Three Generations of British Women Translators: Sarah Austin's Legacy in the Long Nineteenth Century

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1. Introduction

This chapter examines the intellectual endeavours of Sarah Austin (née Taylor, 1793-1867), a British woman writer who in the nineteenth century achieved European recognition as an outstanding English translator whose work was both well received and popular (Johnston 2013). She facilitated intellectual exchanges, discourses, and collaborations by translating into English philosophical, historical, and literary texts originally produced in French, German, and Italian. She shaped an intellectual, active role for the translator that anticipated that of a cultural mediator, which she passed down to her daughter, Lucie Duff Gordon (née Austin, 1821-1869), and her granddaughter, Janet Ross (née Duff Gordon, 1842-1927). They too developed successful literary careers by mediating the history and literature, and political and philosophical debates of other European countries, in which they spent periods of their lives, for the British readership in the long nineteenth century. For these three generations of women writers translation was a valued form of writing which afforded them authority, authorship, and financial independence.

While the reputation of Duff Gordon and Ross, although still marginal, has been maintained by the literary status of their life and travel writing, Austin's professional writing career remains little known. I want to recover her contribution as a pioneer in claiming women's intellectual agency and authority as a translator. By translating the works of German and French intellectuals such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Victor Cousin (1792-1867), Austin contributed to shaping the reception of and the debates surrounding modern German and French philosophical thought and

political reform in nineteenth-century Britain. Significantly, I want to affirm her legacy as a British translator by exploring the intergenerational textual connections between her work and that of her daughter and granddaughter. Austin, Duff Gordon, and Ross shared intellectual interests, a talent for foreign languages, and a belief in their agency, in the words of Austin, as "an interpreter between nations" (1848, 86). Through translation they mediated between cultures and languages in the creation of texts that shaped transnational debates in Britain. In the words of Luise von Flotow, for them, "translation is as intentional, as activist, as deliberate as any feminist or otherwise socially-activist activity." (Flotow 2011, 4) It is in their paratexts, as this chapter will show, that they draw attention to their translations as texts designed to disseminate selected materials for a target language readership.

Eleonora Federici and Vita Fortunati emphasise how "feminist scholars [such as Barbara Godard, Sherry Simon and Luise von Flotow] have recovered a wide range of hidden voices of women translators and outlined the specificity of a feminine approach to the practice of translation through the centuries" (2011, 11). This chapter adds to the significant contribution made by translation studies to the understanding of the development of nineteenth-century women's intellectual lives in Europe by establishing the contribution of Austin, Duff Gordon, and Ross as influential agents in mediating through translation French, German and Italian philosophical and political discourses for a widening British readership. Informed by transnational discourses, their translations are texts aimed to be accessible and engaging culturally and politically for their British target audience. Furthermore, it draws attention to the ways in which Austin's approach to translation created a distinctive matrilineal intellectual legacy that affirms translating as a profession that facilitates women's literary and political agency. The multigenerational approach outlines how, in the nineteenth century, "women who

could translate were empowered to imagine a different discourse and ideological space" (Scholl 2011, 2) and to claim the act of translation as a form of writing giving them agency and visibility.

Since the 1970s feminist scholars have reshaped Victorian Studies and ways of understanding the long nineteenth century by giving women's socio-cultural, political, and intellectual contributions increasing recognition through scholarship on authorship, readership, and publishing. They have brought attention to women's writing as editors, reviewers, journalists, and contributors to periodicals. Interdisciplinary projects have broadened the horizons on women's literary production in the nineteenth century by including chapters on drama, periodical and travel writing, editing and reviewing, life writing, history, children's literature and art history. However, surveys such as *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* (2001) edited by Joanne Shattock and *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing* edited by Linda Peterson (2015) still do not envisage translation as a distinctive form of women's writing. In her introduction, nonetheless, Shattock acknowledges the significance of translating in establishing writing as a profession for women in the nineteenth century and, in her chapter, Elisabeth Jay discusses how women's knowledge of foreign languages was "put to good religious use" (Jay 2001, 258-9) in translation.

Translation studies are a viable means to pursue women writers' European and transatlantic literary connections as Judith Johnston (2008, 2013) and Lesa Scholl (2011) proved with valuable examinations of translation, authorship, and travel in their study of well-known and more unfamiliar Victorian women writers, including Sarah Austin. Hilary Fraser (2014) and Alison Chapman (2015) show how fruitful translation studies are in the study of women's authorship in the nineteenth century as they focus on the European multilingual networks of women writing art history and poetry. Like

Fraser, I believe translating, in the same way as fictional, travel, and life writing, "enabled women to explore prohibited territory under cover and to find an authoritative voice." (Fraser 2014, 63) Through translation, I claim, Austin found an authoritative literary voice and an intellectual legacy she transmitted to her daughter and granddaughter who, like her, engaged actively in the creation of the European intellectual discourses of their times.

This chapter first examines Austin's education and the English translations that established her role as a European cultural mediator. It then considers Duff Gordon's famous literary translations, and Ross's more eclectic writing career distinguished by her knowledge of Florentine history and culture. To highlight their intergenerational dynamics, I focus on those translations that exemplify their connections and collaborations as mothers and daughters starting with *The Story Without an End* (1834), Austin's translation a fairy tale by the German philosopher Friedrick Wilhelm Carové (1789-1852) that reveals in the prefatory letter a close relationship between a translating mother and her daughter, for whom the translation is originally meant. Ten years later, Austin's preface to the English translation of *Stories of the Gods and Heroes of Greece* (1843) by the German historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831), to which she gives her name as the editor, introduces her daughter, Duff Gordon, as a first-time translator. Ross's first publication as a translator also has the name of her mother on the front page as the editor whilst she remains anonymous (Ross 1891; Ross 1912). Following into the steps of her mother and grandmother, Ross translated into English French, German, and Italian texts. In the 1820s, Austin assisted Italian Risorgimento refugees, including Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827) and Santorre di Santa Rosa (1783-1825) and translated their writing (Ross 1893; Wicks 1937; Johnston 2008). Ross translated into English the autobiography of the decorated Italian general Enrico della Rocca

(1807-1897) in 1898, and the travel accounts by the merchant Francesco Carletti (1573-1636) in 1931 and by the Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733) in 1932.[1] She also translated her mother's *Letters from Egypt, 1863–65* (1865) into French in 1880. Her interest in the House of Medici inspired her publication of *Lives of the Early Medici as told in their Correspondence* (1910), and *Poesie volgari di Lorenzo de' Medici* (1912), edited with Edward Hutton (1875-1969).

2. 'An interpreter between nations'

Today Sarah Austin is recognised as a key contributor to the introduction of "German intellectual thought into England" (Johnston 2013, 59) together with Carlyle and Coleridge. In the Victorian era, reviewers recognised Austin's translations as "the benchmark for literary translation" (Burns 2016, 7). For example, the Irish scientific writer Dionysius Lardner (1793-1859) described Austin as "our best living translator" (Hamburger 1985, 71). In her matrilineal family biography, *Three Generations of English Women: Memoirs and Correspondence of Susannah Taylor, Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon* (1893), Ross identifies the origins of her grandmother's illustrious career in the unusually extensive education on which her great-grandmother, Susannah Taylor (née Cook, 1755-1823), insisted. Taylor was not a published author but, Ross claims, she "possessed the pen of a ready writer, and her literary faculty was inherited by her daughter, Mrs Austin, and her granddaughter, Lady Duff Gordon" (Ross 1893, 4). Ross then proceeds in proving her great-grandmother's writing talent through her correspondence that shines a light on the "liberal and thorough education, which included Latin, French, Italian, and German" (1893, 54) Taylor made available to her daughters from a young age. Susannah and her husband John Taylor (1750-1826) were

leading members of the Unitarian congregation of Norwich, related to the Martineaus,[2] and to the physician and writer Henry Reeve (1780-1814). Their household was a place for intellectual discussions by Whig and dissenting intellectuals where her two daughters and her five sons were stimulated to grow intellectually independent. As her letters recount, she argued that "a well-educated young woman may always provide for herself" (1893, 39). Education she insisted, would provide her daughters with the opportunity to have an independent, professional career. Like Johnston, she sees educated bourgeois women as "the engineers of culture and cultural exchange." (Johnston 2013, 8) Taylor also offered them models of women's intellectual achievement as professional writers through her friends Anna Laetitia Barbauld (née Aikin, 1743-1825), Amelia Opie (née Alderson, 1769-1853), and her niece Lucy Aikin (1781-1864) (Ross 1893; Hamburger 1985). Taylor was certain that "[b]esides the intrinsic pleasure to be derived from solid knowledge, a woman ought to consider it as her best resource against poverty" (1893, 34).

Reading extensively was central to this rigorous, forward-thinking education and Sarah Austin's reading list as a young woman remains impressive: it includes philosophical, historical, and political texts in a variety of languages (1893, 55). After her engagement to the legal philosopher John Austin (1790-1859), she also read authors such as Hume, Machiavelli, Cicero, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and Thomas Malthus. Ross's representation of her grandparents' marriage as an idyllic intellectual partnership between two minds equally engaged with the scholarly debates of their time does not reveal the full story. After their initial time in London where they lived near her husband's mentors, Bentham and James Mill, the Austins had to review their expectations. John's income was modest and Sarah started making good use of her education to develop a writing career by specialising in translating into English the

work of radical German, French, and Italian intellectuals of the time (Ross 1893; Wicks 1937; Johnston 2013). Her husband stopped practising as a solicitor in 1825, four years after the birth of their only child, Lucie, and did not succeed in building an academic career.[3] Sarah used her initiative and resourcefulness and became, in her own words, "the man of business" (Hamburger 1985, 66) who sustained the family financially with her writing as an editor, reviewer, and translator.

After a Spanish-English technical vocabulary (1825), and anonymous translations, such as *Lays of the Minnesingers or German Troubadours of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century* (1825) with her cousin Edgar Taylor (1793-1839), and Foscolo's article, "History of the Democratic Constitution of Venice" (1826), Austin built a literary career as a prominent, skilful translator of French and German intellectuals and scholars she often knew personally and with whom she engaged dialectically. An esteemed salon hostess in London and Paris, Austin's intellectual networks included Sydney Smith, Thomas Carlyle, and John Stuart Mill, Harriet and George Grote, Bentham, and the French intellectuals and statesmen François Guizot (1787-1874) and Barthélemy Saint Hilaire (1805-1895), whose works she translated into English. During the Austins' stay in Bonn from 1827 to 1828, she met Niebuhr and the German critic August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845), whose books she also translated. By the second half of the 1830s, Austin was an acclaimed translator whose name appeared on the title page and who signed long, informative prefaces with her initials. This, Johnston remarks, was "[u]nlike most women translators in this period" (2013, 73). Austin's prefaces are significant textual evidence of her acumen in understanding the Victorian publishing market, and of her authorial identity for she addresses the English readers as the producer of the book they are about to read. They demonstrate her intellectual contribution to the European cultural scene as an editor,

critic and historian, as well as an English translator of German and French scholarly works by the historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and the philosopher Cousin, whose research impacted on British academic and political views. She corresponded with them and made use of the knowledge of their national cultural contexts that she gained from having lived in Germany and France.

The prefaces of two landmarks in Austin's career, *Tour in England, Ireland, and France in the Years 1828 and 1829* (1832) and *Characteristics of Goethe* (1833), demonstrate she is the creator of these books for the Victorian British audience by claiming her agency in manipulating source texts to produce a new text that meets the sensibility and interests of her target language readership. She does not declare her political reformist agenda openly, but exposes her dialogue with the original authors and establishes her commitment to producing a new text that works for her target readership. In *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel, Translation and Culture, 1830-1870* (2013), Johnson sustains that *Tour in England, Ireland, and France in the Years 1828 and 1829*, Austin's translation of *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* by Hermann Pückler-Muskau (1785-1871), was a popular success because Austin transformed the text by focusing on his observations as a traveller to Britain. The original German bestseller was notorious for its sexual content, but Austin, as she states in the preface, favoured "the thoughts and feelings excited by [Britain] in the mind of a foreigner" (Austin 1832, iv). As her correspondence with Pückler-Muskau shows, Austin wanted to ensure the success of his work with the Victorian readership.

In her preface to *Characteristics of Goethe,* the book that established her reputation as a cultural mediator of German literature, Austin goes further and articulates her views on the theory of translation. After evaluating the opinions of Johnson, Dryden, and Novalis, she aligns with the subject of her book, Goethe, stating

that “the merit of a [translation] is to be judged of entirely with reference to its aim” (1833, xxxiii). The function of her prefaces is indeed to outline her aim as the writer responsible for the English text sold in Victorian Britain. In this specific case, she opens by announcing that the book is not the translation of Johann Falk’s reminiscences of Goethe but, it is her compendium of relevant selected resources, including memoirs, articles, and a literature review of scholarly work on Goethe published in Germany, which provides the British reader who does not read German with an appreciation of both the character of the German author on whom the book centres, and the characteristics of his work. *Characteristics of Goethe* is her creation, driven by her linguistic and intellectual choices and her expert knowledge of German literature, as well as her interpretation of the material selected. More than forty pages long, this preface is her statement as a cultural mediator, who makes strategic choices in determining which authors and ideas to be made accessible to the Britain readership, and how to interpret them. In the nineteenth century, Austin identifies translation as a form of rewriting, as a creative process whose result is the product of dialogic relationships between authors, texts and their readerships. She outlines how she produces a new text in English to circulate ideas and materials that she deems relevant and influential in a time of radical change and reform in Britain, making her agency in shaping knowledge apparent.

In a letter to *The Athenaeum,* published on 22nd January 1848, Austin outlines her translating practice in defence of the title of her translation of Ranke’s work, *History of the Reformation in Germany* (3 vols., 1845-47), from “charges […] for ‘devices’ tending to mislead the public as to the nature and contexts of books” (1848, 85). She directly discusses the ways in which her English texts are a product of a cooperation between the original author and the translator, and between the translator and the

publisher. "Compromises between the idiosyncrasies of two nations are familiar" (1848, 86), are inevitable, she declares, to give access to the subject matter of the original source. Still affirming a "humble and subordinate role," Austin demands "the only reputation [she aspires] to", and which she fulfils by working with the German and French intellectuals whose works she translates for her British audience. Her "duty as an interpreter between nations" (1848, 86) is what matters most and her paratexts are conversations with her readers, in the same way in which her correspondence with the original authors and her publishers are a means of consultation. Austin was experienced in suggesting projects directly to publishers, in making decisions concerning the text she produced, and in contributing to the European "circulation of knowledge" (Monticelli 2005, 301).

Like Johnston, I consider Austin to be what André Lefevere defines as a translator that "adapt[s], manipulate[s] the originals [she] work[s] with to some extent, usually to make them fit with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and pedagogical currents of the time." (1992, 8) An estimated and successful translator, Austin applies rewriting strategies in producing, for example, *Tour in England, Ireland, and France in the Years 1828 and 1829*, *Characteristics of Goethe*, and Friedrick von Raumer's *England in 1835* (1836) because of their value as a vehicle to access European reflections on the British social and political conditions the Victorian middle-class readership experiences. They are also a means to engage them with the political debates she is passionate about as an active member of the Unitarian intellectual group composed by Bentham, Mill, Carlyle and the Grotes, promoting political and social reform. Her paratexts too are devices to establish her authority as a skilful translator and scholar. For Austin, translating is a means to promote her political views publicly by emphasising those elements of the original texts that sustain her assessment of British

politics and social conditions. For example, in *Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia* (1834), she does not include all of Cousin's study of primary and secondary education in Prussia, which was seminal to the French 1833 Guizot law establishing the need for an educational system, but she focuses on primary education only because her goal was compulsory primary education funded by the state in the United Kingdom.

Austin's prefatory writing reflects an assured professional authorial voice that establishes the features of her work. Victorian reviews, whether negative or positive, confirm her reputation as a cultural mediator who interprets the texts she translates for her British readership as they assess her editorial decisions and the added material she provides.[4] However, it also shows Austin's tension between identifying herself as a "mere translator" (Austin 1832, viii) and delivering an excellent scholarly textual contextualisation that satisfies the knowledge gaps of her British readership together with a woman's product that aims at the British middle-class audience. In *Translation, Authorship and the Victorian Professional Woman: Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Martineau and George Eliot* (2011), Scholl explains how, in the nineteen century, conventional anonymity in the periodical press empowered women to "stand on relatively equal professional terms with men of letters, writing, editing, reviewing and translating" (1). Austin could appear to fit this *modus operandi*: her discreet initials at the end of her paratexts are understating and minimise her presence. However, by 1832, when *Tour in England, Ireland, and France in the Years 1828 and 1829* was firstly published anonymously,[5] her reputation as a skilled translator of German literature was so well established that reviewers openly acknowledged it was her work. In balancing an authorial voice that expresses linguistic and scholarly competence with fulfilling the Victorian gender norms of her readership's expectations in terms of both standards of content and of female authorship in disseminating new and potentially controversial

ideas from diverse European countries, Austin struggles to match her determination as a producer of texts that are "read and understood" (1848, 86) with nineteenth-century notions of translation. This is a tension that the writing of her daughter and granddaughter do not show.

3. Mothers, Daughters, and Translators: Translation as Female Intellectual Legacy

In the case of *The Story Without an End* and *Stories of the Gods and Heroes of Greece*, Austin's paratexts are more personal, though they do not neglect her specialist remarks as an expert in German literature. They reveal a bond between mother and daughter based on their shared knowledge of German language and literature, and love of storytelling. Furthermore, *Stories of the Gods and Heroes of Greece* introduces Duff Gordon as a literary translator. Duff Gordon's name is not included; it is her mother's that appears on the title page as the editor revealing how Austin's professional reputation suffices in securing a writing career. In the preface, after all, Austin "carefully ascertained the accuracy of the translation" and "found nothing to alter" (1843, v); on the contrary, she "was rather tempted to envy the youthful freshness and courageous *naïveté* of the style." (1843, v) In her daughter's skills, she recognises a confidence provided by her childhood years in Germany and France.

In her prefaces, Austin evokes her life in Germany, where her daughter listened to the original stories collected in these two texts. *The Story Without an End* is a German fairy tale that, as her friend Caroline Norton states in "Lady Duff Gordon and Her Works" (1869), captures Duff Gordon's "singularly lonely childhood" (457) spent in the company of intellectuals who supported her independence and curiosity but were not playmates of her age. In *Three Generations of English Women*, Ross represents her

mother's lonesome childhood "in a world of elves and fairies [where she wishes] the sunflowers could talk to" her (1893, 432) that echoes the enchanted land of *The Story Without an End* where a forlorn child discovers the meadows around his "little hut" (Austin 1834, 9) by interacting with plants and animals. Dedicated to Duff Gordon, this story is presented as her daughter's favourite which she wants her mother to translate. Importantly, the preface reveals a deep bond between mother and daughter built on shared foreign languages and literatures that, from this publication onwards, is also reflected in their literary careers. In her translator's preface, signed as an "affectionate Mother" (Austin 1834, vi), Austin's wish that her daughter will find the story "as long as [she] lives untiring" (Austin 1834, vi) anticipates a connection mother and daughter developed throughout their lives by translating the same authors and collaborating in projects such as the work by which Duff Gordon is mostly remembered today, *Letters from Egypt, 1863-65*, whose first edition in 1865 was edited by Austin.

At the origin of Niebuhr's original text, there is a father and son relationship that Austin recalls in her preface to *Stories of the Gods and Heroes of Greece*, as she introduces her daughter's first translation and remembers her multilingual upbringing when her daughter played with the historian's son and "heard and remembered and repeated" these stories (1843, v). A remarkable reader, in Germany Duff Gordon had attended school for two years (1826-28) and, before her more formal schooling at Miss Shepherd's school at Bromley Common, she spent a short time at "a boys'-school at Hampstead" (Ross 1893, 432) where she studied "classics, mathematics, philosophy and ancient history" (Frank 2007, 45) and "showed more taste for Greek than anything else" (Ross 1893, 432). This school was run by Dr Edward Biber, "a German refugee and publicist for infant schools and supporter of" the Swiss educationalist, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) (Martin and Goodman 2004, 64), whose work on primary

education Austin admired and discussed in *Fragments from German Prose Writers* (1841). Austin taught German and Latin to her daughter and Duff Gordon's correspondence shows how German was her language of choice in addressing her mother as "Dearest Mutter" (Ross 1893, 431). German was also central to establishing her literary career as a translator.

Following her marriage to Sir Alexander Cornewall Duff Gordon (1811-1872) in 1840, at the age of nineteen, Lucie Duff Gordon became the hostess of a London salon where "Lord Lansdowne, Lord Monteagle, Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot Warburton […], Tennyson, Henry Taylor, Mrs Norton, Kinglake, and Tom Taylor were *habitués*" (Ross 1893, 446), as well as George Meredith and friends of her mother, such as Ranke and Guizot. After contracting tuberculosis, she moved to South Africa first and then Egypt in search of healthier conditions. Her correspondence from these countries collected in *Letters from the Cape* (1864) and *Letters from Egypt, 1863-65* made her reputation as an acclaimed travel writer with the ability to be 'an interpreter between nations'. Her contribution as a distinguished translator from the French and German is rarely examined; yet, in the Victorian era she was renowned for her "brilliant translation of *The Amber Witch"* by Wilhelm Meinhold (1797-1851) (Wilde 142). A literary hoax, Meinhold's *Maria Schweidler, die Bernsteinhexe* (1843) disputed the ability to distinguish between historical and fictional facts. Disguised as a seventeenth-century manuscript, it aimed to discredit David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) who refuted any historical basis to the supernatural events in the Gospels and interpreted them as myths in *Das Leben Jesu: kritisch bearbeitet* (1835-36). Meinhold's forgery was so convincing that he had to prove it was his original work. Duff Gordon's English translation turned it into "the leading German novel of its day" (Burns 2016, 2).

In the *London Quarterly Review*, a reviewer declared Meinhold's German original to be "incommunicable, […], in any translation" and "scarcely even Mrs Austin could translate it" (1844, 108). Receiving a flat fee from John Murray, Duff Gordon took on this challenge and published *The Amber Witch* in 1844 obtaining great reviews and popularity. Three editions were released in its first year of publication, and it was reprinted in 1845 and 1847, when Meinhold published his second novel, *Sidonia von Bork, die Klosterhexe*,[6] and dedicated it to, "the young and gifted translator of *The Amber Witch*" (Meinhold 1849). In its latest edition, Barbara Burns states that Duff Gordon "was one of the first modern European scholars to produce a literary translation which led to greater fame for a work than it achieved in its language of creation" (2016, 8), included in *The World's Classics Series* of the Oxford University Press in 1928. Compared to Walter Scott and Daniel Defoe, Meinhold became a favourite of the Pre-Raphaelites because of his detailed historical narrative and for his central theme: false witchcraft accusations against young, faithful and strong women. The young protagonist of *The Amber Witch* demonstrates a stronger faith than her father, the narrator, who is a vicar: she is resilient in proclaiming her innocence and praying in Latin when in danger. A language her father had taught her since the age of seven, Latin defines Maria as an unusual woman who is an independent reader capable of distinguishing the content of religious texts from local superstitions.

There are in this character's defining qualities similarities with its young English translator, who was often singled out both for her intellectual and linguistic talents that also characterised her as atypical. Duff Gordon's choice of subject aptly reflects her own identity as a nineteenth-century woman who could be erroneously misjudged because of her knowledge just as women were accused of witchcraft for similar reasons in the seventeenth century. *The Amber Witch* marks the start of Duff Gordon's

independent writing career as a skilful translator and it has all the marks of her mother's successful writing business, except a translator's preface. In praising her friend's professional skills, Norton states that "the patience necessary for translated work is far greater than that requisite for original composition" (1869, 458) pointing out the preparatory extensive reading Duff Gordon did of the historical English record of witchcraft trials in order to render the historical tone of *The Amber Witch*. Research was central to her following projects too, including Ranke's *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg and History of Prussia, during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1848), a translation authored with her husband which announced her role as her mother's successor in mediating German scholarship for the British audience. Indeed, in their translators' preface, the Duff Gordons refer to Austin's 1848 letter to *The Athenaeum* by beginning with a clarification of their English title for the three-volume oeuvre, then of their aim.

Duff Gordon's following two books, *The French in Algiers* (1845) and *Narratives of Remarkable Criminal Trials* (1846), resembled closely her mother's work. The prefaces to these texts voice the historical and literary knowledge of a skilful translator from the French and the German who selected, connected, and contextualised the texts collected as the writer of the English volume. In *The French in Algiers*, Abd-El-Kader, the leader of the guerrilla resistance in Algeria opposed to the French, is presented through the contrasting accounts of two soldiers who arrived to fight against him: *The Soldier of the Foreign Legion* by Clemens Lamping, a German Lieutenant in the Oldenburg service who came to appreciate the Algerian leader, and *The Prisoners of Abd-El-Kader* by M. A. De France, a French Navy Lieutenant. Duff Gordon abridged and transformed their accounts and published them together in one volume with a preface, signed with her initials, that focuses mainly on the life story of the author of the

first piece, Lieutenant Lamping, whose reminiscences portray a more sympathetic portrait of Abd-El-Kader.

In the preface to *Narratives of Remarkable Criminal Trials*, she announces, "[t]he following trials are selected and abridged from a work consisting of 1300 closely printed pages by Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach" (1845, iii) and, after a biographical account of the original author's life, she addresses her "English readers" (1845, ix) to highlight how the chosen trials help to exam the British legal system through comparison, and to advise them on further reading. Her selection and editing are meant to assist the English audience in appreciating Feuerbach's work; as her conclusion reiterates, her translation strategies facilitate their access to the most interesting and relevant material. This is a translator's preface in the first person that openly acknowledges her mastering of the original material that is manipulated and rewritten for the British readers' benefit; that presents her text, founded on her ability to connect and integrate the works of foreign authors. In her prefaces, Duff Gordon addresses her readers as the creator of the texts that they are about to read: in a conversational tone she demonstrates the ways in which her translations from German and French are essential but only one of many elements that contribute to the writing of the English volume she published.

This confidence in considering translation as one of the components of her texts can be found in the work of Janet Ross, Duff Gordon's daughter, who also integrated translation in her writing as a distinguishing component and made use of paratexts to share with her readers the goals of her work and the material that informed it. Ross learnt classic and modern European languages from an early age and at thirteen her literary career was launched with her first English translation, which her mother edited, *The History and Literature of the Crusades* (1861) by Heinrich von Sybel (1817-1895),

a German historian who studied with Ranke. After marrying Henry James Ross (1820-1902), the trajectory of her career changed because, with him, she moved to Egypt in 1861 and then settled in Tuscany in 1869, where she died in 1927. In Egypt she became *The Times* correspondent and started a writing career not led by translation projects but by her life abroad. She too was 'an interpreter between nations': she published texts such as *Lives of the Early Medici, as Told in Their Correspondence*, in which she narrates the story of the Medici family through their correspondence, and *Italian Sketches* (1887), a collection of articles about Italian folklore, rural, and cultural traditions, including popular songs and recipes, as well as the political and socio-cultural conditions of the newly formed Kingdom of Italy.

In these texts, translating original material is an essential component in a narrative developed through her personal, lived experiences. In her shorter prefaces, she does not dwell on translation or editing strategies but on her research based on original material and her first-hand experience that inspired her writing. As her preface to *Italian Sketches* shows, she replaced her grandmother's image of the translator as the 'interpreter between nations' with that of her mother who wrote, "in her *Letters from Egypt*, I 'sit among the people,' and do not 'make myself big'" (Ross 1887, vi). Ross sees herself not as a translator but as a storyteller who listens to the stories of other people and other cultures in which she lives and becomes their vehicle for the English audience, adding historical with anthropological material. She sees herself as an agent in shaping meaning and transmitting knowledge.

Ross is mostly remembered as a member of the late-nineteenth-century Anglo-Florentine community, and the writer of *Leaves from our Tuscan Kitchen, or How to cook vegetables* (1899), a rare Victorian culinary collection that centres on cooking vegetables and arguably the first Italian cookbook in English. Nonetheless, like her

mother and grandmother, in her estate near Florence, Poggio Gherardo, she hosted a salon that promoted Anglo-Italian and transatlantic connections with guests such as John Addington Symonds, Henry James, Marie Corelli, Robert Browning, Mark Twain, Bernard and Mary Berenson, Kenneth Clark, and Edward Hutton. As a journalist, biographer, and historian, Ross used her linguistic skills to establish a cosmopolitan cultural environment where ideas were shared and developed and people could collaborate and support each other. Her knowledge of Tuscan rural life, history, literature, and of rare Florentine archival material that enriched her writing remains a most significant element in understanding her input as a cultural mediator who understood the importance of working with publishers and anticipating readers' interests. As a skilful translator, she strategically mapped new spaces to introduce new ideas and materials for her British readership. In-between languages and cultures, she was an intercultural mediator who valued translation as a creative means to produce texts that contributed to the production and dissemination of knowledge by bridging across borders that she perceived as permeable. She manipulated, rewrote and appropriated material and made it visible by voicing through paratexts her conception and scope for a publication.

4. Conclusion

Translation granted Austin, her daughter, Duff Gordon, and her granddaughter, Ross, a literary career, financial independence, and intellectual agency. Through a multigenerational approach, this chapter affirms their role as catalysts of international intellectual networks and mediators of new scholarly developments and philosophical debates. It locates them firmly within the European intellectual scene of the nineteenth

century as cultural mediators who facilitated the circulation of German, French and Italian scholarship, comparative platforms and wider debates on education, social and gender equality, democracy and the modern nation. As nineteenth-century translators, they anticipate approaches to agency and visibility that scholars such as Simon, Flotow, and Godard have identified in feminist translators. To use Godard's words, they understand translation "as an interpretative transformation" (1995, 77) whose ownership they confidently make visible in their paratexts. In *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (1997), von Flotow reflects on how "it is often considerably easier for a translator to proclaim political action in prefaces and other materials than to actually take action in the translation" (35). Paratexts are certainly essential spaces for Austin, Duff Gordon, and Ross to claim their authorship of new texts for new readerships. Prefaces in particular become opportunities for them to voice their processes of rewriting and therefore their mediation of foreign source texts, their language and culture.

Their prefaces are also instrumental in understanding their strategies in balancing their identities as confident, expert writers with educational and social expectations determined by their gender in the nineteenth century. They are key in recovering Austin's viable model for a writing profession for women as interpreters of cultures, not only translators of an original text in a foreign language. By acknowledging how successful translations demand an ability to select, appropriate, and rewrite the original material for the British audience based on extensive knowledge of both cultural contexts, that of the original text and that of the translated text, Austin passed down a method that identified women as intellectual agents capable of producing accessible publications for the British readership. Her daughter and granddaughter adapted her approach to translation as a creative process in becoming translators, travel

writers and cultural commentators. My multigenerational matrilineal approach highlights how their prefaces show mothers and daughters as mentors, collaborators, and editors of the younger generation's work, demonstrating the relevant contribution translation studies make to a historiography of women's writing.

Notes

1. These translations by Ross are entitled *The Autobiography of a Veteran, 1807-1893* (1898); *An Account of Tibet: The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistoia* (1932); and *Voyages of Francesco Carletti, 1594-1602* (1931).

2. Sarah Austin and Harriet Martineau were distant cousins.

3. John Austin became University College London's first Professor of Jurisprudence when the University was founded in 1826. He held the post from 1828 to 1833. See Wilfred Rumble's "John Austin" in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

4. Herman Merivale's "Mrs Austin's Characteristics of Goethe" (1833) in the *Edinburgh Review* is a good example.

5. Pückler-Muskau's source text was published anonymously so Austin's anonymity as the translator could replicate this original deception. This book's notoriety could also have been a factor in her decision to remain anonymous, as well as her correspondence with Pückler-Muskau, though this came to light only in 1980 when her passionate letters were found in his archive.

6. Jane Wilde (née Elgee, 1821-1896), Oscar Wilde's mother, translated Meinhold's *Sidonia von Bork, die Klosterhexe* into English with the title, *Sidonia the Sorceress* (1849).

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