

Translating and distributing Italian religious literature in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai (late 16th, early 17th century)

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Printing in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai began hesitantly in the first half of the sixteenth century, but by 1590 printing offices were finally established in towns such as Arras, Lille or Saint-Omer.¹ A press had been active in Douai since the foundation of the university there in 1562, but the Douai printers had primarily produced Latin editions for an academic clientele. The newly arrived printers, however, focussed on religious books in French for pastoral purposes. It is remarkable that at least a third of the vernacular editions of religious printed matter in Cambrai over almost a century were translations. Many of these were translated from the Latin, but more than half had an Italian or Spanish original. This article will only deal with translations from the Italian, which made up a quarter of all translations of religious literature published in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai between the introduction of a printing press in Douai in 1563 and the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659), which transferred most of the territories of the region to France.² How did Italian religious literature in translation reach the Cambrai province? Why were these books translated, issued in or distributed from the Gallic parts of the Habsburg Netherlands? Who took the initiative to produce, print and spread them and which local actors (printers, translators, clerics, religious or other institutions and bodies) emerge as the driving force behind the translation and distribution of Italian religious literature in Cambrai?

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¹ The ecclesiastical province of Cambrai was only established in 1559. It encompassed the dioceses of Cambrai, Arras, Saint-Omer, Tournai and Namur and, as such, more or less united the Francophone regions in the south of the Habsburg Low Countries.

² 178 translations from Italian on a total of 702 translations of religious books have been found. The data are gathered from the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC; accessed 25 March 2014) and the printed *Répertoires bibliographiques* by Albert Labarre (Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana 40, 44, 86, 111, 133 & 148, Baden-Baden, Koerner, 1971-1996). These data are incomplete and therefore all statistics are approximate, but nonetheless indicative.

French translations from the Italian have been studied quite extensively in recent years and new research is ongoing.³ During the sixteenth century Italian art, architecture and culture in general reached a high degree of popularity in France. In the context of these renaissance influences, translations from the Italian were highly popular. Much attention has been paid to Paris and Lyon, France's largest typographic centres, and most scholars agree that provincial towns did not play a significant role in publishing translations from Italian.⁴ For the most part, the provinces seem to have only reprinted editions that had first appeared in Paris or Lyon. In addition to the editions from Paris, Lyon and French provincial towns, the recent bibliographic repertories also list a considerable (though incomplete) number of books printed in the Habsburg Netherlands, beyond the confines of the French kingdom. Although these editions are mentioned, they have received little scrutiny so far. It is tempting to see them merely as an extension of French and more particularly Parisian or Lyonese developments. However even if the religious and cultural context of the Cambrai region to a certain extent paralleled that in France, the political situation was often quite different, as the region was an integral part of the Habsburg Netherlands. So, it cannot be assumed that the motives for publishing translations from the Italian in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were the same, for instance, in Douai and Paris.

Studies on French translations from the Italian have often stressed their importance for the development of French language and literature. Especially in the sixteenth century, French translators imitated and emulated the Italian model in order to enrich the French language. They tried to attain the same heights as the Italian original because they wanted to prove that French could reach the same level of elegance and sophistication.⁵ Rather than measuring the linguistic and literary impact of translations from the Italian, this article approaches Italian books from a religious perspective. In fact, almost all translations from the Italian published in the Cambrai province dealt with religious themes. Hence, they should be seen against the background of Counter-Reformation and Catholic renewal.⁶ Therefore, instead of

³ J. Balsamo, *L'amorevolezza verso le cose Italiane: le livre italien à Paris au XVI^e siècle*, Genève, Droz, 2015; *Idem*, V. Castiglioni Minischetti & G. Dotoli (eds.), *Les traductions de l'italien en français au XVI^e siècle*, Paris-Fasano, Hermann-Schena, 2009; G. Dotoli, V. Castiglioni Minischetti & P. Placella Sommella (eds.), *Les traductions de l'italien en français au XVII^e siècle*, Paris-Fasano, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne-Schena, 2001; M. Blanco-Morel & M.-F. Piejus (eds.), *Les Flandres et la culture espagnole et italienne aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Université Charles de Gaulle - Lille III, 1998; N. Bingen, *Philautone 1500-1660: répertoire des ouvrages en langue italienne publiés dans les pays de langue française de 1500 à 1660*, Genève, Droz, 1994. The ongoing project EDITEF (*L'édition italienne dans l'espace francophone à la première modernité*) directed by Chiara Lastraioli at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours can be followed via www.editef.univ-tours.fr.

⁴ J. Balsamo, 'Introduction', in: *Idem*, V. Castiglioni Minischetti & G. Dotoli (eds.), *Les traductions de l'italien en français au XVI^e siècle*, Paris/Fasano, Hermann/Schena, 2009, pp. 16-64, esp. p. 46.

⁵ J. Balsamo, 'Le débat sur la traduction et l'apologie de la langue française à la fin de la Renaissance: François Gilbert de La Brosse et Barthélemy de Viette', in: G. Dotoli (ed.), *Les traductions de l'italien en français du XVI^e au XX^e siècle, actes du colloque, Monopoli, 4-5 octobre 2003*, Fasano, Schena, 2004, pp. 37-52, esp. pp. 37-38.

⁶ On the role of books, translations and reading in these movements, see: R. Po Chia-Hsia, *The world of Catholic renewal, 1540-1770*, Cambridge, University Press, 2005 (2nd edition), esp. Chapter 11, 'The Catholic book', pp. 172-186; C.M.N. Eire, 'Early modern Catholic piety in translation', in: P. Burke & R. Po Chia-Hsia (eds.), *Cultural translation in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, University Press, 2007, pp. 83-100 and D. Julia, 'Lectures et Contre-Réforme', in: G. Cavallo & R. Chartier (eds.), *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, pp. 297-335. A recent account on the Counter-Reformation in general is given by A. Bamji, G. H. Janssen & M. Laven (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2013, which unfortunately has no chapter on Counter-Reformation books.

mapping the linguistic influences of translations from the Italian, this contribution will search for the place of Italian literature within the religious developments in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai.

Printing translations in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai

While printing flourished in Antwerp during the sixteenth century, for a long time the Francophone provinces in the southern parts of the Habsburg Netherlands lacked a successful printing business. Some printers did try their luck in Valenciennes (c. 1500), Hesdin (1512), Cambrai (1518) and Arras (1520) in the first half of the sixteenth century, but their businesses were hardly profitable.⁷ They seem to have produced only a very limited number of editions and most of the presses ceased after a few years. Shortly after the foundation of the university of Douai (1562) the town magistrate convinced the Louvain printer Jacques Boscard to settle in Douai. Yet, the proximity of major typographic centres such as Antwerp, Paris or Cologne further hindered the establishment of printers elsewhere in the region. It would take until the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century before printers settled in Mons, Arras, Lille, Saint-Omer, Valenciennes, Tournai, Cambrai and Namur. Around 1600 Antwerp was still the leading typographic centre of the Habsburg Low Countries, but its dominance apparently no longer thwarted the emergence of printing businesses elsewhere.

The establishment of new printing offices ran in striking parallel with the rise of religious literature in French. During the 1560s and 1570s in Douai mainly theological treatises in Latin came off the presses, but from the late 1580s an ever increasing number of French books was published in Douai, Mons and Arras. Although Latin remained the so-called universal language of the Catholic church, the Counter-Reformation and movements for Catholic renewal had sparked an interest in vernacular religious books. Already in 1565 Maximilien de Berghes (1518-1570), the first archbishop of Cambrai between 1558 and his death, forced his Provincial Council to accept the decrees of Trent.⁸ Around 1580, while Calvinist rebels controlled most towns in Brabant and Flanders, the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai had blossomed into the more stable and Catholic part of the Habsburg Netherlands, a fact that was also acknowledged by some contemporaries.⁹ As a consequence the region became an attractive refuge for Catholics fleeing the British Isles or Flemish and Brabant towns under Calvinist rule.¹⁰ As will become clear further on, it was no coincidence that the

⁷ On this development, see: A. Pettegree, *The book in the Renaissance*, Yale, Yale University Press, 2010, esp. 53-55.

⁸ A. Lottin, 'La mise en œuvre de la réforme catholique, à travers les conciles provinciaux de Cambrai (1565, 1586, 1631)', in: M. Aoun & J.-M. Tuffery-Andrieu (eds.), *Conciles provinciaux et synodes diocésains du Concile de Trente à la Révolution française. Défis ecclésiastiques et enjeux politiques? Actes du colloque tenu à Strasbourg les 4 et 5 mai 2009, organisé par l'Institut de droit canonique de l'Université de Strasbourg*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2010 pp. 167-186, esp pp. 169-174.

⁹ E.g. L. Surius, *La vie de sainte Colete*, Mons, Charles Michel, 1594, 2 voll. (dedication by Michel Notel: 'ceste Ville de Mo[n]s, est l'une des plus catholicques et deuotes Villes, que i'ay rencontré, ny aux Itales, ny aus Allemagnes, ny en France, ny en tous ces pays bas'). For a general account of the Counter-Reformation in Lille and the surrounding regions: A. Lottin, *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme? 1598-1668*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2013 (2nd edition).

¹⁰ L. De Frenne, 'Professions, prêtres et pensions. Les réfugiés catholiques aux Pays-Bas méridionaux sous l'administration des archiducs Albert et Isabelle (1598-1621/1633)', in: C. Bruneel et al. (eds.), *Les 'Trente Glorieuses'. Pays-Bas méridionaux et France septentrionale. Aspects économiques, sociaux et religieux aux temps des archiducs Albert et Isabelle*, Bruxelles, Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 2010, pp. 107-125; G. Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp. 62-66.

publication of translations from Italian coincided with these evolutions and with the foundation of Jesuit and Capuchin houses in particular.¹¹

Local monks, canons, parish priests and even some laymen did their part in producing original works in the French vernacular of the region themselves, as well as in translating books from Latin, Italian and Spanish into French. In the period 1561-1600 almost 60% of all French editions in the region were translations. Most, however, were issued in the last fifteen years of the sixteenth century, which also saw the steep rise of French religious literature in general.¹² Although during the first decades of the seventeenth century the share of translations dropped to approximately 30%, only in the 1630s, when continuous warfare rendered the printing business more difficult, was the pinnacle of publishing translations over.

Up until the Early Modern period most of the texts of Catholic tradition, of which the importance had been confirmed during the Council of Trent, had remained in Latin. Knowledge of this 'universal language', however, was far from general among Catholics and hence, if the Catholic Church aimed at embedding the foundations of its faith firmly into the minds of the faithful, vernacular translations were of the utmost importance.¹³ Yet in a context of Catholic Reformation which, for a large part, was inspired by Southern European developments translations from Italian and Spanish might have been as essential as those from Latin. In a recent study Philippe Desmette has pointed to some of these Italian influences on religious developments in the Cambrai province. When in 1581 the Soignies canons sought to erect a Confraternity of the Holy Name of Jesus, they seem to have been in direct correspondence with the Roman Dominicans. Possibly the erection of the Mons Sunday school (1584) and the catechism of the archdiocese of Cambrai were directly influenced by Italian precursors through the person of vicar-general François Buisseret. While there is no proof of particular connections with Italy, Italian influences are also evident from the veneration of saints such as Cardinal Borromeo, of which the cult was introduced in the Habsburg Netherlands by the bishop of Saint-Omer, Christophe de France, during a plague epidemic in 1635-1636.¹⁴

While some books by Italian authors were printed in Latin in the Cambrai province, not a single religious book in Italian is known to have been printed there between 1563 and 1659.¹⁵ As a consequence, translations from Italian in particular appear to have played a part in spreading new mystical, spiritual, contemplative and devotional practices originating in Italy. In the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai 38% of the translations published between 1563 and 1659 were from Latin, while translations from Italian and Spanish accounted for 25% each.¹⁶ In the first decades of

¹¹ A. Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les Anciens Pays-Bas*, Bruxelles, Hayez, 1927, I, pp. 60-74, 142-149 & 173-196; P. Hildebrand, *De kapucijnen in de Nederlanden en het Prinsbisdom Luik. Deel 1: de tweetalige Nederlandsche Provincie 1585-1616*, Antwerpen, Archief der Kapucijnen, 1945, pp. 100-117, 126-129 & 199-202.

¹² In the 1590s 80% of all French editions in Douai were translations.

¹³ Eire, 'Early modern Catholic piety in translation', cit., pp. 83-84.

¹⁴ P. Desmette, 'Les Pays-Bas, terre de réforme catholique', in: G. Deregnaucourt et. al. (eds.), *Dorsale catholique, Jansénisme, Dévotions. XVIe-XVIIIe siècles. Mythe, réalité, actualité historiographique*, Paris, Riveneuve éditions, 2014, pp. 243-256, on pp. 247-251.

¹⁵ E.g. those works of the Jesuit Giovanni Pietro Maffei (*De vita et moribus Ignatii Lojolaë*, Douai, Jean Bogart, 1585) and the Archbishop of Bologna Alfonso Paleotti (*Historia admiranda de Iesu Christi stigmatibus sacræ sindoni impressis*, Douai, Laurence Kellam, 1607). The only editions in Italian printed in the region before 1660 appear to be two or three music books, see: Bingen, *Philausone 1500-1660*, nos. 252, 282 and 683a.

¹⁶ Besides, 6% was translated from French and 5% from other languages (Greek, Dutch, German, Portuguese).

the seventeenth century the presses in the Cambrai province produced an average of five translations from the Italian each year. Although printers in smaller typographic centres (Saint-Omer, Valenciennes, Tournai and Mons) did not wholly neglect such editions, they took an especially important share in the output of Balthazar Bellere in Douai, Robert Maudhuy in Arras and, in later years, Pierre de Rache in Lille.¹⁷

Printers, booksellers and the readership in the Habsburg Netherlands seem to have been particularly fascinated by the works of Italian Jesuits and Capuchin friars, which accounted for 52 editions and 17 percent of all translations from Italian between 1563 and 1659 respectively.¹⁸ The book *De la perfection religieuse et de l'obligation de l'acquérir* by the Italian Jesuit Luca Pinelli (1542-1607) was issued five times by Bellere between 1603 and 1625. During the 1620s and 1630s the same printer produced four editions of *Le chemin asseuré de paradis*, a book written by the Capuchin friar Alessio Segala (1558-1628). *Le pratique de l'oraison mentale ou contemplative* by another member of the Capuchin order, Mattia Bellintani (1535-1611), and the catechism of the Jesuit cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) also had several editions in the Cambrai province. Other books concerned the passion or resurrection of Christ, some also dealt with the sacrament of the communion or told the lives of (Italian) martyrs and saints.

The popularity of these authors and subjects was of course not unique for the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai; most of the books mentioned here appeared in multiple editions elsewhere in Catholic Europe. But, in contrast to Paris, Lyon or Antwerpen, there was little interest in Cambrai to publish translations of Italian poetry or books on architecture and history. Rather than being a part of a humanist and renaissance culture, and the result of the vigour to further enrich the French language, in the Cambrai province issuing translations from the Italian was inseparable from the developments that characterized the Catholic faith in the later sixteenth century.¹⁹

The French Connection

In 1596, Balthazar Bellere, a printer of Antwerp descent who had moved to Douai in the previous years, published a reissue of the *Meditation sur les mysteres de la passion et resurrection de Jesus Christ*, a book written by the Italian Jesuit father Vincenzo Bruno (1532-1594).²⁰ The French translation was composed by the Bordeaux canon Philibert Dusault and printed first in Paris in 1589. Two years before, Bellere had produced a French translation of Saint Bonaventure's meditations upon the passion, made by François Gilbert de La Brosse, one of the most popular French translators of the period. Bellere's close contacts with the French book market are even more obvious from his 1598 edition of the *Excellent traité de la mortification de nos passions*, written by the Italian Jesuit Giulio Fatio (or Fazio, 1537-1596). The French translation by François Solier (1558-1628), a Jesuit professor who acted as rector of the college at Limoges in these years, had been published earlier that year by Guillaume Chaudière in Paris. In total, Bellere printed 47 books translated from

¹⁷ Bellere (printer 1593-1639) issued 47 translations from the Italian on a total of 559 editions (a share of c. 8,5%, an average of approximately one edition a year), Maudhuy (printer 1592-1632) 13 on 52 (25%) and Rache (printer 1611-1647) 15 on 130 (c. 12%).

¹⁸ Other works (but all in comparably small numbers) can be linked to the Dominican, Norbertine, Franciscan, Carmelite, Augustine and Theatine orders and to the Canons Regular of the Lateran.

¹⁹ Compare Balsamo, 'Introduction', cit., pp. 17-18, 49 & 63.

²⁰ For more information about Bellere, see: A. Labarre, 'Les imprimeurs et libraires de Douai aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', in: F. de Nave (ed.), *Liber Amicorum Léon Voet (= De Gulden Passer, 61-63 (1983-1985))*, Antwerpen, Vereeniging van Antwerpsche Bibliophielen, 1985, pp. 241-260, on p. 245.

the Italian, and at least 22 of these were translated by a French translator or issued first in France (and especially in Paris or Lyon). Similar French connections apply for his colleagues in Douai, Arras or Mons.

The example of Bellere indicates that printers in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai scrupulously followed developments in the French book market. In 1593 Gilles Bauduyn, bookseller at Arras, even explicitly referred to his associates in Lyon, stating that ‘vn mien ami auait enuoié de Lion, la traduction d’Italien en François’ of a book by Mattia Bellintani.²¹ The data collected by Annie Parent, on the other hand, demonstrate that Parisian booksellers sold their editions to their colleagues in Arras, Cambrai, Mons or Tournai.²² The 1614 catalogue of the Douai printer and bookseller Pierre Borremans († c. 1616), for instance, mentions several books translated from the Italian printed in Paris and Rouen.²³ His stock included, amongst others, Cesar Calderari’s *Conceptions théologiques sur le Miserere mei* issued in Paris in 1601,²⁴ Gabriel Chappuys’s translation of a work on the same topic by Jules Mazarini issued by Chaudière in 1611²⁵ and a *Traicté de penitence* by Vincenzo Bruno, published in Rouen in 1610.²⁶ On a political level, the French-speaking provinces were fully integrated into Habsburg institutions, but on a linguistic level the vernacular was shared with France.²⁷ This ‘language union’ was a major advantage for printers, because they could easily sell editions in French printed across the border in Paris, Lyon or elsewhere in the Kingdom of France.²⁸

Considering the success of translations from the Italian in France, printers in the Habsburg Netherlands, and especially in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai, must have been keen not only to sell, but also to reissue the Parisian or Lyonese

²¹ Mattia Bellintani, *Pratique de l’oraison mentale ov contemplative ... Premiere partie*, Arras, Gilles Bauduyn, 1593, *2 r° (dedication to Jean Sarrazin, abbot of the Abbey of St.-Vaast in Arras).

²² A. Parent, *Les métiers du livre à Paris au XVIe siècle, 1535-1560*, Genève, Droz, 1974, maps facing pp. 150, 152, 166, 208, 212 & 214.

²³ *Hortvlvs bibliothecarivs continens Florentissimos flores Librariæ Petri Borremans*, Douai, Pierre Borremans, 1614. The only copy known is preserved in the Bibliothèque Mazarine (8° 34344-7). A. Labarre, ‘Le catalogue de Pierre Borremans à Douai, 1614’, in: *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 56 (1981), pp. 207-209 provides a detailed description of the document.

²⁴ *Hortvlvs bibliothecarivs*, 95v°. This translation by Estienne Alemandi de Saluces seems to have been issued with various imprints within the same year, including those of Abraham Saugrain (copy of the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, Paris), Dominique Salis (copy of the BNU, Strasbourg) and Laurent Sonnius (copy of the Discalced Carmelite Convent, Ghent)

²⁵ *Hortvlvs bibliothecarivs*, 96r°. Most probably the catalogue refers to the second edition of the *Cent-trente discours ... sur le Psalme 50e Miserere mei Deus, divisez en III parties*. Cfr. Dotoli, Castiglioni Minischetti & Placella Sommella, *Les traductions de l’italien ... au XVIIIe siècle*, cit., p. 293.

²⁶ *Hortvlvs bibliothecarivs*, 101v°. I have found no reference to this edition elsewhere.

²⁷ In daily life the inhabitants of these regions spoke various Walloon dialects and although they may have used and preferred other words or grammatical constructions, the written language was essentially the same as that written in, for instance, Paris. As is evident from the circulation of reprints of Parisian or Lyonese editions, works written or translated by Frenchmen could be easily understood in the French-speaking parts of the Low Countries. Contemporary accounts of the difference between the languages as spoken and written in these regions and France are given by the Douai town clerk Paul du Mont (*L’anatomie dv corps politique compare av corps hvmain*, Douai, Jean Bogart, 1581, ‘Advertissement au lecteur’) and the Franciscan writer Philippe Bosquier (in his *Tragoedie nouvelle, dicte le petit rasoir*, Mons, Charles Michel, 1589, A3 v°). I am indebted to Alisa van de Haar for directing my attention to Bosquier’s book.

²⁸ Translations of political works, on the other hand, had to fit with the views of local governments and were adapted more frequently, as has been shown by L. Behiels, W. Thomas and C. Pistor, ‘Translation as an Instrument of Empire: The Southern Netherlands as Translation Center of the Spanish Empire, 1500-1700’, in: *Historical Methods*, 47, 3 (2014), pp. 113-127.

editions.²⁹ The position on the border between France and the Netherlands created interesting opportunities for local printers. They were beyond the reach of French authorities and therefore they did not have to comply with French printing privileges. Bellere and his colleagues could easily reprint Parisian or Lyonesse translations, with little or no changes and without facing legal difficulties.³⁰ In March 1608 the *Conseil privé* in Brussels even accorded a privilege to Guillaume de la Rivière of Arras with regard to a French translation of a book by Luis Cerqueira, a Jesuit missionary and bishop in Japan. The printer obtained permission ‘de pouvoir luy seul imprimer, vendre & distribuer certain livret, intitulé Histoire veritable de la Glorieuse mort que six nobles Chrestien Japonois ont constamment enduré’ for a period of three years, although this translation from Italian had been issued in Paris the previous year.³¹ In other words, some printers applied for a new privilege that would grant them the monopoly to print and distribute translations across the Habsburg Netherlands that had previously been issued in France. This reminds us of the considerable commercial and financial interests at stake and the existence of competition between the printers of the Habsburg Netherlands in issuing such editions. For printers in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai, reprinting some of the numerous French editions was the most obvious strategy to enlarge their bookshop’s supplies of popular Italian books in translation in an easy, cheap and legally risk-free way.

Claude de Bassecourt and Antoine Gazet

The production of translations in the Cambrai region, however, was not confined to reprints of Parisian and Lyonesse editions. Printers and booksellers could also make an appeal to local *gens de lettres* who knew Italian and were acquainted with Italian literature. Although Bellere published many translations from the Italian produced by French translators, at least eleven of his editions were translated by ‘local’ translators. Claude de Bassecourt was one of them. Bassecourt, born in Mons around 1570, translated two books from Italian by order of Balthazar Bellere and the Arras printer Robert Maudhuy.³² The first book, by the Italian Jesuit Vincenzo Bruno, dealt with the mysteries of the life of Christ; the second, entitled *Jardin spirituel*, was written by Paolo Morigia and first published in Venice in 1581. These translations must have been well-received, for in 1598 the Bruno translation had a second edition and in 1615 and 1623 the text was reprinted by Pierre Rigaud at Lyon. The dedications of both books confirm that the printers had ordered the translations themselves. Robert Maudhuy, printer of Morigia’s book, explicitly stated that he had

²⁹ Balsamo, Minischetti & Dotoli, *Les traductions ... au XVIe siècle* lists 60 translations from Italian printed at Antwerp between 1532 and 1600. Almost 60% of these editions were published between 1550 and 1570 and many deal with history, architecture or linguistics. The KU Leuven research project entitled ‘*The Southern Netherlands as translation centre for the Spanish monarchy in the sixteenth and seventeenth century*’ will offer more complete figures.

³⁰ Records concerning a printing privilege accorded to Robert Maudhuy in 1614 suggest that some printers tried to produce cheaper editions than the original French ones, see: Brussel, State Archives, *Conseil privé sous le régime espagnol* [hereafter: CPE], 1276, no. 89.

³¹ L. Cerqueira, *Histoire veritable de la glorieuse mort, que six nobles chrestiens japonois ont constamment enduré pour la Foy de Iesus-Christ*, Arras, G. de la Riviere, 1608, printing privilege. The Parisian edition, bearing the same title, was published by C. Chapelet.

³² About Bassecourt, see the introduction of: C. de Bassecourt, *Trage-Comédie Pastoralle (1594)*. *Publiée avec une introduction et des notes*, G. Charlier (ed.), Bruxelles, Palais des Académies, 1931. A recent account is given by: J.-P. Barbier-Mueller (ed.), *Dictionnaire des poètes français de la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle (1549-1615)*, Genève, Droz, 2015-, I, pp. 364-377. Nothing has been heard of him after 1598, although Charlier (pp. xxxviii ff.) suggested that he might have worked in Paris in later years.

paid Bassecourt.³³ Even if there is no confirmation of this payment, it seems that he translated for his living. In this case he would be on a par with some French translators for whom translating was becoming a profession in its own right.³⁴

Yet, as the case of Antoine Gazet illustrates, printers were not the only ones who took the initiative to order new translations. Gazet was a physician from Aire-sur-la-Lys, a small town close to Saint-Omer, but was encouraged to spend his spare time translating by his elder brother Guillaume (1554-1612), an Arras priest known as a prolific author and translator himself.³⁵ After presenting his brother with some 'good' Italian books, Guillaume encouraged Antoine in composing and publishing translations, although Antoine himself considered his work 'assez rude & mal polie'.³⁶ In the late 1590s three translations by Antoine were published in Arras and Douai: two books by the Italian Jesuit Fulvio Androzzi dealing with communion and Christ's passion respectively; and a third one by the Capuchin friar Bernardino da Balbano on the flagellation of Christ.³⁷ According to Guillaume, his brother also prepared a fourth translation, again of a book by Bruno. But this translation would never appear in print, since shortly before the text went to press a reissue of a French translation by the aforementioned François Solier was published by Laurence Kellam in Valenciennes. The availability of a recent French edition probably made Gazet's printer doubt the profitability of yet another one.³⁸

At first sight, Gazet and Bassecourt had different motives for translating books from the Italian, though similarities can be seen too. Both translators had learned Italian during a stay in Italy. Around 1588 Bassecourt probably travelled to Italy in the entourage of the nobleman Philippe de Croÿ. Back in the Low Countries he became a law student in Douai. There he participated in a literary competition around 1592. Although he did not win the contest (wrongfully in his opinion), the pieces he wrote on this occasion clearly demonstrate his fascination with Italian writers such as Ariosto and Petrarca.³⁹ Antoine Gazet, for his part, had resided in Italy for five years while completing his studies. During his stay he travelled the whole of Italy and no doubt he also acquired a very good knowledge of Italian. In one of his dedicatory letters Gazet argues that it is the duty of a traveller to observe precisely what he comes across and to relate his experiences to his friends. No doubt, Antoine's views must be seen in a religious perspective, given also the

³³ V. Bruno, *Meditations svr les principavx mysteres de tovte la vie de nostre Seigneur Iesus-Christ*, Douai, B. Bellere, 1597, *4 and P. Morigia, *Iardin spirituel*, Arras, R. Maudhuy, 1598, §2-§3. Records concerning a privilege granted to Bellere in 1608 also indicate that he commissioned new translations from the Italian (CPE, 1276, no. 130).

³⁴ Balsamo, 'Introduction', p. 7; T. Uetani, 'La naissance d'un métier: traducteur. Jalons chronologiques', in: C. Bénévent, I. Diu and C. Lastraioli (eds.), *Gens du livre et gens de lettres à la Renaissance*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, pp. 33-61, esp. p. 59; P. Burke, 'Cultures of translation in Early Modern Europe', in: *Idem* & R. Po Chia-Hsia (eds.), *Cultural translation in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, University Press, 2007, pp. 7-38, here pp. 12-13.

³⁵ R. Aubert, 'Gazet (Guillaume)', in: *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* [hereafter: DHGE], Paris, Letouzay & Ané, 1912-, XX, cols. 186-187.

³⁶ F. Androzzi, *Traicté de la freqvente commvniion, et des fruicts qui en procedent*, Douai, J. Bogart, 1599, *2 r°-v° (dedication by Antoine Gazet to his brother Guillaume).

³⁷ F. Androzzi, *Devot memorial des saints mysteres de la mort et passion de nostre Sauueur & Redef[m]pteur Iesus-Christ*, Arras, J. Bourgeois, 1595; B. da Balbano, *Le sacre mystere de la flagellation de nostre savveur*, Arras, J. Bourgeois, 1595 and Androzzi, *Traicté de la freqvente commvniion*, cit.

³⁸ Cfr. G. Gazet, *La bibliotheqve sacree dv Pays-Bas*, Arras, G. de la Riviere, 1610, p. 107 ('il a esté preuenu en l'imprissio[n] par les traducteurs Fra[n]çois'). Most likely he referred to: Vincenzo Bruno, *Abbrege des meditations de la vie, passion, mort et resurrection de nostre Seigneur*, Valenciennes, Laurence Kellam, 1601.

³⁹ Bassecourt, *Trage-Comédie Pastoralle*, cit., pp. XIII-XIV & XVIII-XXXI.

encouragement of his brother, one of the most important clergymen of Arras at the time. Antoine acknowledged that he felt obliged to translate Italian literature ‘pour en illustrer & enricher [la] nation’ and to introduce ‘choses si grandes & excellentes’ to his fellow-countrymen.⁴⁰

Translating the Catholic Reformation

The large number of translations from the Italian printed in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai cannot fully be explained by the commercial interests of printers and the personal contacts translators had with Italy. As is evident from the case of Antoine Gazet, the religious context must be taken into account. Most translations in the Cambrai region had been composed by either secular or regular clergy; lay translators, such as Gazet and Bassecourt, were in fact in the minority. At least a part of the print run was intended for the libraries of religious institutions, as is apparent from contemporary handwritten notes in many of the existing copies. Translators often expressed the wish that the Italian examples of spiritual, devotional and mystical practices would inspire and be followed by readers in more northern parts of Europe.⁴¹ Most convincingly, the contents of the books - ranging from the mysteries of Christ’s life, his passion, Marian devotions and the sacrament of communion to the lives of Italian Jesuits and Capuchins and letters from the Catholic missions in Asia - definitely place these editions within the parameters of Catholic renewal.

It comes as no surprise that much of the translations can be linked to the Jesuit, Capuchin, Oratorian or Theatine orders, all of which had Italian (or at least southern European) origins and had been established fairly recently. Jesuits and Capuchins were widely respected for their role in education and preaching, but they also supported and facilitated the south-north cultural translation of literature associated with Catholic renewal.⁴² Not coincidentally, the rise of Jesuit and Capuchin literature in the Cambrai province followed the establishment of numerous houses of these orders.⁴³ The interest in translations was most evident within the Society of Jesus.⁴⁴ After being sent to the Jesuit general in Rome first, letters from the missions in the Far East were spread all over Catholic Europe and translated into various vernaculars by local members of the society. From the 1590s these letters regularly appeared in French in Douai, Arras and Lille.

At least a few of these missionary letters were translated from Italian into French by Antoine de Balinghem (1571-1630), a Jesuit born in Saint-Omer who was sent to Novellara, Italy, to complete his novitiate around 1588. By 1592 he had returned to his native region where he applied himself to teaching, preaching and writing. During the early decades of the seventeenth century, Balinghem was the

⁴⁰ Da Balbano, *Le sacre mystere*, b2 r°-v° (dedication by Gazet).

⁴¹ See for instance: V. Ceparì, *La vie dv bien-hevreux Lovys Gonzaga de la Compagnie de Iesvs*, Douai, J. Bogart, 1608 (transl. by A. de Balinghem), dedicatory letter to Archduchess Isabella by the translator; Hermanni, *La vie dv bienhevreux Alexandre Lvzage*, ã2 v° (‘Le tradvctevr av lectevr’).

⁴² Cfr. A. Pettegree, ‘North and South: cultural transmission in the sixteenth-century European book world’, in: *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 89 (2012), pp. 507-520.

⁴³ These foundations were supported financially by town magistrates, nobles (arch)bishops, canonical chapters and even powerful Benedictine abbots. On these developments, see: Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, I, pp. 142 ff., 164-191 & 380-394 and Hildebrand, *De kapucijnen ... Deel 1*, cit., pp. 100-117, 126-129 & 199-202.

⁴⁴ On Jesuit translations, see: P. Burke, ‘The Jesuits and the Arts of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, in: J.W. O’Malley et al. (eds.), *The Jesuits II. Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540-1773*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006, pp. 24-32.

most prolific Jesuit author and translator in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai.⁴⁵ His first publication was a translation of the letters from Japan from the years 1589 and 1590. In an dedicatory letter he informs the reader that he was instructed ‘de mettre & coucher succinctement en ma langue naturelle, le contenu & sommaire des dernieres lettres qui du lapon ont esté apportées à Rome, & de Rome en ces quartiers’, illustrating the desire of local superiors to publish these letters in French, as well as the importance of the connection with the Jesuit generalate in Rome.⁴⁶

In later years, Balinghem published translations of the lives of Italian Jesuits and nobles. In 1608 a French edition of the life of the Jesuit Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-1591) was printed by the Douai printer Jean Bogart. Balinghem dedicated his translation to Archduchess Isabella, who had met Gonzaga during his stay at the court of her father, Philips II of Spain. The translator hoped that Gonzaga, who had resided at so many courts without committing any sin, might serve as an example to the courtiers of Isabella.⁴⁷ A similar wish recurs in another of his translations: the life of the Italian nobleman Alessandro Luzzaga (1551-1602). This time Balinghem justified his translation by the fact that he had known Luzzaga personally ‘& ay eu l’honneur de le pratiquer, de luy parler, mesme de manger à sa table; parquoy ie me sentoy comme obligé de donner a cognoistre au monde les vertus de celuy avec lequel i’auoy autresfois traicté familièrement l’espace de presque 4. ans que ie me suis tenu en la ville de Bresce’.⁴⁸ Of course, Luzzaga was a layman, but, according to the translator, his virtues were so ‘excellent and rare’ that his life was of exemplary value to laymen and clergy alike.

Not all translations of Jesuit literature published in the Cambrai province had been composed by local translators. Again a considerable share of 40% of the translations, such as those composed by the mentioned François Solier, was imported from France. Examining the translations of Italian Capuchin books, this ‘French connection’ appears to have been even stronger. For a long time the Capuchin order had been reluctant about reading, writing and the ownership of books and hence Capuchin translators frequently remained anonymous.⁴⁹ Many title pages only mention that the book was translated by ‘a Capuchin friar’. Rarely, if ever, were the editions introduced by a dedicatory letter clarifying the motives for a particular translation. Yet translations of Italian Capuchin books were issued regularly in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai and their ascent runs in striking parallel with the establishment of new Capuchin houses there.⁵⁰ Between 1591 and 1611 no less than

⁴⁵ On Balinghem, see: W. Audenaert, *Prosopographia Iesuitica Belgica Antiqua: a biographical dictionary of the Jesuits in the Low Countries 1542-1773*, Leuven, Filosofisch en Theologisch College van de Sociëteit van Jezus, 2000, I, p. 71; C. Sommervogel (ed.), *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Bruxelles, Schepens, 1890-1960, I, cols. 831-841 and E. Lamalle, ‘Balinghem (Antoine de)’, in: *DHGE*, VI, cols. 387-388.

⁴⁶ *Sommaire des lettres dv lapon, et de la Chine de l’an M. D. LXXXIX. & M. D. XC.*, Douai, widow J. Boscard, 1592. Another selection of these letters was translated by Michel d’Esne, the future bishop of Tournai and a known supporter of the Society of Jesus (*Lettre dv lapon des annees 1591. Et 1592*, Douai, Jean Bogart, 1595).

⁴⁷ Cepari, *La vie du bien-hevrevx Lovys Gonzaga*, cit.

⁴⁸ Hermanni, *La vie dv bienhevrevx Alexandre Lvzage*, cit., ã2 r°. Balinghem was also acquainted with the author of Luzzaga’s life, Ottavio Hermanni.

⁴⁹ On the position of the Capuchin order towards books, see: B. Dompnier, ‘Entre possession collective et usage individuel. Le livre chez les capucins français des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles’: in: M.-H. Froeschlé-Chopard & B. Dompnier (eds.), *Les religieux et leurs livres à l’époque moderne. Actes du colloque de Marseille, E.H.E.S.S., 2 et 3 avril 1997*, Clermont-Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2000, pp. 213-233.

⁵⁰ Approximately 25 translations of Italian Capuchin books were issued between 1595 and the late 1630s.

fifteen convents were founded, more than half of them in only four years (1591-1595).⁵¹ The arrival of large numbers of Capuchin friars, as well as the growing interest in the order, provided Capuchin literature with a new readership and clientele. As a consequence, printing and selling Capuchin books must quickly have become a lucrative activity.

Although the identity, motives and personal Italian connections of Capuchin translators remain obscure, the ecclesiastical approbations (the permission to print a book given by a bishop, his representative, order superiors or theologians) help to uncover the route Capuchin books made from Italy into the Habsburg Netherlands. From these approbations Lyon emerges as an important intermediary centre in transferring Capuchin books to the north.⁵² The editions of Arras and Douai often included the permissions given in Brescia by the Capuchin superiors for the original Italian version, as well as the approval of the French translation, mostly signed in Lyon by the local bishop and the local order superiors. These statements were then supplemented with the approbation by the episcopal censors of Douai and Arras.⁵³ In summary, it may be stated that the Capuchin translations demonstrate how the impetus given by the order itself coincided with, and was often strengthened by, the commercial networks of local printers and booksellers, who closely followed developments in France's major typographic centres.

Conclusions

I would like to propose three main agents that contributed to the transfer of Italian religious literature into the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai and the Habsburg Netherlands in general. First, the cross-border relations linking members of the Cambrai book world with French typographic centres explain how French Italianising tendencies spread into the French-speaking provinces of the Netherlands. Indeed, the publication of translations from the Italian, and in a more general sense the development of the Catholic book in these provinces as a whole, was to a large extent inspired by the transregional exchanges alongside and across borders that characterized the region.

Second, personal connections with Italy were a major advantage in transmitting Italian literature to the north. Antoine Gazet, Claude de Bassecourt and Antoine de Balinghem all temporarily resided in Italy to pursue their studies. They acquired an extensive knowledge of the Italian language and, more importantly, encountered a new type of religious literature, that they would translate and spread among their fellow-countrymen upon their return home. Finally one has to consider the role played by religious orders. As has been shown, the establishment of numerous Capuchin and Jesuit houses largely stimulated the transfer of Italian literature into the Habsburg Netherlands.

These three agents often worked together. Balinghem proves how personal connections with Italy and the incentives of the Society of Jesus could combine. Certainly, the presence of local Capuchin houses had been an important stimulus in

⁵¹ Hildebrand, *De kapucijnen ... Deel 1*, pp. 100-117, 122-129, 199-206, 213-219, 231-239, 248-250. Bellintani's *Pratique de l'oraison mentale ov contemplative*, for example, is dedicated to Jean Sarrazin, abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Vaast in Arras, in reward for his financial support for the foundation of a Capuchin convent in Arras.

⁵² The Arras bookseller Jean Bauduyn, for instance, explicitly refers to his contacts in Lyon in one of his dedications (Bellintani, *Pratique de l'oraison mentale ov contemplative*, *3 r°).

⁵³ Among many examples: A. Segala, *La mariade ... Où est enseigné la methode d'aymer & servir et honorer la glorieuse Vierge Marie*, Arras, R. Maudhuy, 1619. The Brescian approbations are dated 1611, those at Lyon 1614. The permission by Guillaume Sucquet, canon and official at Arras, is from 1619.

printing translations of Italian Capuchin literature, but this would not have been possible without the connections printers maintained with Lyon. The commercial way of thinking that guided printers and booksellers and their transregional networks went hand in hand with the impetus provided by religious orders and translators. So, the Cambrai book world demonstrates how printers, translators - clerical as well as lay - and religious orders all contributed to the same enterprise: transferring the literature, and hence the ideas, of Southern European Catholic reform into the Habsburg Netherlands.

Keywords

Translations, Italian religious literature, Catholic Reformation, Arras, Douai

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RIASSUNTO

Tradurre e distribuire letteratura religiosa italiana nella provincia ecclesiastica di Cambrai (fine XVI-inizio XVII sec.)

Tra la fine del Cinquecento e l'inizio del Seicento, centinaia di traduzioni dal latino, dall'italiano, dallo spagnolo e da altre lingue furono stampate nella provincia ecclesiastica di Cambrai (le regioni francofone dei Paesi Bassi asburgici). In questo contributo sono esaminate le traduzioni francesi di opere di letteratura religiosa italiana (1563-1659). Siccome quasi tutte le edizioni stampate a Cambrai riguardavano dei temi religiosi, queste traduzioni vanno lette alla luce della Controriforma e del rinnovamento cattolico. Anziché misurare l'impatto linguistico e letterario delle traduzioni dall'italiano, in questa sede si cerca di collocare la letteratura italiana stampata a Cambrai all'interno degli sviluppi religiosi in quella provincia. Come questi libri raggiungevano Cambrai, chi li traduceva e chi li diffondeva? Dallo studio emergono tre fattori decisivi per la diffusione dei libri italiani a Cambrai. Un primo fattore sono le relazioni transfrontaliere tra il mondo librario di Cambrai e la Francia, le quali spiegano come certe tendenze francesi italianeggianti si diffondevano verso le province francofone dei Paesi Bassi asburgici. In secondo luogo, le reti di conoscenze dei traduttori locali con l'Italia facilitavano la trasmissione di testi italiani verso l'Europa settentrionale. Infine, un ruolo fondamentale era assunto dagli ordini religiosi, in particolare da quelli dei gesuiti e dei cappuccini. Questi tre canali non erano affatto mutualmente esclusivi, ma spesso coincidevano e si rinforzavano a vicenda. Nella provincia di Cambrai gli stampatori, i traduttori, gli ordini religiosi e altre istituzioni partecipavano, nel loro complesso, alla stessa impresa, cioè di trasferire verso i Paesi Bassi asburgici la letteratura, e quindi le idee, della riforma cattolica dell'Europa meridionale.