

AN EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY FOR THE TEACHING OF TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH RENAISSANCE LITERARY TEXTS IN THE ITALIAN UNIVERSITY

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1.

A real act of translation presupposes that the translator has cognitive, social, and textual skills and access to appropriate stores of linguistic, cultural, and real-world knowledge. Translation is more than just a linguistic activity.

Kiraly's (1995: 6) 'working definition' of translation, like so many others that take into consideration extra-linguistic criteria for the development of translation skills, aptly corresponds to the guidelines I had in mind when I decided to offer my English Language and Literature majors a two-year Literary Translation Seminar in November 1994. It is well known that the Italian University Foreign Languages courses do not generally employ much of their resources in the direction of translation, especially insofar as the Arts Faculties are concerned, preferring to concentrate on literature courses and mainly limiting their efforts to teaching some very basic translation skills in the courses offered by the "Lettorato"¹ primarily so as to permit the students to pass the written examinations. In these language courses, the translation texts are chosen not from a literary point of view but, rather, excerpts are presented from literary texts, in prevalence, if not exclusively, in prose, and little or no time is dedicated to delving into stylistic, thematic or generally cultural problems related to the work, the author and the cultural typology of his times. In other words, there is generally no place in the students' syllabuses for a Literary Translation course.

For this reason, the decision that led to my offering a "thesis" seminar² on the translation of Elizabethan poetical and theatrical texts was a rather brazen

1 The basic language courses taught by mother-tongue teachers.

2 Each year my Department offers the Third-Year students a series of two-year seminars that give them the possibility to do a great deal of advance research on their theses subjects with the aid of their teacher/tutor and in the context of a good teaching/learning situation.

one. Since this was a completely unusual field that our Department³ was opening to the students, it was important that those who wanted to participate, previous to taking the seminar, be given a Reading List that included some of the 'classical' texts on translation⁴ and some specific texts on the subject of literary translation⁵. The students who signed up for the seminar were, in a semi-testing type of situation⁶, asked to translate a short poetical text (mainly Elizabethan sonnets, although excerpts, with explanations, were given of some longer texts) so as to: 1) give the students some preliminary exposure to a literary translation task, 2) to give the teacher the possibility to examine their capability in translating literary texts before the course began⁷ and 3) to procure for the teacher a 'control' translation to use as a way of marking progress during the two years that the seminar was to last. Each student who took the seminar, no more than ten in number to guarantee a suitable learning situation, was to be given the opportunity, if she⁸ so wished, to prepare a thesis on the translation and analysis of an Elizabethan poetical or theatrical text. What we hoped to achieve was to be able to offer our students technical translation skills in a specifically literary context, that is, to examine and experiment general translation skills and, at the same time, guarantee a knowledge of the cultural context of the text.

These were the premisses upon which our seminar was based.

1.1

At this point it is, I believe, necessary to present three sample translations, done during the preliminary examination, that exemplify the three main student-types that made up the seminar group: 1) the average student with no particular

3 Dipartimento di Scienze Linguistiche e Filologico-Letterarie dell'Area Anglo-Germanica.

4 Mounin (1965), Newmark (1988), Ulrych (1992) and Bassnett (1993).

5 We chose our texts once again for their easy 'accessibility' to the Italian students who would be using them: Bona *et al.* (1988) and an article by their linguistics professor, F. Nucciarelli (1977), who graciously submitted to being called upon to explain the process of translation from a linguistic point of view and to answering innumerable questions.

6 The students were given a general question to answer on the texts on the Reading List that they had read as well as the text of an Elizabethan sonnet. They were given two hours to do both tasks and bi-lingual and mono-lingual dictionaries and a thesaurus were at their disposal.

7 Noting particular 'talent' or aptitude for the task.

8 The students who signed up were all female, and this, in itself, might be an interesting aspect of this 'experiment'.

aptitude for translation, 2) the diligent student who, in any case, addresses the task before him/her, whatever that task may be, with the intention of doing a better-than-average job, and 3) the student with an obvious aptitude for the translation task. All of the students were, in any case, convinced that this seminar would give them the possibility to analyse a literary work with the depth that only the concentration on linguistic and contextual elements that doing a translation offers.

- 1) The following translation was done by a student with no obvious aptitude for translation:

To His Son by Sir Walter Raleigh (1614 ca.)

Three things there be that prosper up apace,
And flourish, whilst they grow asunder far,
But on a day, they meet all in one place,
And when they meet, they one another mar;
And they be these - the wood, the weed, the wag.
The wood is that, which makes the gallows-tree,
The weed is that, which strings the hangman's bag,
The wag, my pretty knave, betokeneth thee.

(The poet continues, saying that he hopes that these three elements will never meet and warns his son to behave in such a way that they never do)

Translation:

Ci sono tre cose che *prosperano velocemente*
e fioriscono, fintanto che crescono lontane e separate,
ma un giorno, si incontrano tutte in uno stesso luogo,
e quando si incontrano, *si rovinano l'una con l'altra*:
e sono queste - il legno, la malerba e il burlone.
Il legno è quello con cui si fa la forca,
la malerba è quella che *lega* la borsa del carnefice,
il burlone, mio bel furfante, *annuncia* te.

There are, clearly, some problems concerning an imperfect comprehension of the text and I have used italics to underline the most obvious, but what is more significant is the fact that the student, in presenting a literal translation, for the most part ignored both style and content.

- 2) The following translation was done by a particularly diligent student intent on doing the best job possible:

To His Friend Master R.L., in Praise of Music and Poetry by Richard Barnfield (1598)

If music and sweet poetry agree,
 As they must needs (the sister and the brother),
 Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
 Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
 Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
 Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
 Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
 As passing all conceit, needs no defence.
 Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
 That Phoebus' lute (the queen of music) makes;
 And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned
 Whenas Himself to singing he betakes.
 One god is god of both (as poets feign),
 One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

Translation:

Se musica e dolce poesia concordano
 come devono per forza (*la sorella e il fratello*),
 allora grande deve essere l'amore fra te e me,
 perché tu ami l'una e io l'altra.
 Dowland è a te caro, il cui celestiale tocco
 sul liuto rapisce i sensi umani;
 Spenser è a me caro, la cui profonda immagine è tale
 da superare ogni altra, non necessita difesa.
 Tu ami sentire il dolce melodioso suono
 che il liuto di Febo (*re della musica*) emette;
 ed io in un profondo *diletto* sono completamente sommerso
 quando egli si dà *al cantare*.
 Un dio è il dio di entrambi (poiché i poeti *inventano*),
 Un cavaliere ama entrambi, ed entrambi in te *rimangono*.

In this case, the translation is obviously better thought-out. The dictionary is used with more care than in the previous translation and the student has not chosen the first definition but has tried to find the word that most closely corresponds to the poet's intention, as she has understood it to be (*diletto, al cantare*). There are some points in which the student has opted for a literal translation that neither respects her own clearly good comprehension of the text nor the feeling of the poet's rhythm that, in other points, she seems to have taken into consideration (*la sorella e il fratello, Spenser [...] difesa*, both of which could easily have been rendered, if not more 'poetically', at least in such a way

as to make them more easily understood; and *rimangono*, which is clearly an unsuitable choice of words in that, in Italian, the sense is lost). On the other hand, the fact that she has changed *the queen of music* into *re della musica* and has used the form *poiché i poeti inventano* for *as the poets feigned* shows that she has obviously tried to interpret the poem.

3) The following translation was done by a student with an obvious aptitude for literary and, especially, poetic translation:

The Golden Age by Thomas Middleton (1604)

There was a golden age - who murdered it?
How died that age, or what became of it?

Then poets, by divinest alchemy,
Did turn their ink to gold; kings in that time
Hung jewels at the ear of every rhyme.

But Oh, those days are wasted! and behold
The golden age that was is coined to gold:

And why Time now is called an iron man,
Or this an iron-age, 'tis thus expressed, -
The golden age lies in an iron chest.

Translation:

C'era un'epoca dorata - chi *ne provocò* la morte?
come *perì* quell'epoca, o *come accadde*?
Allora i poeti, per opera di una *celeste* magia,
hanno tramutato il loro inchiostro in oro; *Allora i re*
hanno ornato con gioielli *i lobi* di ogni rima.

Ma ahimé, quei giorni sono *svaniti*! E guarda
l'ormai andata epoca dorata non è altro che *effige d'oro*.
E perché della nostra si dice uomo di ferro,
o epoca di ferro, così *la si esprime*, -
Ma l'epoca dorata è *riposta in uno scrigno di ferro*.

There are some obvious errors in this translation — *o come accadde* is the result of an imperfect understanding of the text and *hanno tramutato* and *hanno ornato* are incorrect verb choices — but, on the whole, a great deal of effort is made to translate 'poetically': the use of the "passato remoto" of the verbs *ne provocò* and *perì* render the sense of nostalgia that the poet intends to create; *una celeste magia* and *la si esprime*, although not completely adherent to the original, are clearly an effort to respect the poet's simplicity and sense of meter; certain terms like *svaniti* and *effige d'oro* are happy choices; *Time* has been translated using the term *epoca* which, although not contrasting with *effige d'oro*

in the second line of the second stanza, does create some 'gender' problems in the next line when *nostra* is linked with *uomo di ferro*; *allora i re* is almost better than the original *kings in that time* and picks up on the previous term *allora i poeti*; and *è riposta in uno scrigno di ferro*, with its passive verb, is a 'sensitive' translation for *lies in an iron chest* that, once again, renders the nostalgia of the piece.

1.2

After having done their translations, the students were asked to describe the process they had used to perform the task: 1) Had they given more consideration to the poet's a) style, or to his b) meaning?; 2) How had they proceeded? a) straight on from the beginning to the end?, or b) had they gone back to correct a word or expression when a further reading of the text indicated that a change should be made?; 3) Had they read a) the entire text before beginning the task, or b) had they immediately begun translating?; 4) Had they asked themselves who their 'audience' was and a) whether or not it was interested in Elizabethan poetry, or b) had they simply addressed themselves to the task of translation? (see Mondahl & Jensen 1996: 100)⁹

Student number one answered in the following manner: 1) b; 2) a; 3) both a and b (not having understood the text, the student had decided to simply proceed in the translation hoping, eventually, to understand the meaning better); 4) b.

Students number two and three answered in exactly the same manner: 1) a and b; 2) b; 3) a; 4) a.¹⁰

2.

The first year of the seminar began with a generalised theoretical discussion of the essence of translation and an attempt to develop a working definition of the

9 Krings (1986: 267) suggests that professional translators generally read the whole text through, noting difficult passages, before translating it; they keep their target audience in mind, concentrating on the content and constantly go back to check coherence.

10 There is always the danger that students answer questions in such a way as to please their teacher and this fact must be taken into consideration. In this case, I believe that student number two, who was definitely anxious to please the teacher, was also very concerned with doing a good job for her own personal satisfaction. Both students number one and three answered the questions without taking into consideration whether or not their teacher would be pleased with their answers — or so the two years of our seminar led me to believe.

term "literary translation". Having read a number of texts on the subject, the students were already aware of some of the most important and pressing questions that a translator, and *in primis*, a translator of literary texts, especially poetry, must solve. Our discussions, which I will not relate in detail in that this would be too time-consuming, mainly revolved around the problem of 'respect' towards the author and his text, towards the target audience, towards the language into which the translation was to be done — that is, how far can the translator stray from the words and expressions of the author? — and, hence, the age-old question of the choice between the literal (or close-to-literal) translation and the "bella infedele" (Mounin 1965: 53). The students tended in the end to prefer the "bella infedele" to the literal translation when it was a poem that was to be translated, although they felt that it was always important to take the poet's meaning into consideration. Lyrical poetry, they argued, had to be translated taking into consideration the meter as well as the sense, and, therefore, had to be 'modified' to fit the language into which the translation was to be done. Narrative poetry, on the other hand, they thought should respect the content over the form.

In any case, most of the first year was spent in translating Elizabethan poetry, individually, collectively and in small groups. And it was this practical approach that yielded the best fruits.

2.1

It is necessary, at this point, to present some of the texts that were translated during the course of the first year of the seminar. Edmund Spenser's *One Day I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand* was approached collectively by the entire group and three successively-more-satisfactory attempts were made to translate it:

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washèd it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that doth in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalise,
But I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.¹¹

11 Cultural background information on the poet and his times was given constantly during the seminar, especially in connection with the 'rediscovery' of the individual that took place during the English Renaissance and the effect this had on the poetry

First attempt at translation:

Un giorno scrissi il suo nome sulla spiaggia,
 ma vennero le onde e lo trascinarono via;
 lo scrissi ancora una seconda volta,
 ma venne la marea, e fece del mio dolore la sua preda.
 Uomo vano, disse lei, che provi invano
 ad immortalare così una cosa mortale,
 ma a me *piacerà questa perdita*
 e anche il mio nome sarà cancellato.

Aside from the very obvious error in comprehension that I have underlined through the use of italics, what is most notable about this first attempt is that it is a perfectly literal translation.

Second attempt at translation:

Un giorno scrissi il suo nome sulla sabbia,
 ma le onde giunsero e con sé lo trascinarono;
 lo scrissi ancora
 ma anche la marea giunse, e si impadronì del mio dolore.
 Uomo vano — disse lei — che tenti invano
 di immortalare ciò che è immortale;
 io stessa svanirò
 e persino il mio nome sarà cancellato.

This time, the meaning having been made clear, there is obviously more attention being paid to what the students consider a more 'poetical' version of the translation — the use of the "passato remoto" and of the verb "giungere" (*giunsero*) instead of "venire", the play on the words *immortalare* and *immortale* — although they are still unsatisfied, and justly so, with the result.

The third attempt was carried on in a slightly different way. Each line was addressed individually and various alternatives were suggested for each part:

- 1) Un giorno scrissi il suo nome sulla sabbia,
 Un giorno scrissi sulla sabbia il suo nome,
- 2) ma vennero le onde e lo cancellarono,
 lo lavarono via,
 ma le onde giunsero e via lo trascinarono,
- 3) di nuovo lo scrissi,
 lo scrissi ancora,
 scrissi una seconda volta quel nome,

written during that period (Mannerism). In Spenser's case, the key words for this sonnet were: *love*, *immortality* and *fame*.

- 4) ma venne la marea e si impadronì del mio dolore.
- 5) Uomo vano, disse ella, che cerchi invano per questa via
- 6) di immortalare ciò che è mortale;
- 7) io stessa -svanirò
 eppure, io stessa -sbiadirò
 ma anche io -mi consumerò
 -sfiorirò
- 8) e persino il mio nome sarà cancellato.

In this case, certain lines have been translated without alternatives in that, after a long discussion, they were considered the best that the group had to offer at that stage of the course. Other lines are given with some alternatives, while still others are offered with numerous alternatives. The students remarked that those lines with the highest number of alternatives were the ones with which they were least satisfied.

The students were then asked to translate the sonnet again individually and there are two results that I think are interesting to notice:

- 1) Un giorno scrissi il suo nome sulla sabbia,
 ma vennero le onde e lo cancellarono;
 lo scrissi ancora,
 ma venne la marea e si impadronì del mio dolore.
 Uomo vano, disse ella, che cerchi invano per questa via
 di immortalare ciò che è mortale,
 io stessa svanirò
 e persino il mio nome sarà cancellato.
- 2) Scrivei un dì sulla rena il di lei nome,
 Ma l'onda giunse e seco l'ardua dipartita.
 Sì ancor lo scrivei codesto nome
 Ma la marea venne, e del mio dolor si è impadronita.
 Uomo vano, diss'ella, che invano l'ardir ti invita
 A render lo mortale, immortale,
 Ché la beltà mia pure sarà svanita
 E de lo nome mio la memoria fugita.

The first individual attempt has clearly taken into consideration all of the previous work done in class and the final result, a choice of what the student has considered the best of the alternatives offered in the third attempt, is not unsatisfactory. The second translation is clearly the work of a student who, although (and I would like to think, perhaps, because) stimulated by the work done in class, could not wait to 'get her hands on the poem', so to speak, and her version, although more Dante-like than Spenser-like, has taken into consideration rhyme as well as meter. The students were very favorably

impressed with this translation even though there was some lively discussion about the suitability of the Dante-like language.

2.2

A number of other experiments of the same type were carried out during the seminar with encouraging results. But the most interesting were those in which the class was divided into two groups that, starting from the translation of an individual student, produced a 'group-translation':

1) *To His Friend Master R.L., in Praise of Music and Poetry*¹²

If music and sweet poetry agree,
 As they must needs (the sister and the brother),
 Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
 Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
 Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
 Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
 Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
 As passing all conceit, needs no defence.
 Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
 That Phoebus' lute (the queen of music) makes;
 And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned
 Whenas Himself to singing he betakes.
 One god is god of both (as poets feign),
 One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

Translation of the individual student:

Se musica e dolce poesia concordano
 come devono per forza (la sorella e il fratello),
 allora grande deve essere l'amore fra te e me,
 perché tu ami l'una e io l'altra.
 Dowland è a te caro, il cui celestiale tocco
 sul liuto rapisce i sensi umani;
 Spenser è a me caro, la cui profonda immagine è tale
 da superare ogni altra, non necessita difesa.
 Tu ami sentire il dolce melodioso suono
 che il liuto di Febo (re della musica) emette;
 ed io in un profondo diletto sono completamente sommerso
 quando egli si dà al cantare.
 Un dio è il dio di entrambi (poiché i poeti inventano),
 Un cavaliere ama entrambi, ed entrambi in te rimangono.

12 Both the original text and its first translation have already been presented in section 1.1 of this paper.

The first group of four students did the following translation:

Se Musica e dolce Poesia concordano
come sorella e fratello,
Così grande, deve essere l'amore fra me e te,
perché tu ami l'una ed io l'altra.
A te caro è Dowland il cui tocco divino
sul liuto rapisce il senso umano;
A me Spenser, la cui solenne immagine è tale
da superare tutte le altre, non ha uguale:
Tu ami ascoltare il dolce suono melodioso
che il liuto di Febo (regina della Musica) emette;
e mentre io sono completamente immerso in un profondo piacere,
egli si dedica al canto.
Un Dio è Dio per entrambe (come ostentano i poeti),
un Cavaliere ama entrambe, ed entrambe rimangono in te.

Although there are still some significant problems related to comprehension (*A me Spenser [...] non ha uguale, egli si dedica al canto and ed entrambe rimangono in te*), and some awkward phrasing (*rapisce i sensi umani*), the concerted group effort has produced a translation that is more satisfactory, both on the levels of style and content, than the individual effort.

The second group of four students produced the following translation:

Se musica e poesia si accordano,
come devono fratello e sorella,
allora grande sarà l'amore tra te e me
ché tu ami l'una e io l'altra.
Caro è a te Dowland, il cui tocco divino
sul liuto rapisce i sensi;
E a me lo è Spenser, le cui profonde immagini tali
da superare tutte l'altre, non richiedono difesa;
Tu ami sentire il dolce melodioso suono
che il liuto di Febo (re della musica) echeggia,
ed io in profondo diletto sono sommerso
quando egli si dà al canto.
Un dio è dio di entrambe (come i poeti fingono),
un cavaliere ama entrambe ed entrambe in te sono.

The students concluded that this second translation was much more 'poetic'. There is, in fact, a clear attempt to 'capture' the meter (*si accordano, Caro è a te Dowland... and che tu ami l'una e io l'altra*) and great efforts are made to remanage the text so as to convey the poet's meaning (*E a me lo è Spenser [...] non richiedono difesa, quando egli si dà al canto and entrambe in te sono*).

2) *Weep You No More, Sad Fountains* by an Anonymous (1605 ca.)

Weep you no more, sad fountains;
 What need you flow so fast?
 Look how the snowy mountains
 Heaven's sun doth gently waste.
 But my sun's heavenly eyes
 View not you weeping,
 That now lies sleeping
 Softly, now softly lies
 Sleeping.

Translation of the individual student:¹³

Non piangete più, fontane tristi.
 Perché così in fretta scorrete?
 Guardate come le montagne nevate
 dal sole celeste adagio son abbandonate.
 Ma gli occhi divini del mio sole
 non vedono il vostro pianto
 che ora giace dormendo,
 dolce, dolce sta dormendo.

Despite some difficulty in the structure and choice of terms in the last three lines, the desire to translate 'poetically' is clear (*perché così in fretta scorrete?* and *dal sole celeste adagio son abbandonate*) and both meaning and style are preserved.

The first group of four students translated the poem in the following manner:¹⁴

Non piangete più, tristi fontane;
 perché scorrete così veloci?
 Guardate come il sole dal paradiso
 scioglie delicatamente le cime innevate.
 Gli occhi divini del mio sole
 non si accorgono del vostro pianto,
 lei ora dorme
 dolcemente, ora dolcemente dorme.

13 This student was an ERASMUS student from Finland and this makes her translation doubly interesting in that she obviously tried to be as concise and synthetic as possible so as to avoid difficulty in Italian.

14 The groups were composed of different students each time so as to create the greatest possible amount of exchange of ideas and aptitude.

Here, too, the meaning of the last three lines is unclear, but there is an obvious desire to reproduce the meter (the structure of the last two lines being an indication) and, in the midst of a very simple and linear translation, there are some concessions made to what the students conceive to be 'poetic language' (*le cime innevate*).

The second group's translation was as follows:

Non piangete più, tristi fontane;
perché scorrete così veloce?
Guardate come il sole celeste
adagio scioglie le bianche vette.
Ma gli occhi limpidi del mio sole
non vedono il vostro pianto,
che ora riposa
quieto, quieto ora
riposa.

This time the meaning of the entire poem is clear. One can clearly see the desire to transmit 'poetic' images (*il sole celeste* and *le bianche vette*), some 'poetic licence' is taken (*gli occhi limpidi*) that, paradoxically, enhances the translation and in the last three lines, in the game of *ora riposa quieto* and *quieto ora riposa*, there is an interesting attempt to capture the delightful game of longer and shorter lines that the author of the poem had proposed.

2.3

During the first year of the seminar, to guarantee a practical as well as cultural approach to translation, two professional translators were invited to speak with the students.

The first,¹⁵ a highly qualified translator, gave the students some very clear and practical advice on the art of translating and on the joys and sorrows (isolation) of the professional translator. She emphasised the importance of being respectful towards the text and gave some very good advice regarding the importance of uniformity and precision within the translation (using the same type of script, for example, throughout the entire text). She warned the students against some of the 'traps' that the translator might find along his/her path,

15 Anna Rita Vignati, with a diploma from the Liceo Internazionale of Rome and from the Scuola per Interpreti e Traduttori of Rome, is a well-affirmed translator with both editorial and teaching experience and many translations (more than 30 of which are books) to her credit, mostly in the fields of psychology and sociology, but also of literary texts.

especially if his/her attitude toward the task did not remain humble and respectful. Being overly confident or in a hurry are enemies to good translations. The translator emphasised that any intervention on the translator's part, if not exclusively to make the text clearer, was absolutely to be avoided. The students, who found this meeting with a professional translator interesting and stimulating, argued that a poetical text required more intervention on the translator's part than other types of texts.

Of the students' opinion was the second professional translator¹⁶ who spoke with the group, according to whom the form, the fluidity and the beauty of the text were not to be sacrificed in favor of an excessively literal adherence to the text. This translator directed the attention of the students to a series of passages from the literary (mainly poetical) texts she had translated that had been the cause of particular difficulty for her and showed the students how she had solved these problems. She stressed the need for a serious reflection on poetical language in general on the part of the literary translator and the importance of studying the author and all of his works if one is to do a good literary translation.

Both translators emphasised the importance of knowing the language from which one is translating very well and of having an excellent knowledge of the language into which one is translating.¹⁷

3.

At the beginning of the second year of the seminar, each student was given a text to translate that was eventually to be the object of her thesis.¹⁸ Each member of the group which, as it had during the first year, met once a week for two hours, spent the beginning of the year reading and studying the text that had been assigned to her.¹⁹ Subsequent sessions were dedicated to generalised

16 Isabella Farinelli, who graduated from the University of Perugia with a Foreign Languages degree and a specialisation in linguistics, has some highly qualified literary translations to her credit. She has translated four of K. Gibran's works (for SE editors, Milan) with great sensitivity, and has done other, mostly literary, translations.

17 The entire seminary was geared from the very beginning towards translating into the mother-tongue language.

18 These texts were chosen with an idea of the students' capabilities and aptitudes in mind.

19 Among these texts were some (Wyatt, Surrey) rarely translated into Italian, and others (Spenser, Sidney, Milton) that had had more 'success' in the Italian context. All of the students, in any case, consulted the *Index Translationum* to see when and how often the text they were going to translate had already been translated. No

discussions of the problems encountered both on the cultural and linguistic levels by each individual student, and this sharing of problems was a help to all of the members of the group. Many sessions were also dedicated to the choosing of a 'format' for presenting the theses. Since, along with specific problems concerning the translation itself, it was often noticed that cultural and literary problems came to the fore directly in connection with linguistic problems, it was decided that the theses would have a format similar to that of texts with the original and the translation *a fronte*, with the difference that, on the page facing the translation, instead of the original text, particular problems concerning the translation as well as interesting notes on the text would be presented.²⁰

At the moment, we are anxiously awaiting the first fruits of our thesis seminar which, all things permitting, will be presented in this coming June's thesis session.

References

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importance was given to the fact that a text had already been translated in that the object of this course was not that of translating unknown works but, rather, mainly of gaining translation skills — although the possibility of making some sort of research contribution was not ignored.

20 In some cases, it must be noted, authentic "discoveries" were made, as in the case of a word that the Oxford English Dictionary indicated as having entered the English language at the end of the 17th century, that was found in a poem written at the end of the 16th century.

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