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London Calling: John Harington's Exegetical Domestication of Ariosto in Late Sixteenth-Century England

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Abstract

Sir John Harington's 1591 translation of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* has been much maligned for its free translation, digressive notes, and the translator's obtrusive presence. This essay addresses the question of Harington's accommodation of his audience using Paul Ricoeur's notion of 'linguistic hospitality' to consider how Harington invites English readers to engage with the Italian poem. Harington's exegetical notes and paratextual aids serve as a privileged site or 'third text' between the source and target texts to adapt Ariosto for English readers. The translator's anglicising strategies are grounded in contemporary Elizabethan reading practices, while also emulating the exegetical apparati that accompanied the Italian reception of Ariosto's poem. Domestication strategies Harington employs include the anticipation of his audience's cultural biases, an emphasis on historical events of interest to English readers, along with the inclusion of personal details that create cultural bridges between the reader, the translator, and the Italian author.

Keywords: *John Harington*; Ludovico Ariosto; Orlando furioso; Translation; Readership; Elizabethan

7294 words

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THE TRANSLATOR'S OVER-VISIBILITY

A contemporary translator of literary fiction who would dare to cut 6,700 lines of text and to insert references to his mother, grandparents, and pet dog in the translation of a foreign-language classic would almost certainly receive angry, blood-red editorial comments, and—if the published work were ever to see the light of day—critical reviews scathing in their cruelty. John Harington's 1591 translation of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, however, features just such personal references, arrogating for itself a permissive 'translatorial licence' whose frequent intrusions, distortions, and commentary on the original text would shock even the most liberal of translators working today.¹ Such differences, as we will see, ought not to be condemned, but rather, serve to reveal Harington's multiple strategies for adapting a famous Italian narrative poem for an English audience. Harington (1560-1612) was an English courtier and Queen Elizabeth's godson. In addition to translating Ariosto, he also invented the flush toilet, and published a treatise on water closets, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596). A longstanding rumour has it that Harington's translation of the *Furioso* was done at the queen's behest; he first translated the bawdy story of Astolfo, Giocondo, and Fiametta from canto 28 of Ariosto's poem and read it aloud to an audience of ladies at court. Elizabeth heard such laughter, wandered in, and surprised the group. Objecting to several aspects of the tale, along with Harington's shocking—or perhaps titillating—her ladies in waiting, the Queen banished him from court until he had translated the remainder of the poem.²

¹ All quotations and page numbers from Harington refer to the following edition: *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'. Translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington*, edited by Robert McNulty (Oxford, 1972). All quotations from Ariosto refer to Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, edited by Marcello Turchi and Edoardo Sanguineti, 2 vols (Milan, 2005).

² Jane E. Everson, 'Translating the Pope and the Apennines: Harington's Version of the "Orlando Furioso"', *The Modern Language Review*, 100 (2005), 645–58, doi: 10.2307/3739118 (658). See also Graham Hough, 'Introduction', in *Sir John Harington's Translation of 'Orlando furioso' by Lodovico Ariosto*, ed. and intro. by Graham Hough (Wakefield: Centaur Press, 1962), i-xi (x); and Robert McNulty, 'Introduction', in Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, ix-liv (xxv). The rumour is difficult to substantiate as it somewhat resembles an urban legend. It first appears in 1804 in a new edition of *Nugae Antiquae*, a miscellany of documents from the Harington archive originally selected and brought to publication by Henry Harington in 1775, and re-edited in this new edition by Thomas Park. The 1804 edition contains a prefatory biography of Sir John Harington, where the above story is related in a footnote (xn.2). Park claims that the story was related to him by Mr. Walker, who heard it from the Earl of Charlemont. Joseph Cooper Walker (1762-1810) and James

Harington's translation, as alluded to above, is quite free; out of 4842 stanzas in Ariosto, his *Furioso* only includes 4096. He frequently omits and abbreviates certain 'things impertinent to us' and 'tedious flatteries of persons that we never heard of,' often references to Italian nobles.³ He also adds a number of paratextual aids to help his reader navigate the text. Curiously, all of these paratexts are authored by Harington, rather than by the printer or editor. These aids include a preface which serves as a defense of poetry, of the author, and of the translator; an advertisement to the reader, a short life of Ariosto, a 'briefe and summarie allegorie of *Orlando Furioso*', a table featuring names of all the persons, objects, and places in the poem; along with a list of short tales that might be read by themselves. Within each canto or 'book', Harington includes a brassplate illustration with a matching introductory 'argument,' and marginal glosses. At the end of each canto, he includes an exegetical apparatus criticus divided into four sections: the 'morall', the 'historie', the 'allegorie' and the 'allusion'. While the first two categories contain moralizations of events in Ariosto, and elucidations of any historical references, the 'allegorie' permit Harington to explain away fantastical events and beasts in the text as allegorical signifiers, while the allusion serves as a catch-all category which occasionally makes reference to classical topoi or applies aspects of a particular canto to historical or present events.⁴ In his advertisement to the reader, Harington explains such additions with reference to the Horatian trope of *dulce et utile*: 'because the reader may take not onely delight but profit in reading.'⁵ Harington's inclusion of such aids imitated Italian editions of Ariosto; these included a number of paratextual materials, illustrations, and exegetical apparati which, as Daniel Javitch has demonstrated, served to cement the work's status as a modern classic, while also defending the poem from accusations of lewdness.⁶

Caulfield, first Earl of Charlemont (1728-1799), were both Irish men of letters who travelled extensively in Italy, the latter composing a three-volume history of Italian poetry from Dante to Metastasio. Where Caulfield learned the story, or indeed whether he had any involvement with it at all remains to be explored by scholarship. Park remarks in his footnote on the bizarre nature of Harington's penance, which 'was increasing the nature of the offence...like making a man commit burglary to screen himself from the penalties of petty larceny' (x).

³ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, A PREFACE, 1-15 (15).

⁴ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER, 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (Princeton, 1993), 134-138. As Javitch shows, many of Harington's allegories come from Simone Fornari's *Spositione sopra l'Orlando Furioso* (1549-50), while his claims for the poem's moral utility and superiority to Virgil on Christian grounds echoes those

In this essay, I will argue that Harington's exegetical notes are a privileged site for adaptation of Ariosto's text to an Elizabethan reading public. Such additions demonstrate Harington's desire to claim a didactic role for Ariosto's poem, yet they also highlight a careful attention to his English-speaking audience. The prefatory advertisement demonstrates how Harington thought his readers might approach the poem. Regarding the table and the list of self-contained tales that may be read by themselves, Harington warns the reader that these aids should not be used upon a first reading, but only to help the reader's memory when reading the poem a second time.⁷ Harington's attention to accommodating his readership has been discussed by scholars. Simon Cauchi has shown how Harington worked carefully with the publisher, Richard Field, on the book's design. Citing evidence from Harington's own 'grumbles about the lack of space available to him' and his instructions to the printer, Cauchi argues that Harington's end-of-canto annotations were an 'ingenious solution to a practical difficulty,' which permitted him to fill up space on a page so that the text might end neatly at the bottom of a recto. The brassplate illustration would then appear on the verso, facing the beginning of the canto which it illustrated, though this ideal wasn't always possible.⁸ Moreover, in adapting Ariosto's text to an English audience, Harington insisted that the paratextual materials be published in pica roman, consciously imitating Field's 1589 edition of Samuel Puttenham's *The Arte of Englishe Poesie*.⁹

Harington's attention to his reading public is also evident throughout his translation of the text. As Javitch has shown, Harington's translation alters two crucial aspects of Ariosto's text; he systematically minimises Ariosto's frustratingly sudden narrative shifts between plot lines, displacing them whenever possible from the middle of Ariosto's octaves to the beginning of a new stanza, and he omits many of Ariosto's narratorial intrusions and asides, effectively removing 'all the signals the narrator provides of the poem's fictional autonomy'.¹⁰ Such changes reveal Harington's 'desire to lessen the

made by Valvassori in the preface to his 1553 edition (135). Townsend Rich notes that Harington seems to have used for his source text a copy of the 1584 *Furioso* published by F. Franceschi, importing the plates from that edition by Girolamo Porro and using Gioseffo Bononome's *Allegoria sopra il Furioso* to inform his 'Briefe and Summarie allegorie of the poem. Townsend Rich, *Harington and Ariosto: A Study in Elizabethan Verse Translation* (New Haven, 1940), 50-69.

⁷ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, AN ADVERTISEMENT, 16.

⁸ Simon Cauchi, 'The "Setting Foorth" of Harington's Ariosto', *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, 36 (1983), 137-68 (159-160).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 142. Cauchi also notes that Field reused the same ornaments and initials from his edition of Puttenham in Harington's Ariosto.

¹⁰ Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic*, 148-55.

distance between the world of the Elizabethan reader and the fictive universe of the *Furioso*, in other words, to alter Ariosto's text when translating it into English in order to render it as the didactic work Harington claimed it to be.¹¹ Thus, the paratextual explanations and allegories were not simply afterthoughts, merely intended to fill up space on the page or imitate Italian editions; they reveal, rather, Harington's conception of his reader's itinerary, serving as important a role in domesticating Ariosto as the translation itself. For T.G.A. Nelson, Harington's allegories were included to appeal to the 'serious-minded English reader' who was familiar with the heavy allegorisation present in texts such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, the first edition of which was published only one year before Harington's *Furioso*.¹²

Scholarship on Elizabethan translations of early modern Italian narrative poetry has tended to emphasise Harington's infidelity to Ariosto: his departures from the text, his omission of octaves, along with the many changes he makes to the rhythm of Ariosto's stanzas.¹³ Harington is often compared to his contemporary, Edward Fairfax, who produced an English translation of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* in 1600. Fairfax is seen to be 'as self-effacing as his contemporary Harington is entertainingly obtrusive.'¹⁴ Such categories, however, belie what Lawrence Venuti has famously referred to as the translator's invisibility: 'a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture.'¹⁵ While the field of translation studies has grown significantly in the intervening twenty years since Venuti's book was first published, such concepts still shape certain scholarly approaches to Harington's rendition of Ariosto. Selene Scarsi, for example, accuses Harington of mistranslation, distortion, and misunderstanding 'the spirit of the original to an

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹² T.G.A. Nelson, 'Sir John Harington and the Renaissance Debate over Allegory', *Studies in Philology*, 82 (1985), 359-379. While Nelson has argued that Harington's allegories were added out of fear 'that the poem would not pass muster among his own friends and contemporaries', and that he was somewhat dubious as to their value (378), Javitch has underlined how such a statement is problematic, since Harington realized that the value of his translation 'depended quite directly on the moral and educational benefits that the poem was shown to possess' (193n11).

¹³ For the original articulation of this position, see F.O. Matthiessen, *Translation: An Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1931). More recently, see D.H. Craig, *Sir John Harington*, (Boston, 1985).

¹⁴ Kathleen M. Lea and T.M. Gang, 'General Introduction', in *Godfrey of Bulloigne: A Critical Edition of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata*, edited by Kathleen M. Lea and T.M. Gang (Oxford, 1981), 3-64 (19).

¹⁵ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (New York, 1995), 7.

extreme extent.’¹⁶ Other recent work, however, has approached Harington from a more generous perspective. Massimiliano Morini has grounded Harington’s translation practice within overlapping ideas of translation theory and practice in sixteenth-century England which, he argues, was ‘between two worlds’; on the one hand, the humanist emphasis on rhetorical translation that faithfully reproduced the original—as exemplified in Leonardo Bruni’s 1426 *De interpretatione recta*—was beginning to gain ground, while on the other, many earlier ‘medieval’ habits of translation as commentary and exegesis continued to exist.¹⁷ Harington’s intrusions, Morini argues, show ‘the resilience of old habits’, and rather than being seen as careless or obtrusive, ought to be read as a type of ‘domestication.’¹⁸ While Morini notes Harington’s ‘systematic’ interferences with Ariosto’s references to both himself and his patrons, along with the substitution of such details with anecdotes from the translator’s own life, he does not dwell on Harington’s method of adapting the text for his English courtly readers.¹⁹ Some work in this vein has also been done by Jane Everson, who considers how Harington adapted his translation to an English audience by carefully altering geographical and religious references in Ariosto’s text to make them appeal to the cultural and religious climate of Elizabethan England.²⁰

TRANSLATION AS LINGUISTIC HOSPITALITY AND ELIZABETHAN READERS

Such recent approaches to Harington’s translation, however, only examine the text of the poem itself, rarely, if at all, engaging with Harington’s *apparatus criticus* and the adaptive strategies he employs therein.²¹ Recent

¹⁶ Selene Scarsi, *Translating Women in Early Modern England: Gender in the Elizabethan Versions of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso* (Burlington, VT, 2010), 184.

¹⁷ Massimiliano Morini, *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice* (Burlington, VT, 2006), 9-12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹ Massimiliano Morini, ‘Sir John Harington and the Poetics of Tudor Translation’, in *Travels and Translations in the Sixteenth Century: Selected Papers from the Second International Conference of the Tudor Symposium (2000)*, edited by Michael Pincombe (Burlington, VT, 2004), pp. 120–36.

²⁰ Everson, ‘Translating the Pope and the Apennines’. On Harington’s religious identity as one which retained elements of Catholic tradition while identifying with reformist positions see Debora Shuger, ‘A Protesting Catholic Puritan in Elizabethan England’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 587–630, doi:10.1086/598212.

²¹ Morini is a notable exception; he mentions how Harington’s inclusion of personal anecdotes and details from his life are included in the notes or comments to the cantos, but only mentions these in passing, ‘Sir John Harington and the Poetics of Tudor Translation’, 125-126.

reflections on translation theory, however, may allow us to approach Harington's paratexts from a new perspective. In 'Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness', the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur considers translation in relation to both Walter Benjamin's 'task' of the translator and Sigmund Freud's uses of the term 'work'. In one sense, Ricoeur writes, translation is similar to the 'work of memory' which aims to salvage experience, shape memory according to one's mental state, and project this image onto one's understanding of the past.²² Translation is also akin to Freud's 'work of mourning': coming to terms with the loss of a loved person or abstraction when reality shows it to no longer exist. The dual labours of memory and mourning, for Ricoeur, thus become the starting point for thinking about translation. The translator first begins by recalling personal experience of the text, salvaging and compiling the myriad linguistic and semantic features she deems to be essential characteristics, and slowly brings these into the target language while mourning the inevitable loss of the original text and any hope of a perfect translation. This emphasis on labour, as Richard Kearney underlines, highlights the 'common experience of tension and suffering which the translator undergoes as he checks the impulse to reduce the otherness of the other'.²³

Importantly, translation, for Ricoeur, implies a non-existent 'third text', a semantic original which mediates between the target and the source, permitting the translator to claim that the same thing is being said in two different ways.²⁴ According to such a model, translation can only result in an ultimately inadequate correspondence; the translator's source of happiness comes from the completion of mourning the loss of the source text. Such loss is compensated by the notion of 'linguistic hospitality', which Ricoeur defines as 'the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language ... balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home'.²⁵ In other words, 'the work of translation might thus be said to carry a double duty: to expropriate oneself as one appropriates the other'.²⁶

Using Ricoeur's model of linguistic hospitality, we will now see how Harington's commentary serves as a natural site for such domestication as it constitutes what Ricoeur terms a 'third text' or semantic original that mediates between the source and target texts. As we will see, through his paratextual commentaries Harington quite literally welcomes the foreign text into his home; his notes serve to bring Ariosto into the linguistic and cultural fabric of

²² Paul Ricoeur, 'Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness', in *On Translation*, translated by Eileen Brennan (New York, 2004), 3-10.

²³ Richard Kearney, 'Introduction', in Ricoeur, *On Translation*, vii-xx (xv).

²⁴ Ricoeur, 'Translation as Challenge', in *On Translation*, 7.

²⁵ Ricoeur, 'Translation as Challenge', in *On Translation*, 10.

²⁶ Kearney, 'Introduction', in Ricoeur, *On Translation*, xvi.

Elizabethan England through allusions that would be of special interest to English readers, and with comments that establish links between the poem and Harington's own life. Rather than dismissing these personal references as the work of an 'obtrusive' translator, I will consider them in terms of textual domestication, as an 'expropriation of self' that occurs while welcoming the foreign other.

In order to appreciate how Harington's notes served to adapt the text to an English reading public, we might begin by asking how he conceived of his readership. The responses Harington expects from his Elizabethan courtly readers are discussed both in his preface and advertisement to the work. In the preface, he writes:

But now it may be and is by some objected that although [Ariosto] write Christianly in some places, yet in other some he is too lascivious, as in that of the bawdy Friar, in Alcinas and Rogeros copulation, in Anselmus his Giptian, in Richardetto his metamorphosis, in mine hosts tale of Astolfo, and some few places beside; alas, if this be a fault, pardon him this one fault, though I doubt too many of you (gentle readers) will be to exorable in this point, yea me thinks I see some of your searching already for these places of the booke and you are halfe offended that I have not made some directions that you might finde out and read them immediatly. But I beseech you stay a while and as the Italian saith *Pian piano*, fayre and softly, and take this caveat with you, to read them as my author ment them, to breed detestation and not delectation²⁷

This passage demonstrates Harington's awareness that readers may still object to some of the poem's more 'lascivious' episodes. It also shows the tension inherent in his presentation of Ariosto's poem as a serious didactic text. He is aware that not all readers will approach it in this way: some will seek to condemn all lewd passages in the text, while others, still, will explicitly seek them out. Such comments exemplify a kind of tongue-in-cheek Ariostesque irony, which may have served to adapt the Italian author's playfulness for an English audience. Harington, furthermore, seems to recall the last book of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* by cunningly shifting the responsibility for such prurience to the reader.²⁸ In the advertisement, Harington affirms Ariosto's poem 'to be neither vicious nor profane but apt to breede the quite contrarie

²⁷ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, A PREFACE, 11.

²⁸ 'To the corrupt mind nothing is pure: and just as the corrupt derive no profit from virtuous conversation, so the virtuous cannot be corrupted by a touch of wantonness, any more than the sun's rays or the beauties of heaven may be contaminated by mud or earthly squalor.' Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, translated by Guido Waldman (Oxford, 2008), 683-84.

effects *if a great fault be not in the readers owne bad disposition.*²⁹ A similar sentiment is also present in his gloss to Ruggiero's dalliances with Alcina. In canto seven, he includes a marginal note explaining: 'This lascivious description of carnall pleasure needs not offend the chast eares or thoughts of any, but rather shame the unchast that have themselves bene at such kinde of bankets.'³⁰

Harington's anticipation of how his readers might read or misread the text echoes ideas of his contemporaries. Responding to the accusation that poets teach lustful love in his 1583 *Defense of Poesy*, Sir Philip Sidney writes:

Grant, I say, what they will have granted, that not only love, but lust, but vanity, but, if they list, scurrility, possess many leaves of the poet's books; yet think I, when this is granted they will find their sentence may with good manners put the last words foremost, and not say that poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry [...] But what, shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious? Nay truly, though I yield that poesy may not only be abused, but that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force it can do more hurt than any other army of words.³¹

Sidney responds to accusations made against poetry and, much like Harington, shifts the responsibility for immorality onto abusive readers. Anxieties about potential misreadings were also expressed by Spenser in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh which served as a preface to the 1590 *Faerie Queene*. Here, Spenser describes his intentions for the work as a 'continued allegory, or darke conceit' about Arthur before he became king:³²

The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample [...] To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus cloudily enwrapped in Allegorical devises.³³

²⁹ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, AN ADVERTISEMENT, 16, emphasis mine.

³⁰ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 7.27.

³¹ Sir Philip Sidney, 'The Defense of Poesy (1583)', in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, edited by Allan H. Gilbert (Detroit, 1967), 404-61 (440-41).

³² The ambitious poem was meant to have 24 books, the first twelve portraying the perfection of the twelve private moral virtues in different knights, with the latter twelve centred on Arthur and his embodiment of the twelve public virtues.

³³ Edmund Spenser, 'Letter to Raleigh', in *The Faerie Qveene*, edited by A.C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki (Harlow, 2007), 714-18 (714-15).

Like Sidney and Harington, Spenser is conscious that many readers will enjoy his poem for its ‘historicall fictions’ and the variety of its material rather than appreciating its intended didactic aims.

Such acknowledgements and anxieties about multiple readings fit well with the findings of recent scholars who have reconstructed Elizabethan reading practices. As Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have shown, readers in early modern England demonstrated an ‘active’ and pragmatic approach to scholarly reading, while William Sherman has argued that John Dee’s reading habits often included ‘an active and biased appropriation of the author’s material,’ as the reader intervened in the text.³⁴ Peter Mack’s research on Elizabethan commonplace books has supported such findings, showing how early modern readers often noted ‘moral sentences, arguments, comparisons and political axioms’ along with the overall structure of a text for reuse in letters.³⁵

Eugene Kintgen has demonstrated that Elizabethans often approached their texts with a particular interpretive method that was also utilitarian and informed by church services and classroom practice.³⁶ Kintgen notes how Harington’s presentation of Ariosto’s text ‘reflects what he would have learned about a famous author at school,’ including marginal annotations of ‘similes, sentences, and proverbs’ —perhaps for those looking to compile a commonplace book—an appreciation of the text, details about the life of the author, and the relevant historical background for each canto.³⁷ Such details, we should note, reflect Harington’s understanding of what his readers might have expected, and serve to further anglicize Ariosto’s text by presenting it within a familiar pedagogical framework. While Kintgen claims that Harington demonstrates the Tudor characteristic of reading allegorically, through his consideration of the ‘historical, moral, and allegorical senses of the material,’ he does not discuss Harington’s ‘allusions’ in terms of reading practices,

³⁴ Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, ‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy’, *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 30-78; William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, MA, 1995), 65. See also Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, ‘Pragmatic readers: knowledge transactions and scholarly services in late Elizabethan England’, in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*, edited by Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), 102-124.

³⁵ Peter Mack, ‘Everyday writing: notebooks, letters, narratives’, in *Elizabethan Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2002), 103-34 (103-04). For a wider study of early modern European commonplace books, along with their relation to reading habits see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996).

³⁶ Eugene R. Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh, 1996).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

dismissing these as simply ‘intertextual.’³⁸ Gerard Kilroy, however, has argued that Harington’s notes and paratextual aids engage ‘the reader in an imagined participation’ and ‘consciously imitate the act of author and reader discussing the shared text.’³⁹

As we will see below, Harington’s ‘allusions’ seem to form part of his strategic adaptation of Ariosto’s text for an English reading public. Such adaptation begins in Harington’s preface to the work. As Javitch has noted, Harington here echoes the practice of Italian commentators who sought to legitimise Ariosto’s poem by comparing the the opening and closing lines of the *Furioso* to Virgil’s *Aeneid*.⁴⁰ While he invokes Virgil as part of a shared classical heritage in order to legitimise Ariosto’s poem, Harington also invokes the authority of an English poet in a nuanced anticipation of his readers’ cultural bias:

I can smile at the finesse of some that will condemne [Ariosto] and yet not onley allow but admire our Chawcer who both in words and sence incurreth far more the reprehension of flat scurrilitie, as I could recite many places, not only in his Millers tale, but in the good wife of Bathes tale and many more, in which onely the decorum he keeps is that that excuseth it and maketh it more tolerable.⁴¹

On the one hand, this comment evinces a cultural preference among Harington’s critics for English poetic indiscretions rather than Italian ones. The other side of this coin is that potential bawdiness in Ariosto may be legitimised with reference to ‘our Chawcer,’ an author who held significant cultural capital in early modern England. As Theresa Krier notes, the sense of Chaucer’s importance for English letters and national identity in this period led to a variety of tropes of gratitude toward the medieval writer as a revered ‘father of England’s youngest poetry’.⁴² Legitimising an Italian Romance epic through reference to Chaucer was also a strategy used by Fairfax in his translation of

³⁸ Ibid., 96.

³⁹ Gerard Kilroy, ‘Advertising the Reader: Sir John Harington’s “Directions in the Margent”’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 41 (2011), 64–110, doi:10.1111/j.1475-6757.2010.01080.x (68-9).

⁴⁰ Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic*, 135.

⁴¹ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto’s ‘Orlando furioso’*, A PREFACE, 11.

⁴² Such tropes also included ‘Chaucer as master and teacher, Chaucer’s refinement and garnishing of the vernacular, Chaucer’s bounty and abundance... Chaucer as the most hospitable host and also the glad receiver of English poets’ later hospitality.’ Theresa M. Krier, ‘Receiving Chaucer in Renaissance England’, in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*, edited by Theresa M. Krier (Gainesville, 1998), 1-20 (2). For a comprehensive overview of Chaucer’s reception in early modern England see Alice Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven, 1975).

Tasso's *Gerusalemme*.⁴³ Already in the work's preface and its advertisement, Harington displays a keen sensitivity to how his readers might receive his translation of Ariosto. He anticipates his readers' accusations of lewdness in the poem and shrewdly curtails them by displacing the moral responsibility for such controversial episodes onto the critics themselves. His legitimisation of the poem with reference to Chaucer, moreover, serves to subtly present his translation as an English poem heir to Chaucer's legacy.

HARINGTON'S BED & BREAKFAST: ACCOMMODATING FOREIGN GUESTS

Moving now to Harington's textual notes, these demonstrate two key strategies in his domestication of Ariosto's poem: the development of historical or cultural themes of special interest to English readers, and the inclusion of personal details as a model approach to reading the poem. In his notes, Harington frequently dwells on themes of special interest for English readers. For example, in the third canto, when Ariosto describes Merlin's cave, Harington adds a marginal note which reads: 'description of Merlines tombe out of the book of king Arthur, but this is poetically licens to faine it to be in France, for it is in Wales'.⁴⁴ The 'historie' at the end of the canto contains a sustained explanation concerning Merlin. Harington asserts his 'certaine belief' that such a man existed as advisor to Arthur, but distances himself from the controversy over whether he is buried in Cornwall or Wales, whether he built Stonehenge using magic, and whether he was trapped in his own magical tomb by the lady of the lake.⁴⁵ Similarly, the 'historie' of canto four—where Arthur is only mentioned in a passing reference in stanza 40—includes a sustained explanation of Arthur and Guinevere, their purported burial at Glastonbury, and Harington's own inquiries into Arthuriana.⁴⁶

Another example of Harington's historical and cultural domestication occurs in cantos nine and eleven with reference to gunpowder. In canto nine, Olimpia mentions the horrors of gunpowder used in the war between Friseland and Holland. This prompts Harington to write the following note in the 'allusion' at the end of the canto:

In the monstrous effectes of gunne powder he alludes perhap to that huge damage done at Venice when their Arsenal or storehouse was blowne up, as a like mishap, though

⁴³ Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford, 1993), 146-147; Charles G. Bell, 'Fairfax's Tasso', *Comparative Literature*, 6 (1954), 26-52 doi: 10.2307/1768848 (50).

⁴⁴ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 3.11.

⁴⁵ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 47.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

not so terrible, happened in the Tower, my grandfather Sir John Markham being Lieutenant of the Tower.⁴⁷

Harington's reference to the explosion at the Venetian arsenal comes from Alberto Lavezola's *Osservazioni sopra il Fvrioso*, an explanatory paratext that was part of the 1584 Franceschi edition of the poem.⁴⁸ Lavezola's mention of the explosion is included as a gloss on 9.78. After being knocked off his horse by Cimosco's musket, Orlando rises up with greater fury, as a storehouse of gunpowder explodes and catches fire when struck by lightning.⁴⁹ In Ariosto, the metaphor deftly transfers the thematics of gunpowder to Orlando and amplifies its explosive properties. In Harington, however, the metaphor is absent; stanza 78 in Ariosto is summarized by the last two lines in Harington's stanza 71: 'So though Orlando with his fall was troubled/ His force and furie seemed to be doubled'.⁵⁰ Some critics might here point to Harington's carelessness in including an allusion to a metaphor he omits, or his tin ear for the beauty of Ariosto's text. We might add to their chorus, noting the impossibility of Harington's claim that Ariosto 'alludes perhap' to the explosion Lavezola describes, which occurred in 1569, 36 years after Ariosto's death.

Such inaccuracies aside, however, Harington's method here serves as an example of his strategy to anglicize the text. In the *Osservazioni*, Lavezola writes: 'Mi riduce alla memoria questa bellissima comparatione quel caso, che avvenne in Venetia l'anno 1569, quando s'appiccò il fuoco nell'arsenale.'⁵¹ Lavezola describes the horrible effects of the Venetian fire—pieces of marble falling as far as Murano, thick walls of churches felled by debris, and the scars which the explosion left on nearly all buildings in Venice. He also mentions a second explosion caused by lightning striking a store of gunpowder on the Apulian island of Lisena in 1579. Such reflections do not serve to discern a hidden meaning in Ariosto's extended metaphor, but rather to remind the reader of memorable explosions in recent memory. Thus, a careful reader would recall the events described by Lavezola, applying such personal recollections to Ariosto's extended metaphor, further appreciating Orlando's invincibility,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 110.

⁴⁸ *Osservazioni del sig. Alberto Lavezola sopra il Fvrioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto*, in *Orlando Fvrioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto, nuovamente adornato di figure di rame da Girolamo Porro* (Venice, 1584). Concerning this explosion and the role of gunpowder in early modern Venice, see Walter Panciera, 'Venetian Gunpowder in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Production, Storage, Use', in *Gunpowder, Explosives and the State: A Technological History*, edited by Brenda J. Buchanan (Aldershot, 2006), 93-122 (109).

⁴⁹ Lavezola, *Osservazioni*, 9r.

⁵⁰ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 9.71.

⁵¹ Lavezola, *Osservazioni*, 9r.

strength, and power in fighting against Cimosco. In other words, before Harington brings this detail over into English, there are already multiple levels of domestication occurring in Lavezola's exegetical commentary. Harington's substitution of the second explosion Lavezola mentions for a 'like mishap' that occurred in the Tower at the time when his grandfather served as lieutenant (1549-1551) seems to aim toward similar rhetorical goals, hoping to conjure his English reader's local memories of a similar event. Indeed, two cantos later, Harington develops the theme of gunpowder again, adding in the 'historie' that it might have been invented by 'Baken, the great English necromancer' who did not circulate his findings 'for feare it would be a meane to destroy all mankind.'⁵² The omission of Ariosto's extended metaphor in Harington's text is perhaps an oversight, yet it is significant insofar as it demonstrates Harington's priority in using exegetical notes to adapt the text for an English reader, much like Ariosto's Italian commentators used their own paratexts to domesticate the poem for Italian readers.⁵³

Harington's notes also include several references to his personal life and circle of acquaintances. These, I will argue in the remainder of this essay, ought not to simply be read as the work of an obtrusive translator or commentator, but rather as another strategy in bringing the text over to English readers. Harington anticipates criticism over the inclusion of such personal details, and defends the allusions to his friends and kin with the authority of Plutarch:

And wheras I make mention here and there of some of mine owne frends and kin, I did it the rather because Plutarke in one place speaking of Homer, partly lamenteth and partly blameth him that writing so much as he did, yet in none of his works there was any mention made or so much as inkling to be gathered of what stocke he was, of what kindred, of what towne, nor save for his language, of what countrey. Excuse me then if I in a worke that may perhaps last longer then a better thing and, being not ashamed of my kindred, name them here and there to no mans offence.⁵⁴

Harington's inclusion of personal references emulates both the practice of other Elizabethan writers, such as Sidney, and of Ariosto himself.⁵⁵ Such details, however, are more than a simple way for Harington to insert himself into the text; they model a pragmatic practice of reading that relates elements in Ariosto's poem to the reader's own life, and in so doing extends linguistic hospitality to a foreign writer by welcoming his text into the translator's domestic sphere.

⁵² Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 131.

⁵³ Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic*, 139.

⁵⁴ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, A PREFACE, 15.

⁵⁵ Morini, *Tudor Translation*, 114-117.

Another example of this practice occurs in canto 29. Here, Isabella tricks Rodomonte into cutting off her head so that she might preserve her chastity. In Ariosto's poem, Isabella's death is followed by three stanzas where the poet first bids her adieu and underlines her exemplary status, followed by God himself commenting on Isabella's martyrdom.⁵⁶ The last of these three stanzas features a prophecy where God predicts that all who bear her name will be 'di sublime ingegno,/... bella, gentil, cortese, e saggia' providing material to poets who wish to glorify them in their works.⁵⁷ Such praise from Ariosto refers to Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua and sister of Ariosto's protector: the duke of Ferrara, Alfonso I d'Este. Harington retains this eulogy of Isabella in stanzas 29-31 of his poem, including God's prophecy that 'who ever shall hereafter beare that name/ Shal be both wise and continent and chast,' glorified by writers and poets alike.⁵⁸ In his notes to the canto, however, Harington does not mention Isabella d'Este at all. Instead, in the 'morall' he interprets this prophecy in Ariosto as referring to his own mother, who also bore the name Isabell.⁵⁹

Harington thus adapts Ariosto's text by referring it to his immediate domestic sphere, demonstrating yet another facet of the 'utilitarian' habits of early modern English readers. Such references also suggest a mental process that operates between the original and target texts, where Harington thinks of his mother when reading Ariosto and transfers this personal domestication of the text to his English translation.⁶⁰ Such a strategy also occurs later in the commentary where Harington's favourite dog, Bungy, makes a prominent appearance. In canto forty-three, Adonio, a bankrupt knight, returns to Mantua in the guise of a pilgrim with a trained dog in order to win the love of a jurist's wife. In the 'allusion' to this canto, Harington writes:

⁵⁶ Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 29.26-29.29.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.29.

⁵⁸ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 29.31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁶⁰ Both Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England*, 95 and Robert McNulty, 'Introduction', in *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, ix-liv (xlii-xlvii) have suggested that some of Harington's notes were an afterthought, added in only after the translation was completed. While this may very well be the case, H.R. Woudhuysen has shown that the manuscript containing the first twenty-four cantos of Harington's translation on which such analyses were based —Bodleian Rawlinson 125— was not a mockup for print, but rather prepared as a gift copy in the late 1580s. See H.R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640* (Oxford, 1996), 108-109. The printer's copy of Harington's manuscript is still preserved in BL Add. MS 18920, and includes all of Harington's end-of-canto notes along with many precise instructions to the printer.

Marrie for the shagheard dogge that could daunce to please Ladies so well and had such pretie qualities, I dare undertake my servant Bungy (whose picture you may see in the first page of the book and is knowne to the best Ladies of England) may compare with any Pilgrims dogge that served such a saint this seven yeare, onely he wants that qualitie to shake duckets out of his ears.⁶¹

While Bungy's reputation among the 'best Ladies of England' in this period is unknown, he is indeed included on the frontispiece to Harington's translation. As McNulty and Morini have discussed, this frontispiece emulates that of the 1584 Franceschi edition, substituting the figure of Peace at the bottom with that of Harington himself, including an illustration of Bungy, seated on his left with the motto 'fin che venga' emerging from a small banner near his mouth.⁶² As Harington writes in the 'allusion' to canto 41, such heraldry is taken from Olivero, Orlando's cousin, whose banner shows a crouching spaniel with this motto. Harington's interpretation of such a device is noteworthy:

Olivero ... doth with great modestie shew thereby that as the Spaniell or hound that is at commaundement waiteth till the fowle or deare be stricken and then boldly leapeth into the water or draweth after it by land, so he being yet a young man waited for an occasion to shew his value, which being come, he would no longer couch but shew the same [...] My selfe have chosen this of Olivero for mine owne, partly liking the modestie thereof, partly (for I am not ashamed to confesse it) because I fancie the Spaniell so much whose picture is in the devise, and if anie make merie at it (as I doubt not but some will) I shall not be sorie for it, for one end of my traveil in this worke is to make my friends merie, and besides I can alleage many examples of wise men and some verie great men that have not only taken pictures but built cities in remembrance of
of serviceable beasts. 63

Harington not only draws parallels between Ariosto's text and his favourite dog, he also appropriates an *impresa* from Ariosto's poem as his own. Rather than reading the inclusion of such a detail as Harington's perception 'of the English *Furioso* as his own toy, to the point of cramming it with allusions not so much to classical authors as to his own friends, family, and spaniel,' it may be worth considering Harington's appropriation of Olivero's heraldry as a serious exercise in domestication.⁶⁴ Olivero's device represents, for Harington, that of a young ambitious nobleman who is prepared to 'shew his value,' but has not yet had the right opportunity to do so. The top of the medallion with Harington's portrait on the frontispiece includes the author's age at the time of

⁶¹ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 515.

⁶² McNulty, 'Introduction', xlv; Morini, *Tudor Translation*, 114.

⁶³ Harington, *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando furioso'*, 480.

⁶⁴ Morini, *Tudor Translation*, 115.

publication as thirty years old, while the portrait of Harington also includes an open watch inscribed with his family's arms. Directly below this watch is the motto 'Il tempo passa,' which happens to be slightly to the left of the 'fin che vengà' motto emerging from Bungy's mouth, suggesting that the two motti might be read together. The title page also contains a Latin epigraph from Horace, 'Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.' [To have won favour with the foremost men is not the lowest glory].⁶⁵ Harington thus emerges, like Olivero, as a young man anxious to distinguish himself at court, aware of the quick passage of time, yet awaiting the right opportunity which has not yet come. As Jason Scott-Warren has noted, the combined elements of Harington's frontispiece send out a clear message that the translator 'may never be a great hero, an Augustus or an Orlando, but he would happily live public life at a lower level.'⁶⁶ Once again, Harington's notes serve as a site for anglicizing Ariosto's text and making it his own, exemplifying a practice of active reading and appropriation that adapts the Italian text for his contemporaries. In this particular instance, such domestication allows Harington to put his personal stamp upon the poem; a line from the *Furioso* comes to represent the translator himself and his courtly ambitions.

If we return to Ricoeur's model, Harington's 'work of memory' involved salvaging not only Ariosto's text, but also the exegetical tradition that had been built around it by Italian editors and commentators. Harington's salvaging was filtered through his own personal and national interests, and mediated by his reading practice, which was both idiosyncratic to a certain extent and informed by contemporary cultural habits. Whether Harington's notes were written before, during, or after his translation, they serve as a 'third text,' what Ricoeur terms a 'semantic original,' that mediates between Ariosto's poem and its English translation; allowing Harington to implicitly claim that his translation reflects the same allegorical truths and moral lessons to be found in Ariosto's original. Ricoeur's 'work of mourning,'—the renunciation of any idea of a perfect translation—enables the translator to take on 'the two supposedly conflicting tasks of 'bringing the author to the reader' and 'bringing the reader to the author'.⁶⁷ So, too, does Harington's personalised approach to translating Ariosto permit him to accommodate the text for an Elizabethan audience. Rather than attacking Harington for the differences between his text and Ariosto's poem, or for the purported frivolity of his notes, perhaps such divergences should be considered with an eye to the cultural purposes they

⁶⁵ Horace, *Epistles*, in *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, translated by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA, 1926), I.XVII.35.

⁶⁶ Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* (Oxford, 2001), 55.

⁶⁷ Ricoeur, 'Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness', 8.

might have served. In other words, if such translations embody linguistic hospitality, what can they tell us about their hosts?

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