might begin with a prequel to the accounts such sources make available for the vernacular, which is to say with the continuing tradition of translation from Greek into Latin. The lead was given by Boethius (480–524/5 CE), who prepared literal Latin versions of the Greek philosophers which he intended would create an archive for civilization, together with Jerome (*c.* 341–420), whose methods of biblical translation prioritized accuracy. The Greek East and Latinate West had to communicate, and there was a Greek presence along the northern coast of the Mediterranean for much of the early Middle Ages. The Roman senator Cassiodorus (*c.* 480–*c.* 550) founded a monastery where monks were to translate works of philosophy and theology from Greek into Latin. By the eighth century it was the Muslim world that was making the running with Greek material: in Toledo and Baghdad, in Sicily and Seville, could be found Muslims active in turning classical Greek works of philosophy and physical science into Arabic. When Aristotle and other Greek philosophers were introduced into European universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it

11. Gillespie and Cummings (2004).

was through Latin versions of these Arabic translations, one result being that Aristotle was condemned by some authorities as a pagan influence.

Nevertheless, the relative marginality of translation to the 'universalizing' Latin culture becomes clear when this picture is contrasted with the role translation will come to play as a vehicle of cultural exchange within vernaculars. For much of the Latinate Middle Ages, down to the late fourteenth century, translation was not actually necessary, as Stephen Medcalf has recently spelled out. 'As long as to be literate normally involved belonging to the clergy, whose language was Latin,' Medcalf writes, 'the Latin classics were a literary heritage to be retold, continued or imitated, like the *Aeneid* in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae*, but there was no great point in translating them. Nor indeed did the *Aeneid* or the works of Ovid, Lucan, or Statius have the status accorded them in the Renaissance, of works whose meaning and style needed to be recovered.'[12] Greek texts, too, were still much more often turned into Latin than other languages – the natural impulse following the recovery of ancient Greek was to resume the work of Boethius and late antiquity and translate into Latin. As Greek scholars from the Byzantine Empire reached fourteenth-century Italy, the humanist translating tradition began to take shape. Both Galen and Hippocrates were Latinized by an early figure, Niccolo da Reggio (1280–1350). The first humanist rendering of Aristotle, again into Latin, was Leonardo Bruni's of 1423. Bruni, more than any other, made the treasures of the Hellenic world available to the Latin reader through his literal translations of Greek authors, among them Plato, Plutarch, Demosthenes and Aeschines. Marsilio Ficino, Georgio Valla, Theodore Gaza and Angelo Poliziano followed in Bruni's footsteps. Translations of Plato, a considerable challenge, extended to the full corpus by the first half of the fifteenth century; Ficino then consolidated the work of numerous hands by preparing a humanistic *Opera omnia* in 1463–9. Direct translation from Greek into vernaculars had been occasional since the twelfth century through the agency of such figures as James of Venice (*fl.* 1125–50). In England the Anglo-Norman Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, had placed several works at the disposal of a learned European audience in this way in the 1240s, among them Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De caelo*.[13] But it was not until the arrival of Greek instruction at Oxford during the second half of the fifteenth century, along with the contemporaneous development of printing, that English translations of Greek texts appeared in significant numbers.

Meanwhile the English language had been emerging as a literary medium. While it is evident that some classics were rendered into Old English, the limitations on our knowledge of the results are severe. A tantalizing indication of the non-survival of such texts is an early eleventh-century manuscript fragment of the Greek romance *Apollonius of Tyre*, translated into Old English. Woefully incomplete as it is, it forms the first known vernacular translation of the story and 'arguably the

12. Medcalf (2008), 364.

13. For a recent overview of Grosseteste's work, see Rosemann (2008).

first English romance'.[14] Or again, after the Norman Conquest Marie de France claimed in the late twelfth century to have translated a collection of Aesop's *Fables* from an English rendering by King Alfred, but if anything along these lines was available to her, neither it nor other mentions of it survive. The arrival of printing naturally had the effect of ensuring a much higher survival rate for translations as for other kinds of texts.

Chaucer (*c.* 1343–1400) has his Man of Law say that the poet 'hath told of loveris up and down | Mo than Ovide made of mencioun'. In fact, most of Chaucer's 'loveris' are derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*. In some cases (Ceyx and Alcyone, Thisbe, Philomela) Chaucer shares Ovidian material with Gower. But Chaucer, in particular, acquired much more from Ovid than narrative material, whereas he acquired nothing from his Anglo-Saxon predecessors.[15] His principal formal translation from Latin is, however, his *Boece* – one of four medieval versions of the *Consolation of Philosophy*.[16] The impact of Boethius is apparent in the language and thought of several works central to the Chaucerian corpus: *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Knight's Tale*, *Troilus and Criseyde*.

On a pan-European view from the beginning of printing in the mid-fifteenth century to 1600, and speaking quantitatively, classical translation moved fastest in Italy and France, with German, Spanish and English following some distance behind.[17] The material translated was broad in range, including medical, military and technical texts. In this era there are as many printed vernacular translations from Greek authors as from Latin ones overall: Plutarch is felt to stand more in need of translation than Ovid, Lucian more than Martial. But they are not often translations from the Greek language: 'secondary' (or 'indirect') translation from intermediate versions in other languages is common, especially so in England from French texts of Greek classics. Plutarch's *Lives* were expressly translated by Sir Thomas North in 1579 from Jacques Amyot's French of 1559, and not from the Greek (the relationships are explored further in Chapter 4, below). Similarly Aristotle's *Politics*, englished in 1598 by I.D. (John Dee?) from Louis Le Roi's French of 1568. Equally, the Latin versions of Greek works produced by many European translators alongside translations into the vernaculars were very often the source of English versions. Among the first direct translations from Greek texts, though, are Thomas Elyot's version of Lucian's *Necromantia* (bilingually in English with Thomas More's Latin, 1530) and Gentian Hervet's *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon (1532).

14. So Archibald (1991), 184; for a summary account of the manuscript and related scholarship, see 183–4.

15. For Chaucer and Ovid, see Calabrese (1985).

16. *Boece* draws on Jean de Meun's French prose translation, collating and supplementing it with the Latin original. For a major study of medieval receptions of Boethius, see Minnis (1993).

17. Bolgar (1954), Appendix 2, presents comparative tables for first translations of individual works into the respective European vernaculars. The French picture for the sixteenth century is well described by Hutton (1980).

Why was the acquisition of classical works a slower process for English than for Italian or French? There was clearly a ready audience: a verse translation of the *Aeneid* (by Phaer and Twine) went through six editions between 1573 and 1620. But the effort was unofficial and uncoordinated, largely a matter of individual initiative. This included the initiatives of patrons, but translation did not enjoy the kind of royal patronage provided for it in France. Nor was there in England a scholarly publishing house comparable to those of Aldus and Paulus Manutius in Venice, the Estiennes in Paris, or Plantin in Antwerp. But the tide washed in new literary translations continuously, as well as all manner of practical, technical, political, polemical and in particular doctrinal translated material, to contribute to what was by 1600 an extensive translating culture. In one bibliography of 'literary' English translations, broadly defined, for the period 1550 to 1660, Latin originals (classical and contemporary, along with some medieval religious texts) are estimated to account for 40 per cent of the material.[18]

In addition to the literary arrivals already mentioned, sixteenth-century England embarked on the vernacularization of Ovid, extending to most of the corpus in published verse translations by 1572; of Horace's *Satires* and *Ars poetica*; of Martial and Ausonius; of Seneca's tragedies; of Homer; of Longus, Heliodorus and Apuleius. Other new arrivals in part or whole included Euripides and Sophocles, Moschus and Musaeus, Theocritus and Achilles Tatius. The exemplary and informative works of classical historians gained them much attention: Sallust (*c.*1520), Caesar (1530, 1565), Livy (1544, 1570), Thucydides (1550), Herodian (1556), Polybius (1568), Appian (1578) and Tacitus (1591, 1598). For the sixteenth century, 'letters' could also include such texts as Proclus (1550), Euclid (1570) and Vegetius (1572), as well, of course, as moralists such as Epictetus (1567) and orators and rhetoricians such as Isocrates (1534, 1576, 1580) and Demosthenes (1570).[19]

At the most familiar level of classical learning, school texts often comprised translations of selections from suitable authors such as Aesop or Terence. These are easy to overlook. The translations are prosaic and, what (in aesthetic terms) is worse, they are often 'grammatical' – that is, with the English syntax following the Latin for pedagogical purposes. In terms of readership and of publishing history, however, the scale involved was large. One famous compilation is by a schoolmaster, Nicholas Udall, whose *Flours for Latine Spekynge selected and gathered oute of Terence, and the same translated into Englysshe*, first appeared in 1533. Another is *The Distichs of Cato*, used in England with the annotations of Erasmus, presented as an aid to Latin language learning in 1540 by Richard Taverner in a bilingual text reprinted in 1553, 1555 and 1562, then supplanted in 1577 by an anonymous version 'newly englished to the comforte of all young schollers', itself reprinted in 1584. 'Cato', as it was called, has been singled out as '*par excellence*

18. Braden, Cummings and Gillespie (2010), 9.

19. For a complete chronological listing of printed English translations of this era by classical author, see Cummings and Gillespie (2009).

the first of schoolbooks, and the elementary moral treatise of the Middle Ages'. It was edited, augmented, selected, and in time translated into a dozen European vernaculars, 'first as a means to assist in the understanding of the original, or in verse, emulating the Latin in a modern language'.[20] Such compilations – texts sometimes printed together with *Cato* include the proverbs of Publilius Syrus and the *Dicta Sapientum* – were in use on a scale out of all proportion to their barely perceptible profile today. Their users, we might bear in mind, will have included almost every historically identifiable male of Renaissance England. Much of Shakespeare's experience of Latin writing, like that of all other sixteenth-century grammar school boys, thus came in the first instance not in the form of complete works of verse or prose but from such collections of *sententiae*, 'dicta', and the like, in which the Latin was often accompanied by more or less literal English translations – the traces of which can sometimes be found in his own works.[21]

By the mid-sixteenth century, English vernacular writing begins consciously to seek to remodel itself according to Latin standards, whether of linguistic purity or literary quality. Translation, in fact, is often felt to reveal the poverty of the vernacular. Humanist teachers were concerned with the quality of the vernacular and not only with language learning, so that their instruction in Latin and Greek rhetoric laid the foundations of literary English from the Tudor era on. Nor was the translator's role necessarily servile, at least once training was complete. At the highest level the instinct of classical translators and imitators is competitive. Edmund Spenser's ambition is to 'overgo' his sources; Ben Jonson, translator of Horace, imitator of Martial, Virgil, Tacitus, invokes the classics as 'guides, not commanders'.[22] And, as is revealed by some of the metaphors its exponents use, translation was seen not just as a method of fertilization, but, in other moods and contexts, as a form of invasion, colonization or conquest.[23]

If we are to believe Thomas Warton, the 'first English classical poet' had already come and gone by 1550 in the shape of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–47).[24] Surrey translated Books 2 and 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, drawing on the compelling, but isolated and posthumously published, early sixteenth-century version in Scots by Gavin Douglas.[25] Surrey's best original poems, with their close attention

20. Lathrop (1933), 16.

21. For Shakespeare's use of Publilius Syrus, see Smith (1963); of Aesop, Gillespie (2001), 9–13; of Taverner's Cato, Baldwin (1944), 603–6. A list of school translations in use in the period appears in Tuck (1950).

22. *Timber, or Discoveries*; Jonson (1975), 379. For Jonson's attitudes to classical authority, see further pp. 44–5. below.

23. See Chapter 3 for some of these tropes. For attitudes to the practice of translation in the Tudor period, see Morini (2006).

24. Warton (1774–81), III, 2: 'Surrey the first English classic poet' (section heading); Warton's discussion of his work is at III, 10–25.

25. Sources on this material include Jones (1964) for Surrey and Cummings (1995) for Douglas's *Aeneid*. Douglas's translation was completed in 1513 and published in 1553.

to individual words and phrases, are those of one who has appreciated Martial, Virgil and Horace. Thus Surrey's work reflects the effort to discover new possibilities for English writing as an impetus to translation of the classics. But translation could have many different purposes (and, as we have begun to see, different readerships). A few years after Surrey's death, Thomas Hoby suggested others in the dedication to his English rendering of Castiglione (1561):

> the translation of Latin or Greeke authours, doeth not onely not hinder learning, but furthereth it, yea it is learning itselfe, and a great stay to youth … and a vertuous exercise for the unlatined to come by learning, and to fill their mind with the morall vertues, and their bodies with civill condicions, that they may bothe talke freely in all companie, live uprightly, though there were no lawes, and be in a readinesse against all kinde of worldlye chaunces that happen, whiche is the profit that commeth of Philosophie.[26]

Such sentiments will echo through translators' prefaces over many decades to come. Though their conventionality is apparent, their rehearsal reveals that justification for englishing the classics was felt necessary. There have perhaps been opponents of vernacularization for as long as it has gone on.

By 1600 there was still in English no full translation of Latin authors as considerable as Lucretius, Persius or Quintilian, to say nothing of some even larger Greek lacunae. But developments towards the end of the sixteenth century had been rapid. Older favourites such as Cicero were being freshly translated, but there was also a taste for later, sometimes post-classical, texts – William Aldington's Apuleius of 1566 would be one example. Some Renaissance English translators produced work which has remained squarely within the English literary canon, and indeed the translators were often well-known writers independently of their translating work: for example, the poets and playwrights Christopher Marlowe (who translated Ovid and Lucan), George Chapman (Homer, Hesiod, Juvenal and Musaeus) and Ben Jonson (Horace's *Ars poetica* line for line; Martial, Ovid, Catullus, Horatian satire and other texts more freely). In England translators usually worked outside the academic world as their contemporaries abroad did not. They were courtiers, students at the Inns of Court, gentleman-soldiers and many other things. Far from operating on scholarly principles, they are regularly found using a French or Italian intermediate text where access to a Latin or Greek original must have been feasible – and indeed sometimes seeing this as a virtue. But many of their productions have proved more durable than more scholarly undertakings.

'After the age of Jonson,' Thomas Greene writes, 'ancient culture acquired in England that straddling status it already possessed on the Continent: it was foreign but at the same time it *belonged*. It had undergone its process of reception, and

26. Hoby (1588), ¶3^{r}.

now it was progressively a native possession.'[27] For 'reception' we could read 'translation', which for most readers – as contemporary discussion shows – was easily the most significant aspect of the 'process'. That is, a classical text, author or even genre is felt to have been definitively acquired for the anglophone world once successful translations have become available. So Jonson welcomes Chapman's Hesiod (the first in English, in 1618, following Chapman's 1611 *Iliad*):

> Whose worke could this be, Chapman, to refine
> Olde Hesiods Ore, and give it us; but thine,
> Who hadst before wrought in rich Homers Mine?
>
> What treasure hast thou brought us! and what store
> Still, still, dost thou arrive with, at our shore,
> To make thy honour, and our wealth the more![28]

More metaphors than one are at work here, but the idea of 'acquisition' (and indeed 'possession', to use Greene's word) is central. In spite of this example, however, with this period Greene's generalization works better for Latin than Greek: Plato might have been translated into Latin by Jonson's time, but a full-scale English version took until 1701, and even then it came by way of a French text. In the Latin-based culture of Christendom, a poem like the *Iliad* was in so many ways an 'alien text',[29] not readily accommodated to the Renaissance epic norms of moral teaching, allegory and romance. It had probably been experienced by relatively few English readers by the time Chapman began publishing his translations in 1598. But increasingly through the seventeenth century, classical texts are no longer there to be 'discovered' by the translator. One of the purposes of fresh translations is to broaden the range of what translators themselves wish to write about. This means, as Richard Stoneman puts it, that 'even those works which to us read like a translation … in fact often diverge in directions the author himself wished to expand'.[30] Translators speak in the person of their authors. Sometimes it is the pressures of contemporary politics that make themselves felt, as in Thomas May's version of Lucan's *Pharsalia* (1627), which idealizes Pompey as a republican leader and regrets Rome's drift into empire. May's dedications to the individual Books situate his work among a politically independent and hawkish nobility tending towards parliamentary opposition to royal policies.[31] May's Latin and English verse are symbiotically related: he also composed in English couplets a continuation of Lucan's epic down to the death of Caesar which, when later

27. Greene (1982), 293.
28. Jonson, 'To my worthy and honour'd Friend, Mr George Chapman', in Chapman (1618), A4^{v}.
29. Sowerby (1994), 9. See 1–29 for his account of Homer's Renaissance standing, with particular reference to Chapman.
30. Stoneman (1982), 10.
31. Norbrook (1999), 57–66.

recast by him into hexameters, found its way into editions of the *Pharsalia*. On the other side of the political divide, during the Civil War period many Royalists turn to classical translation, whether as exiles of one kind or another, like Sir John Denham, or in postwar retirement at home, like Abraham Cowley, who worked Horace, Claudian, Seneca, Martial and Virgil into his reflections on the good life in his *Essays in Prose and Verse*, 1668. Thomas Stanley, another Royalist, after retiring to his estate from an inhospitable London following the execution of Charles I in 1649, combined his lyric bent with his considerable Greek scholarship in translations of 'Anacreon', Bion and Moschus. By this time it was becoming common, as in Stanley's case, for an English poet's translations of individual short poems, selected according to his tastes and affinities, to appear within a miscellaneous collection of his original and translated verse, an arrangement foreshadowed in the innovative Jonson *Works* of 1616.

New markets emerge among readers after the 1660 Restoration: women, and the non-classically educated middle classes, are targeted by publishers specializing in literary translation such as Jacob Tonson (1656?–1736).[32] However, at least some classical translation had already been aimed at a wide audience: the Elizabethan Seneca, for example, in the *Tenne Tragedies* gathered together in 1581, seems to have spoken to all those who enjoyed the contemporary stage. These and other early translations of the Renaissance now start to look comprehensively dated, so that new versions are felt necessary – not only of Seneca (by Sir Edward Sherburne in 1679 and 1701, and others), but Plutarch (by several hands, 1683–5), Virgil (Dryden, 1697), Josephus (Roger L'Estrange, 1702), Ovid (Samuel Garth and others, 1717) or Homer (Alexander Pope, 1715–26). But translators are often deeply aware of their predecessors, and may seek deliberately to use and embody within their work the best parts of the tradition in which they can now see for the first time they stand. Whereas his predecessors had stressed novelty and innovation, Dryden's *Works of Virgil* draws on previous English Virgils repeatedly, attempting to fashion a kind of summation of English versions. The most recent editor of Dryden's Virgil, William Frost, remarks the way 'the neo-classical translators read, studied, and reacted to each other's versions, borrowing lines or phrases from each other … and generally operating under the stimulus of an enterprise felt to be cumulative and mutual'.[33]

Notable over the eighteenth century is the popularity and longevity of the leading classical translations. Dryden's Virgil (1697) goes through ten editions by 1790, while Pope's 1715–20 *Iliad* and 1725–6 *Odyssey*, with some 50 editions

32. And by his star translator, Dryden, who is explicit about this in 1693, writing of his target audience as consisting of 'Gentlemen and Ladies, who tho they are not Scholars are not Ignorant: Persons of Understanding and good Sense … not … conversant in the Original'. *Discourse of Satire*, Dryden (1956–2000), IV, 87.

33. Frost (1988), 93, with documentation from eighteenth-century Persius translations. For recent discussion of Dryden's Virgil in this regard, see Frost's edition of Dryden's *Æneis* in Dryden (1956–2000), VI, 862–70.

separately or together, can fairly be said to make Homer a classic for the Enlightenment English reader.[34] But different kinds of translation had differing purposes. Utilitarian cribs met pedagogical needs. At the opposite extreme, for readers with good Latin or Greek, a translation could become a kind of commentary on its original, generating at the highest artistic pitch a complex intertextual play, as with Pope's satirical *Imitations of Horace* (1733–8), which appeared with the Latin texts of the relevant epistles *en face*. Pope's choices of English equivalents for characters and their actions (and sometimes his silence, as when blank space corresponds to Horatian approbation of a public figure) are in themselves telling.[35] Such effects are only likely with the most familiar of classics. Much misunderstanding is today caused by ignorance of a translator's ambitions: Pope's Horace is simply not meant as a guide to verbal meaning. Once again, a divide opens up between current expectations and the very different assumptions of previous eras; the prime objective in the eighteenth century was usually understood to be semantic accuracy only when it came to school texts. Otherwise, the priority might very often be the reproduction of 'classic' aesthetic qualities by any available means. Hence the centrality of the medium of translation to the movement later known as English Augustanism, which took as the guiding lights for its poetics Virgil, Ovid and Horace. Translations, that is, were meant as stylistic experiments, or as models for modes of English verse writing – in short, as making available for emulation and development some of the qualities of a classical text not yet assimilated to contemporary poetic possibility. Translators and theorists are perfectly explicit about this.[36]

The period from Dryden's first translations in the 1680s to Samuel Johnson's death in 1784 has a good claim to be regarded, no less than the Renaissance, as a golden age of English classical translation – it is, in fact, at the core of the present book. Its two most eminent poet-translators concentrated on the classics, and were both versatile enough to work across a number of genres. Dryden's Virgil and Pope's Homer in an important sense *became* Virgil and Homer for the eighteenth century.[37] Beyond this, Dryden and Pope translated (or imitated) between them the whole of Persius and substantial parts of Homer, Ovid and Juvenal (Dryden), Horace and Statius (Pope), together with sometimes highly influential versions of poems or segments from Lucretius, Horace and Theocritus (Dryden), Boethius, Martial, Ovid and Tibullus (Pope). The work of these and other higher-profile figures is naturally underpinned by a great deal of activity from less illustrious names – for translation, like other art forms, cannot nurture its stars without an extensive supporting cast. Pope's *Odyssey* was itself a collaboration, a practice Pope inherited primarily from Dryden, the editor of a number of 'several hands' transla-

34. For the Pope statistics, see Young (2003), 412.

35. A sample is quoted in Chapter 8. The fullest account of these aspects of the *Imitations* is Stack (1985).

36. For eighteenth-century translation as a stimulus to innovation in English writing, see recently the overview in Gillespie and Sowerby (2005).

37. See p. 32, below.

tions. Examples of specialist eighteenth-century translators, prominent in their time but well below the horizon today, are Gilbert West (Euripides, Lucian, Pindar, Apollonius Rhodius), William Melmoth (Pliny the Younger, Cicero) and Thomas Gordon (Tacitus, Sallust).[38] To give an indication of the proliferation of activity: some 120 book-length translations and imitations of Horace, mostly selections but including about a dozen collected versions, were published in the eighteenth century. Some 40 of these appeared in the 1730s alone[39] – an average of four per annum, or one per quarter.

Plainly, the eighteenth-century literary world is a translating culture, with the greatest prestige attaching to classical translation. Once this fact comes into focus, the absence of this dimension from the received literary-historical account becomes equally obvious. Pope and Dryden always emerged from the orthodox narratives until the late twentieth century primarily as (original) satirists. Indeed, they were original satirists, but this is certainly not the part of their *œuvres* for which they were most celebrated in their own lifetimes, nor is it the principal emphasis, by the 1770s, of Johnson's authoritative accounts of their life and work. This culture is one in which works of translation have full continuity with other literary output, so that it becomes common for writers to publish volumes of their 'Poems and Translations', while perhaps also contributing to joint translations, whether of short works like Horace's *Odes* (where variety of hands leads to pleasurably various English verse) or within large undertakings such as the *Plutarch's Lives* translated by some 42 contributors under the editorship of Dryden (1683–6). Widely read collections, such as poetry miscellanies, integrate translations in quantity into the material they print.[40] It's a culture in which some writers come to translation late, like Dryden in his fifties, while others found their careers on it, like John Oldham (1653–83), translator of Horace, Ovid and Juvenal, imitator of Moschus.[41] It is a culture in which classical translation is not confined to authors of high social rank (Rochester, Roscommon) or even in which contributors need to be of professional standing (Oldham, Samuel Garth, Philip Francis); translation can be published by women, as with an Ovidian epistle Aphra Behn contributed to a Dryden collection, or the learned Elizabeth Carter's Epictetus of 1758.[42] It is one in which writers so far below the notice of literary history as to be virtually unheard of today could make handsome livings by translating (or even, on occasion, by merely promising

38. For the work of these figures and brief biographical notices, see Gillespie and Hopkins (2005).

39. Gillespie (2009), 196–202. 'Book-length': publications sold as individual items or volume-sets; appearing as separate published entities in the *English Short Title Catalogue*, a database of publishing activity 1473–1800.

40. Such is conspicuously the case with classical translation in the highly successful verse miscellanies published by Jacob Tonson, 1684–1709. For a full account of the place of translation in them, see the introduction to Gillespie and Hopkins (2008).

41. Significantly, the first book-length study of Oldham's work did not appear until Hammond (1983).

42. Behn, 'Oenone to Paris', in *Ovid's Epistles*, 1680. Carter's *Enchiridion* was still in use as late as the twentieth century, as the basis of the Everyman's Library text.

to do so: Thomas Cooke followed up his heroic couplet Hesiod of 1728 by collecting 700 subscriptions for a verse translation of Plautus; he published only one play, in 1746).

Naturally, the mix of translated classics evolved as the eighteenth century went on. Before 1800 the works selected were often, on a broad definition, philosophical. After that date genres we would today label 'literary' tended to take precedence, among which the previously seldom translated texts of Greek drama should perhaps receive special mention. In spite of the discouragement Romantic theories of original genius appear to give translation, and in spite of the promotion of alternative models (modern or sometimes native models such as, for epic, Ossian), poets of the Romantic era were engaged in translating and otherwise reworking classical texts all the way across Europe. The most prominent English example is Shelley (1792–1822), who made direct versions of Euripides' *Cyclops*, the *Homeric Hymns*, Theocritus and the *Symposium*, and modelled other works on Aeschylus and Bion.[43] As will be explored in Chapter 9, literary history has played down the importance of classical knowledge, as well as of translation, to this generation. Such memorable but superficial comments as Byron's on his schoolroom experience of Horace ('Then farewell Horace! whom I hated so') have often been allowed to discourage further probing. The Hellenisms of (say) Keats, Landor and the novelist Thomas Love Peacock are different things, and manifest themselves in different ways, but we can be certain that plenty of their reading of Greek literature was in the form of English translations, sometimes historical ones. Appreciation of Chapman's Homer, for instance, undergoes a revival at this time, and Keats's well-known poem 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' is not the only recorded reaction to it.[44]

Further into the nineteenth century, Homer, by now generally preferred over Virgil, was at the centre of the debate over translation conducted publicly between Matthew Arnold and his opponent F. W. Newman, a Classics professor at University College London, in the 1860s. German scholars had pressed for the principle of 'facsimile' translation, which would reproduce not only meaning but also idiom and metrical form. In translating Homer, then, should a translator register the archaic and alien, disrupting contemporary English-language norms (as Newman argued), or should Homer be made to sound simple, natural, unquaint (as Arnold contended)? Subsequent English versions of Homer – and there was no shortage – could go in either direction.[45] Newman's Homer wrote in ballad metre, whereas Arnold argued for hexameters; Victorian writers as diverse as Tennyson, Clough, the scientist William Whewell and the politician Gladstone would later try their hands at reproducing classical metres in English. The prestige of classical Greek

43. The first general modern account of Shelley's translations was Webb (1976).

44. For Keats's, Shelley's and Coleridge's responses, see Webb (2004) and pp. 33–4, below.

45. For the issues at stake in the controversy, with reference to subsequent translations, see Ricks (2006). For a sampling of these translations, see Steiner (1996).

and the emphasis on school training in it were two factors behind the many English treatments of previously little-translated Greek poets. Poems and fragments of Sappho were translated by Byron, George Eliot, Landor and D. G. Rossetti. Theocritus attracted Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Calverley, Leigh Hunt, Andrew Lang and John Addington Symonds. Nonnus appealed to Thomas Love Peacock and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Plenty of distance still obtained between different types of translation, both in the product and the intended audience. Shelley did not write for the benefit of those who wanted uncoloured translations, but others did. From the early nineteenth century many works of translation, hitherto normally marketed as separate, individual publications, were issued within series intended for readers who would not have possessed copies of the originals. Henry Bohn (1796–1884) became the best known of the series publishers, with the 100 volumes of 'Bohn's Classical Library' (mainly issued 1848–63) a core part of his list, and sometimes embracing historical translations as a supplement to freshly commissioned items. For example, Bohn's 1850 *Satires of Juvenal, Persius, Sulpicia, and Lucilius, literally translated into English Prose by the Rev. Lewis Evans, M.A.*, also carries William Gifford's metrical version of Juvenal and Persius, first published in 1802.[46] Similarly, the Bohn Horace of 1850, translated by Theodore Alois Buckley, also prints Christopher Smart's literal prose rendering dating back to 1756. It has been imagined that this type of series publishing was aimed at radically challenging the expected audience norms: 'to find new markets for classics and to break the upper-class monopoly on classical learning'.[47] But the reality is more complex; as noted above, publishers had targeted the middle-class market for classical translation as early as Dryden's time.

For all this activity, it is with some justice that the nineteenth century has been found wanting for its achievements in the arena of classical translation. That it is also a period in which the prestige of the classics reached a very high pitch is only superficially paradoxical: the 'inhibiting force of excessive respect', the 'accepted inequity in the relation' between past and present, is said to explain a certain counterproductive humility with which translators seem to approach Greek and Latin texts.[48] An archaizing technique is one tangible outcome of a felt distance between classics and moderns, and the resulting vocabulary is apt to look stilted when, for example, instead of 'hungry' Calverley in his translation of 1869 makes Theocritus say 'not on an o'erfull stomach'. This language was, of course, already remote from contemporary norms in Calverley's own day. Calverley's ear was not insensitive, so perhaps this type of phrasing is meant as evoking Theocritus' Doric. An explicit statement is made by J. M. Edmonds, the early twentieth-century translator of Loeb's *Greek Bucolic Poets*:

46. For Gifford's Juvenal, see further Chapter 9 below.
47. Kenneth Haynes in France and Haynes (2006), 165.
48. Poole and Maule (1985), xlv.

> In the prose parts of my translation of the pastorals I have adopted the archaic style because the shepherd in modern literature does not talk the only modern dialect I know, that of the upper middle-class, and partly in an endeavour to create in them an atmosphere similar to that of the songs. I have extended archaism to … mimes for kindred reasons, to the Love-Poems because they are so Elizabethan in spirit, to the Epic poems because the Epic is necessarily, under modern conditions, archaic, and to the rest because it is the fashion of the day.[49]

'The Epic is necessarily, under modern conditions, archaic': there could hardly be a plainer statement of felt distance between ancient and modern.

Calverley died in 1884. Edmonds lived only a few years beyond the first appearance of *The Greek Bucolic Poets* in 1912. The next generation took a fresh approach. The early Modernists, say the editors of *The Oxford Book of Classical Verse in English Translation*, 'will not have anything to do with [the] cripplingly reverential position' of the Victorians.[50] Certainly, the central figure where translation was concerned, Ezra Pound, made a point of irreverence. His *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, 1919 – of which more in Chapter 2 – outraged the establishment with its apparently cavalier attitude to interpretation and by implicitly claiming that intuition can be more important than scholarship in understanding a classical text. Pound's epic *Cantos* had set out in 1915 with a version of part of Andreas Divus' Renaissance Latin version of *Odyssey* 11.[51] Euripides (*Elektra*) and Sophocles (*Trachiniae*) were much later targets for Pound, in quirkily idiomatic, not universally acclaimed versions of the 1950s.[52] His often less direct responses to Sappho, Catullus, Ovid and Pindar have been explicated. The nature of the poetic he promoted meant that Pound's followers often had Greek tastes – Richard Aldington and his wife Hilda Doolittle ('H.D.'), for example, producing versions of Euripides and Sappho (again see Chapter 2).

There is no doubt that Pound and his school sought to overturn Victorian and Georgian poetic convention. But why does engagement with the classics through translation represent a means of doing so? For translation, as is well recognized, constituted (in the words of Stephen Yao) 'an integral part of the Modernist program of cultural renewal, a crucially important mode of writing'.[53] Daniel Hooley has suggested that what these writers were registering was the passing away of the classics from school curricula and from common knowledge; and that the spectacle of 'translator-poets demonstrating in the manner of their engagement with old poems some terribly acute awareness of their position in time and culture

49. Edmonds (1928), xxvi.
50. Poole and Maule (1985), xlv.
51. Why Divus? See Kenner (1990), 17, who writes: 'No one in 400 years has owed him so much.'
52. *Electra*, unpublished until 1989, was a collaboration with Rudd Fleming. For objections to the colloquial styles of *The Women of Trachis*, see Kenner (1972), 526; but for a strikingly positive assessment of this work, see Mason (1969).
53. Yao (2002), 6.

and art, of their being simultaneously at an end of things and a beginning' is what 'one refers to in describing Pound and his circle as seminal moderns'.[54] Pound's experimental translations can be seen as breaking down the foreign text and reconstituting it so as to 'make it new', as his motto ran. Pound can, as Donald Carne-Ross suggests, resuscitate elements of diction and syntax 'unfamiliar enough to sound startlingly new' and confront us with 'ancient texts that we know could only have been written in [the twentieth] century'.[55] But it is possible to discern more continuity between the Victorians and the early Modernists than might have made the latter comfortable. *Canto I* closes with some lines on Aphrodite: 'with golden | Girdle and breast bands, thou with dark eyelids | Bearing the golden bough of Argicidia'. It is perhaps less the pronoun than the clothing terminology that strikes us as redolent of the archaisms of Calverley or Edmonds; Pope's word 'zone' for the Homeric κεστός in his *Iliad* has worn better.[56] To be fair, however, Pound's archaisms sound less affected as the *Cantos* proceed.

More will be said of Pound's influence on translators in Chapter 2, but this was not ubiquitous. Twentieth-century diversity can be suggested by a sample list of translators whose lives overlapped with Pound's but whose priorities did not: Hardy (Sappho and Catullus), Housman (Horace), Allan Tate (*Pervigilium Veneris*), J. V. Cunningham (Martial and Catullus), W. S. Merwin (Persius), Peter Porter (Martial) and, for a prose example – a one-off in every way – Stephen McKenna (Plotinus). The last was eventually accommodated within the twentieth century's best-known classics in translation series: Penguin Classics, established by Allen Lane in 1946 under the editorship of E. V. Rieu, previously a distinguished but obscure classicist and publisher who had whiled away his wartime service perfecting his prose version of the *Odyssey*. Rieu promoted prose translations written in 'plain English' and without extensive annotations. Over time, with emphases shifting in schools and universities in the UK and USA, more use was made of translations in classrooms (on Great Books and on Classics in Translation courses, for example) and a more scholarly flavour was sought. This was developed by Rieu's assistant and eventual successor Betty Radice, herself a translator of Roman comedy, Pliny and Erasmus.[57] Today in the Penguin Classics list there can be found a second or third successive translation of several major classical texts (three *Aeneids* to date) – a sign of success, or of a fast track to obsolescence?[58]

54. Hooley (1988), 20.

55. Carne-Ross (1990), 137.

56. See especially (for Venus' *cestus*, with Pope's discursive notes) Pope's 14.210, 245; Pope (1939–69), VIII, 170–3.

57. For further history of the Penguin Classics, see Radice and Reynolds (1978).

58. While it is usually assumed that translations age more quickly than original works, and while this may be true of contemporary works for the textbook market, I have set out statistical evidence of the historical unreliability of this assumption from the book trade in the long eighteenth century. See Gillespie (2005), 143–4.

Greek tragedy deserves mention as a contemporary translation phenomenon. Pound and Eliot looked to Aeschylus, but more diffuse interests have absorbed drama translators in recent decades.[59] Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (after *Philoctetes*, 1990), for the Field Day Theatre Company, holds on to the Greek scenario, but the verse has the flavour of Irish speech. Heaney's *Antigone* followed in 2005 under the title *The Burial at Thebes.* Just as common have been adaptations which explicitly parallel settings and situations with modern equivalents. Contemporary concerns are clearly reflected in the popularity for theatre purposes of a play like Euripides' *Medea*.[60] But perhaps the unexpected development of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is simply the widespread revival, in Britain especially, of the Renaissance poet's habit of undertaking classical translation at intervals in a writing career. A few passages or poems from (say) Ovid or Horace is routine, but a more regular commitment is often apparent. Greek theatre is in this context frequently to the fore: Tony Harrison has translated the *Oresteia*, Euripides' *Hecuba* and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (twice). Between translating a chunk of the *Odyssey* in 1960 and Euripides' *Alcestis* in 1993–8, Ted Hughes, at whom Chapter 11 will look more closely, undertook Seneca's *Oedipus* and selections at volume length from Ovid's *Metamorphoses.*[61]

But there are, as ever, many further layers of activity beyond this highest-profile level. The career-long classical translator is still with us – C. H. Sisson is one twentieth-century example, with Catullus, Horace, Lucretius and Virgil to his credit. Over 40 book-length translations and imitations of Ovid in English appeared between 1950 and 2004.[62] Daniel Hooley is right to note that 'for the sheer number and stylistic variety of its classical translations, the first half of [the twentieth] century ranks with the Renaissance and the age of Pope'.[63] It should give pause for thought that a much larger number of English translations from the classics were published in that century than any previous one.

♦ ♦ ♦

If classical literature has been formative of western literary traditions, translations of it have probably been no less so. This is partly a practical matter: a writer cannot make use of a work she cannot read. But it is also a more subtle question of how the most ambitious translations make a text 'available' to the native tradition. Perhaps more than that: through translation, and only through translation, it can be argued, can a classic fully take its place within the vernacular culture, becoming

59. For an overview, see Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (2004).
60. For performance history, see Hall, Macintosh and Taplin (2000).
61. The developments outlined in this paragraph are explored further in Hardwick (2000). Three essays on Hughes's *Tales from Ovid* and one on his Seneca appear in Rees (2009).
62. Gillespie and Cummings (2004), 216–18.
63. Hooley (1998), 18.

an adoptive child, an immediate member of the family, rather than a distant (or dead) cousin – however deeply respected a distant cousin. In the aggregate, translations are crucial to the process of 'making the classics belong'. Understanding how this occurs, which includes attending to the individual acts of translation which are fundamental to it, is one of the things this book is about.