INTRODUCTION

This book is a contribution to the exploration of the extensive but relatively neglected body of Latin writing about translation which was produced during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The subject was first suggested to me by the observation that Bolgar's appendix of translations in *The Classical Heritage* does not detail Latin translations of Greek texts.[1] In fact, works of synthesis have tended to pass over the productions of these translators. Gilbert Highet's study of the classical tradition, for example, specifically excludes Latin literature.[2] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff too places translations beyond the scope of his study, because, he argues, the Humanist translators were more often *littérateurs* than scholars.[3] Latin translations have thus fallen between two stools: they are too scholarly to receive the attention of literary historians, and too literary to interest the historians of scholarship.

This work emerged from an attempt to compile a survey of the Latin translators of the Renaissance touched upon in the histories of Sandys and Pfeiffer.[4] It is particularly indebted to the modern scholarship characterised by the work on the transmission of ancient Latin texts brought together by Reynolds in *Texts and Transmission*, and by similar studies of Greek texts by Wilson.[5] Yet although the *fortuna* of a number of Greek texts in the Renaissance is clarified in this book, my principal aim is to study what the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries thought of the translations of their predecessors, and how these ideas informed their own translations. It is an attempt to examine the ways Renaissance scholars thought about the transmission of the ancient works. The material for this study is scattered widely, in the prefaces of translations and editions of Greek authors, in occasional letters, and in

[1] Bolgar (1954). [2] Highet (1949). [3] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1921) 2, 10.
[4] Sandys (1908); Pfeiffer (1976).
[5] L. D. Reynolds (1983); Reynolds and Wilson (1974); Wilson (1992).

commentaries and annotations. I have chosen to focus on the work of three translators: Leonardo Bruni (c.1370–1444), Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) and Desiderius Erasmus (c.1469–1536). The work of these three figures spans the entire period under investigation. All three translators made translations of the central texts of their day, Aristotle and the Scriptures; all encountered criticism of their versions; and all wrote in defence of their methods of translation.

The translations of Leonardo Bruni mark the start of a process of translation which eventually transferred into Latin most of the literature salvaged from the Greek world. With the recent publication of the first volume of the *Repertorium Brunianum*, Bruni scholarship is gathering pace.[6] Much of the preparatory work for the long-meditated and much-needed edition of Bruni's correspondence has been completed.[7] Bruni's work as a translator constitutes a substantial portion of his writing, and some parts of this work have been carefully explored: James Hankins' work on his translations from Plato, for example, places their study on a new foundation.[8] However, not a few of Bruni's translations are still in manuscript, and most of the rest have not been edited since the sixteenth century. In particular, his translations from Plutarch and the Greek historians, and consequently his debt to Greek biography and historiography, remain poorly documented. While there is much more to be done in this area than can be achieved within the scope of this book, it is hoped that the contextualisation of some of his versions attempted here may lead to a reassessment of their significance. Although Bruni's essay on translation, *De interpretatione recta*, was edited by Hans Baron in 1927, it has attracted surprisingly little attention from modern scholars, perhaps because it attracted very little attention from Bruni's contemporaries. Here it is located, as Bruni conceived it, amongst the controversies surrounding his Aristotelian translations.

One Florentine translator certainly studied Bruni's essay on translation. Giannozzo Manetti is the least known of the three translators examined in this book. Recent editorial work is at last bringing some of Manetti's rarer works to light, but Manetti's

[6] Hankins (1997). [7] See Baron (1981); Viti (1992). [8] Hankins (1990).

translations have received little attention.[9] This is remarkable considering his position among the Latin translators of the fifteenth century. Manetti is an important link between the Florentine translators of the early fifteenth century and the Greek scholars who gathered around Pope Nicholas V in the middle years of the century. He was translating Aristotle at Rome during the great wave of Aristotelian translations produced during Nicholas' pontificate. If his translations of Aristotle's *Libri morales* look back to Bruni's *Ethics* controversy, then his work on a new translation of the Bible anticipates the New Testament scholarship of Erasmus. Not only was he translating the New Testament while Lorenzo Valla was preparing his influential annotations on the New Testament, he was also a Hebrew scholar of the first rank at a time when the language was almost unknown among Christian scholars in Italy. Here, I attempt to clarify the obscure history of his translations. His treatise on translation, *Apologeticus*, more substantial than either Jerome's or Bruni's comments on the matter, remained almost unknown from Manetti's day until it was edited by De Petris in 1981. It is a document of central importance to the history of fifteenth-century ideas about translation.

Manetti did not publish his New Testament translation, perhaps because he anticipated that it would involve him in controversy. Erasmus' New Testament translation, first printed in 1516, was one of the most controversial translations ever made. Although a number of aspects of Erasmus' work on the Scriptures have been explored, his *Annotations* on the New Testament have received less attention.[10] In fact, until the recent editorial work of Anne Reeve on the *Annotations*, finally completed in 1993, the systematic study of the development of Erasmus' ideas on translation was a laborious process.[11] The successive revisions and expansions of the *Annotations* revealed in Reeve's edition allow the accumulation of factors which informed Erasmus' renderings to be traced. His

[9] Recent editions include: *Vita Socratis* (1974), *Vita Senecae* (1976), *Apologeticus* (1981), *Dialogus consolatorius* (1983), *Apologia Nunni* and *Laudatio Dominae Agnetis Numantinae* (1989). I am preparing an edition of the *Exhortatio ad Calistum III*. Manetti's *De illustribus longevis*, and his *Adversus Iudeos et Gentes* remain in manuscript, as do all his translations.

[10] See, for example, Rabil (1972); Bentley (1983). I am indebted to Rummel (1986).

[11] A. Reeve (1986), (1990), (1993).

debt to Valla, and to Valla's concept of *Elegantiae*, has been well advertised, not least by Erasmus himself. Here, I stress that although Erasmus had very real doubts about the application of Valla's methods to the text of the New Testament, his citation of Valla's work in the *Annotations* is often tactical as well as philological. By repeatedly pointing out Valla's excesses, Erasmus attempts to make his own work appear more conservative than it really is.

If the advocates of Greek studies are to be believed, most students of Greek did not learn Greek to read Greek texts. It certainly appears that most Latinists acquired only a little Greek, and that they remained dependent on the translations made by other scholars. The final chapter suggests that the translations created by these scholars can be placed in several categories. Medieval versions tended to function as replacements for the original Greek text, partly because very few contemporaries could read any Greek, and partly because most medieval translations were of works of Greek science, the technical manuals of medicine and philosophy. In the fifteenth century different varieties of translation emerged. A new type of translation developed in the language schools as a supplement to Greek texts, to help students of Greek to learn the language. At the same time, Bruni revived an ancient conception of translation, touched on by Cicero and Quintilian, and produced his translations to compete with the original Greek texts, and with the Latin versions of his fellow translators. This method of translation was most appropriate for the literary works of Greek rhetoric and poetry, and Bruni justified its application to the works of Aristotle by redefining Aristotle as a rhetorical author. Subsequently, Manetti outlined the position that ancient translations of the Bible had been produced for specific reasons, and that new translations of Scriptural texts could also be justified in terms of the purposes they were created to serve. Erasmus, with the backing of his friend Thomas More, later developed this line of thought when he argued that it was better to have several versions of a difficult text than to have a single authoritative translation. In their different ways, the approaches of the teachers of Greek, and of Bruni, Manetti and Erasmus, encouraged readers to regard translations as temporary and replaceable accommodations with the Greek text. This development is described in the following pages.

1

LEONARDO BRUNI

Introduction

Leonardo Bruni was the most illustrious pupil of the famous Byzantine teacher Manuel Chrysoloras. He went on to become one of the most prolific translators of the fifteenth century. Bruni's development as a biographer and as an historian was stimulated and punctuated by his contact with a succession of Greek authors. This chapter attempts to assess Bruni's role in reorienting Latin thought in the light of these contacts with Greek texts. It is worth making this attempt because although several valuable studies of a number of Bruni's translations try to reconstruct his Greek manuscript sources, they are often uninterested in his attitudes to the texts he translates.[1] In the manuscript collections of Florence he had access to a large portion of the surviving corpus of Greek works; he also had a grasp of the Greek language rare among his contemporaries. He could have chosen to translate any number of authors. In this chapter, I shall examine the availability of Greek authors in Florence in the early years of the fifteenth century and attempt to identify some of the factors which led him to them.

To this end, I examine his apprenticeship as a biographer through his translations of Plutarch's *Lives*. Latin prejudices often made contact with Greek culture productive, and Bruni's own Latin biographies of Cicero and Demosthenes grew out of his dissatisfaction with this Greek source. Bruni also did a great deal to reshape the Latin historical tradition in the light of newly available Greek sources. Although his work as an historian has been the subject of a number of essays, his very real debt to Livy has often overshadowed the contributions made by Greek historians to

[1] See, for example, Accame Lanzillotta (1986); Berti (1978); Naldini (1984).

the development of his thought.[2] He applied his ideas about classical historiography to the problems of assessing Greek historical sources. To find out how he treated his Greek sources, I concentrate on three of his historical works: his *Commentaries* on the First Punic War, a work based on the early books of Polybius; his *Commentarium rerum Graecarum*, drawn from Xenophon's *Hellenica*; and his *De bello italico adversus Gothos gesto*, which he compiled from Procopius.

Bruni's rhetorical training also influenced his treatment of Greek texts. His most popular and most controversial translation, of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, replaced the literal medieval translations with a more classical Latin prose. In defence of his methods of translating Bruni wrote the treatise *De interpretatione recta*, a more extensive treatment of translation than anything which has survived from antiquity. I consider these works in the context of the criticisms of Bruni's translation put forward by his contemporary Alfonso, Bishop of Burgos, who takes issue with Bruni's conception of Aristotelian eloquence. In some modern criticism, Bruni's insistence on the philosopher's eloquence has been rather summarily treated. I hope to demonstrate the coherence of Bruni's ideas about Aristotle's *eloquentia*, and to show that they reopened an ancient debate about the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy.

Bruni's early Greek studies

Some time in the 1370s, the Archbishop of Thebes, Simon Atumano, translated Plutarch's *De remediis irae* into Latin.[3] Twenty years later Coluccio Salutati, Florentine Chancellor and patron of the young Leonardo Bruni, revised Atumano's translation of the treatise. Salutati was no Greek scholar and simply recast his predecessor's rendering into more elegant Latin. This marriage of Atumano's Greek learning and Salutati's Latinity was the best compromise possible at the time. As he wrote in the preface to his version,

[2] See, for example, Santini (1910); Santini's introduction to his edition of Bruni's history, Santini (1914–26); Ullman (1946).
[3] For the date of the version, see Mercati (1916) addendum.

Non sunt hoc tempore Ciceriones, Hieronymi, Rufini, Ambrosii vel Chalcidii, non Cassiodori, non Evagrii, non Boetii, quorum translationes tante sunt venustatis atque dulcedinis, quod nichil possit ornatus vel perspicuitatis in his que transtulerunt desiderari.[4]

[Today there are no Ciceros, Jeromes, Rufinuses, Ambroses or Chalcidiuses, no Cassiodoruses, no Evagriuses, no Boethiuses, whose translations are so attractive and pleasant that no refinement or clarity is lacking in what they have translated.]

This list pointedly excludes medieval translators, whose techniques Salutati identified with Atumano's. Bruni's early career as a translator was constructed to fill a gap which Salutati perceived. Having brought the Byzantine scholar Chrysoloras to Florence in 1397 the Chancellor encouraged Bruni, then a promising law student, to study Greek under him.[5] Bruni, who later provided alternatives to some of these medieval versions, shared the older man's opinions about medieval Greek learning. Clearly Salutati felt that he knew what a good translation ought to look like, even though he never mastered enough Greek to produce one himself.[6] It is likely that the essential elements of Bruni's ideas about translation were established under the influence of a man who knew no Greek, and before he himself had learnt any.

Salutati's interests can be discerned in many of Bruni's early translations. Bruni's Latin translation of St Basil's treatise *De studiis secularibus* was completed by May 1403, and dedicated to the Chancellor.[7] A letter of Salutati's uses Bruni's recent translation to vindicate his position on the study of pagan authors.[8] Through Bruni, Salutati was able to cite authorities that opponents had to respect, even if they could not read them. This was to be Bruni's only translation of a patristic work, and its purpose was to legitimise the study of pagan literature by Christians. It was chosen, he writes, 'quod maxime eum conducere ad studia nostra

[4] Novati (1891–1911) II: 482. Cited in Setton (1956) 50. I have modernised the punctuation of quotations throughout. All translations are my own.
[5] Bruni says, 'ego per id tempus Juri Civili operam dabam, non rudis tamen ceterorum studiorum' (Di Pierro (1914–26) 431).
[6] For Salutati's Greek, see Ullman (1963) 118–21. For four other fifteenth-century translations of the treatise, see Resta (1959) 237–41. Erasmus' version was published in 1525. See *EE* VI: 70–2.
[7] Baron (1928) 160–1.
[8] To Giovanni da Samminiato. Novati (1891–1911) IV: 170–205, 25 January 1405–1406?

arbitrati sumus'[9] [because I thought it contributed a great deal to our studies]. Its keynote – *non omnia nobis recipienda sunt, sed tantum utilia* – was to provide the standard justification for the study of pagan antiquity.[10] Under Chrysoloras, Bruni studied with Roberto Rossi, Pier Paolo Vergerio, Jacopo Angeli and Palla Strozzi. All of these students produced translations from the Greek, but none of these versions were as numerous, as ambitious or as elegant as Bruni's. To judge from the prefatory letter to this version of Basil, Bruni was excited by the extent of the Greek literature which he was beginning to uncover:

> Ego tibi hunc librum, Colucci, ex media (ut aiunt) Graecia delegi, ubi eiuscemodi rerum magna copia est et infinita paene multitudo. Nec veritus sum ne abs te ut parum liberalis ac sane ingratus accusarer, si ex tanta abundantia hoc tam parvum munus ad te mitterem.[11]
>
> [I have chosen this book for you, Coluccio, from the midst of Greece (as they say), where there is a great supply, a near-infinite multitude, of this sort of thing. And I was not afraid that you would reproach me for being ungenerous and ungrateful, if from such abundance I were to send to you such a small gift as this.]

This is an understandable reaction to the essay: Basil's work makes a point of quoting interesting passages from a large number of Greek authors. By the time he made this translation, Bruni was in a remarkable position. He had been given the key to a field almost entirely unexplored by western scholars. His grasp of the language was improving steadily, and many of the surviving works of classical Greek literature were available to him through Chrysoloras and the manuscript collections of his fellow students. The reasons which led Bruni to translate certain works cannot be evaluated without first attempting to discover which works were available to him before the important manuscript collections of Guarino, Aurispa and Filelfo reached Italy. Here, I shall piece together some of the scattered notices of Greek manuscripts to establish which Greek authors were used by this circle of students in Florence in the final years of the fourteenth century and the first years of the fifteenth.

No doubt one of the first texts they met was Chrysoloras' own grammar, *Erotemata*, produced by him for his western pupils.[12]

[9] Baron (1928) 99. [10] Naldini (1984) 241. [11] Baron (1928) 99.
[12] For Chrysoloras' grammar, see Pertusi (1962).

Chrysoloras himself seems to have introduced his students to a very wide range of authors. We know that he used several of Lucian's dialogues with his students, and a surviving manuscript made by one of his Florentine pupils throws some light on his teaching methods.[13] In the fourteenth century Boccaccio had begun his Greek studies with Homer, and throughout the fifteenth century he remained among the first authors encountered by students.[14] Vergerio certainly had a Greek manuscript of the *Odyssey* from Palla Strozzi in the winter of 1400–01.[15] A lost translation of Homer made by Vergerio has been tentatively assigned to this period.[16] Bruni's own prose translations from Homer were published in his maturity, but it seems likely that he too first met the poet under Chrysoloras' supervision.[17] He is able to cite the poet in his *Laudatio* of Florence, which was produced by 1404.[18] The *Laudatio* itself is modelled on Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, which must therefore have been available to Bruni in some form before this date.[19]

There are also good reasons to believe that many, if not all, of the works of another writer popular with students were in Florence at the time. Some time before 1403, Bruni translated Xenophon's *Hiero* and dedicated it to Niccolò Niccoli. In the preface he says that he translated the treatise 'ingenii exercendi gratia'[20] [to train my ability]. Bruni would have known that Cicero had translated Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* in his youth, and perhaps he was deliberately following Cicero's lead in choosing Xenophon to sharpen his Greek on.[21] Some remarks in the preface to his version of *Hiero* suggest that Bruni already knew another work of Xenophon, the

[13] Chrysoloras owned Vat.gr.87, from which Urb.gr.121 was made. An interlinear Latin gloss was added by an anonymous pupil. An anonymous Latin translation of Lucian was made from this copy before 26 May 1403. See Berti (1987).
[14] See Coulter (1926) and Boccaccio, *Genealogiae*, XV: 6–7.
[15] Smith (1934) Ep. 95. [16] Pertusi (1964) 522.
[17] Baron places the publication of Bruni's Homeric versions after 1421 (Baron (1928) 172); Pertusi dates them to 1405 (Pertusi (1964) 522). They have been edited by Thiermann who dates them c. 1438 ((1993) 126–9).
[18] Baron (1968) 237; *Iliad* XII: 278–86. The *Laudatio* was probably produced late summer 1404 (Hankins (1990) II: 377).
[19] For Bruni's use of Aristides in the *Laudatio*, see Santosuosso (1986). Palla Strozzi owned Urb.gr.123 of Aristides (Diller (1961) 316).
[20] Baron (1928) 100, 161. Bruni's version of *Hiero* was often reprinted until Erasmus' rendering replaced it in 1530.
[21] See *De officiis* II. 24. Cicero's translations are listed by Bruni in a letter of 1435 (Mehus (1741) VII: 4; Luiso (1980) VII: 4). This letter is edited in Birkenmajer (1922) 129–210.

Anabasis.[22] Bruni's interest in Xenophon continued. In a letter of 15 March 1407, Bruni writes from Rome that Pietro Miani has promised to send him some manuscripts: 'Habet enim . . . Plutarchi et Xenophontis quaedam volumina'[23] [For he has some volumes of Plutarch and Xenophon]. In the autumn he writes to Miani with a request for a Greek manuscript of the *Cyropaedia*.[24] In the same year Bruni paraphrased Xenophon's *Apologia Socratis*.[25] Xenophon's *Agesilaus* was perhaps known to Bruni by 1408.[26] Other, less common, authors can also be located in this period. Angeli owned a Greek manuscript of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, which he may have had before 1400.[27] We also know that when, in August 1401, Salutati requested from Angeli a copy of a passage from the *Heroicus* of Philostratus, Angeli responded by sending him the entire Greek manuscript.[28] It was presumably from this manuscript that Bruni translated for Salutati that part of the *Heroicus* which deals with Hector.[29] An extant Latin version of the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*, an account of the production of the Septuagint Greek translation of the Pentateuch, has been wrongly attributed to Angeli. The *Letter* will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, but for the moment it is enough to observe that the work can be situated within this Florentine context.[30]

We have already noticed Xenophon; of the other Greek historians, we know that at least some of Diodorus Siculus' work was available in Florence, because Bruni translated a passage from the

[22] Xenophon 'qui bellum difficillimum ac periculosissimum ita gessit, ut plurimis ex hoste victoriis summa cum gloria potiretur exercitumque victorem ex intimis Babyloniae finibus per infestissimas atque barbaras gentes ad patrias sedes reportaret incolumem' (Baron (1928) 101).
[23] Luiso (1980) II: 6. This passage is not in Mehus (1741).
[24] Luiso (1980) II: 16, October–November 1407.
[25] Marsh (1992) 109; Baron (1928) 187.
[26] On 17 September 1408 Bruni wrote to Niccoli 'Agesilaum tibi remittam propediem, ut opinor, si tamen per curas et dolorem mihi illum expolire licebit' (Luiso (1980) III: 3). This appears to refer to a translation rather than to an edited Greek text, but no version by Bruni of Xenophon's *Agesilaus* or Plutarch's biography of Agesilaus has come to light.
[27] Now Vatican Library Urb.gr.105. See Weiss (1955c) 261–2, described in Stornaiolo (1895) 161–2. This manuscript was later owned by Palla Strozzi (Diller (1961) 316).
[28] Weiss (1955c) 264–5. See Novati (1891–1911) III: 522–3, III: 547 and note.
[29] Novati (1891–1911) 547.
[30] Laur. 25. Sin.9, fols 3^{r}–27^{r}, dated 26 May 1403 and dedicated to 'Frater Thedaldus'. See chapter 2, 105–6. For the suggestion that this translation is Bruni's, see Weiss (1977b) 244–5.