Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance by A. E. B. Coldiron. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

In a brief afterword, A. E. B. Coldiron offers what may be one of *Printers without Borders*' most overtly polemical, and welcome, remarks: "I'm not sure that we write our best, richest literary history inside the strict limits of nation and language" (283). By bridging conversations in the fields of translation studies and book history, Coldiron's monograph offers a potent challenge to these strict limits, limits manifested all too often in today's separate language departments and the established accounts of literary nationalism corresponding to each. While these departments and studies have shown us much about the writing, reading, and publishing that furnished early modern Europe's "imagined communities" (to use Benedict Anderson's widely adopted phrase), they have often obscured simultaneously the multilingual and transnational histories at the seams of these narratives.

It is this state of affairs that Coldiron wishes to address directly. Indeed, in bringing Randall McLeod's notion of "transformission" to bear on a series of case studies, *Printers without Borders* transcends national boundaries in literary history, shifting the emphasis to language and translation and delving into noncanonical texts from the late medieval period up to the 1580s. While holding the English-French dyad as a central concern throughout, Coldiron also examines the interparticipation of these two languages with Italian, Latin, Spanish, and, to a lesser extent Arabic, Dutch, German, Greek, and Hebrew. If this approach appeals to scholars in comparative literature, it also encourages critics in nationally designated language departments to consider what the author calls (riffing on Richard Helgerson's landmark study) "form[e]s of transnationhood"—"form[e]s" hailing both the poetic styles one encounters in these publications (sonnet, hendecasyllabic verse, dixain, etc.) and the printers' formes, the physical furniture arranging pieces of type for the press. In laying out this approach, Coldiron ultimately encourages scholars to ask "*by what means*, *in what patterns*, *with what techniques*, and *with what effects* translators and printers in England engaged with the foreign past" (19, author's emphasis). Her clever title flags one of this book's especially vital contributions: an emphasis not solely on authors or historical or cultural contexts, but also on the instrumental work of the printers who helped shape communities of literature and language during the early modern era. This recognition will be particularly important in coming decades as quantitative and linguistic approaches to the period's literature begin to incorporate bibliographical elements including format, typography, and printers' ornaments. Coldiron herself gestures to these

emerging computational directions in referring to the Universal Short Title Catalogue and the Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Project, which in her words "promise enough new data to occupy generations of future scholars" (5), even if the particulars remain obscure for now.

Scholars and advanced students of Renaissance literary translation will find much to contemplate in *Printers without Borders*, particularly in the first chapter, an introduction spelling out Coldiron's three patterns, or flexible models, of translation. What one finds here is an expanded attempt, and in concert with much recent work, to historicize translation and transnationalism for the early modern period: a theoretical extension of established studies including Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* and investigations into Renaissance applications for Mary Louise Pratt's "contact zones" and Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Unsettling the linear model of translation assumed from cultural narratives of *translatio imperii*, Coldiron first offers the "catenary pattern," a less teleological variation on the linear model bearing more resemblance to pearls on a chain, but retaining a genealogical relation. A second model, the "radiant pattern," adopts Jerome McGann's concept of radiant textuality to account for texts published simultaneously in a variety of tongues, fanning out across diverse language communities. The third, the "compressed pattern," signals multiple languages appearing simultaneously in the same published text. Although these models certainly overlap at times and are by no means exhaustive—a point Coldiron concedes (29–30)—*Printers without Borders* offers them as a guide to scholars interested in the general patterns of translation in the early modern period.

In five chapters following her introduction, Coldiron grounds these three conceptual models in a series of illustrating cases dating from the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century (proceeding in a roughly chronological order). If this telescoping down from the broadly conceptual to the narrow, specific, and noncanonical seems dizzying, and risks losing certain readers, it offers plenty of room in between for other scholars to take up further applications. The first chapter addresses three examples from the English printer and translator William Caxton: the Burgundian *Recuyell of the Hystoryes of Troye* (1473), the *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres* (1477, 1480, ca. 1489, ca. 1528), and the anticourt *Curial* of Alain Chartier (1483, 1549), each of which follow the pattern of catenary translation. In addition to emphasizing these works' paratexts and Caxton's role as both translator and printer, Coldiron highlights in these examples the ways in which English language and literature were a kind of French literary subculture at the time. The inferiority of English letters receives further attention in chapter

3, which focuses on a mid-sixteenth-century illustrated religious work rendered into a variety of languages by Peter Derendel, each version printed by the Lionnais stationer Jean de Tournes. Coldiron contends that Derendel sought, in including English in this pattern of radiant translation, to remedy the language's status as "bastard allone," apart from and subordinate to its continental vernacular counterparts. Moving forward in time to the 1580s, the next portion of *Printers without Borders* examines John Wolfe's trilingual edition of *The Courtier* (1588) as an instance of compressed translation. Here, both the paratexts selected by the printer and the three-column *mise-en-page* skew the work towards transnational contexts, "visually insisting on what we might call a worldly reading" (164). Building on this discussion of compressed translation are two final chapters: the first exploring a fascinating octolingual vellum broadside, which celebrates the defeat of the Spanish Armada; and the second featuring three examples of English-Latin macaronic verse—"an intense and strange kind of poetry" (255).

Although *Printers without Borders* offers through its case studies a clear and welcome challenge to the national boundaries critics have retroactively superimposed upon the multilingual and transnational literary culture of Renaissance Europe, and specifically England, it often retains conventional narratives of Protestant triumphalism that have accompanied the national preoccupations of Anglophone critics. This is especially evident in Coldiron's final two chapters. For instance, while recognizing the work of scholars including Filipe Fernandez-Armesto, who have offered productive challenges to the propaganda-inflected historical accounts of the 1588 Armada episode, *Printers without Borders* ultimately suggests that "the interpretations and representations were not entirely divorced from reality" (249) and espouses a critical view centered upon the presumed experience of English and Protestant readers. Likewise, while the analysis of macaronics holds open the possibility for a "dual view" (274), it nonetheless locates its emphasis with the subversive Protestant fervor of John Bale and Reginald Scot's denigration of "popery." Such an approach is acceptable for a study focusing primarily on printers and translators, and, indeed, the author clarifies that this is not a work of social, economic, or political—one might add religious—history (18). Scholars following Coldiron might, however, find useful ways to pursue her patterns of translation along religious axes, and in ways that may qualify conventionally antagonistic understandings of Catholicism and Protestantism in early modern Europe. In any case, *Printers without Borders* successfully illustrates how early English literature both contributed to and was shaped by a transnational fabric of literary publication and translation. Readers will do well to take up the methods of

"worldly reading" proposed in this study and to explore their operations in other contexts and among various languages.

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