

BOOK REVIEW

Newly Recovered English Classical Translations, 1600–1800. By STUART GILLESPIE. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xii + 530 (+ x + 531–829). Hardback, \$135.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-870557-4.

The groundbreaking book under review (hereafter abbreviated [NRECT](#)) complements two related multivolume projects, the *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* ([OHLTE](#)) and the *Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature* ([OHCREL](#)). Along with the author's 2011 monograph, *English Translation and Classical Reception: Towards a New Literary History*, the present collection extends the study of Classical translation theory and practice into the Early Modern Period. Across a print volume and a digital [Annexe](#) with an additional 300 pages of text, Gillespie gathers together 319 translations (or excerpts therefrom) contained in 159 manuscripts housed in collections on both sides of the Atlantic. These translations—all poetry, no prose—are generally organized chronologically by genre and/or author. In a brief but efficient introduction, Gillespie explores the cultural milieu for these previously unprinted literary productions, outlines his criteria for which translations to include in and which to exclude from the book, and explains the rationale behind his editorial choices. This collection of newly recovered manuscript texts not only immediately alters the landscape of Classical translation studies, but also suggests that more (indeed, many more) manuscripts remain to be rediscovered.

As Gillespie himself notes in the introduction, future work on these materials will undoubtedly focus on the *why* and the *how* now that he has done so much to aid scholars in understanding the *who*, *what*, *where* and *when* of these previously fugitive pieces. Gillespie likewise observes that his work straddles the (evanescent) boundary between Classical reception and English literature. Indeed, there is ample room for more theorizing about the *why* and the *how* behind the creation of these translations, from their relationship to their originals, as well as other Greek and Latin texts, to their relationship to existing translations of Classical literature. (This complex process comes full-circle with translations of vernacular texts “back” into their Latin or, less commonly, Greek originals.) In the same vein, the

collection also includes a striking number of passages in which the translator forges a connection between ancient and modern literature. So, for example, an anonymous translator of three of Seneca the Younger's plays (*Hercules furens*, *Thyestes*, and *Oedipus*) inserts a direct quotation from *Hamlet* 1.5.40 (O my prophetic soul!) at two particularly appropriate moments, first in the *Hercules furens* (XSE01.547 [p. 744, with n. 1]) and then in the *Thyestes* (XSE02.426 [p. 758, with n. 1]). Many more such intertextual tags remain to be found.

The following notes (many with hyperlinks to additional materials) record a number of additions and corrections for texts in the print volume and the digital Annexe (cf. v–vi of the preface):

EP17.8 (39): the translator, Joshua Barnes, appears to have substituted the nearby Hyades for Orion in the original Greek; indeed, the entry for the "[Hyades](#)" in [the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica](#) likewise derives their name from the fact that they "preside over rain."

EP22.1, 11 (41, 42): for the sense of "bits" in the phrases "bits o' brutes" (l. 1) and "bits o' burds" (l. 11), see [DSL \(Dictionary of the Scots Language\) s.v. bit n.1, adj. \(quasi\), adv.1.1.\(4\)](#).

GA05 (102–103): this poem is indeed printed in [Orrery's Letters of Pliny the Younger](#).

HO10 (146–147): see D. K. Money, *The English Horace* (1998), 58 n. 10.

HO18.30 (154): perhaps *Avrio* (so italicized in the manuscript) is "Tomorrow" in Greek?

HO27 (165–166): the (alternating) rhyme appears to require that the name lurking beneath the reference to "my Lord ——" (l. 12) rhyme not with "gay" (l. 9) and "away" (l. 11) but with "is" (l. 10)—which therefore rules out William Murray, first earl of Mansfield (1705–1793).

HO41.71 (194): the translator, William Popple, renders the French musical term "[retenu](#)" with its English cognate, "retain'd," and, fittingly enough, uses the term in reference to a *French horn*.

JU02.19 (229): “Eugenean” should be “Euganean” ([the error recurs in F. Scott Fitzgerald](#)).

JU05.218 (242): perhaps a “termagant moustache” is (like an) imperial moustache?

LE16 (264): this poem is likewise printed in [Orrery’s Letters of Pliny the Younger](#).

OV03.12 (337): “Colchos” and “Colchis” are both correct for the name of the city.

OV06 (357–358): [perhaps the translator, Solomon Nash, is the younger of the two graduates from Oxford, whose death is recorded by the Oxford antiquary and biographer Anthony Wood?](#)

OV14.6 (371): “Agæan” should be “Ægæan”.

SE03 (419–421): [the translator, Robert Dobbins, is one of these graduates from Oxford.](#)

VI04.149 (459): “Paestus” and “Paestum” are both correct for the name of the city, and so the form here is likely an unmarked possessive (hence the suggestion of “Pæstan” or “Pæstum’s”).

VI06 (p. 478): [perhaps the translator, Bates, is one of these graduates from Cambridge?](#)

XGA02.85 (539): the MS note “Engonasi” = *en gonasi* (“on the knees”) = “The Kneeler”.

XJU01.348 (579): “peccadil(l)io” (for “peccadillo”) also appears in [Stapylton’s Juvenal](#).

XJU02.19 (610): as in the print volume, “Eugenean” should be “Euganean”.

XOV12.6 (678): as in the print volume, “Agæan” should be “Ægæan”.

XOV14.311, 343 (726): “Æmyclæ” should be “Amyclæ”; “Æroceraunia,” “Acroceraunia.”

XSE01.407 (741): “leave” here does not mean “lave, wash” (suggested in the marginal note), since Tantalus does not drink the water (see XSE02.76–79 [749] and 157–176 [751]).

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