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A SUCCESSFUL TRANSLATION. A SURVEY OF THE *HEROIDES* BY REMIGIO NANNINI (1560)

Introduction

The successful translation of the *Heroides* into unrhymed endecasyllables by Remigio Nannini (1518-1580),¹ also known as Remigio Fiorentino, constitutes one of the most interesting demonstrations of the vitality and popularity of the sylloge in Renaissance Italy.² The earlier versions of Ovid's epistles in an Italian vernacular appear in 14th-century Florence:³ by virtue of its success and linguistic clarity, mention should be made of Filippo Ceffi's masterful prose translation,⁴ datable to

¹ Nannini, a poet and Dominican friar, contributed to the Venetian printing house of Gabriele Giolito (see A. Nuovo, Ch. Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell'Italia del XVI secolo*, Genève 2005); on the author's life and works see M. Zaggia, *Tra Mantova e la Sicilia nel Cinquecento*, vol. I, Florence 2003, 384-386; V. Caputo, *Le vite in tipografia: Dolce, Porcacchi, Varchi and N. nella stamperia del Giolito*, in «Studi rinascimentali», V (2007), 87-102, C. Tomei, *Nannini, Remigio*, in *Dizion. biogr. degli Italiani*, LXXVII, Roma 2012, 734-738 and A. Comboni, *Remigio Nannini curatore-correttore editoriale di testi in volgare: appunti per una ricerca*, in E. Garavelli, E. Suomela-Harma, *Dal manoscritto al web: canali e modalità di trasmissione dell'italiano*, Firenze 2014, 103-113.

² On the *Fortleben* of the *Heroides*, which were very broad from the Middle Ages to the modern age, see the studies by H. Dörrie (*L'épître héroïque dans les littératures modernes. Recherches sur la postérité des "Epistulae Heroidum" d'Ovide*, in «Revue de Littérature Comparée», XL (1966), 48-64 and *Der heroische Brief. Bestandsaufnahme, Geschichte, Kritik einer humanistisch-barocken Literaturgattung*, Berlin 1968), the last critical editor of the Ovidian collection.

³ In Florence, Ovid's works are appreciated both for the centrality of the love theme, fully adhering to the interests of the literati of the time, and for the wide repertoire of fables and myths that lend themselves to an allegorical and moralising reading (the 'moralised' reception of Ovid, widespread in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, remained alive in the Renaissance: see J.-M. Fritz (éd), *Ovide moralisés latins: Arnoul d'Orléans, Allegoriae; Jean de Garlande, Integumenta; Giovanni del Virgilio, Allegoriae*, Paris 2022): it is no coincidence, in fact, that Nannini's translation - whose moralistic declination emerges clearly in the prose added before and after the epistles - is preceded by an allegorisation of the *Heroides* by Aurelius Albutius, published in Milan in 1542.

⁴ Preceding Ceffi's translation was the so-called «volgarizzamento Gaddiano», which, transmitted with no author's name in the Laurentian Gaddian rel. 71, presents a wide set of glosses to the text; M. Zaggia offered an overview of this translation: *Ovid. "Heroides". Volgarizzamento fiorentino di Filippo Ceffi*, vol. I: *Introduzione, testo secondo l'autografo e glossario*, Firenze 2009, 223-228; the five epistles that can definitely be ascribed to such

around 1325 and preserved in the autograph codex Vat. Pal. lat. 1644.⁵ Subsequently, the *Heroides* served as a model in Giovanni Boccaccio's literary and erudite production, who extensively exploits not only the Latin text of the Ovidian epistles, but also Ceffi's translation, especially in the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*.⁶

In the 16th century, a new impulse to translate ancient texts into vernacular, which had risen to full literary dignity thanks to the 'Three Crowns', was fostered by new reflections on language.⁷ The vernacular prose translation that was for a long time attributed to a contemporary of Boccaccio (Carlo Figiovanni), which turned out to be a skilful forgery dating back to the early 16th century,⁸ demonstrates not only the identification of the 14th-century Florentine vernacular as a language model, but also the renewed interest of authors in the Ovidian epistolary collection. In such a cultural climate, the tendency to privilege the translation of ancient

a translation (letters of Penelope, Phyllis, Briseis, Oenon and Ipsipile) have been edited by A. D'Agostino-L. Barbieri, *Istoriotta troiana con le Eroidi gaddiane glossate. Studio, edizione critica e glossario*, Milano 2017.

⁵ M. Zaggia has devoted three dense volumes to the critical edition, commentary and fortune of Ceffi's translation (in addition to the first volume of 2009, mentioned in the previous footnote, see vol. II, *I testimoni oltre l'autografo: ordinamento stemmatico e storia della tradizione*, Firenze 2014, and vol. III, *Le varianti di una tradizione innovativa e le chiose aggiunte*, Pisa 2015); the general introduction, which dwells extensively on Ovid's fortune in the Middle Ages and in the vernaculars (vol. I, 3-359), is very important; see also G. Frosini, *La parte della lingua nell'edizione degli autografi*, «Medioevo e rinascimento», XXIII (2012), 149-172.

⁶ On the reuse of Ceffi's translation in the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta* see R. Bragantini, *La sperimentazione in prosa: il "Filocolo" e l'"Elegia di madonna Fiammetta"*, in M. Fiorilla-I. Iocca, *Boccaccio*, Roma 2021, 88; for further insights into Boccaccio's engagement with vernacular translations of Latin classics, see also Stefano Carrai, *Boccaccio volgarizzatore*, in S. Bischetti, M. Lodone, C. Lorenzi, A. Montefusco, *Toscana bilingue (1260 ca. - 1430 ca.). Per una storia sociale del tradurre medievale*, Berlin-Boston 2021, 355-367. Vernacular translations of the *Heroides* in the 15th century are less attested: a prose version prepared in Naples in 1478 is reported by L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid surveyed. An abridgment for the general reader of 'Ovid recalled'*, Cambridge 1962, 187.

⁷ In 1525 Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* was published; the crisis of the vulgarizations at the beginning of the 16th century is illustrated by C. Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*, Torino 1980², 156-178 (*Tradizione classica e volgarizzamenti*); according to E. Ardisino, *Recensione a Remigio Nannini. – Epistole d'Ovidio. – Torino, Edizioni RES (Collezione di traduttori), 1992, pp. 276*, in «Giornale storico della Letteratura Italiana», CLXXIII (1996), 288, translations such as Nannini's demonstrate the dignity that the Tuscan language had earned thanks to the linguistic reflections and literary production of the early 16th century.

⁸ For a long time, critics assumed that Figiovanni could be identified with a friend of Boccaccio's; E. Bellorini's study, *Note sulla traduzione delle "Eroidi" ovidiane attribuita a Carlo Figiovanni*, in *Raccolta di studii critici dedicata ad Alessandro d'Ancona festeggiandosi il XL anniversario del suo insegnamento*, Firenze 1901, 13-22, showed that Figiovanni's translation dates back to the first decades of the 16th century.

poetic texts into verse explains the various 16th-century reprints (1502, 1508, 1510, 1515, 1518) of the translation of the *Heroides* into octaves by Domenico da Monticchiello, who lived in the second half of the 14th century.

Within Nannini's production, the translation of the *Heroides* represents a particular experiment: *magister* of theology from 1553, the author dedicated himself mainly to devotional commentaries and historical treatises, as his greatest literary successes demonstrate.⁹ In 1547, however, Nannini published in Venice a collection of *Rime*¹⁰ in Petrarchan style, demonstrating not only the author's familiarity with the *topoi* of classical, courtly, and Stilnovistic poetry, but also his tendency to experiment with different metrical forms and prosodic solutions; furthermore, the six "selve" in unrhymed verse at the beginning of the work prelude to his choice of the endecasillable as the metre for his version of the heroic epistles by Ovid.

It comes as no surprise that Nannini, a rigorous advocate of Catholic orthodoxy threatened by the Reformation, repudiated his own translation of the *Heroides*: indeed, in a letter to Piero Boninsegni dated 15 April 1569, the author expresses regret for this poetic *lusus* and accuses himself of having scandalised many people.¹¹ First printed in Venice in 1555, the poetic translation of Ovid's epistles was revised and enriched in 1560 with a prose conclusion sealing each letter,¹² already provided with a prologue.¹³ It is also worth noting that the success of Nannini's version is documented

⁹ The anthology of vernacular readings from the *New Testament*, enriched with moral commentaries, was printed in Venice in 1567 and, because of its strict adherence to the dictates of the Counter-Reformation, underwent numerous re-editions up to the 19th century; «una visione razionale e pragmatica del reale» and a profound knowledge of the dynamics that regulate the political-institutional sphere (Tomei, *Nannini, Remigio...*, 737) surface in the work of greatest commitment, namely *Considerazioni civili sopra l'histoire di Francesco Guicciardini e d'altri historici*, published posthumously in Venice in 1582; an appendix to this treatise contains a series of precious *Lettere familiari*. As proof of a strong interest in historiography, the first edition of the *Eroidi d'Ovidio* was preceded by the vulgarizations of Cornelius Nepos and Ammianus Marcellinus published in 1550, the first modern language versions of both works.

¹⁰ D. Chiodo, *Remigio Nannini. Rime*, Torino 1997 republished Nannini's *Rime*; he also edited the reprint of the translation of the *Heroides* (*Remigio Nannini. Epistole d'Ovidio*, Torino 1992), based on the 1560 edition and used here as a reference text; the Latin text is taken from Ubertinus Clericus' commentary (see below).

¹¹ *Lettere familiari*, in *Considerazioni civili sopra l'histoire di Francesco Guicciardini e d'altri historici*, Venezia 1582, c. 189v.

¹² As Chiodo, *Remigio Nannini. Epistole d'Ovidio...* 275 points out, it is not certain that the prose was written by Nannini himself.

¹³ *Epistole d'Ovidio di Remigio Fiorentino divise in due libri. Con le dichiarazioni in margine delle Favole, e dell'Historie. Et con la tavola delle cose notevoli*. Con privilegio. In Vinegia, appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrati, MDLX.

long before the series of Italian and foreign reprints that followed in subsequent centuries.¹⁴ In the prefatory letter to his friend Tomasso Ginori dated 25 December 1559, with evident modesty the author asks himself whether he has not betrayed rather than translated («più tradite che tradotte») the «Pistole d'Ovidio» and recounts that he submitted the translation of some epistles to the judgement of his friends,¹⁵ who, after having modified it in various ways, circulated it against the translator's wishes.¹⁶ Therefore, in spite of the *deminutio* of his own enterprise, Nannini's decisive stance against remakes and unauthorised reprints, which induced him to publish a new edition, shows a certain pride and an awareness of the value of his work.

The present contribution aims to examine a selection of significant examples and to illustrate Nannini's translation strategies, hermeneutic purposes and reuse of classical models. However, in order to fully appreciate the scholar's operation, we need as complete, as far as possible, and an in-depth and systematic study of the commentaries on the *Heroides* produced in the Humanistic and Renaissance ages (this field of study has been little developed so far).¹⁷ Within these limits, the synoptic reading of the Latin text and the vernacular version allows us to ascertain that the 'betrayals' take different forms and are connected to the rhetorical framework and aims of his exegetical work: for the author does not simply translate

¹⁴ On the reprints of Nannini's *Heroides*, see S. Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de'Ferrari da Trino di Monferrato*, vol. I, Roma 1890, 461-462 and vol. II, Roma 1895, 87 e 249; the success of Nannini's translation in seventeenth-century opera has been emphasised by L. Bianconi, *Il Seicento*, Torino 1991, 234; T. Ragno, «Non immutate le moderne scene, ma rinnovate le antiche». *La ricezione del mito in P. P. Bissari, "Fedra incoronata" (1662)*, in «Invigilata Lucernis», XL (2019), 195 n. 37 e 203 n. 71 especially focused on the influence of Ariadne's epistle on P.P. Bissari's *Fedra incoronata* (1662).

¹⁵ «Secondo un certo mio liberal costume, ne andava mostrando agli amici quando una e quando un'altra, più perché mi fossero mostrati gli errori che per esserne lodato» (the letter to Ginori was reprinted by Chiodo, *Remigio Nannini. Epistole d'Ovidio...*, 5-6); the author probably refers to a manuscript circulation.

¹⁶ On statements similar to Nannini's in the prefaces to translations coeval with that of the *Heroides*, see B. Guthmüller, *Letteratura nazionale e traduzione dei classici*, in «Lettere italiane», XLV (1993), 501-518.

¹⁷ On the other hand, medieval and humanistic commentaries on the *Metamorfosi* have been extensively studied by Frank Coulson, whose most recent contributions I will only mention here: F. Coulson-P.A. Martina-C. Wille-M. Brusca, *Commentaire vulgate des "Métamorphoses" d'Ovide*, Paris 2021; F. Coulson-G. Dinkova-Bruun, *Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries: Annotated Lists and Guides- Ovid, "Metamorphoses"* (12), Toronto 2022; see also *Un commentaire médiéval aux "Métamorphoses". Le Vaticanus Latinus 1479, Livres I à V*. Texte établi, introduit et annoté par L. Ciccone et traduit par M. Possamai-Perez, avec la collaboration de P. Deleville, Paris 2020 and *Un commentaire médiéval aux "Métamorphoses". Le Vaticanus Latinus 1479, Livres VI à X*. Texte établi, introduit et annoté par L. Ciccone et traduit par M. Possamai-Perez, avec la collaboration de I. Salvo Garcia, Paris 2022.

Ovid's poem with pedantic fidelity, but strives to draft a translation that, by virtue of a clear tendency towards expansion, clarifies the meanings of the source text and, by means of a refined and sometimes pompous style, reproduces the querulous tone of the *scribentes* heroines.

Debts to the commentary by Ubertinus Clericus and Janus Parrhasius

D. Chiodo¹⁸ believes it is likely that the author exploited the commentary on the *Heroides* published in Venice in 1543,¹⁹ in which the *enarrationes* by Ubertinus Clericus Crescentinas (†1483) and Janus Parrhasius (Giovanni Paolo Parisio, 1470-1522) converge; on the other hand, as it will be discussed in this contribution, Nannini may also have exploited other commentaries of the *Heroides* circulating in the mid-sixteenth century.²⁰

First of all, faithfulness to Ubertinus' commentary can be seen in the *accessus*, which outline the essential developments of the *fabula* and enunciate a moral and often take the form of vernacular translations of the exegetical annotations found in the Venetian edition: suffice to mention the legend of Ulysses' death at the hands of Telegonus, narrated in the prose conclusion of the first epistle.²¹

¹⁸ Remigio Nannini. *Epistole d'Ovidio...*, 275; however, this dependence is questioned by G.S. Galbiati, *Primi sondaggi sulla traduzione delle ovidiane "Heroides" di Remigio Nannini*, in Ph. Bossier, H. Hendrix, P. Procaccioli, *Dynamic Translations in the European Renaissance, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Groningen 21-22 ottobre 2010*, Manziana 2011, 50 n. 24 and Ead., *Saffo nella traduzione delle "Heroides" di Remigio Nannini*, in A. Chemello, *Saffo. Riscritture e interpretazioni dal XVI al XX secolo*, Padova 2015, 40, n. 30.

¹⁹ P. Ovidii Nasonis *Heroides cum interpretibus Hubertino Crescentio et Iano Parrhasio*, Venezia 1543 (but a year earlier this commentary was edited in Brescia by Ludovicus Britannicus); within this commentary there are also notes by Domitius Calderinus (1446-1478), Joannes Baptista Egnatius (G.B. Cipelli, 1478-1553), and Jodocus Badius Ascensius (Josse Bade van Assche, 1462-1535).

²⁰ Guy Morillon's commentary was printed in Venice in 1546: *Heroidum Epistole Pub. Ovidii Nasonis et Auli Sabini responsiones, cum Guidonis Morillonis argumentis ac scholijs. His accesserunt Ioannis Baptistae Egnatij observationes, ex officina Erasmiiana apud Vincentium Valgrisi sum.*

²¹ The same fidelity can also be seen in *epist.* 2 (Ubertinus, p. 41), 3 (Ubertinus, pp. 65-66), 5 (Ubertinus, pp. 109-110).

Ubertinus, p. 40:²²

*Postremo a Thelogono filio, quem ex Circe suscep-
erat, cum non cognosceretur esse pater, inter-
fectus est [...] Penelope usque ad ultimum spi-
ritum pudice vixisse dicitur: unde pro exemplo
pudicitiae a poetis praeponi solet*

Nannini, p. 15:

Fu poi Ulisse ammazzato da Telegono suo
figliuolo che gli aveva partorito Circe, non
lo conoscendo egli per padre. E Penelope
visse insino all'ultima vecchiezza continente
e pudica [...] E per questa cagione i poeti la
sogliono mettere per esempio di pudicitia.

However, some passages of Sappho's epistle – the twenty-first in the Florentine collection – demonstrate that Nannini most likely exploited different commentaries on the *Heroides*. In fact, on the basis of an alternative lesson transmitted by *recentiores* (v. 19 *hic sine crimine*) and accepted in Guy Morillon's commentary,²³ the translator reverses the meaning of the litotes *non sine crimine*, a textual form accepted by Ubertinus: in Nannini's version, Sappho affirms that the love reserved for the maidens of the thiasos was not guilty: «Ed altre cento poi fanciulle e donne, / che castamente amai» (*Safo a Faone*, vv. 37-38²⁴). Furthermore, if Ubertinus' text ascribes to a Naiad the exhortation to throw herself from the cliff of Lefkada (Ov. *epist.* 15,162 *constitit ante oculos Nayas una meos*),²⁵ Nannini's version, however, conforms to the vulgate lesson of such a pentameter (*formosus puer est visus adesse mihi*): it is not a Naiad but Cupid who exhorts the poetess to suicide: «Mi parve un garzon nudo aver inanzi / di bellissimo aspetto» (*Safo a Faone*, vv. 339-340).

Moreover, Ubertinus' glosses often lead the translator to a fallacious decoding of the Latin text: when Phaedra, with bitter sarcasm, exhorts Hippolytus to respect the sanctity of Theseus's wedding, who, as husband and father, has repeatedly humiliated his son and wife, the commentator grasps the irony conveyed by the adjective *meritus*; Nannini translates the gloss literally, but does not see in the attribute a reference to the (lack of) merit of the father:

²² The transcription of the commentary notes has been adjusted to align with modern standards of formatting and punctuation.

²³ There is also an interpretation of Domitius Calderinus (p. 441) in the Brescia commentary (1542): (Anattoria, Cidro, Attide) *quas vero nunc designat fuisse discipulas, et sine infamia fuisse amatas. Sine crimine: sine criminatione, et reprehensione, qua non caruit in illis tribus. Hic ostendit se de popularibus suis intellexisse.*

²⁴ Galbiati, *Primi sondaggi...*, 57, believes that Nannini's translation censured Ovid's Sappho; however, in the later contribution, *Saffo nella traduzione...*, 40, she speculates that Nannini took into account an alternative lesson, without denying the hypothesis of a censorial intervention by the translator.

²⁵ Today accepted by most editors (Palmer, Bornecque, Showerman, Dörrie), the lesson *constitit ante oculos Naias una meos* appears only in manuscript F (Frankfurt, Univ. Barth. 110, 13th century¹, France).

Ov. <i>epist.</i> 4,127: i nunc et meriti lectum reve- rere parentis ²⁶	Ubertinus, p. 103: meriti: irronice, quasi dicat: immo, non meriti	Nannini, Fedra a Ippolito, v. 257: Del mai da te non meritato padre.
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Besides, in Phaedra's epistle the commentator ignores the concessive nuance of the conjunction *quod* in vv. 157-159, judged to be equivalent to *quid mihi prodest?* on the basis of the variant reading *quid mihi*, whose existence is also attested by Ubertinus; influenced by this interpretation, Nannini reads the Latin text according to the commentary note:²⁷

Ov. <i>epist.</i> 4,157-160: quod mihi sit genitor, qui possidet aequora, Minos, / quod veniant proavi ful- mina torta manu, / quod sit avus radiis frontem vallatus acutis, / purpureo tepidum qui movet axe diem	Ubertinus, p. 107: Quod mihi: legitur etiam “Quid mihi”, et melior est lectio, quasi dicat: quid pro- dest nunc mihi nobilitas? quid mei maiores? nam no- bilitas ab amore vincitur et ei cedit	Nannini, Fedra a Ippolito, vv. 333-340: Che mi val or che 'l mio gran padre abbracci / molto spazio di mare, o che dal cielo / scendino i tuoni e le saette ardenti / per man di Giove a sbigottir la terra, / o che mi giova, oimè, ch'in- torno intorno / abbia di raggi d'or mio avo illustre / la fronte cinta, e col vermi- glio carro / dopo l'ombra ai mortali il giorno apportì?
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In *Heroides* V, Oenon adopts the noun *rudimentum* to define the disgraceful beginning of the affair between Helen and Paris,²⁸ who put the kidnapping of a woman before the good of his homeland; it is likely that in this context too Nannini translates according to Ubertinus' *interpretamentum*, convinced that the term *rudimentum* is equivalent to *institutio*:

²⁶ The *Heroides* text is cited from the annotated edition by Ubertinus.

²⁷ Note the addition of the adverb «ora», which takes up the term *nunc* from Ubertinus' note and supports the hypothesis of a direct descent of the version from the commentary.

²⁸ See A. Palmer, *Ovid. "Heroides"*, new Introduction and Bibliography by Duncan F. Kennedy, vol. 2: *Commentary*, Oxford, 1898, 321: «*rudimentum* properly denoted the first essay of the young tiro».

Ov. epist. 5,97:	Ubertinus, p. 123:	Nannini, Enone a Paride, v. 192-195:
turpe rudimentum, patriae praeponere raptam	Turpe rudimentum, i(d est) turpis institutio	L'è brutta legge e disonesta usanza / preporre a donna, che nutrita e nata / nella tua patria sia, / una impudica / giovin, rapita, e meretrice infame». ²⁹

Additions

According to Galbiati,³⁰ the peculiarity of Nannini's translation consists in the expansion of the Latin text,³¹ which is particularly evident in the version of the opening and closing couplets.³² An eloquent example of such αὔξησις appears in vv. 41-44 of Penelope's epistle:

²⁹ In order not to burden the discourse with a long series of equivocal cases, it is considered appropriate here in the footnote to provide a list of exegetical notes that have influenced Nannini's translation: *epist.* 5,39-40 *anusque / longaeuosque senes*: Parrhasius, p. 116 *anus et longaeuos senes, sagos intelligit et conieciore*; N., vv. 77-83: «Corsi a le maghe incantatrice e vecchie, / e a' vecchi pien di malefici e d'anni, / bramosa di saper qual mai dovesse / esser il fin di tal giudicio odioso. / I quai mostrar che di travagli e sangue, / di pene e morti era presagio tristo / l'alta sentenza»; 14, 10 *quaeque aderant sacris, tendat in ora faces*: Ascensius, p. 296 *quae exuruntur, ut suffocentur, faces*; N., v. 28: «Onde 'l fumo m'affoghi o tragga gli occhi»; 17,170 *et melius famae verba dedisse fuit*: Ubertinus, p. 354 *dedisse verba famae, i(d est) decepisse ipsam famam et me non esse talem, qualem fama praedicat, hoc est, melius esset non observare fidem marito*; N., vv. 335-338: «E ben cred'io che meglio / fora ingannare il comun grido, e sotto / il vel dell'onestà gustar talora / d'un amante gentil gli amati frutti».

³⁰ *Primi sondaggi...*, 47.

³¹ In an epistle (*Lettere familiari*, in *Considerazioni civili sopra l'histoire di Francesco Guicciardini e d'altri historici*, Venezia 1582, c. 200b), Nannini approves a translation that adheres to the original text, without distortions of the sense and length of sentences (this is a judgement referring to a translation of the second book of *Aeneid*, which the author considered appreciable).

³² Examples of amplification are listed by Galbiati, *Primi sondaggi...*, 48-51; to corroborate the stylistic effort made by the narrator in the beginnings and closures of the epistles, one can add the case of *epist.* 8, 117-122: N., vv. 250-265: «Deh dolce Oreste mio, deh mio consorte / toglimi al mio nimico, io te ne prego / per la mal nostra avventurata stirpe, / e per quell'alto sacrosanto Giove / che le fu padre, al cui sol cenno il cielo / s'imbruna e rasserena, e 'l gran Nettuno / si conturba e tranquilla, e la gran mole / de la terra talor si scuote e muove. / Io te ne prego ancor per l'infelici / ossa d'Agamennon tuo padre, a cui / fui già nipote umil, ch'ancor sepolte / ti son tenute, poi che così giusta / e sì degna di lor vendetta festi: / perch'io fermata son d'esserti sposa, / o ne' verd'anni miei trarmi di vita, / et esser di me stessa acerba Parca».

Ov. *epist.* 1, 41-44:

ausus es, o nimium nimiumque oblite tuorum,
/ Tracia nocturno tangere castra
dolo, / totque simul mactare viros adiutus
ab uno. / At bene cautus eras, et memor
ante mei

Nannini, *Penelope a Ulisse*, vv. 85-97:

Troppo fu il grande ardir, troppo alta impresa / prendesti Ulisse, e ben mostrasti,
allora / che con l'animo invitto entrasti
dentro / ai traci padiglion di notte, e solo,
/ e con la scorta sol d'un fido amico / togliesti l'alma a tanti, aver te stesso, / la
consorte, il figliuol, la patria, 'l padre, / e
ciò che v'hai di buon, posto in oblio. / Tu
già ben fusti accorto, e de' perigli / saggio
conoscitore, e fusti ancora / ricordevol di
me: ma poi che dentro / a l'alma il tempo
intepidi l'ardore, / tu non timor, tu non
periglio attendi.

The heroine recalls Odysseus and Diomedes' nocturnal incursion into Dolon's camp, recounted in the book X of the *Iliad*, and reproaches her husband for the excessive audacity he displayed in such a risky undertaking.³³ In the vernacular rendering, Nannini emphasises Penelope's apprehension and not only explicates the generic *tuorum* in v. 41, but also senses that in the resentful memory of the heroine her husband's valiant action signals a weakening of love towards her. The author focuses on a textual segment of particular importance and, expanding it, rephrases it in such a way as to make the sense of the source text clearer and to reproduce its style. In most contexts, such additions can take the form either of a focus on a generic term, to which the translator gives a more precise connotation,³⁴ or of a reworking of *iuncturae*.³⁵

³³ On this point see also Ubertinus' note, p. 24.

³⁴ See, e. g., *epist.* 1, 27 *grata ferunt Nymphae pro salvis dona maritis* = N. vv. 56-57: «Porgon devote ai lor paterni Iddii / ostie, ghirlande, e sacrifici, e voti»; 4,26 *quae venit exacto tempore peius amat* = N. vv. 62-65 «ma quella ch'ama in più matura etate, / sente dentro al suo sen d'amor mai sempre / gli spron più duri, e più pungente il dardo, / più stretto il nodo, e più cocente il foco»; 8, 95 *non cultus tibi cura mei* = N. vv. 202-205: «Né ti calse adornarmi il collo o 'l petto / di perle e d'oro, od intrecciarmi il crine, / o che i biondi capei negletti ad arte / gisser lascivi alle mie guance intorno»; 12, 193 *redde torum, pro quo tot res insana reliqui* = N. vv. 412-414: «Renditi a me, per cui, misera e stolta, / tant'impero lasciai, tant'alto seggio, / tanto tesoro, e tante amate cose»; 18,206 *perstet hiems* = N. vv. 415-417: «Cresca l'impeto e 'l suon, la rabbia, e l'ira / degli Aquiloni, e del marino gregge / odasi risonar l'orribil grido».

³⁵ See, e. g., *epist.* 4, 14 *dabit victas ferreus ille manus* = N. vv. 33-37: «Bench'egli abbia / il cor di ferro, e di diamante il petto, / ei nondimen, tutto pietoso in vista / quasi umil vinto al vincitor gentile, / la man ti porgerà, le braccia, e 'l collo, / onde l'annodi, e l'incateni, e leghi»; 7, 179 *dum freta mitescunt* = N. vv. 373-377: «Sta' meco sol per fin ch'all'onde caggia / il furore e la rabbia, e fin che 'l cielo / i nembi scuota, e si disgombri

In order to clarify the Latin text, Nannini tends to reshape the passages requiring careful interpretation. In vv. 85-86 of Phyllis's letter, in which the maiden wishes to refute anyone who considers concrete consequences the only criterion for judging an action, in addition to the meaning conveyed by Ovid's verses, the author also delineates the heroine's opinion in a positive sense: indeed, it is right to look at the intention in view of which a deed was performed regardless of the negative result it produced:

Ov. *epist.* 2, 85-86

«Exitus acta probat». Careat successibus
opto / quisquis ab eventu facta notanda
putat

Nannini, *Fille a Demofonte*, vv. 144-147:

Il fin dimostra pur le cose fatte. / Ma non
abbia già mai successo buono / chi delle
imprese altrui non guarda il fine, / ma solo
i casi e gli accidenti attende.³⁶

The same tendency to illuminate the source with explanatory additions also emerges in the couplet in which Paris declares that he does not regret having awarded victory to Venus: Nannini's translation combines the negative utterance with the vindication of his own choice and captures, so to speak, the spirit of the sentence:³⁷

il manto / e negro vel che gli circonda intorno / empio Aquilon»; 13,131 *ventos audite retantis* = N. vv. 282-285: «Udite, udite / come stride Aquilon, come enfia il mare, / come risuona il cielo, e come freme / sopra l'onde fortuna».

³⁶ Ubertinus' observation (p. 56) appears to be at play in this translation as well: *sensus est, male illi eveniat qui non a fine rerum, sed ab eventu facta hominum denominat*.

³⁷ It should also not be excluded that Ascensius' note (p. 317) influences the translation: *elegisse stulte: quod te, potiusquam regna, vel virtutem elegerim*. In the version of the various epistles many are the examples of additions incorporated into the translation; here are some significant cases: *epist.* 2, 125-126 *et quaecumque procul venientia lintea vidi, / protinus illa meos auguror esse deos* = N. vv. 218-221: «E quelle vele ch'io da lunge scorgo / drizzarsi a' porti nostri, esser mi credo / le tue bramate, e che sien stati uditi / in cielo i pianti, e le preghiere, e i voti»; *epist.* 4,84 *denique nostra iuvat lumina, quidquid agis* = N. vv. 170-173: «Non men d'amor che meraviglia piena, / ogni atto miro, ed a quest'occhi piace / la destrezza, l'ardir, la forza, e l'arte: / ch'agli occhi di chi ama ogn'atto è bello»; *epist.* 7,13-14 *quaerenda per orbem / altera, quaesita est altera terra tibi* = N. vv. 22-26: «Tu fuggi una città già fatta, e segui / altra che far si deve, e nuovo albergo / brami acquistarti, e non attendi, folle, / che senza pur versar sudore o sangue, / t'hai soggiogato e la cittate e 'l regno»; *epist.* 8, 33 *at pater Aeacidae promiserat inscius acti* = N. vv. 67-70: «Ma lo mio genitor, ch'era allor quindi / troppo lontano, e non sapeva quanto / avesse fatto il diligente vecchio, / mi promesse al figliuol d'Achille altero»; *epist.* 12, 29-30 *accipit hospitio iuvenes Aeeta Pelasgos, / et premitis pictos, corpora Graia, toros* = N. vv. 64-70: «Egli cortese / accolse dentro al suo beato regno / voi greci altieri, e di lignaggio illustri, / e quale a voi era dovuto onore, / seder vi fe' sopra i dipinti letti / per dar riposo ai travagliati corpi, / ch'erano omai dal gran viaggio stanchi»; *epist.* 14, 26 *dantur in invitos impia tura focos* = N. vv. 64-67: «Già si spargea dentro a' sacrati fuochi, / che del nefando e sanguinoso effetto / quasi presaghi, a gran fatica al cielo / mandavan gli empi, et odiosi fumi»; *epist.* 16, 325-326 *si pudet et metuis ne me videre secuta, / ipse reus sine te criminis huius ero* = N. vv. 491-

Ov. *epist.* 16, 169-170 nec piget, haud unquam stulte elegisse videbor, / permanet in voto mens mea firma suo

Nannini, *Paride a Elena*, vv. 157-163:

Né de la impresa mia me stesso incolpo, / né del giudicio mio mi pento, o doglio, / anzi mi pregio, e me ne glorio, e vanto / ch'abbia bramato più gentile e bella / donna goder, che possedere in terra / cit-tadi o regni, o ne la schiera illustre / aver dei saggi il più supremo loco.

Additions to the Latin text not infrequently take the form of actual erudite notes 'interpolated' into the diegesis. Although no explicit reference to the hero's wrath appears in the Ovidian verses, Achilles' failure to oppose the delivery of Briseis to Eurybates and Thaltibius is ascribed to his fury («furore»). As an expert reader of the classics, Nannini refers the reader to Achilles' μῆνις, the cause of the hero's disdainful behaviour and – in a sort of resemantization of the Homeric concept – of his indifference towards the woman:

Ov. *epist.* 3, 7-8:

non, ego poscenti quod sum cito tradita regi, / culpa tua est, quamvis haec quoque culpa tua est

Nannini, *Ippodamia ad Achille*, vv. 14-24:

Del mio marito irato / lamenterommi, e di mia sorte avversa, / poi ch'a dolermi e lamentar m'invita / l'onta crudele, e l'inhumano oltraggio, / che fuor del merto mio, de la tua voglia, / lassa, sopporto; e so ben io che tua / non fu la colpa ond'io mandata fussi / al grand'Agamennon, ma il tuo furore / fu ben cagion dapoi che così presto, / senza pur dirmi a Dio, scacciata quasi / da te mio sposo, al tuo signor ne gissi.

In Briseis' letter, Nannini openly explains the reference to Meleager's death at the hands of Althaea, which is only hinted at by Ovid:

Ov. *epist.* 3, 93-94:

Nannini, *Ippodamia ad Achille*, vv. 220-223:

496: «E s'hai vergogna, o se paventi forse / di non parer che volontariamente / abbia seguito il peregrino amante, / io de la colpa, e violento furto / dirò d'esser cagion, ché dove un uomo / la forza adopra, ivi è il fallir men grave».

res audita mihi, nota est tibi: fratribus orba / E sai ben tu che la sua madre Altea, /
 / devovit nati spemque caputque parens / perch'egli avea di lei due frati ucciso, /
 sdegnosa il maledisse, e d'ira accesa / al suo proprio figliuol bramò la morte.³⁸

A similar taste for learned explanation shines through in the translation of verse 159 of Sappho's epistle:

Ov. *epist.* 15, 159: Nannini, *Safo a Faone*, vv. 331-334:
 quem supra ramos expandit aquatica lotos / E sopra cui de' suoi bei rami estende /
 quella ninfa gentil le frondi e l'ombra, /
 che di Priapo il gran furor fuggendo / in
 pianta si cangiò soave e bella.

The reference to the *aquatica lotos* is enriched by the reference to the *fabula* of the nymph Lotis – loved by Priapus and transformed into the lotus – recounted by Ovid in a cursory manner in the ninth book of the *Metamorphoses* (vv. 346-348) and more extensively in the first book of the *Fasti* (vv. 319-340).³⁹ Sometimes the propensity for learned expansion induces the author to profoundly transfigure the original text: in vv. 49-50 of Hermione's missive the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus perpetrated by Orestes, only evoked by the heroine, are recounted in detail to emphasise the apologetic tone characterising the reference to the *arma invidiosa* and to clarify the meaning of this phrase:

Ov. *epist.* 8, 49-50: Nannini, *Ermione a Oreste*, vv. 104-117:
 nec virtute cares: arma invidiosa tulisti; / Né manchi di valor, né di virtute, /
 sed tu quid faceres? induit illa pater / perch'ognun sa che da giusta ira mosso /
 ti volesti imbrattar le mani altere / del san-
 gue di tua madre, e dell'iniquo / crudele
 Egisto, e vendicasti l'onte / che quella, e
 questi, al genitor tuo fero: / e bench'altrui
 di scelerato e crudo / animo verso alla tua
 madre infame / ti dimostrasse il glorioso
 fatto, / che potevi tu fare? ella fu duce /
 con dare, ah! fero, ah! scelerata sposa, / al
 padre tuo la mal composta veste, / ond'ei

³⁸ The explanation of the mythological reference is also offered by Ubertinus, p. 78.

³⁹ See also Ov. *epist.* 15, 89-90 *hunc si conspiciat, quae conspiciat omnia, Phoebe, / iussus erit somnos continuare Phaon* = N., vv. 188-192: «E se dal cerchio suo la vaga e bella / candida luna il suo bel viso miri, / ella vorrà che su ne' monti, dove / suo bello Endimion s'adagia e dorme, / anch'ei si giaccia addormentato e stanco»; 18, 181-182 *velle quid est aliud fugientia prendere poma / spemque suo refugii fluminis ore sequi?* = N., vv. 359-363: «E ch'altro far desio che seguir sempre, / qual Tantalo al supplicio eterno dato, / i fuggitivi pomi, e beber l'acque, / che tanto fuggan più quanto più bramo / far l'assetate labbra a l'acque appresso?»

vilmente, e bruttamente ucciso / fosse
dall'empio e temerario Egisto».

Nannini's *doctrina* often seems aimed to display his poetic streak,⁴⁰ ennobled by occasional plundering of Dante's famous phrases;⁴¹ nevertheless, his translation reveals a profound knowledge of the *topoi* and lexicon of love poetry and an awareness of the learned allusions within the Ovidian text. In fact, in the rewriting of vv. 139-142 of Phaedra's letter, the poet adds to the elegiac scene of the lover sneaking into the house of the beloved woman references to *metus*, although Phaedra's fear stems not from the risk of being caught in an adulterous act, but from the incestuous nature of her desired relationship with Hippolytus.

Ov. *epist.* 4, 139-142:

viderit amplexus aliquis, speremus pariter, pariter
laudabimur ambo: / dicar metuamus amantes [...] nil
privigno fida noverca meo. metuam?
/ Non tibi per tenebras duri
reseranda mariti / ianua,
nec custos decipiendus erit

Ov. *am.* 2, 18(19), 5 e 55

Nannini, *Fedra a Ippolito*, vv.
282-292:

S'alcun vedrà che tu m'abbracci, o ch'io / dolcemente
talor ti stringa e baci, / sarei
laudati insieme, io d'esser pia / al mio figliastro, e
tu qual madre amata / aver
la dolce tua matrigna in pregio; / né d'uopo ti sarà con
fraude e tema / ne l'ombra
folte de l'oscura notte / del
geloso marito aprir tremando / le chiuse porte, o
con pregiati doni / farti benigno il camerier mal fido, /
od ingannar suo vigilante servo».

⁴⁰ Ov. *epist.* 12, 62 *mane erat et thalamo cara recepta soror*; N., vv. 136-141: «Già la bell'Alba, incoronata il crine / di rose, e d'amaranti, e di viole, / uscia di grembo al vecchiar del Titone, / quando da gran pietà sferzata e punta, / mia sorella s'entrò là dove io sola / misera mi giaceva»; 14,79 *mane erat*; N., vv. 188-189: «Già fuor de l'ocean levato aveva / la fronte Apollo, e n'arrecava il giorno».

⁴¹ Ov. *epist.* 18, 15 *protinus haec scribens «felix i, littera!» dixi*; N., vv. 33-36: «E d'amorosa invidia il cor compunto (~ *Inf.* 1, 15), / mentr' io scriveva, e rimembrando quale / di questa fia la contentezza estrema, / Vatten lieta, diss'io, beata carta»; 15,195 *nunc vellem facunda forem*; N., vv. 405-406: «Or bramo, lassa, aver leggiadro il verso, / e 'l bello stilo che m'ha fatto onore (~ *Inf.* 1, 87)»; anche il v. 237 dell'epistola di Saffo «il subito dolor mi fe' di smalto» (~ Ov. *epist.* 15, 110-111) riprende *Inf.* 9,52 «vegna Medusa: sì 'l farem di smalto».

In the last elegy of the second book of the *Amores*, in a paradoxical reversal of the exhortations to *vir* of the beloved maiden, Ovid considers the fear of being discovered to be the main lure of a secret affair: Hippolytus, therefore, will be able to openly enjoy Phaedra's love, without having to resort to deception and without fear of being caught in the act.

Similarly, in the translation of vv. 127-130 of Oenon's letter, where the heroine says she is sure Theseus has not returned a virgin Helen, whom he has kidnapped, Nannini clarifies the concept by virtue of which lovers intuit the (very often negative) future developments of their affair, that is, they perceive details invisible to those who do not love. Dido, who notices Aeneas' flight before it is announced (*praesensit*), and Pyramus and Thisbe,⁴² who do not miss the crack in the wall from which they can express – at least in words – their love, develop a similar faculty:

Ov. *epist.* 5, 127-130: Verg. *Aen.* 4, 296-297: Ov. *met.* 4, 67-68: Nannini, *Enone a Paride*, vv. 253-262:

illam de patria at regina dolos (quis id vitium, nulli per
Theseus, nisi no- fallere possit aman- saecula longa no-
mine fallor, / nescio tem?) / praesensit tatum / (quid non
quis Theseus abstu- sentit amor?),
lit ante sua. / A iu- primi vidistis,
vene et cupido cre- amantes
datur reddita virgo?
/ Unde haec com-
pererim tam bene,
quaeris? amo

E già ne' suoi primi
anni, un'altra volta /
rapita fu da l'amator
suo Teseo, / io non
so qual, e della patria
fore / vergine ancor
la trasse: e creder
deggio / che giovi-
netta, e grande-
mente amata / da
giovinetto amante,
al padre sia / vergin
tornata, et incor-
rotta, e casta? / Tu
mi domandi forse
ond'io sì fatte / cose
abbia intese? Or non
sai tu che nulla, / o
poco, a' veri amanti
Amore asconde?»

Abandoned by Jason, Medea laments losing the only man who, after the ruin of her kingdom, homeland and home, replaces all affection. Nannini intuites the Ovidian re-use of a famous passage from Andromache's ῥῆσις to Hector in the sixth book of the *Iliad* and combines the three

⁴² One cannot exclude the possibility that Nannini was inspired by Ubertinus's commentary, which refers to the Virgilian line (p. 128).

elements listed by the woman (12,161 *regno patriaque domoque*) with the ties of kinship and affection already mentioned by the Greek heroine:⁴³

Hom. *Il.* 6, 429-432:

Ἔκτορ ἄπαρ σὺ μοι ἔσσι
πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ /
ἦδὲ κασιγνήτος, σὺ δέ μοι
θαλερὸς παρακοίτης· / ἄλλ'
ἄγε νῦν ἐλέαιρε καὶ αὐτοῦ
μῖμν' ἐπὶ πύργῳ, / μὴ παῖδ'
ὄρφανικὸν θήης χήρην τε
γυναῖα

Ov. *epist.* 12, 161-162:

deseror, amissis regno pa-
triaeque domoque, / co-
niuge, qui nobis omnia so-
lus erat!

Nannini, *Medea a Giasone*,
vv. 344-347:

Cacciata son dal mio crudel
consorte, / che più che 'l re-
gno mio, più che mio padre,
/ più che mio frate amai,
anzi ei sol m'era / padre, re-
gno, fratello, albergo, e
sposo.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Although based on a selection of exemplary cases, the analysis of the translation reveals the criteria and goals of Nannini's learned operation. Unlike most ancient translations into vernacular and in the wake of other famous coeval translations,⁴⁵ this poetic version is not inspired by a strict and slavish fidelity to the Ovidian text, which is instead expanded, glossed and at times forced with a view to achieving his artistic and exegetical aims.

A century after Nannini, in the preface to the translation of the *Heroides* (1683) John Dryden (1631-1700) outlined a schematic partition of the different types of translation. The poet theorises a version similar to a paraphrase («Paraphrase, or Translation with Latitude»): unlike literal transposition («Metaphrase») and the systematic betrayal of the sense and words of the original («Imitation»), paraphrase represents the only model to give value to the source text, even if the meaning is privileged at the expense of its words.⁴⁶ Quite different from metaphrase, Nannini's

⁴³ It is not certain that Nannini drew directly from the Greek text; the possibility that he consulted a Latin translation faithful to the original, or that he became familiar with the Iliadic context through indirect transmission, cannot be excluded.

⁴⁴ See also *epist.* 3,52 *tu dominus, tu vir, tu mihi frater eras*, where Ovid translates the famous Iliadic verse (N., vv. 129-130: «E m'era solo il glorioso Achille / padre, patria, signor, fratello, e sposo»).

⁴⁵ Suffice it to recall Annibal Caro's *Aeneid* (unfinished and published posthumously in Venice in 1581, but composed between 1563 and 1566) or Lodovico Dolce's *Trasformazioni*, a version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1533); on the theory of translation in Nannini's age see Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia...* and B. Guthmüller, *Fausto da Longiano e il problema del tradurre*, in «Quaderni Veneti», XII (1990), 9-152.

⁴⁶ See L. Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, New York-London 2004², 38-42; on the importance of vernacular translations in the Renaissance, see also O. Merisalo, *Translating the Classics into the vernacular in sixteenth-century Italy*, in «Renaissance Studies», XXIX

version does not always reflect the meaning of the original and is, at times, more like an imitation than a paraphrase. It is precisely the continuous reinterpretations of the Latin model that make Nannini's *Heroides* a work quite different from the Augustan hypotext: the version, in fact, is configured as a functional tool for the full understanding of the meanings of the text and, at the same time, as an attempt to revive the tone and style of the heroines. Moreover, the latitude of the translation, often aimed at illustrating the moral content of the text, reveals the artistic and stylistic potential of the model: indeed, already favoured by the Florentine scholars in the transitional age between Dante and Boccaccio, the Ovidian epistles lend themselves well to a rewriting that combines learned content and allusiveness with stylistic refinement. It is likely that the extraordinary success of this translation depends precisely on its peculiar characteristics, i.e. its ability to fulfil erudite and artistic functions and its quest to fully penetrate the meaning of a work that demands a broad doctrine and a particularly refined taste: therefore, it is exactly Nannini's betrayals that produced the success of his disavowed translation for many generations of readers.

Breve sintesi: Nel 1560 Remigio Nannini, frate ed erudito fiorentino, pubblicò la sua fortunata traduzione delle *Heroides* di Ovidio in endecasillabi sciolti. Questo contributo intende illustrare le principali caratteristiche di quest'opera: Nannini, infatti, non si limitò a tradurre i versi latini, ma cercò di spiegare le parole di Ovidio e di emulare lo stile raffinato del modello in forza di aggiunte e chiarimenti.

Parole chiave: Ovidio, Traduzione, Rinascimento, Remigio Nannini

Abstract: In 1560 Remigio Nannini, Florentine friar and scholar, published his successful translation of Ovid's *Heroides* in unrhymed hendecasyllables. This essay aims to highlight the main features of this work: Nannini did not merely translate the latin verses; he also sought to clarify Ovid's words and to emulate the refined style of the model by means of additions and explanations.

Keywords: Ovidio, Translation, Renaissance, Remigio Nannini

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