

# Preface

In 2011, after my retirement from the University of Toronto Library and the publication of my second bibliography, *Italian Literature before 1900 in English Translation*, I decided to revise and update the earlier *Twentieth-Century Italian Literature in English Translation*, which had been published in 1998. The original edition had been somewhat ungainly, including as it did a 51-page appendix of entries identified only after I had gained access to the OCLC bibliographic database—the first of the by now many circumstances in which the researcher’s methodology was overtaken by advances in information technology.

The plan was simple: to integrate the appendix entries into the main sequence arranged by year of publication, to add the titles and editions from 1929 to 1997 not included in the original edition, and to add entries for the years between 1998 and the (as then undecided) completion date. The new edition could then be uploaded into TSpace, the University of Toronto Library’s research repository, and would thus be made available to interested readers everywhere.

The original edition had been quite well received, and was also successful as an e-book when the University of Toronto Press made it available in that form. All that would be necessary then would be to obtain permission from the Press as original publisher and copyright holder to re-launch the much-revised and extended edition under the aegis of the University of Toronto Library.

Editors at the Press, however, when I approached them, suggested that it might instead be possible for the Press itself to publish the updated edition. An acquisitions editor in the area of humanities looked at samples from my work in progress and the decision was made to publish the new edition.

This course of action had seemed unlikely to me at the time, given the enormous changes in pub-

lishing, including scholarly publishing, that had taken place over the previous twenty years. For example, e-book sales as a percentage of total book sales worldwide was 12.3% in 2013, rising to an anticipated 25.8% in 2018 (for Europe in 2017 the figure was over 20%). In 2014 *Forbes Magazine* reported that e-books made up around 30% of all book sales, and that Amazon, with its Kindle titles, had a 65% share of that category. Internet users in the developed world, the International Telecommunications Union noted, rose from 51% of the population in 2005 to 81% in 2016 (the prevalent language was English, followed by Chinese).

With regard to academic libraries, when Elsevier—admittedly not a neutral observer—asked subscribers to its ScienceDirect Books why they were shifting to an electronic library, 72% responded that e-books met user needs, 58% that they allowed multiple user access to content, and 42% that they wanted to have a print and a digital library. The pressures mentioned included the need to reduce or eliminate library space (60%), and the library budget (48%).

With respect specifically to translations, in 2014 Hephzibah Anderson for the BBC Culture web page noted:

Some call it the two per cent problem, others the three per cent problem. It depends on which set of statistics you use and, and, as with most statistics, there’s ample room to quibble. But what they all point to is this: English-language publishers have a lamentable record when it comes to translating great stories from elsewhere in the world.

Comparable figures for France show that 27% of books published are in translation, while a 2015 study by *Literature across Frontiers* states that translated fiction accounts for 19.7% of the Italian market. Figures given in *Lingue e linguaggi*, vol. 14, 2015 for literary translation between Italian and English show that the most-translated genres are

literature for children (32.2%) and generic fiction (30.1%), with thrillers at 9.3%, fantasy at 6.4%, detective fiction at 5.9%, and on down to poetry (2.2%), plays (1.2%), and essays (1.1%). The corresponding figures for translations from Italian to English show generic fiction as the leader with 29.6%, followed by classics (22.7%), detective fiction (11.6%), historical novels (9.8%), literature for children (7.2%), poetry (4.7%), plays (3.4%), literary studies (3.4%), and essays (2.5%). But as Anderson comments:

With so many countries in which English is either the first language or a robust second, all of them boasting highly evolved literary cultures, publishers in London and New York are already spoilt for choice. Why would they go looking to territories that present the bothersome burden of translation?

In recent years, of course, not all translations are published in paper form. Amazon, for example, has since 2010 had a translation imprint of its own, AmazonCrossing. Its list includes at least one Italian writer, Riccardo Bruni (not otherwise noted in this bibliography), with two thrillers translated and available in Kindle editions, and listed, at least, as available as print-on-demand paperbacks. Any future bibliographies of this kind will of necessity have to take note of e-book-only titles, and other forms of electronic publication.

When the first edition of this bibliography was published I was happy to be able to note the award of the 1997 Nobel Prize for literature to Dario Fo. Now, twenty years later, I have the sadder task of recording Fo's death, on October 13, 2016. He was, again sadly, predeceased by his writing, performing, and life partner Franca Rame, on May 29, 2013. Since 1998, many of the noted Italian writers included in this bibliography have died, among them Giorgio Bassani (1916-2000) and Umberto Eco (1932-2016), Antonio Tabucchi (1943-2012) and Andrea Zanzotto (1921-2011), while others, like Andrea Camilleri, continue on into their nineties. Many translators, too, have left us, from

Patrick Creagh (1930-2012) to William Weaver (1923-2013), and teachers, friends, and colleagues in Toronto, Richard Landon (1942-2011), Frances Halpenny (1919-2017), and my mentor, and mentor of many scholars and editors, the distinguished founder and editor of the Collected Works of Erasmus project for the University of Toronto Press, Ron Schoeffel (1936-2013).

It is with sincere gratitude that I acknowledge the encouragement and practical help of my colleagues at the University of Toronto Press. Anne Laughlin, now retired as Managing Director, was, with Ron Schoeffel, instrumental in guiding me towards the publication of the original edition of this bibliography and of the second volume, covering works before 1900. It was Anne who advised me to show samples from the new edition to Acquisitions Editor Mark Thompson, and Mark who decided that a new edition would be worthwhile. As the book came closer to completion, it was Ani Deyirmenjjan, as Production Manager for Scholarly Publishing, who had guided me through the production process for that second volume in 2011, who now looked at my first less than perfect PDFs and advised me how to make them acceptable to the Press, or, as was once said, print-ready. Managing Editor Lisa Jemison and Associate Managing Editor Robin Studniberg kept us all in contact and oversaw the results.

I would not have been able to bring this work to completion without the love and support of my family: my wife Toni, and our daughters Elspeth, in Lawrence, Kansas, and Emma, in Montreal and Toronto. All of us are involved, through our various responsibilities, in the study of language and the dissemination of reliable information. Their skills and advice have thus made this work possible.

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