

**Translating an Oriental Frame Tale and its Translator in Hapsburg Spain:
The Prefaces to the *Espejo político y moral* (1654, 1659)**

At the beginning of his preface to the *Espejo político y moral para príncipes y ministros y de todo género de personas* (1654), the first volume in an incomplete adaptation of a Turkish collection of exemplary fables by the name of *Humayun-Nameh* ('Book of Humayun', 1540), Vicente Bratutti recounts the story of his translation's beginnings:

Avrá dos años, traduxe de la lengua Turca en la Toscana la Segunda parte de la Coronica Otomana y prometí de traduzir y publicar también la Tercera. Mas por no aver podido en estas remotas partes proveerme la continuación de la Historia Turca para traducirla, assí no he podido cumplir mi promessa y deseo. Sin embargo, en su lugar he traduzido de la lengua Turca en la Castellana la Primera Parte del Espejo Político y Moral. (Bratutti 1654: ¶7r)¹

Bratutti's words are hardly the ringing endorsement we might expect to encounter in a translator's preface, which would normally proclaim the value of the translated text in order to encourage readers to engage with if not to purchase it. Instead his explanation presents the *Espejo* as second best, a replacement for the work he *really did* desire to translate but could not locate due to his location in a place he refers to as 'estas remotas partes'. This reference is, I believe, an allusion to Hapsburg Spain, where Bratutti had been employed from around 1652 as a *dragoman*, an official diplomatic translator of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic who mediated between European powers and the Ottoman Empire.² His transfer to Madrid was apparently made against his wishes, a fact that may go some way to explaining this rather dismissive portrayal of Philip IV's court.³ Bratutti was previously a *dragoman* in Istanbul for his native

¹ For this article I consulted digitised versions of the *Espejo*'s 1654 and 1659 volumes conserved in the Universidad Complutense's Biblioteca Histórica 'Marqués de Valdecilla', the links to which are listed in this article's bibliography. I have modernised the punctuation and accentuation of cited passages but otherwise not altered their orthography.

² On these important figures in East/West diplomatic relations, see Roland (1999), Rothman (2011, 2013), and Safa Gürkan (2015). Lacarra (2006: 136) suggests the dating of Bratutti's employment in the court of Philip IV.

³ Šundrica believes that the move to the Spanish court was made to avoid further disruption and scandal following an attempt on the interpreter's life in Istanbul in 1633, the effects of which were felt for many years

Ragusa, and had also served the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III in Vienna, in whose court he had translated the first two volumes of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi's *Tacu't-Tevarih* ('Crown of Histories') into Italian – the 'unlocatable' third part of which is referred to above.⁴

Although located physically in Spain at the time of writing, Bratutti's comment provides a perspective on it from *without*, from the point of view of a well-travelled and educated man who had spent much of his working life in the Austrian Hapsburg court and the Ottoman Empire. Viewed from the perspective of these competing centres of political and economic dominance and intellectual and cultural production, it suggests that Spain is perceived as a remote kingdom at the margins of power and influence. This is a bold even politically injudicious statement for Bratutti to make in a work dedicated to the Spanish king; he not only relied upon Philip IV for his position but was seeking further support to publish the second volume of the *Espejo*, which would appear in 1659.⁵ Yet Bratutti's labelling of Spain as 'estas remotas partes' is not merely an expression of his irritation at being located in a place characterised, as he saw it, by intellectual and material poverty and isolation; it is intimately related to his justification for translating this particular work for Spanish audiences.

Bratutti's source, *Humayun-Nameh*, which was composed by the celebrated poet Ali Çelebi, was not an original creation but one in a long line of translations descending from a famous Arabic collection of exemplary fables known as *Kalila wa-Dimna* (750 AD). The work of a Persian convert to Islam named Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kalila wa-Dimna*'s origins lay in a fourth-century Sanskrit text, the *Panchatantra* ('Five Treatises' or 'Five Chapters'), which underwent a rather complex transmission.⁶ *Kalila wa-Dimna* came to the Ottoman Empire, where Bratutti may have become familiar with it, via two medieval Persian translations: the first by Nasr Allah Munshi in the twelfth century and the second, *Anvar-i Suhayli* ('Lights of Canopus'), by Husayn Va'iz Kashifi in the fifteenth century.⁷ Bratutti's translation has been the focus of far less scholarship than the two earlier and better-known Castilian translations of the *Kalila*

later (2000: 48). Cziráki provides archival evidence that Bratutti was employed at the Austrian Hapsburg embassy in Constantinople in 1650 (2016: 39, n.43).

⁴ In addition to the *Chronica dell'origine, e progressi della casa Ottomana* (Vienna 1649, Madrid 1652), another of Bratutti's translations was the *Anales de Egipto, en que se trata de las cosas mas principales que han sucedido desde el principio del mundo hasta de cien años á esta parte* by al-Rumi Salih Jalaladah (1678).

⁵ Of the fourteen chapters in *Humayun-Nameh*, the first was printed in 1654 (Madrid: Domingo Garcia y Morràs) with the existing Turkish prefaces; the next seven were printed in 1659 (Madrid: Josef Fernández de Buendía); a proposed final volume containing the remaining six was never published.

⁶ For details of the fables' transmission history see Montiel (1975) and De Blois (1990, 1991).

⁷ On *Humayun-Nameh* and its manuscript tradition, see Sims (1991); on the Persian translations see Van Ruymbeke (2016: 24-28, particularly chapter 7),

fables: *Calila e Dimna* (1251) and the *Exemplario contra los engaños y peligros del mundo* (*editio princeps* 1493).⁸ This may be because it came to Spain via the eastern branch of transmission from Turkish and Persian sources and is far more distant from the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna*; or because it has been perceived as being of less literary and aesthetic value. Nevertheless, the *Espejo* is worthy of far more critical attention than it has hitherto received and has much to offer scholars of early modern translation and literature and Habsburg-Ottoman political and cultural relations.

Politics and translation have long gone hand in hand, as a number of scholars have theorised in recent decades; translation is a fundamentally political and ethical act that takes place within nexus of power and competition.⁹ The creation by Charles V of a *Secretaría de Interpretación de Lenguas* in 1527 to facilitate the work of the *Consejo de Estado* and other government institutions reveals its perceived importance to governance and empire; while the 1612 mandate to appoint translators experienced in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian reflects the increasing importance placed on relations with states to the east of Europe's boundaries (Cáceres-Würsig 2004). In addition to the practical use of interpreters, literary production and literary translation were powerful aspects of early modern political relations that constituted a form of cultural diplomacy, a subject explored by Timothy Hampton (2009) and most recently by essays in a volume edited by Tracey Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (2019).

A textbook of statecraft providing moral and practical guidance for rulers and their counsellors belonging to the genre of 'mirror for princes', we could feasibly view the *Espejo* within this economy of early modern cultural diplomacy. The transmission of *Kalila wa-Dimna* as a tradition certainly exemplifies the interweaving of politics and poetics: translations were frequently dedicated or attributed to monarchs and many of the book's translators were also diplomats and courtiers, individuals who played a key cultural as well as political role in transnational relations. According to Natalie Rothman in an article on the creation of 'Turkish Literature', *dragomans*, like Bratutti, participated in a process of 'cultural and linguistic boundary-making' that was fundamentally textual and which helped shape western European views of 'the East' (Rothman 2013: 418); and, of course, *viceversa*. Indeed, translators in early modern Europe played a role in shaping perceptions of self and community, creating a concept

⁸ Lacarra (2006) has considered Bratutti's translation of *Humayun-Nameh*'s prefaces but not the new preliminary materials added to the *Espejo*. See Cacho Blecua and Lacarra (1984) on *Calila e Dimna* and Haro Cortés (2007) on the *Exemplario*.

⁹ Essays in Álvarez and Vidal (1996), Tymoczko and Gentzler (2002), and Bermann and Wood (2005) and studies by Venuti (1994) and Meschonnic (2007) provide theoretical frameworks for thinking about the political and ethical aspects of translation, as well as its role in the formation of cultural identity.

of ‘Europe’ vis a vis an ‘Other’ ‘at a time when the continent was torn apart by internal dissension and under threat from foreign powers’, says José María Pérez Fernández (2012: 16). Yet as the critic remarks in a later article, ‘The complexity of these simultaneous processes of exchange and construction was compounded by the fact that the translators and diplomats involved in them did not always belong with in a single group’ but rather ‘frequently acted as members of several different communities, each of which had its own distinctive identity, interests, and agendas’ (Pérez Fernández 2019: 88). As we will see, the *Espejo* raises questions about the production of knowledge and about the fidelity of translators – not to their texts, but to the cultures for which they translated.

Although Bratutti’s treatment of the fables themselves are important and warrant their own study, the paratextual framework of the *Espejo*’s two editions are particularly worthy of attention, above all for the way they re-frame this oriental text for a Catholic audience in Habsburg Spain. In line with early modern print traditions, Bratutti’s introductions are themselves framed by prefaces of Inquisitorial censors: in volume one, clerics Benito de Ribas and Julián de Pedraça, and in volume two Jesuit monk Joseph Espuches and the poet and chronicler José Pellicer de Ossau y Tovar.¹⁰ Bratutti’s perspective as an outsider contrasts with the ‘official’ viewpoint of the censors, who write from *within* the *monarquía hispánica*. This juxtaposition of perspectives *within/without* is both formally and ideologically important in the context of *Kalila wa-Dimna* – a layered, labyrinthine narrative comprised of a multiplicity of voices and points of view which over the centuries was framed by an expanding array of preliminary materials, creating a second narrative about the fables’ origins and relevance. Paratexts like these represented spaces in which the relationship between different cultures and the transmission of knowledge and power could be reflected upon, conceptualised, and shaped. They offer interesting viewpoints not only of Habsburg Spain and these famous exemplary fables, but of the process of translation itself. As we glimpsed with the passage from Bratutti’s introduction, a central motif of the *Espejo*’s prefaces is the notion of remoteness, which has underlying connotations of civility and otherness. Where this ‘remoteness’ is located differs according to the perspective of our prefatory authors: for Bratutti, it is fluid, applying both to Habsburg Spain *and* the origins of the fables; for the censors, however, it defines not only the book but its translator, a dual otherness that had to be mediated and interpreted for a Catholic

¹⁰ The 1558 *Pragmática sobre la impresión y libros* established the requirements and process of printing a book in Castile; as per this decree, the 1654 and 1659 volumes of the *Espejo* include licenses, privileges, dedications, as well as the *censuras* and *aprobaciones* of Inquisitorial censors. For more on the 1558 *pragmática* see De los Reyes (2010).

audience in Spain.

A view from without: Bratutti's offering of an 'oriental joya'

Bratutti's service as a *dragoman* would have brought familiarity with the languages and cultures that constituted the *Kalila* fables' origins – Turkish, Arabic, and Persian – and an appreciation of their intellectual and political prestige and symbolic power. In his dedication to Philip IV in volume one, Bratutti presents the *Espejo* as 'digno para ofrecerle' because it contains 'cosas muy deleytables y provechosas' and is 'una Oriental joya de documentos políticos y preceptos morales' (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶2r). In the second volume he once again refers to it as an 'joya Oriental' that is 'lleno de peregrinas enseñanças y moralidades, y muy entretenido y provechoso' (Bratutti 1659: ¶7r). For seventeenth-century Spanish audiences 'peregrino' could mean not only 'travel' and 'traveller' but also 'strangeness', 'foreignness', thus encompassing the idea of boundary making.¹¹ Such terms 'other' the work and play on long-held western European conceptions of 'the East' as an 'exotic' place of material, intellectual, and spiritual wealth, spurred no doubt by the trade in valuable goods – spices, gold, incense, textiles and silks – from the near and far east to Europe.¹² Stereotypes such as this persisted in the early modern period despite better knowledge of this part of the world; the East functioned as a trope that was recalibrated and re-created constantly.¹³ Bratutti's use of well-worn tropes like 'Oriental joya' are not empty descriptions but a key part of the way in which he positions the *Espejo* for readers in Spain, underlining its authority and inciting interest by hinting at the work's cultural value and prestige.

The exoticness conveyed by the names of previous rulers and counsellors associated with the book is also drawn upon as a means of signifying *political* value: 'Behermenio Bidpay', the Persian physician who voyaged to India to acquire the work from 'Dapeselino Rey de la China y de las Indias Orientales'; 'Nosirevano el justo Rey de la Persia' (the sixth-century Persian king Khosrow I), 'Ebu Gaifer' (the eighth-century Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur), and 'Nurulah' (likely the previously mentioned Nasr Allah Munshi). From its inception, *Kalila and Dimna* was seen as far more than a mere work of moral conduct; over

¹¹ In his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611), Covarrubias gives the following definition: 'el que sale de su tierra en romería a visitar alguna casa santa, o lugar santo. Díjose en latín *peregrinus a peregre, hoc est longe*, por andar largo camino. Peregrinar, andar en romería o fuera de su tierra; peregrinación, la romería. Cosa peregrina, cosa rara' (2006: 1356).

¹² On the exotic in medieval textual culture, see Akbari (2009) and Freedman (2012); Fuchs has explored how Spain was itself othered within early modern Europe (2009).

¹³ The notion of 'fixity' in ideological constructions of otherness was discussed by Bhabha (2004: 94-120).

the centuries it became a marker of political and cultural power and ‘acquired a symbolic meaning by which its very possession signified the greatness of its sovereign patron’ (Patrick 2015: 160-161). The act of acquiring it becomes linked to the political fortunes of successive generations of rulers who used it ‘para regla de gobernar bien sus Estados y conservar sus vasallos’ (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶7v); like al-Mansur, who founded the city of Baghdad in 762 and ‘fundó la fábrica de su gobierno sobre aquellos saludables y útiles consejos’ (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶8r).

In dedicating the *Espejo* to Philip IV, Bratutti therefore places both himself and the king within a teleology of powerful rulers and their ministers (a position the translator here assumes), who used their acquisition of the fables to not only gain knowledge but to legitimise political ambitions. This positioning is a deliberate move by a man fully aware of the power of language and translation to shape perceptions of a nation, their history, and relations to others. Yet Bratutti’s impetus for doing so is not because he *already* sees Hapsburg Spain as a monarchy equal to its predecessors, but precisely because he *does not*, hence the reference to it as ‘estas remotas partes’. By the time the *Espejo* was published, Spain’s place in the world and relationship with other powers within Europe and beyond had undergone a considerable evolution, economically and politically weakened following the break-up of the union with Portugal and Catalan revolt in 1640, the loss of the colonies in the Netherlands and recognition of Dutch independence in 1648, and ongoing conflict and competition with France and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ Thus, Bratutti presents the fables as a remedy for decades of economic and imperial decline and internal political fracturing, an offering that will bring the *monarquía hispánica* to greatness once more.

In a bit to perhaps further please his patron, the king, however, the *Espejo*’s transmission to Hapsburg Spain is also presented as a move that will simultaneously enhance the prestige of the work itself. Bratutti demonstrates an understanding of translation as what Lawrence Venuti calls a ‘double-edged’ transformative process that could benefit and constitute both the ‘domestic’ *and* the ‘foreign’ culture (1994: 202). He describes the book as ‘una hermosa esposa’ who,

mostrando su cara en diversas formas y semblantes, aora en el hábito indiano y persiano, y aora en el vestido Arábico y Turco representó su belleza. Mas

¹⁴ The so-called decline of Spain in the seventeenth century has been addressed by Elliott (1961, 2002) and Kamen (1978, 2014).

aunque mostrasse la cara de su excelencia con varias lenguas, sin embargo, le faltava el ornamento del lunar de la lengua e idioma Castellano. Por lo qual yo me resolví de vestir y adornar este libro con el manto Español y publicarlo en la lengua Castellana, para que assi los nobles como los plebeyos puedan gozar de sus infinitos bienes. (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶8v)

Using an extended metaphor that plays on the classical notion that language is rhetorical ornament, the translator personifies the book's transmission as a performance of beautification: 'she' first tries on Indian 'dress', then Persian, then Arabic and Turkish. But although these Oriental 'clothes' reveal something of her beauty, they are ultimately discarded as unsuitable. The 'lengua Castellana', in contrast, provides the fitting finishing touch – the beauty mark that completes her dazzling allure. Clothing metaphors such as the motif of dressing were common in early modern descriptions of translation; however, the translated text was traditionally positioned as inferior to its source, with the 'sumptuous clothing' of the latter exchanged for the 'rougher garment' of the former (Van Wyke 2009: 24-25; Hermans 1995: 115). While no doubt a rhetorical formality, it is nonetheless rare to find the hierarchy between original and translation inverted as openly as Bratutti does here.

The imagery of marriage suggests (inter)dependency and thus implicitly recognises Spain's inextricable bond with and debt to Eastern cultures. However, the depiction of the book as a wife who acts out a performance of dressing and undressing is suggestive of a desiring male gaze, casting the cultural and intellectual wealth of the East as something to be objectified and appropriated by the voyeur and 'husband', a position that Spain assumes. The movement between 'español' and 'castellano' furthermore highlights the politics of language which are at work in the paratexts to the *Espejo*: the cloaking of the book in the 'manto Español' hints perhaps at a level of protection offered by the *monarquía hispánica* while the 'lengua Castellana' not only shows off the work's greatness to better effect but enables better use to be made of it. For in order that the *Espejo* can continue to be of benefit, Bratutti argues, the work's wisdom has to be translated into a suitable tongue, namely Castilian.

To conclude his introduction to the 1654 volume, Bratutti returns to the supremacy of Spanish, contrasting it again with the eastern languages in which the fables had thus far been transmitted:

esta Oriental joya de documentos Políticos y Morales que he sacado a la luz de las tinieblas de tan peregrinas y ignotas lenguas para que desta clara fuente

bevas doctrinas para la mejor política y gustes erudiciones para el más acertado gobierno. (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶8v)

Contrasts between light and dark evoke notions of civility and barbarism, with Bratutti describing how he has brought the work out of the ‘shadows’ of the strange and unknown languages of the East and into the ‘light’ of Castilian. The use of ‘peregrino’ again conjures up not only estrangement but also impermanence, the inherent mobility of culture and with it the danger of loss and dissipation of cultural value and power that comes with it. Bratutti thus presents the act of translation as a means of bringing beauty and value to an object which, for all of its renown, would otherwise remain lost and unknown (at least to audiences in western Europe); a means of stabilising and fixing the dangerous mobility of these fables. In translating *Humayun-Nameh*, he sought to provide a stable ‘home’ in a ‘civilised’ land for this literary pilgrim. The wealth of the fables’ heritage represents *the past* but cannot preserve their brilliance in the future. Indeed, while it is granted authority by its status as an ‘oriental joya’ with a long and distinguished line of transmission, in fact the *translatio* from Turkish to Spanish is what provides ‘el ornamento del lunar’ – the final gloss of superiority and civility lacking in the tongues of its providence.

Bratutti’s translation is positioned in such a way to flatter the Hapsburg king, to reassure him that although perhaps perceived elsewhere as remote and isolated, Spain held superiority in one aspect at least: the linguistic, Castilian being not only the language of centralised government but of artistic creation, literary and poetic prestige. Such statements reflect the sentiments of greatness, culture, and learning associated with ‘Spanishness’ following the period of intense artistic and literary creativity known as the *Siglo de Oro* (Álvarez-Junco 2014: 28-30). However, linguistic ideologies, as Kathryn Woolard asserts, ‘are never just about language, but rather also concern such fundamental social notions as community, nation, and humanity itself’ (2004: 58). Bratutti’s presentation of the *Espejo* to Philip IV in this manner may have been politically-motivated flattery, but it aligns with broader interest in the relationship between language and nationhood, as can be seen in the debates between Bernardo Aldrete and Gregorio López Madera over the origins of Castilian or interest in defining the status of Hebrew and Arabic within Spain’s national identity.¹⁵

¹⁵ Woolard (2002, 2004) discusses the language ideologies of Castilian in Aldrete and López Madera’s writings in the context of debates about *morisco* assimilation in the early seventeenth century. Gilbert (2014) and García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano (2017) consider the question of Arabic in early modern Spain.

In translating the fables for Philip IV, Bratutti presents himself as a benefactor of Spain, bringing wisdom and knowledge that can ensure the success of the monarchy, much as other opportunistic rulers and their counsellors had made use of the fables in previous centuries.¹⁶ Of course, more than political altruism Bratutti is motivated by a need for patronage and security of position within the Hapsburg court – a position that his own personal history shows could be unpredictable and insecure. Like the ‘oriental joya’ and the ‘peregrinas enseñanzas’ he translated, Bratutti’s perspective was not singular or fixed; as an outsider with familiarity of the eastern cultures and languages from which the work originated, he saw both Spain’s weakness and its potential. As we will see in the censors’ prefaces, however, this duality could be cause for concern, leading to the translator himself becoming the object of scrutiny as much as the work he was offering.

A view from within: Translating the translator in the censors’ prefaces

Prefaces written from the ‘official’ perspective of the Spanish Inquisition functioned as an assurance to readers that the work they were about to read contained nothing unorthodox or heretical according to the church doctrine. Although a work of practical and political knowledge, the prefaces to both of the *Espejo*’s volumes quantify *Kalila wa-Dimna*’s worth from the perspective of a specifically Christian worldview. In his *aprobación* to volume one, Julián de Pedraça comments not only that ‘no he hallado en él cosa que no sea muy ajustada a nuestra Santa Fe Católica’, but also highlights how the fables ‘conducen a las buenas costumbres, y todas se enderezan a una buena policía Christiana, y por tanto es digno de que se dé a la Imprenta’ (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶5r). Such assurances are reiterated in the *Licencia del Ordinario* in volume two, which asserts that ‘no haber en él cosa contra nuestra Santa Fe Católica, y buenas costumbres’ (Bratutti 1659: sig. ¶3v).¹⁷

These comments go hand in hand with statements about the fables’ remote origins, which create an opposition between East and West by equating *spatial distance* with *cultural difference*. In his *aprobacion* in volume two the Jesuit priest Espuches emphasises the fables’ distant origins in ‘aquella Nación tan desviada’ as well as its ‘elegancia peregrina’ (Bratutti 1659: sig. ¶3r), contrasting the remoteness of an unspecified ‘nación’ *over there* – an

¹⁶ An earlier translation, the *Exemplario*, was printed in Spain as late as 1621 in a dual edition with Aesop’s fables. Bratutti, however, presents the *Espejo* as if it were a hitherto unseen novelty, making no mention of the book’s previous circulation in the Peninsula.

¹⁷ The work’s re-contextualisation within a Christian perspective was not uncommon; it can be seen in the thirteenth-century Latin translation by Juan de Capua and the *Exemplario*, both of which moralise and sermonise the fables.

unspecified, amorphous ‘East’ – with a Spanish community *here* (‘la noticia nuestra’). The cleric Benito de Ribas also begins his *censura* by outlining the fables’ journey from the East to Spain in a truncated narrative that occludes their translation into Syriac, Persian, and Arabic:

Libro que de Regiones tan remotas ha venido a las nuestras, antes de leído tiene créditos de precioso. En la China se trabajó esta obra, corrió después en la lengua Turquesa y aora por la diligencia de Vicente Bratutti Interprete de su Majestad en la lengua Turquesa, ha de correr en lengua Castellana. Sóbrale de verdad al libro para peregrino lo que ha caminado y para hazerle passo lo extrangero (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶3r)

Kinetic vocabulary related to travel and journeying – ‘correr’, ‘peregrino’, ‘caminado’ – underlines the fables’ mobility. Reference to it having been composed in ‘China’ in place of India locates the *Espejo*’s origins in a place that is physically more distant from Spain, suggesting a shifting localisation of ‘the East’, a slippery and mobile concept in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. The final sentence of the passage is syntactically convoluted and semantically multi-layered and plays on the associations of the terms ‘peregrino’ and ‘extrangero’. ‘Peregrino’, as already noted, could signify both ‘traveller’ or ‘pilgrim’ as well as ‘strangeness’ or ‘foreignness’; ‘extrangero’ also meant someone not from, foreign to, a particular place while the related term ‘extraño’ could refer both to something ‘unique’ or ‘extraordinary’ and yet also to a sense of ‘alienation’ or ‘otherness’, something that doesn’t belong (Covarrubias 2006: 869). Ribas’s description of the book therefore characterises it as a traveller who has undertaken an abundance of journeys, and who carries with it many a strangeness.

The ‘otherness’ of the fables’ origins did not escape the notice of the second volume’s censor either. Pellicer’s *aprobación* counsels readers that ‘El autor que le compuso en su lengua Turca, escribe como Gentil y como Idolatra; y con esta consideración deve leerse’ (Bratutti 1659: sig. ¶4r), for Bratutti has at times necessarily produced a literal rendering, while at others he has ‘templado sin alterar el contexto las que podían hazer alguna disonancia a los leyentes que no advirtiessen que este libro se escribió en la China entre las tinieblas de la Gentilidad’ (Bratutti 1659: sig. ¶4v-¶5r). He therefore advises readers to approach the fables as they would ‘uno de aquellos antiquísimos Escritores Griegos que enbolvieron entre sus Mitologías la doctrina y preceptos del vivir bien; o como Æsopo, que haziendo hablar a los Animales intentó enseñar a los Hombres’ (Bratutti 1659: sig. ¶5r). In referencing the sibyls and authors of

Antiquity and the *Aesopica*, which was well-known in Europe both in Latin and the vernacular, Pellicer may have sought to reassure readers of the *Espejo* that it was perfectly possible to engage with the learning provided by non-Christian authors, as long as one approached such texts with the caution to recognise potential ‘disonancia’ with Christian beliefs and worldviews.¹⁸

Ribas’s *censura* is built around a series of examples taken from historical and religious figures and events, which include the meetings between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon and between Joseph, eleventh son of Jacob and Vizir of Egypt, and his estranged brothers; Oswald, a Northumbrian king in seventh-century Britain; two Christian saints, Jerome and Clement; and passages from the Old and New Testaments including the Book of Kings, Book of Genesis, the Acts of the Apostles, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians. That Ribas refers only briefly to these and includes little detail about the person or event described suggests that the censor was writing for an audience that would have been familiar with the scriptural and historical sources from which they were taken. His examples are glossed by a series of marginal annotations, likely added by the printer to provide specific textual references that would supplement readers’ understanding. In part due to the inter-textual dialogue created by these marginal annotations, Ribas’s *censura* offers a dense and rich perspective on the book and deserves more attention. Quite a few of the examples with which he frames the *Espejo* are concerned with intercultural exchange and religious and political power; they depict monarchs who have participated in the process of *translatio studii et imperii* by appropriating knowledge from other cultures for their own political and ideological ends. His preface is most striking, however, because it reads less like a consideration of the merits and suitability of the *Espejo* for Christian readers and more like a meditation on the act of translation and the role of the translator, and it is this aspect that I will focus on in the remainder of this article.

Translation, Ribas argues, is a fundamentally necessary skill in the political world: ‘Noticia de idiomas y lenguas diferentes, habilidad de príncipes y Reyes se preciaron de intérpretes’ (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶3v). Ribas then demonstrates this using the example of the seventh-century British king Oswald, whose own linguistic skills were an important political tool: we are told that ‘quando Predicadores estrangeros predicavan a los suyos, porque doctrina de tan Apostólicos varones se lograsse, hazía él mismo oficio de Interprete’ (Bratutti 1654: sig.

¹⁸ Religion was not necessarily an obstacle to translation, as demonstrated by the reception of Spanish Catholic authors in Protestant England, which Yamamoto-Wilson has discussed (2012).

¶3v).¹⁹ Oswald's ability to translate between languages and cultures places him in a position of authority and enables direct control over the information entering his kingdom. However, the phrase 'porque doctrina de tan Apostólicos varones se lograsse' suggests another impetus for this skill: the acquisition and transmission of knowledge that his own kingdom *did not possess* from another culture. Oswald's kingdom had strong ties to Ireland and Rome, both important centres in early Christianity, and these connections facilitated the development of rich cultural and intellectual traditions in Northumbria, such as the founding of the important monastery of Lindisfarne in 635 AD. As king *and* translator, Oswald played a personal role in such intercultural exchanges that led to Northumbria becoming a powerful Anglo-Saxon domain. As Ribas later remarks, 'Es [translation] habilidad de Monarcas. Y en sus Monarquías la más precisa' (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶4r). That Ribas intended 'monarquias' here to intend both the *political* and *religious* becomes clear in the paragraph that follows, in which the censor acknowledges the necessity of interactions with other cultures that lead to the acquisition of knowledge that will be of great benefit: 'Para que sus progressos no se embaraçassen, siempre a los principios de la Iglesia sustentó en ella Intérpretes, disponiendo que si en lengua estrangera profetizava o escribía alguno por los Intérpretes lo gozassen todos' (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶4r).

In the final section of his *censura* Ribas moves from a discussion of the importance of the necessity of translation in the political and religious sphere to a specific discussion of the agents involved, including the *Espejo's* translator. In contrast to the censors of volume two, whose *aprobaciones* mention only Bratutti's previous works, his skill in translation and his fidelity to the Turkish source, Ribas makes Bratutti's *origins* the focus of his argument. To arrive at this issue, the censor begins by citing two saints whose skill as interpreters benefited the Church and its faithful: Saint Clement, who 'traduxo y comunicó a los Latinos' the Epistle to the Hebrews attributed to Saint Paul; and Saint Jerome, who alone amongst the Church's wise men 'da la Iglesia renombre de Máximo por las ventajas que a todos haze en aver sido

¹⁹ This passage is accompanied by the marginal annotation 'Chillielmus de gest.Anglor.lib.1.cap.3.', referring the reader to Book 1, chapter 3 of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, or *The Chronicles of the Kings of England*, a twelfth-century history of the kings of England by William of Malmesbury. The reference to the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* throws up intriguing questions about the circulation of English texts in early modern Spain. The story of King Oswald of Northumbria acting as a translator for St Aidan was well-known in early medieval England through Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* ('An Ecclesiastical History of the English People') (ca. 731) and other Latin and Old English saint's lives and both Bede's works and that William of Malmesbury circulated in print in seventeenth-century Europe.

Intérprete (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶4r-¶4v).²⁰ Mention of Saints Clement and Jerome reiterates the religious context of translation in early Christianity but it more importantly provides Ribas with the rhetorical means of defending the *Espejo*'s translator. He forges a direct link between Jerome and Bratutti based upon their common geographical origins, the former from Stridone in Istria, the Roman province of Dalmatia; and the latter from Ragusa (Dubrovnik), a city-state located in the Dalmatian region.²¹

Ragusa had been an important centre in East/West relations since the fourteenth century and by the seventeenth-century was a tributary of the Ottoman Empire – a ‘familiar exotic’, ‘alien in language, religion and regime but situated partly within Europe’ (Burke 2012: 141).²² As a native of a city on the very edge of Christian territories and closely linked to the Ottoman Empire, the primary military and spiritual threat faced by western European states, Bratutti may well have been ‘othered’ by his liminal position between East and West in the eyes of Spanish readers. Indeed, the title pages of both volumes places his nationality inescapably front and centre: ‘Traducido de la lengua Turca en Castellana por Vicente Bratuti, Raguseo, Interprete de la lengua Turca’. That Ribas focuses on Bratutti’s Ragusan citizenship suggests it raised questions of trust and credibility; but these may have been intensified by his profession as a *dragoman*, a position that could give rise to ‘deliberation over questions of fidelity’, argues Zrinka Stahuljak (2012: 149). Such questions were evidently very real in seventeenth-century Europe. Following concerns raised about ‘alien’ interpreters working on behalf of European states, who were often of diverse ethnicity and religious background (Greeks, Armenians, Jews or converted Arabs), concerted efforts were made to employ interpreters from ‘within’, from European states linked to the Ottoman Empire. In addition to obvious necessary language skills, the new recruits were required to have unquestionable loyalty towards their European employers (Cziráki 2016: 37-38).

Much as the work Bratutti had translated was both othered by and yet simultaneously defined as prestigious and worthwhile *because of* its eastern heritage, Ribas turns the Ragusan’s origins into a source of authority. The cleric counters any potential anxiety by juxtaposing Bratutti and Jerome, creating a line of descent between the two men as a means of justifying

²⁰ This section is accompanied by the marginal annotation ‘Cornel. ibi’, which likely refers to the *Commentaries in omnes divi Pauli epistolas* (1614) by Cornelius à Lapide, the Flemish Jesuit and scriptural commentator.

²¹ Two final marginal annotations accompany this section, both of them taken from the Mass for the feast of St Jerome. The first, ‘Beatum Hieronymum Confessorem tuum Doctore Maximum providere dignatus etc. Eccles. S. inci. Collect’, refers to the oration, and the second, ‘Stridone in Dalmatia Constantino Imperatore, natus in eius vit.’, to the opening passage that describes where Jerome was born and when (Murphy 2003: 46-53).

²² On Ragusa’s history and relation to the Ottoman Empire, see Faroqhi et al (1997: 510-513) and Harris (2006).

the former's credibility and trustworthiness:

El Autor deste libro es de su misma tierra, Ragusia se llama aora lo que entonces Dalmacia, Patria de San Gerónimo, enseñado a producir sugetos tales aquel terreno, ha destinado la Divina providencia a esta Monarquía Católica un sugeto que en lo Político y humano le copie habilidades a S. Gerónimo con evidente utilidad del Pueblo Christiano y alabança especial de nuestro Rey Católico, que un ingenio tan raro y de tan desviados Reynos le aya traído Dios a su servicio. (Bratutti 1654: sig. ¶4v)

Just as Jerome's work as an interpreter contributed to the growth and development of the early Christian church, Ribas argues that this book and its translator likewise serve the Christian people of Spain and their monarch, Philip IV, *despite* the fact that Bratutti hails from a part of the world seen from the Iberian Peninsula as remote, barbarian, and thus inferior ('tan desviados Reynos'). Such a perspective of Bratutti's remote origins both mirrors and stands in direct tension with the translator's views of Spain, expressed in similar terms of isolation, with spatial distance being used by both men as a shorthand for cultural difference that also simultaneously signifies inferiority *and* authority. By referencing the power of divine providence and by associating him with the saint, Ribas reassures readers that Bratutti was not only an intellectually gifted man but a *Christian* one. While a tribute state of the Ottoman Empire, Ragusa was known at the time for its avowed position as 'an outpost of Catholicism in a region dominated by infidel Muslims and schismatic Orthodox' whose self-definition as such 'was not just a piece of political opportunism: Catholicism also forged a vital and invigorating cultural link with Western Europe' (Harris 2006: 82).

The duality of perspective offered by the *Espejo*'s prefaces is suggestive of the broader political and cultural dynamics between East and West, Ottoman Empire and Habsburg Spain. In their emphasis on the necessity of intercultural encounters and the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom from elsewhere, Bratutti and the censors exemplify how culture is not pre-existing or formed in isolation but is instead constituted by encounters across frontiers of time, place, language, culture and ideology; they argue that a nation or a religion's success depends on their ability to build, quite literally, on the words, concepts, and knowledge of others. Yet this position stems not from a neutral desire to acquire knowledge and wisdom for its own sake, but from a recognition of the necessity such interactions play in the establishment and continuation of the balance of power both internally (to become a 'great' ruler) and externally

(within global nexus of competition and conflict). The fact that the *Espejo* is offered to Spain from *without* rather than being the result of an effort to acquire the fables from *within* is significant. By the seventeenth-century the story of *Kalila wa-Dimna*'s process of transmission had become as much a part of its identity as the fables' ethical dilemmas. Bratutti follows and picks up on this, and his own origins are interwoven with his translation, becoming one of the primary aspects that faced Inquisitorial scrutiny. Alongside the fables and their knowledge, what is being translated for audiences in seventeenth-century Spain, and in the process constituted, is the figure of the translator himself.

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