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## The Englished Sciascia: Translations 1960-2010

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### 1. Contexts

Translation, like any writing, is usually practiced in solitary conditions. But it links multitudes.<sup>1</sup>

How do books, and the ideas within them, travel between countries (where the language is not the same)? While some Europeans are indeed able and willing to read fiction in English, this is not true for a majority of readers, and English readers are hardly noted for their abilities vis-à-vis other languages. Translation is the vehicle that overcomes this hiatus. Nevertheless, and as has frequently been stated in research studies, the UK has long been the largest ‘exporting’ country of published fiction within Europe, thus frequently being seen as the ‘centre’ exporting its works, via translation, to the ‘periphery’, or peripheries. Italy, by contrast has traditionally had only a small ‘export market’ as far as literature is concerned.<sup>2</sup> Novelist Ian McEwan spoke recently of a country’s “creative energy index”, calculated from a range of attributes including the numbers of its books which have been translated.<sup>3</sup> But who ‘chooses’ which books for translation, and what determines their choices? Translations of Dante, for example, continue to appear, and many classic works are repeatedly retranslated.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> In this connection, Donatella Barbieri, director of the Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale in Milan (ALI), has stated: “In Italia, ma anche negli altri paesi europei, si pubblica un numero molto maggiore per quanto riguarda la letteratura straniera, molto maggiore di opere di lingua inglese – che siano inglesi o americani – che non delle opere di tutti gli altri paesi. [...] Il best seller, il grande successo di vendita, ci è arrivato proprio da oltreoceano.” Interview with Gillian Ania, Milan (May 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Ian McEwan, Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech, 20 February 2011, reported in the *The Guardian*, 26 February 2011 (*Review*, p. 20). The phrase perhaps draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘symbolic’ and ‘economic’ capital; see Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 141-42.

<sup>4</sup> Two different translations of the *Paradiso*, for example, have been published in recent years: one by Robin Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), the other by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander (New York: Anchor Books, 2008). Machiavelli’s *The Prince* was recently retranslated by Tim Parks (London: Penguin Classics, 2009).

UK currently seems to be witnessing a gentle explosion of foreign fiction in translation, including from the Italian.<sup>5</sup>

Up to the end of the century, few translated novels could be found among best-seller lists, often appearing only several years after their original publication. Today, only a decade or so later, the picture, at least for some kinds of fiction, is quite different, and a complex trade in rights and licences now occurs, involving authors, agents, publishers and their scouts, who propose, sell and buy (or not) the permissions to translate an author's work into one or more languages.<sup>6</sup> The Frankfurt, London and Turin Book Fairs are now a major focal point for such transactions, as for making and renewing vital contacts.

This essay aims to give an account of the translations of Leonardo Sciascia's work into English, over the last five decades. We approach this by way of two contextualizing overviews: firstly, of the translation of fiction in Europe today (Section 2), and secondly, of the translation of Italian literature into English since the 1930s (Section 3). As appropriate to Sciascia's case, we focus throughout on the translation of novels and short stories, and conclude with some thoughts on the 'art' of translation.

## 2. Fiction flows in Europe: some statistics and patterns

Literary translation is at the core of exchanging stories and ideas across political and linguistic boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

In a 1982 conference address Frank MacShane (Raymond Chandler expert, literary biographer, and founder of a translation centre at Columbia University) expressed his belief that the knowledge of the art and literature of another country is not a luxury, but essential, since "such knowledge makes us understand our common humanity and our common responsibility to people everywhere, and not just to those within the English-speaking world."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, as another speaker commented, reading a range of contemporary authors in translation "corrects our provinciality".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Troubador Publishing (Leicester) recently launched a specific imprint, 'Storia', devoted exclusively to modern Italian fiction in translation, while Bitter Lemon Press (London), founded in 2003 to specialize in foreign crime novels, has announced that "the time for Italian fiction is coming" – after "the setting in of Scandinavian fiction fatigue"; see Tom Kington, 'Italian authors' invasion is set to conquer the crime fiction lists', *The Observer*, 9 January 2011. Amazon, furthermore, now has a specific search engine for foreign books (in the original language and/or in translation).

<sup>6</sup> See Miha Kovač and Rüdiger Wischenbart, *Diversity Report 2009. 'Cultural diversity in translations of books: Mapping fiction authors across Europe'*, p. 3. On this subject, Francesca Manzoni, who administers foreign translation rights at Einaudi, states: "Quando il libro si cede all'estero, vengono ceduti i diritti solo per quella lingua. Nel caso ad esempio delle traduzioni in inglese, può cambiare ed essere 'world English rights' sia per l'Inghilterra, che per il Canada, gli Stati Uniti, l'Australia, la Nuova Zelanda, l'India e il Sud Africa; oppure sono limitati al territorio [...]. Dipende dal libro." Interview with Ania, Milan (May 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart, *Diversity Report 2010. 'Literary Translation in Current European Book Markets: An Analysis of Authors, Languages, and Flows'*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Italian Book and American Publishing conference, Rome, 1982; cited by Robin Healey, *Twentieth-Century Italian Literature in English Translation 1929-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. xviii.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Wilbur, poet and literary translator; see Healey, p. xviii.

While individual translators often elect to translate a book for its particular appeal or worth, and smaller publishers still actively seek out the best writers of foreign fiction, economic factors today are those which *most frequently* determine which books will be translated, how big the print run will be, and how a book will be marketed by the publisher; marketing, indeed, whether of the original or the translation, now has a vital role to play in a book's distribution and 'success', demonstrably a greater role than the literary merit of the book in question (although how long this success lasts, is, of course, another matter). Robin Healey notes, for example, that the marketing of one of Umberto Eco's novels published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich could have little in common with the marketing of a Sciascia novel published by Carcanet, "either in expenditure or in results."<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, the digital and communications revolutions, together with the formation of the publishing giants with their extensive distribution networks, are responsible for the speed at which fiction can now travel across borders and the impact it can have. And while in 1997 a critic could claim that "a translation that comes first is an anomaly",<sup>11</sup> this is no longer necessarily the case, and for the authors deemed most successful, simultaneous publication deals are regularly agreed. In his 2008 essay, *I barbari: saggio sulla mutazione*, Alessandro Baricco observed that successful writers today can potentially sell vast numbers of copies of their work, far more than those writing a couple of generations earlier could even have imagined.<sup>12</sup> A look at some statistics bears this out.

For the last three years (2008-2010), a research team of international scholars, led by Rüdiger Wischenbart, has produced an annual report on 'books in translation' across Western Europe. Tracking the cross-country journeys undertaken by works of fiction, the reports reveal their increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, and point to emerging trends and implications.<sup>13</sup>

The 2008 report opened with a historical overview of books in translation from 1979 to 2005. According to UNESCO's *Index Translationem*, for example, 48,000 books were translated in Europe in 1979, increasing to 73,000 in 2005 (having peaked at 85,000 in 2001).<sup>14</sup> Highlighted in particular was the fact that English was the principal source language (growing from 40% in 1979 to over 60% in the mid 1990s), followed by German and French. The Report also pointed out that since the translation of books resulted in additional costs for publishers this had long discouraged the buying of translation rights, especially when foreign writers were in any case considered less attractive to readers. Overall, between 1979 and 2004, the top twenty languages of origin

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<sup>10</sup> Healey, p. xvii. Booksellers in Milan and Novara have confirmed that advertising is the factor that has most impact on book sales, although for fiction published by smaller presses, reviews and word of mouth can be more important (Ania, *Conversations*, December 2010 and January 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Marilyn Rose Gaddis, *Translation and Literary Criticism* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2008), pp. 67-68.

<sup>13</sup> In his first report Wischenbart notes that while the statistics should not be seen as wholly accurate (with information gathered from different data sets), they can nevertheless signal broad developments; Wischenbart, *Diversity Report 2008*. 'An overview and analysis of translation statistics across Europe: Facts, trends, patterns', p. 3. All three Diversity Reports (2008, 2009, 2010) are available at: [www.wischenbart.com/translation](http://www.wischenbart.com/translation).

<sup>14</sup> Globally, around 53,000 titles were translated in 1979, while by 2004 the figure had risen to over 82,000; 2008 Report, p. 12. UNESCO began collecting data on translations in 1932 (p. 14).

accounted for over 90% of all translations (notably English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish and Swedish).<sup>15</sup>

Between 2005 and 2008, new crime authors such as Henning Mankell and Stieg Larsson had sprung to prominence, and the period saw the success of the ‘fictionalized thriller’ based on a political cover-up, such as Roberto Saviano’s *Gomorra*, first published by Mondadori in 2006, and winner of the 2006 Viareggio prize. Translated books were still published in much smaller print runs than domestic fiction and tended to deal with popular topics or niche areas. Translation *into* English remained minimal, representing only 2-3 % of all translations.<sup>16</sup> By 2006, in fact, while English (at 60.5%) remained the most prominent original language, French (11%) had overtaken German (7%), and Italian had increased its share of the market (to 3.5%), followed by Spanish (2.5%), Swedish (2%) and Dutch (1.5%). Data relating to 2000-08 may have hinted at decreasing translation numbers overall, yet Europe still came out as the richest and most dynamic continent for the translation of books.<sup>17</sup>

The 2008 Report consisted of an analysis of data then available (including from the UNESCO *Index*); it did not at this stage consider data from the bestseller lists of specific European book markets – which the subsequent reports proceeded to cover.

The 2009 report, authored by Miha Kovač and Rüdiger Wischenbart, analysed the best-seller lists from seven main West European countries (including Italy);<sup>18</sup> these lists identified authors (rather than individual titles) which reached the ‘top ten’ either in their original language or in (largely) English translation. The best-selling authors (across all these lists) from April 2008 to March 2009 proved to be Larsson (1<sup>st</sup> position), Stephanie Meyer (2<sup>nd</sup>), Khaled Hosseini (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Saviano (4<sup>th</sup>). Also present were Paolo Giordano (15<sup>th</sup>, winner of the 2008 Strega prize) and Andrea Camilleri (18<sup>th</sup>) – out of a total of 40 authors listed. A few months later (looking at data for October 2008 to September 2009), Saviano had shifted slightly to 5<sup>th</sup> position, Giordano had risen to 4<sup>th</sup> position and Camilleri to 15<sup>th</sup> (Larsson and Meyer remained at the top, with Carlos Ruis Zafón in 3<sup>rd</sup> place). As far as Italy is concerned, the 2009 report showed above all the success of Saviano, attributable in large part to the marketing of this author by Mondadori. When the numbers of different translations of works were also taken into account, Saviano (five different ‘foreign-language successes’) was ranked the third most successful fiction writer in Western Europe (October 2008-September 2009), earning the epithet of ‘hyper-selling author’.<sup>19</sup> ‘Success’, it should be noted, is being defined primarily in economic terms.

The 2010 Report, once more compiled by Kovač and Wischenbart, took a different form and a longer perspective: while it again analysed authors over the previous twelve

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<sup>15</sup> France was deemed the strongest ‘target country’, receiving the greatest number of foreign translations. See 2008 Report, pp. 3, 8, 13, 15.

<sup>16</sup> See 2008 Report, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>17</sup> See 2008 Report, pp. 11, 16, 17, 20. Fears expressed by the Report’s compiler as to the future for translated books, with the looming threat of economic recession (p. 11) have proved to be partly unfounded. Jeremy Thompson, proprietor of Troubador, recently remarked, in conversation: “Recession? What recession?”

<sup>18</sup> France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

<sup>19</sup> Saviano had success in the French, German, Dutch, Spanish, and Swedish markets. See 2009 Report, especially pp. 4, 7, 8, 9-10, 35-38. *Gomorra* appeared in English translation in 2008 (*Gomorra*, Macmillan), and has now been published in over fifty countries.

months (including the success of their novels in translation), it also mapped the three-year pattern between January 2008 and December 2010. In addition it expressed the explicit aim of seeking to encourage more literary translation as a way of promoting useful cultural interchange. Furthermore, since numerous different authors and styles were now present, the survey sought to determine the factors that characterized the leading writers. Was success attributable primarily to the language in which a text was originally written? To its content? To the publisher (or agent)? And/or to what extent did literary awards play their part?<sup>20</sup>

Taking the three year perspective, the report's findings show that of the 451 authors represented across the eight main West European markets,<sup>21</sup> the most successful (those making the overall 'top twenty' list) were: Larsson (1<sup>st</sup> position), Meyer (2<sup>nd</sup>), Hosseini (3<sup>rd</sup>), Dan Brown (4<sup>th</sup>) and Ruis Zafón (5<sup>th</sup>). Also present, for Italy, were Giordano (7<sup>th</sup>), Saviano (9<sup>th</sup>), and Camilleri (11<sup>th</sup>). One of the more surprising aspects to emerge from their statistics was the fact that of the top twenty novelists, now only a third of these were writing in English (as opposed to 60% in 2006, after a peak of 65% in the late 1990s).<sup>22</sup> Italian authors, indeed, had increased their share from 3.5% (in 2006) to 10%, while the other writers making the top twenty were those writing in Swedish (29%) and French (9%), followed by German and Spanish.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, taken together, the top five authors (listed above) represented an astounding 95% share of the European book market, with Larsson being classed as the most successful author of the decade. The statistics also revealed the clear preference of readers for contemporary writers over longer-established authors, and the dominance of popular tastes, especially of the crime or detective novel genre.<sup>24</sup>

Of the 187 authors considered for 2010 (writing in 14 different European languages), twelve Italians are represented: Baricco, Antonio Pennacchi, Claudio Magris, Dacia Maraini, Daniele Del Giudice, Niccolò Ammaniti, Sandro Veronesi, Tiziano Scarpa and Erri di Luca, as well, of course, of Camilleri, Giordano, and Saviano.<sup>25</sup> In Italy, in 2010, publishers, agents and booksellers were all speaking particularly of the phenomenal success of Camilleri (including in English translation), though also of Giordano, Melania Mazzucco and Margaret Mazzantini (all winners of the Strega prize).<sup>26</sup> All are conscious, nevertheless, of the second-fiddle role literary merit often has to play to 'selling power', in the market.

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<sup>20</sup> Literary Agencies, long a familiar presence in the UK book market, may be less prominent in Italy but their role is expanding. As Barbieri (of ALI) has stated: "l'editoria appartiene al settore dell'industria che possiede due anime che sono entrambe strutturali e sono: un'anima commerciale, perché è strutturale alla vendita, e un'anima creativa, perché consente allo scrittore di esprimersi" (Ania Interview).

<sup>21</sup> Now also including Austria.

<sup>22</sup> 2010 Report, p. 51; 2008 Report, p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Of the 451 authors, 159 wrote in English, 60 in Swedish, 52 in French, and 46 in Italian: 2010 Report, pp. 40-41.

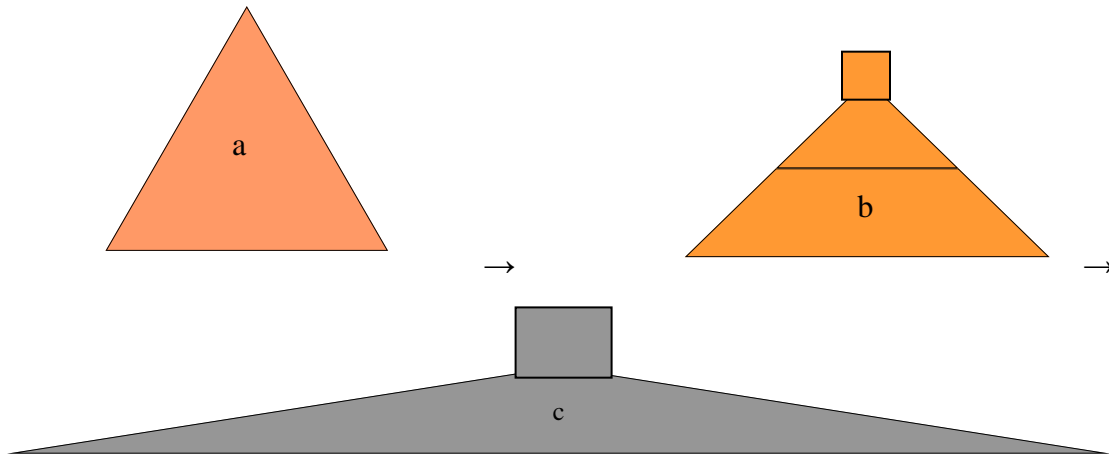
<sup>24</sup> See 2010 Report, pp. 27, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Of these authors, only Del Giudice and Di Luca (and Camilleri) have *not* been winners of one of the three main prizes in Italy (Strega, Campiello, Viareggio) from the 1990s on (most have been post-2000). Camilleri, however, was awarded the Premio letterario Piero Chiara for his life's work in 2010, while the English translation of a Del Giudice novel was awarded the John Florio prize in 1998: *Staccando l'ombra da terra*, translated by Joseph Farrell as *Take Off: The Pilot's Lore* (London: Harvill, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Barbieri refers to Camilleri as "un fiore meraviglioso" and "un fenomeno editoriale mondiale"; in his case ALI had negotiated translation rights for 35 different languages, worldwide (Ania Interview).

From their examination of the period 2008-2010, the compilers identified four patterns, or groups of authors. The most successful authors were those who had attained recognition over the previous two decades (and consequently had received prizes for their work), with several books translated into more than five languages. The second grouping comprised those authors with fewer than five titles in their original market, but who achieved rapid success thanks also to the translations; this group included Saviano (as well as Larsson). The third group featured authors with over five titles to their name and of which over five had been translated into more than one language, but who were nevertheless less prominent overall (such as Camilleri), while the fourth category included authors whose success was largely based on home market sales, and with only a few translations being visible, but who nevertheless showed (economic) potential (including Giordano).

According to all involved (analysts, publishers, agents, booksellers), one of the most significant characteristics of the book publishing world, especially since the turn of the millennium, has been the increasing size of publishers through mergers, to form corporations, or conglomerations, such as Random House/Bertelsmann (from 1998), and, in Italy, Mondadori or RCS libri, the latter two accounting for about 30% and 7% of the Italian market, respectively.<sup>27</sup> And the larger the publisher, it goes without saying, the more commercially-oriented their policies, such as an evident preference for selling vast numbers of a limited range of novels rather than smaller quantities of a wider range. Hence the mutation, we might say (in a rough author/sales representation of the book market), from a reasonably equilaterally-shaped ‘pyramid’ (Fig. a), through the ‘tagine’ design, with a few authors where the steam collects (Fig. b), to the flattened ‘lampshade’ effect (Fig. c).<sup>28</sup>



<sup>27</sup> Ania Interviews with Manzoni and Barbieri, and Healey, p. xvii.

<sup>28</sup> My designs and labels (based on the data), to illustrate the altered ‘shape’ of the book market over the last few decades.

The independent publishers, nevertheless, are still selling successfully, including Sellerio, in Italy, the original publisher of Camilleri, and the GeMS grouping led by Mauri Spagnol. Larsson, in fact, only became a ‘global phenomenon’ when he was translated into French and published by Actes Sud, and then by the English publisher Quercus.<sup>29</sup>

We now turn our attention to the translation of modern and contemporary Italian fiction, beginning with a historical perspective and some figures.

### 3. The translation of Italian literature into English

Italian fiction available in English translation, just as any national literature, contains works of greater and lesser literary merit, works that are accepted into the canon of *Weltliteratur* (to borrow Goethe’s term) and those that never will be. Of course, fiction can take time to travel across borders, fashions come and go, and it is not always the ‘best’ fiction that appears in best-seller lists, as we have noted. Tzvetan Todorov, however, has the following to say about the chasm that divides literary quality and commercial success:

Ormai si scava un solco profondo tra letteratura di massa – produzione popolare a stretto contatto con la vita quotidiana dei suoi lettori – e letteratura d’élite, letta degli esperti – critici, insegnanti, scrittori – che mostrano interesse solo per i virtuosismi dei suoi creatori. Da un lato il successo commerciale, dall’altro le autentiche qualità artistiche. Tutto avviene come se l’incompatibilità tra loro fosse naturale, tanto che l’accoglienza favorevole riservata a un libro da un gran numero di lettori diventa il segno del suo fallimento sul piano artistico e causa il disprezzo o il silenzio della critica.<sup>30</sup>

Yet they do not coexist, he concludes, and this is the problem: “L’epoca in cui la letteratura sapeva interpretare un sottile equilibrio tra rappresentazione del mondo comune e perfezione della costruzione romanzesca sembra superata.”

For this focus on Italy, and for the period up to 1997 one must record a particular debt to Robin Healey, whose *Twentieth-Century Italian Literature in English Translation* is an invaluable source of information and without which my discussion could not have been so comprehensive. Beyond that, information has been drawn from a number of different sources, and is consequently less than exhaustive. Data is presented on: translated authors – which writers have been most ‘visible’ and well received, appreciated for literary qualities or backed for economic reasons; publishers – which publishing houses have been most active in encouraging the spread of Italian fiction in translation; and translators – especially the most prolific.

In his study Healey points, for example, to the fact that of the three main literary prizes awarded in Italy, the Strega, Viareggio and Campiello, between only a third and a half of winning titles (up to 1986) had been translated. More recently, between 2000 and 2009, this has remained true for the Strega prize (translations have appeared of at least

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<sup>29</sup> See 2010 Report, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Todorov, *La letteratura in pericolo* (Milano: Garzanti, 2008), p. 58; first published as *La Littérature en péril* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007).

five of the ten winning novels),<sup>31</sup> though even fewer of those winning the Viareggio or Campiello prizes have appeared in English, suggestive, perhaps, of different emphases on their part. And of the novels listed in *Cento romanzi italiani (1901-95)*, 43 had not appeared in translation, including those by Capuana, Soldati, Arbasino and Meneghello.<sup>32</sup> Of the 65 novels listed as Italian bestsellers in 1996 only one had been translated into English, Baricco's *Seta*, while *Italian Novelists of the 20th Century* (Casalini libri), of 1997, lists 183 authors, of whom about 60% had had at least one novel published in translation.<sup>33</sup>

For the period between 1929 and 1997 and across all the main literary genres Healey's volume cites almost 1400 titles of Italian works that had been translated into English (UK and US), approximately half of which were novels. Between 1929 and 1934, 48 new translations were published, which increased to almost 100 for the period 1971-75, and to 188 for 1991-95.<sup>34</sup> As to which novelists will be represented in these figures, UK Italianists today (or comparativists, where criticism is often dependent on translation) would likely refer to Primo Levi, Calvino and Eco, and, going back somewhat earlier, to Pirandello, Svevo, Moravia, Pavese, Vittorini, Silone and Lampedusa, with Pasolini, Morante, Ginzburg and Sciascia coming chronologically somewhere in between.<sup>35</sup>

Healey, considering both the US and the UK markets, cites Moravia, in fact, as the most translated novelist (32 different titles), closely followed by Calvino (29 different titles).<sup>36</sup> Other regularly translated authors included Guareschi, Silone, Carlo Levi, and Lampedusa, with certain novels being translated two or three times.<sup>37</sup> After 1980 the 'champion in sales', as Healey calls him, was Eco, followed by Fallaci, Primo Levi, and Tamaro, all being published by the US publishing giants Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (Eco and Calvino) and Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Moravia); in the UK, Moravia, Eco and Calvino were all published by Secker and Warburg (as well as by various smaller publishers).<sup>38</sup>

Sciascia, Healey classes as one of the 'respected writers' published in smaller print runs, for example by Carcanet in the UK (or Marlboro Press in the US), along with authors such as Bassani, Pavese, Ginzburg, Maraini, Morante, and Camon. From the turn

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<sup>31</sup> Those by Ammaniti, Giordano, Mazzantini, Mazzucco and Veronesi.

<sup>32</sup> See Healey p. xvii. However, other novels by these authors were available in translation, such as Meneghello's *I piccolo maestri (The Outlaws)*, published in 1967.

<sup>33</sup> See Healey, p. xvii.

<sup>34</sup> Between 1924 and 1928, 24 new US translations had been recorded by Nancy C. Shields, in *Italian Translations in America* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1931); Healey's figures are: 1929-1934: 48; 1951-1955: 78; 1971-1975: 99; 1991-1995: 188; see pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>35</sup> Of more recent authors likely to have been translated, the UK Italianist might name Baricco, Calasso, Tabucchi or Tondelli.

<sup>36</sup> Angus Davidson translated most of Moravia, William Weaver of Calvino; more recently both authors have been translated by Parks.

<sup>37</sup> Verga, Pirandello, Brancati, Pavese and Silone all had novels that were retranslated more than once, generally at a distance of twenty or thirty years.

<sup>38</sup> Fallaci and Tamaro have notably been more successful in America than in the UK. See Healey, p. xvi. The most translated Italian playwright up to 1997, was Pirandello (41 plays) followed by Mario Fratti (21), Fo/Rame (19) and Betti (10), who between them accounted for about a third of the 250 plays translated. The most translated poets were Montale (26 book-length titles), Quasimodo (9 titles), Carducci (9 titles) and Ungaretti (6 titles), who between them represented about a quarter of the 200 titles. As for essayists, the most translated have been Eco, and earlier Croce and Gramsci. For further details, see Healey, p. xvi.



of the century, Sciascia has been published mostly by Granta Books and Hesperus in the UK, and by NYRB Classics in the US (see below, Section 4).

Contemporary authors who have been translated for the first time since 1998, or have new titles translated, include Albinati, Ammaniti, Baricco, Calasso, Camilleri, Capriolo, Carlotto, Carofiglio, De Carlo, di Fulvio, Duranti, Eco, Fois, Giordano, Jaeggy, Lavagnino, Lucarelli, Magris, Maraini, Mazzantini, Mazzucco, Melissa P, Morozzi, Murgia, Rigosi, Saviano, Scarpa, Tabucchi, Varesi and Vassalli. In the past, it has not always been easy to interest English publishers in commissioning a translation, because of the additional outlay, yet investment in this can often be shrewd. The following UK publishers seem currently to be most actively promoting the translation of Italian fiction into English: Bitter Lemon Press, Bloomsbury, Canongate, Dedalus, Hesperus, Penguin Classics, Pushkin Press, Quercus (MacLehose imprint), Serpent's Tail, and Troubador (Storia imprint), as well as the Chatto & Windus, Harvill Secker, and Viking imprints of Random House. At the time of writing, moreover, there are also a number of new novels in the pipeline, an indication that, if rather belatedly, translation is 'alive and reasonably well' in the UK.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, with marketing campaigns now able to have almost instant effect the situation of which particular Italian authors/works reach the Anglo-centric world for consumption can change overnight. Yet instant success or acclaim can also mean a rapid forgetting, and canons of any respectability demand far more careful consideration over time.<sup>40</sup>

Lastly, a word about the translators, bearing in mind that the role of the translator has become more 'visible' and respected, thanks in part to the work of Lawrence Venuti. The most prolific translator during the course of the previous century (up to 1997) was William Weaver (around 90 titles over 45 years, including translations of Pratolini, Calvino and Eco). Other translators responsible for opening up Italian fiction to an English-speaking audience include Archibald Colquhoun (Manzoni, Lampedusa, Sciascia), Angus Davidson (Moravia), Frances Frenaye (Guareschi, Silone, Maraini), Stuart Hood (Fo, Palandri), Raymond Rosenthal (Busi, Primo Levi) and Venuti (Buzzati, Carlotto, Melissa P). More recently, prominent translators include Patrick Creagh (Eco, Bufalino, Carofiglio), Howard Curtis (Pirandello, Fenoglio, Sciascia), Joseph Farrell (Sciascia, Consolo, Del Giudice, Fo, Varesi) and Tim Parks (Moravia, Calvino, Tabucchi, Calasso), as well as Michael Reynolds and Stephen Sartarelli (for much of Lucarelli and Camilleri, respectively).

Following this contextualization of Italian to English translations over the course of the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, we now turn our attention specifically to Sciascia's work.

#### **4. Sciascia translated into English: a survey**

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<sup>39</sup> Forthcoming for 2011/12 are novels by the following authors: Camilleri and Giordano (Penguin Classics); Palandri, Avoledo and Vallorani (Troubador); Bologna and Grossi (with Pushkin); Mazzantini (Viking), Giuttari (Little, Brown Book Group); Maraini (Dedalus), Saviano, Varesi and Murgia (Quercus), and Nicolai Nilin (with Canongate). Many more titles (especially the more populist) are available solely as 'Kindle'/e-book editions.

<sup>40</sup> Ideally, the question the translator or publisher should ask is: what has the original to recommend to this new audience, or, more generally, which characteristics are most likely to appeal and to enlighten?

The master of sophisticated detective fiction.<sup>41</sup>

In 2008, the Translators' Association of the Society of Authors compiled a list of fifty translations considered outstanding, internationally from the previous fifty years. The list features five Italian authors, including Sciascia (for the 1963 translation of *Il giorno della civetta*).<sup>42</sup> Almost all Sciascia's narrative fiction in fact, has been translated into English, some works in more than one edition and/or with different publishers, most appearing in both UK and US editions.<sup>43</sup> Taking a chronological approach, we now present an account of the English translations of his novels and short story collections over the past half century; this includes those works that defy neat categorization, and which I will refer to as *inchiesta* or *racconto-inchiesta* ('investigative essay' or 'enquiry' – while acknowledging the less-than-entirely satisfactory nature of such labels). The title of the first translation, in each case, appears in bold font; where re-publications are listed these refer to the original translation unless otherwise indicated. Information relating to the publication of individual short stories is given in footnotes, where relevant. And lastly, since some of the apparent distinctions between publishers have been obscured by the various mergers, details have also been indicated in footnotes.<sup>44</sup> The survey concludes with a brief examination of some of the English-edition covers.

1960-69

The first of Sciascia's novels to be translated was *Il giorno della civetta* (Einaudi, 1961); it appeared in 1963 under the title of ***Mafia Vendetta***, translated by Archibald Colquhoun and Arthur Oliver (London: Jonathan Cape), with an American edition coming out the following year (New York: Knopf). The second was *Il Consiglio d'Egitto* (Einaudi, 1963), translated by Adrienne Foulke as ***The Council of Egypt*** and published in 1966 by Cape and then Knopf. *A ciascuno il suo* (Einaudi, 1966), also translated by Foulke, appeared in the US in 1968 with the title ***A Man's Blessing*** (New York: Harper & Row) and in the UK (Cape) in 1969. *Le parrocchie di Regalpetra* (Laterza, 1956) and *Morte dell'inquisitore* (Laterza, 1964) were published in the US in 1969, as ***Salt in the Wound*** and ***Death of the Inquisitor***, both translated by Judith Green (New York, Orion Press).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Farrell, 'Keep it in the Family', *The Guardian*, 19 August 2000, a review of Michael Dibdin's fiction, which mentions his debt to Sciascia.

<sup>42</sup> The other Italian authors were Primo Levi (1959 translation of *Se questo è un uomo*), Lampedusa (1961 translation of *Il gattopardo*), Calvino (1981 translation of *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*), Eco (1983 translation of *Il nome della rosa*) and Calasso (1993 translation of *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia*). See <http://www.closeuptranslations.com/news>.

<sup>43</sup> William S. Di Piero, who introduced the 2000 American edition of *To Each His Own*, observed: "There's no American novelist whose voice has the broad public resonance that Leonardo Sciascia's had"; *To Each His Own* (New York: NYRB Classics), p. vii.

<sup>44</sup> Information from Healey has been supplemented with that from *La Sicilia il suo cuore: Omaggio a Leonardo Sciascia* (Palermo: Fondazione L. Sciascia, 1992), pp. 130-35; Valentina Fascia, ed., *La Memoria di Carta: Bibliografia delle Opere di Leonardo Sciascia* (Milan: Edizioni Otto/Novecento, 1998), pp. 80-82; library online catalogues; and publishers' and booksellers' websites.

<sup>45</sup> The short story 'La paga del sabato', translated by Teresa Magee, appeared in the volume *I giorni di tutti/All in a day: stories* (Rome: Edindustria Editoriale, 1960); an extract from *Morte dell'inquisitore* (1964), translated by Anthony Rhodes, was published in 1967 in the anthology *Italian Writing Today*, ed. Raleigh Trevelyan (Penguin).

Thus, in this decade, five of Sciascia's novels (including one *racconto-inchiesta*, *Death of the Inquisitor*)<sup>46</sup> appeared in English, most in both the US and the UK, with the translations closely following the Italian originals by just two or three years. Four different translators (two working jointly) were involved.

#### 1970-79

A similar chronological pattern can be identified in the 1970s. *Il contesto* (Einaudi, 1971), translated as *Equal Danger* by Foulke, was published in 1973 by Harper & Row and in 1974 by Cape. *Todo modo* (Einaudi, 1974), translated by Foulke as *One Way or Another*, was published in the US in 1977 (Harper & Row), while *Candido, ovvero, Un sogno fatto in Sicilia* (Einaudi, 1977) appeared in the US in 1979 as *Candido, or A Dream Dreamed in Sicily*, again translated by Foulke (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). In addition, an edition of *A ciascuno il suo* introduced by Iole Fiorillo Magris appeared in 1976 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin).<sup>47</sup>

In this period, then, three further novels were translated, all by Foulke for US publishers, and closely following the date of publication in Italy.

#### 1980-89

This decade saw the republication of six novels, including the four *gialli* – one of which in a new translation, and two with altered English titles. It also saw the first translations of short story collections, of two further *racconti-inchiesta*, and a first *inchiesta*. Most of the translations here were for the UK market.

*Candido* appeared in the UK in 1982, published by Carcanet (Manchester), who reissued it in 1985. In 1984 *Il giorno della civetta* was republished with the new title *The Day of the Owl*, together with *Equal Danger* (Carcanet) and accompanied by an afterword by Frank Kermode; it was reissued by London's Paladin Grafton Books (in association with Carcanet) in 1987, and by Carcanet in 1988; the volume was also published in the US in 1984 (Boston: D. R. Godine).<sup>48</sup> In 1985 Carcanet published Avril Bardoni's English translation of the thirteen short stories of *Il mare colore del vino* (Einaudi, 1973), entitled *The Wine-Dark Sea*; Bardoni was awarded the John Florio prize for this in 1986, and it was reissued by Paladin Grafton in 1987. One of Sciascia's earliest works, the collection *Gli zii di Sicilia* (Einaudi, 1958), was published in the UK in 1986 as *Sicilian Uncles*, translated by N. S. Thompson for Carcanet, and republished by Paladin Grafton (in association with Carcanet) two years later. Also in 1986 *Il contesto* was published as a study guide, with introduction and annotations by Tom O'Neill (Manchester University Press).

The year 1987 saw the dual publication of Sciascia's *racconto-inchiesta* *La scomparsa di Majorana* (Einaudi, 1975) and *inchiesta L'Affaire Moro* (Sellerio, 1978) as *The Moro Affair* and *The Mystery of Majorana*, both translated by Sacha Rabinovitch (Carcanet). In the same year Rabinovitch also produced a new translation of *Todo modo*

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<sup>46</sup> Sciascia referred to this work as: "questo breve saggio o racconto"; *Morte dell'inquisitore* (Adelphi, 1992), Prefazione, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> 'L'antimonio' appeared in English ('Antimony') in the anthology *Stories of Sicily*, ed. Alfred Alexander (London: Paul Elek) in 1975.

<sup>48</sup> Paladin and Grafton are a division of the Collins Publishing group, bought by News International in 1989 and bringing together Collins and Harper & Row; HarperCollins was formed in 1991. Godine today remains an independent publisher.

for the UK market (Carcanet), preserving the title, however, of *One Way or Another*; it was reissued under the Paladin Grafton imprint in 1989. Carcanet republished *Il consiglio d'Egitto* in 1988, and in 1989 brought out the translation, once again by Rabinovitch, of the *racconto-inchiesta 1912+1* (Adelphi, 1986), entitled, in fact, **1912+1: a novel**; the volume included an Interview with Sciascia by Ian Thompson. Carcanet also republished *A ciascuno il suo* in 1989, with the revised title of *To Each His Own*. The two English title changes (*The Day of the Owl* rather than *Mafia Vendetta*, and *To Each His Own* rather than *A Man's Blessing*) seem to have been preferred by the independent academic publisher Carcanet to bring out the allusions of the Italian originals, choices that perhaps better reflect Sciascia's linguistic playfulness, and appreciation of our common literary heritage.

This decade saw the English translations generally appearing much later, after a gap of ten or so years from the original's publication date, and the involvement of three new translators. It also saw Carcanet taking the lead to become Sciascia's main publisher in the UK.

1990-99

In the 1990s several new first translations appeared, including a third collection of short stories and the remaining *gialli*.

In 1990 Carcanet published a new translation of *Morte dell'inquisitore* with a slightly altered title, in the volume: *Death of an Inquisitor, & other stories* ('an' instead of 'the'), all translated by Ian Thompson; the 'other stories' comprised the short story collection, or seven *racconti-inchiesta*, **Little Chronicles** (*Cronachette*, Sellerio, 1985), and the *racconto-inchiesta* **The Captain and the Witch** (*La strega e il capitano*, Bompiani, 1986); the volume was republished in 1992 by Grafton (London) and in 1994 by Harvill (London).<sup>49</sup> In 1991 Carcanet published the three Adelphi books *Il cavaliere e la morte* (1988), *Porte aperte* (1987) and *Una storia semplice* (1989) as **The Knight and Death, Open Doors** and **A Straightforward Tale** in a single volume entitled *The Knight and Death, & other stories*; the first and last were translated by Joseph Farrell, the second by Marie Evans, and a preface by Evans and a critical essay by Farrell completed the volume. It was then republished by Harvill in 1992 under the amended title *The Knight and Death: Three Novellas*.<sup>50</sup> In the same year Knopf brought out, in a slightly different combination, *Open Doors: And Three Novellas* (also including *1912+1*), which was reissued by Knopf's imprint Vintage (New York) in 1993.<sup>51</sup> In 1991 Paladin (London) republished *The Moro Affair* and *The Mystery of Majorana* (together), and *The Council of Egypt*; in 1992 Carcanet reissued *To Each His Own*, while in 1993 Harvill reissued *The Council of Egypt*.

In 1994, Padovani's interview with Sciascia, *La Sicilia come metafora* (Mondadori, 1979; originally published in French, also in 1979), appeared in the US as **Sicily as Metaphor**, translated by James Marcus (Marlboro, Vt: Marlboro Press). While Sciascia

<sup>49</sup> Grafton disappeared as a separate imprint in 1993. Harvill, founded in 1946, was acquired by Random House in 2002, with the Harvill Secker imprint coming into being from 2005. (Secker, founded in 1910, became part of Random House in 1997.)

<sup>50</sup> For Farrell, *Porte aperte* is half-way between a detective novel and an investigative essay; see 'Sciascia's Late Fiction', in *The Knight and Death* (Harvill, 1992), 203-15, pp. 205, 208.

<sup>51</sup> Knopf set up the Vintage imprint in 1974. (Vintage Publishing is a separate UK series, launched in 1990.)

had written numerous essays and articles over the years, this was the first work to appear in English translation that was neither fiction nor an ‘enquiry’ of some sort – and the only one, to date.<sup>52</sup> In 1995 Harvill republished *Candido*, while in 1998 Manchester University Press published a study guide to *Il giorno della civetta*, with introduction and notes by Gerard Slowey. A new edition of *The Council of Egypt* was brought out by Carcanet in 1999.<sup>53</sup>

In this decade, therefore, six new works were published in English translation, all – with the exception of the interview – appearing two to five years after the Italian original. One work was retranslated (*Death of an Inquisitor*), and several translations were reissued, with the Harvill imprint becoming more significant in the UK. Four new translators were advancing the knowledge of Sciascia’s work, three of whom for the UK market.

## 2000-2010

At the start of the new millennium there was a flurry of activity, with several of Sciascia’s works being republished (nine novels or ‘enquiries’, and two short story collections), in the UK and/or the US. This has doubtless occurred partly since most of the above were no longer in print,<sup>54</sup> but it serves nevertheless to illustrate the belief that each new edition or translation, and its readers, can “open wider circles of dissemination, reinforcing the reputation of a book and its author”.<sup>55</sup> Two publishers now seem to be almost exclusively involved: NYRB Classics (New York) and Granta Books (London).<sup>56</sup> A further change, moreover, is that virtually all the translations (eight out of eleven) have been accompanied by a critical introduction, witness to the continued interest in Sciascia studies in the English-speaking world and the increasing value attributed to scholarly editions.<sup>57</sup>

In 2000, *To Each His Own* was republished in the US with an introduction by W. S. Di Piero (NYRB Classics), while *The Wine-Dark Sea* appeared in the same year, with an introduction by Albert Mobilio (also NYRB Classics); this last was republished by

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<sup>52</sup> While Sciascia’s critical essays on literature and culture (Sicilian, especially) appeared regularly in French, German and Spanish, they have not to my knowledge been translated into English. And of Sciascia’s plays, only *L'onorevole* has been translated, as *His honor* by Michael Vena, published in 1999 in *Italian Quarterly*, XXXV.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Gioco di società’/‘Parlour game’, from *Il mare colore del vino*, appeared in the anthology *Name and tears, and other stories*, ed. and tr. Kathrine Jason (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press) in 1990, while ‘Il lungo viaggio’/‘The Long Crossing’ (tr. Bardini) appeared in the anthology *Short Stories in Italian*, ed. Nick Roberts (Penguin), in 1999. A dramatized version of ‘Parlour game’, in English, by Concetto La Malfa, 2003, was recently aired to commemorate Sciascia (March 2011); see [www.italvideonews.com](http://www.italvideonews.com).

<sup>54</sup> Exceptions include Carcanet’s 1992 edition of *To Each His Own* and 1999 edition of *The Council of Egypt*.

<sup>55</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart, 2010 Report, pp. 39-40.

<sup>56</sup> The NYRB (New York Review Books) Classics series presents itself as “exploratory and eclectic”, publishing literature from different eras and especially in translation, “simply because so much great literature has been left untranslated [...] or deserves to be translated again”. Granta Books (launched in 1989 as an imprint of the Cambridge magazine *Granta*, expanded in 1997, and taken over in 2005 by philanthropist-entrepreneur Sigrid Rausing), describes itself today as “one of the most independent-minded and prestigious literary publishers in the UK”, publishing “groundbreaking, ambitious, and beautifully written fiction”; Sciascia is included in its ‘backlist classics’.

<sup>57</sup> Five appeared in the US (NYRB) and three in the UK (Granta and Hesperus), while previously the (occasional) introductions had been produced predominantly for the UK market (Carcanet or MUP).

Granta in 2001. In 2001 Granta also brought out a new edition of *The Day of the Owl* with an introduction by Anthony Oliver, as well as reissuing *Sicilian Uncles* and *Equal Danger*. Granta republished *The Moro Affair*, with an introduction by Neil Belton, in 2002, and *The Knight and Death* together with *One Way or Another* (the latter in Rabinovitch's 1987 translation) in 2003. In this year NYRB Classics brought out new editions of *Equal Danger* with an introduction by Carlo Romano, and (separately) *The Day of the Owl* with an introduction by George Scialabba. In 2004 the NYRB published *The Moro Affair*, together with *The Mystery of Majorana*, with a new introduction by Peter Robb.

Recently, a new publisher has entered the picture, namely Hesperus, a small press based in London.<sup>58</sup> Two works have been retranslated, both by Howard Curtis: *A Simple Story* and *Candido or A dream dreamed in Sicily*, published together in 2010; the volume also comprises a foreword by Paul Bailey and an introduction by Curtis. [ ex. FN 59 removed ] The title change (from *A Straightforward Tale* to *A Simple Story*) may have been preferred for being closer to the original Italian; however, while the revised English title better communicates the 'simplicity' of Sciascia's last story, the title has been used before.<sup>59</sup> In this decade, no new works were translated for the first time.

In all, in this fifty-year period, 18 different narrative works by Sciascia have been translated into English. Four novels have been translated more than once (*Todo modo*, *Morte dell'inquisitore*, *Candido* and *Una storia semplice*, two of which were given new titles in the process), and two title changes to existing translations have been made. The publishers (or imprints) involved have been Cape, Carcanet, Harvill, Paladin, Grafton, Granta and Hesperus, in the UK, and Knopf, Vintage, Harper & Row, Orion, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Houghton Mifflin, Godine, Marlboro and NYRB, in the US. Not surprisingly, given the popularity of the genre, it is the *gialli* which have been the most translated and republished, and which remain the most visible on UK university syllabuses of both Italian studies and comparative literature. Mafia, in the context of justice remains a 'hot topic' and an integral part of (Italian) crime/detective fiction, although cinema has clearly also played its part in fuelling interest in mafia outside Italy, and in perpetrating, or challenging mafia myths.<sup>60</sup> Film versions, indeed, by directors in sympathy with Sciascia's political aims, were made of all Sciascia's *gialli*.

Finally, here, a brief consideration of cover designs and illustrations, with particular reference to the *gialli*. While the original Italian publishers (notably Einaudi) have tended to favour artistic images from relevant artworks, English publishers such as Carcanet, Paladin and Granta have opted for images which situate the works firmly within the detective/crime genre, with a particular preference for eye-catching designs featuring murder weapons. The American NYRB covers, however, have all shown a preference for striking, artistic images.

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<sup>58</sup> Founded in 2001 by Alessandro Gallenzi and Elisabetta Minervini, Hesperus sports a Latin motto that would have found favour with Sciascia: "*Et Remotissima Prope*", or 'bringing near what is far'.

<sup>59</sup> Albeit two centuries earlier – for Elizabeth Inchbald's 1791 novel, while Mark Chu, in a review of Joseph Farrell's 1995 monograph, *Leonardo Sciascia*, published by Edinburgh University Press, suggests a possible allusion to *A Simple Tale*, the subtitle of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907): «*Italian Studies*», LI, 1996, pp. 223-225: 225.

<sup>60</sup> Films such as *The Godfather*, *Salvatore Giuliano*, *I Cento passi*, and, more recently, *Gomorra* and *Romanzo Criminale*.

The front cover of the first UK edition of *The Day of the Owl/Equal Danger* (Carcanet, 1984) shows two revolvers facing each other, pressed barrel to barrel, in a red circle (Fig. 1), while the 1987 Paladin edition – quite ‘clever’, and especially appropriate to the earlier novel’s content – uses a stark illustration by James Marsh, showing the eyes of an owl protruding from the end of a double-barrelled shotgun (Fig. 2). Both, however, are far removed from the more traditional or artistically inspired Italian covers which do not categorize the novels into a specific ‘genre’: the original Einaudi covers for *Il giorno della civetta* (1961) and *Il contesto* (1971) offer details from paintings by Guttuso (a Sicilian landscape) and Forain (two judges seated at a bench), the latter emphasizing the theme of justice, indeed, rather than murder (Figs. 3, 4). The 1990 Einaudi edition of *Il giorno della civetta* shows another landscape, a detail from painting by Egon Schiele (‘Paesaggio campestre’),<sup>61</sup> while the 2001 Granta editions of *The Day of the Owl* and *Equal Danger* use photographic images: the former depicts a man running across a road, from a black-and-white photograph by Joshua Sheldon (a ‘random’ cover design), and the latter the shadowy image of a man at the wheel of a left-hand-drive car.

While the 1966 Einaudi cover of *A ciascuno il suo* portrays a detail, in black and white, from a Velázquez painting (Fig. 5), Carcanet’s 1989 edition of *To Each His Own* presents a black-and-white image of a man’s face (filling the front and back covers), designed by Stephen Raw (Fig. 6). NYRB’s 2000 cover, on the other hand, shows a colourful Guttuso painting (‘Night in Velate’). Similarly, while the 1974 Einaudi cover of *Todo modo* shows a detail from the religious painting by Manetti (‘La tentazione di Sant’Antonio’) which figures directly and centrally in the story (Fig. 7), the Carcanet and Paladin covers of *One Way or Another* offer two quite different images: Carcanet’s 1987 cover (the first edition in the new translation) shows an old, ‘blue’-tone ‘still’ of a crowd scene, designed by Stephen Raw (Fig. 8), while Paladin’s 1989 edition depicts the white outline (on a black background) of a chapel window which frames two hands, one raised as if in blessing, the other, at right angles to it, pointing a gun.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, a comment on the Italian and UK covers of *Il mare colore del vino*. The 1973 Einaudi original portrays an artistic representation of the *sea*, a detail of a painting by Manguin (‘Femme à l’ombrelle’) (Fig. 9). Paladin Grafton’s 1987 cover, on the other hand, shows two full glasses of not-very-ruby-coloured *wine!* (Fig. 10)<sup>63</sup>

## 5. Sciascia and the art of translation

Ottima persona: colta, zelante, onesta... [...] Un uomo di una correttezza, di un dirittura morale, di una coerenza... Esemplari. [...] Un uomo insostituibile. (*Todo modo*)<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Subsequent editions of *Il contesto* reprint the 1971 cover image.

<sup>62</sup> Granta’s 2003 edition of *One Way or Another* (with *The Knight and Death*), however, shows a generic black-and-white photograph of a Sicilian horse and cart, by Getty/Stone (another ‘random’ design).

<sup>63</sup> The first UK cover by Carcanet (1985) shows a ‘blue’-tone photo of a bird flying over the sea; the 2000 NYRB cover portrays a brightly-coloured sea. I wish to thank Francesco Izzo, and colleagues at the Mondadori foundation for assistance in tracing cover images of early editions, and Craig Barrington for his technical expertise.

<sup>64</sup> *Todo modo* (Einaudi, 1976) pp. 58, 62, 63; see *One Way or Another* (Carcanet, 1987), pp. 51, 54, 55.

Were it not for the irony the reader ‘hears’ in the voices, these comments could refer to Sciascia himself – rather than being judgements on ex-Senator, Michelozzi, the first (and far from innocent) victim at the Zafer hermitage; this is the story Sciascia chooses to narrate through the painter who had ‘lived among Pirandellian landscapes’, who seems both suspicious of, and tainted by, his environment. Central to all Sciascia’s work is the question of justice: the reader is transported, one way or another, into the murky worlds of the judiciary, the aristocracy, politics, and the police, to witness abuses of power (public and private), corruption, the lack of civil probity and, in particular, the omnipresence of mafia, as if it were genetically encoded into certain minds in Italy – and far beyond.<sup>65</sup>

Foreign detective fiction, in English-language translation, is considered especially appealing to the UK market, of course, for its modern roots and our long appreciation of the genre. In Sciascia’s *gialli*, moreover, the reader is intrigued not only by crimes, victims, suspects and settings, but by the dark realism and absence of ‘neat solutions’; this makes the stories at once accessible and distinctive.<sup>66</sup>

Of course, language itself is at the centre of the aesthetic pleasure of reading literature in the original, which cannot be replicated in translated fiction (that is, in the same way). Literature in translation can be appreciated for its socio-cultural content, or function, as Franco Moretti has argued, as “a thorn in the side, a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures”,<sup>67</sup> yet the enjoyment of a translated story is still bound up with the manner in which it is told, or retold, by the translator. Writing always takes place in a context, not a vacuum, and translation is similarly forged, created in the dual context of two languages/cultures and allowing ‘dialogue’ between them. Despite Pirandello’s pessimism as to the possibility of successful translation – seeing it as akin to the act of transplanting a tree into a foreign climate with the result that its flowers and foliage were lost,<sup>68</sup> I prefer to believe that words and phrases can be adapted to new environments, and flourish.

Interest in the process of translation, or ‘translation studies’, has developed significantly over the last fifty or so years, evident in the number of academic conferences now devoted to this area internationally; there is, furthermore, an increasing range of organisations and initiatives to support translators, at least as far as the Anglophone world is concerned. However, and paradoxically, perhaps, Venuti cites the translation studies discipline as being particularly to blame for having privileged scientific or linguistic-oriented approaches over “the creative reproduction of values”, which his 1998 volume sought to address, in addition to seeking “greater cultural authority” for translators and “a more favourable legal status, especially (although not exclusively) in the US and the UK”.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Howard Curtis sees Sciascia as “a regional writer who, far from celebrating the uniqueness of his society, spent his career decrying the forces that have prevented it from changing”; Introduction to *A Simple Story* (London: Hesperus, 2010), p. xiv.

<sup>66</sup> On this aspect see, for example, Ania, *Fortunes of the Firefly: Sciascia’s Art of Detection* (Leicester: University Texts, 1996), particularly Chapter 2 (‘Sciascia’s Reworking of the Genre’).

<sup>67</sup> Moretti, ‘Conjectures on world literature’, *New Left Review* (II) 1, 2000: 54-58, p. 68, cited in Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 12; see also Milner, pp. 133-40.

<sup>68</sup> See Susan Bassnett, ‘Pirandello and Translation’, in *Pirandello Studies*, 20, 2000, 9-17 (p. 9).

<sup>69</sup> See *The Scandals of Translation*, pp. 1-4. Translators might need to take decisions and establish ground rules for consistency, but this hardly, I feel, turns literary translation into a “true science, with its methods



Each translator, then, who values creativity and professionalism, will work his or her own careful magic on the original text, crafting his version for the pleasure and benefit of a new readership, indeed, for reciprocal benefit. Subjectivity, therefore, conveyed (for instance) through the choice or rejection of a particular word or phrase, is as impossible to avoid for the translator as for the original writer, and any translation is only ‘one possible variant’ because of these different subjectivities; as Maria Sanchez has rightly observed: “Translation as product is there for all of us to see, but translation as process is a highly individual experience that makes each translating act unique and non-transferable.”<sup>70</sup>

It is accordingly on literary translation, an art developed out of a keen sensitivity to language and a deep knowledge of the macro- and micro-culture of an author, that the success (or not) of a novel can depend.

La traduzione è tutto per un libro straniero. Noi in editoria diciamo che il mestiere in assoluto più difficile è quello del traduttore. Non è sufficiente che il traduttore abbia un’ottima conoscenza della lingua. Non è sufficiente che sia una persona colta. [...] Deve riproporre lo stile di chi ha scritto, e addirittura [...] riuscire a esprimere in una lingua diversa l’universo di quello scrittore, l’universo interiore.<sup>71</sup>

To date there have been thirteen different translators engaged in translating Sciascia’s novels, and whose particular aims, and consequently styles, clearly vary (although it has not been my aim to comment on these here). The most prolific have been Adrienne Foulke (five translations in the 1960-70s), followed by Sacha Rabinovitch (three translations in the 1970-80s), Ian Thompson (three translations, 1960s), Judith Green (two translations, 1960s), Joseph Farrell (two translations, 1980s) and Howard Curtis (two translations, 2000s).

Farrell, who translated *Il cavaliere e la morte* and *Una storia semplice*, has the following to say:

Sciascia is an ideal author for a translator, because he expresses himself clearly and because his style is sober, direct, unencumbered with any ‘fine writing’ or aspirations to *belles lettres*. He knows his own mind and is clear about what he wishes his readers to understand [...]. In part this is the consequence of his desire to discuss ‘issues’ – government, mafia, corruption etc – rather than simply tell a tale, although he does also tell a very good tale.<sup>72</sup>

And never a straightforward one, we might add. Farrell further stated that he was most interested in presenting Sciascia in a readable, accessible format “in all his Sicilian authenticity”, rather than in concerning himself with translation theories.

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and masters”, one of the conclusions reached by the 2009 ‘Literary translation and culture’ conference in Brussels; see [http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news3306\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news3306_en.htm).

<sup>70</sup> Maria Sanchez, *The Problems of Literary Translation* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 10, 137. Sanchez also notes that what a good literary translator gives us is one creation of one possible version of somebody else’s thoughts (p. 11). In their introduction to *Translation and Creativity* (London: Continuum, 2006), Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella (eds) point, similarly, to “the relative nature of translational practices and strategies” and to the role of subjectivity (pp. 1-3).

<sup>71</sup> Barbieri, Ania Interview.

<sup>72</sup> Farrell, personal communication, 21 March 2011.

Translators read, interpret and rewrite the original, taking apart words, expressions and structures (consciously or otherwise), and re-assembling them for a new reader-interpreter and cultural context. For translation theorist Rainer Schulte, “No scholar explores the linguistic and aesthetic interaction of a literary text with the same attention to detail and contextual thinking as does the translator.”<sup>73</sup> And perhaps this explains why translators are frequently also writers themselves, or academics, interested in the language and literature of a particular country.<sup>74</sup> Tim Parks agrees: the translator “must read with the sensibility of the very best literary critic to have any chance at all of capturing the essential traits of a complex text.”<sup>75</sup>

Investigations into translation across Europe reveal that today, because of the globalized environment in which we live, writers can even write with the translation of their work in mind, choosing appropriately transferable concepts, contexts, even names.<sup>76</sup> Leonardo Sciascia said, and with some justification, that he abhorred being seen as some sort of prophet.<sup>77</sup> Yet, if we remember those deeper truths lying beneath the surface of reality that the Sicilian author sought with such commitment, passion, and sophistication to convey, and his revelations of local to national to universal shifts (in the *gialli*), then his prescience, or ‘future memory’, is in no doubt.

Sciascia used Sicily as a metaphor for the world. Widely read, he appreciated the value of translation as a way of disseminating the literature, art and culture of another country. Translation too is a metaphor, a ‘carrying across or beyond’ (both deriving from the Greek, μεταφορῶ, or *meta + ferein*, to carry across), whether we replace the translator with a conductor interpreting a musical score or, better, a painter reproducing an artwork.<sup>78</sup> A translator conveys and extends the memory of the original, painting the same (and yet a new) picture for a new exhibition. For Sciascia, who followed the art world so closely, collaborated with artists, and integrated allusions to it in his own work (sprinkling a dozen or so artists’ names through the narrative of *Todo modo*, indeed), it is a particularly fitting metaphor with which to close.

Disegnai per un paio di ore. La mia mano era appena un po’ piú nervosa del solito; ma non un solo tratto che sul foglio mi si spezzasse o impennasse, anche impercettibilmente. Soltanto una inusitata celerità e quasi ritmica, come dettata da un lontano e segreto tempo musicale.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Rainer Schulte (cited by EZRA, online journal of translation); see [http://www.ezratranslation.com/uploads/Ezra\\_SP10\\_ARCH.pdf](http://www.ezratranslation.com/uploads/Ezra_SP10_ARCH.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> Choosing to translate a particular work, indeed, can be the greatest compliment a critic-translator can pay to an author.

<sup>75</sup> Parks, *Translating Style: a Literary Approach to Translation; a Translation Approach to Literature* (Manchester: St Jerome Publishing, 2007), p. 248. Every decision must be taken, he adds, to suit the whole (p. 248).

<sup>76</sup> Parks also makes this point; see pp. x, 245.

<sup>77</sup> See *A futura memoria* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992) p. 57; the context for Sciascia’s remark was a journalist’s (mistaken) assumption that Dalla Chiesa had been the inspiration for Captain Bellodi.

<sup>78</sup> See Michael Hanne’s lively discussion, ‘Metaphors for the Translator’, in Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush, *The Translator as Writer* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 208-24. See also Sciascia, ‘Del tradurre’, in *Rendiconti*, n. 1, 1961, cited in Giovanna Lombardo, *Il Critico collaterale: Leonardo Sciascia e i suoi editori* (Milan: La Vita Felice, 2008).

<sup>79</sup> *Todo modo* (Einaudi, 1976), p. 116; *One Way or Another* (Carcanet, 1987), p. 97.

A translator, or writer, could not wish for a better process and result – always hoping, of course, to be endowed with ‘warm feet’ rather than the devil’s (or Don Gaetano’s) spectacles.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> See *Todo modo*, pp. 18, 29; *One Way or Another*, pp. 19, 27.