Review of *Radical Translations*, Editors: Sanja Perovic, Erica Joy Mannucci, and Rosa Mucignat

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1. With the exponential growth of print in eighteenth-century Europe came an exponential increase in the number of translated works. In *Romanticism and the Stranger*, David Simpson describes the problems with "precise accounting of the numbers and kinds of translation into English" as primarily bibliographical, citing "the phenomena of secondary translation (e.g., into English from the German via the French) and of fake or unacknowledged translation, along with the fact that physical copies of many published works have not been recovered" (155). As a result, most attempts to trace the phenomenon of translation in Europe have focused on case studies of particular authors, as in Laura Kirkley's work on Mary Wollstonecraft both in translation and as a translator; particular national and linguistic contexts, be they English, German, or French; or, in the case of Diego Saglia's recent work, particular media forms. But a general exploration of translation in the print culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has remained an elusive undertaking, largely due to the enormity of its scale.

2. Enter *Radical Translations*. Created by principal investigator (PI) Sanja Perovic, along with co-PIs Erica Joy Mannucci and Rosa Mucignat, and developed with the support of King's Digital Lab, this database offers a new way to engage with the transnational circulation of radical ideas in the Romantic period. At the heart of this project is a bibliographic database that captures information about more than 1,600 titles (so far)—either translations or their source texts in English, French, and Italian—and the nearly 800 authors and translators involved in their production. Selected according to a capacious definition of "radical," which includes "any translation that aims to extend democratic and egalitarian ideas into new contexts," the dataset represents an ambitious effort to capture the movement of ideas through Europe and North America during the years leading up to and following the French Revolution. The exclusion of other European languages such as German omits many significant works in circulation, but this is a practical limitation that the project hopes to redress in future stages of the work. In addition to the data, the site contains a timeline, a wealth of contextual information in the form of blog posts, and detailed documentation of editorial choices useful for both the casual user and the most technical of digital humanists.

3. Designed according to the Library of Congress's BIBFRAME 2.0 model, the database has two main entry points: "Resources" and "Agents." Resources captures information about source texts and their translations, while Agents consists of the people and organizations, including businesses, that were involved in writing, translating, and publishing source texts and their translations. Resource records provide metadata about a specific edition of a work, including categorization according to subject matter and literary form, links to

records for the agents (authors, translators, and publishers) involved in its publication, and links to "Related Resources," which may include both a source text and other editions of the same translation (see fig. 2). The records are easy to understand at a glance, aided by a key (see fig. 1) that identifies the categories represented by different graphics; the search function enables keyword searches, which can be filtered by all of the fields captured in the records.
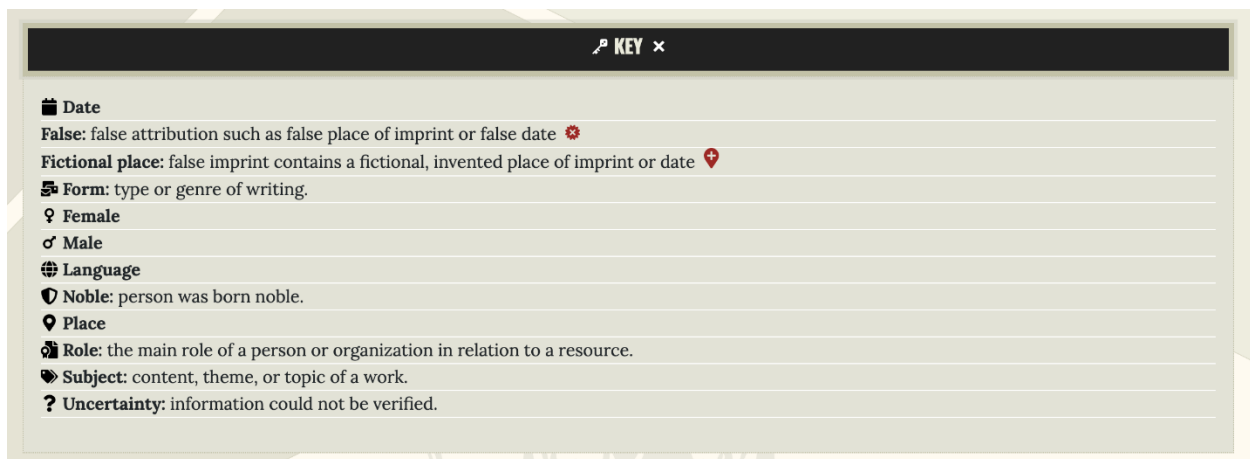

Fig. 1: Key to the visual code used in Resource and Agent records.

Fig. 2: Resource record for William Kendall's translation of Gaetano Filangieri's *Analysis of the Science of Legislation*.

4. In addition to providing an accessible overview of radical source texts and their translations, the fields captured in Resource records give evidence of careful thought about the challenges of building a bibliography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts, as well as about how to open new avenues for exploration. One of the most exciting features of the way Resources are recorded is their emphasis on the paratextual materials that attend translation. Each text accompanied by an introduction, preface, or footnotes is tagged "has paratext," and the paratexts are given linked records that categorize them according to form and function and that describe their contents (see fig. 3). The ability to browse the

Resources by source text, translation, or paratext creates a number of pathways into the database and enables users to navigate and search according to their interests.

Fig. 3: Record for the paratext of William Kendall's translation of Gaetano Filangieri's *Analysis of the Science of Legislation*.

5. Navigation becomes less straightforward when multiple translations and/or editions exist. Joseph Lavallé's abolitionist work of fiction, *Le nègre comme il y a peu de blancs* (1789), has a particularly complicated translation and circulation history. It was translated into English twice in 1790, as *The negro as there are few white men* by Joseph Trapp and as *The negro equalled by few Europeans* by an unknown translator. The latter translation was reprinted three times, in Dublin and Philadelphia in 1791 and again in Philadelphia in 1801. Although all four editions present the same translation, only the original London translation links back to the record of the source text and to the other editions of that translation. The 1791 and 1801 editions link only to the 1790 London edition, not to each other. This creates

a branching structure that has the potential to oversimplify the complex relationships between editions produced by evolving distribution networks. Matthew Carey, who printed the 1791 Philadelphia edition in his periodical *The American Museum, or, Universal Magazine*, was born in Ireland, and Vincent Kinane has identified Patrick Byrne, the printer of the Dublin edition, as one of Carey's suppliers. The source text for the first Philadelphia edition was likely the Dublin edition, a relationship that would be made clearer by linking each edition of the translation to each of the others, rather than granting primacy to the first edition of the translation. On a more basic level, this structure also means that the record for the source text does not show all editions of the work in translation, only the first edition of each translation with the tag "has other edition" where relevant, which prevents users from seeing a translation's reach at a glance (see fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Resource record for Joseph Lavallée's *Le nègre comme il y a peu de blancs*.

6. The Philadelphia reprintings of *The negro equalled by few white men* also strain the project's data model by attempting to capture works published in periodicals and works reprinted in a volume with other works. As a translation printed in a periodical, the 1791 edition links to a separate record for *The American Museum* (see fig. 5), which lists basic details about the periodical's run and all translations that appear in it, and also provides a note describing the edition: "Re-edition in instalments in the American Museum throughout the year 1791." Users interested in the role of periodicals in circulating translated material can filter a Resource search by the Form/Genre "Serial Publications" and find a list of all the periodicals in the database. However, periodicals fit uneasily into the data model; Resource records for periodical publications include start and end dates, significant contributors, and the source texts and translations that appeared in them. However, periodical-specific data, such as how frequently issues were printed, are captured only in the notes, if at all. The 1801 Philadelphia edition poses a similar problem, in that the volume also includes the full text of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, which is neither a source text nor a translation. As a result, Wheatley's work appears in the title of the Resource, and "poetry" is listed as one of the forms, but Wheatley is not included as an author in the record (see fig. 6). While the compilation of two texts in this edition is unusual, the presence of translations in periodical publications is much more typical. A more robust strategy for capturing some of the nuance of how source texts and translations appeared in them would highlight the role they played in transforming and circulating translated texts.

Fig. 5: Resource record for *The American Museum, or, Universal Magazine*, which included a serialized reprinting of *The negro equalled by few Europeans*.

Fig. 6: Resource record for the 1801 edition of *The Negro equalled by few Europeans*, which includes Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Moral and Entertaining*.

7. The people, businesses, and organizations involved in the production of translations are included in a catch-all table called "Agents." Designed according to "friend of a friend"

(FOAF) specifications, Agent records focused on an individual (see fig. 7) capture data about people, including birthplace, birth and death dates, languages spoken, links to authority records, and a list of contributions. They also list other people that the Agent "knows" as well as organizations they are a "member of," highlighting the networks that underpinned the circulation of radical ideas. Records devoted to organizations—which include publishers, political organizations, and salons—are sparser, listing only a location, contributions, and, where appropriate, members. Some, such as that for the Helen Maria Williams Salon (see fig. 8), include notes that provide a brief narrative and description of its significance, but the diverse set of organizations limits how much structured data can be presented. As with the publication of Resources in volume and periodical formats, the attempt to represent people and organizations in a single table makes it difficult to systematize data, even as it has the benefit of simplicity.

Helen Maria Williams

♀ London 1759/1762-06-17 – 1827-12-15 Paris | ⊕ German, English, French | ♥ Main: `Amsterdam` `London` `Paris` | `novelist` `poet` `salonnière` `translator` `writer` | ↗ Helena Maria Williams (viaf) Helen Maria Williams (wikidata)

Contributions

1. A tour in Switzerland `has translation` `author`
2. Letters containing a sketch of the politics of France, from the 31st of May, 1793, till the 10th of Thermidor, 28th of July, 1794, and of the scenes which have passed in the prisons of Paris `has translation` `author`
3. Letters on the events which have passed in France since the Restoration in 1815 `has translation` `author`
4. Letters on the French Revolution, written in France, in the summer of 1790, to a friend in England, containing, various anecdotes relative to that interesting event, and memoirs of Mons. and Madame Du F. `has translation` `has paratext` `author`
5. Paul and Virginia. Translated from the French of Bernardin Saint-Pierre by Helen Maria Williams `translation` `has paratext` `translator`
6. Paul and Virginia. Translated from the French of Bernardin Saint-Pierre by Helen Maria Williams `paratext` `author`
7. Poems on various subjects, with introductory remarks on the present state of science and literature in France `has translation` `author`
8. Report upon the principles of political morality, which are to form the basis of the administration of the interior concerns of the Republic: Made in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, the 18th pluviose, second year of the Republic `translation` `translator`
9. Sketches of the state of manners and opinions in the French Republic `has translation` `author`
10. The political and confidential correspondence of Lewis the Sixteenth. With observations on each letter `translation` `has paratext` `translator`
11. The political and confidential correspondence of Lewis the Sixteenth. With observations on each letter `paratext` `author`

Knows

- Anna Letitia Barbauld `poet` `writer`
- Bertrand Barère `freemason` `journalist` `jurist` `politician` `translator` `writer`
- Marguerite Ursule Fortunée Bernier Briquet `poet` `writer`
- Thomas Cadell `bookseller` `civil servant` `publisher`
- Marie-Joseph Chénier `playwright` `poet` `politician`
- Thomas Christie `entrepreneur` `physician` `translator` `writer`
- Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis `artist` `novelist` `playwright` `poet`
- William Godwin `journalist` `novelist` `philosopher` `writer`
- Sophie Grandchamp `translator` `writer`
- Alexander von Humboldt `scientist` `traveller` `writer`
- Nicholas Madgett `civil servant` `cleric` `translator` `writer`
- John Oswald `military` `philosopher` `poet` `revolutionary` `translator` `writer`
- Sampson Perry `journalist` `pamphleteer` `physician` `publisher` `writer`
- Amodio Ricciardi `jurist` `revolutionary` `writer`
- George Robinson `bookseller` `publisher`
- Marie-Jeanne Roland de la Platière `revolutionary` `salonnière` `writer`
- Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre `abolitionist` `engineer` `military` `philosopher` `spy` `traveller` `writer`
- Jean-Baptiste Salaville `journalist` `translator` `writer`
- Jean-Baptiste Say `economist` `entrepreneur` `professor` `translator` `writer`
- Charlotte Smith `novelist` `poet`
- Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope `politician` `scientist` `translator`
- John Hurford Stone `entrepreneur` `publisher` `writer`
- Benjamin Vaughan `diplomat` `editor` `journalist` `jurist` `physician` `politician` `translator` `writer`
- Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud `jurist` `politician`
- Mary Wollstonecraft `novelist` `philosopher` `translator` `traveller` `writer`
- Anonymous (58) `translator`

Member of

- Girondists `political organisation`
- Helen Maria Williams Salon `salon`
- L'Imprimerie de la rue de Vaugirard (English Press) `publisher`
- Société des amis des droits de l'homme ('British club') `political organisation`

Fig. 7: Agent record for Helen Maria Williams (person).

Helen Maria Williams Salon

Paris | salon

Members

- Alexander von Humboldt | scientist | traveller | writer
- Benjamin Constant | politician | translator | writer
- Bertrand Barère | freemason | journalist | jurist | politician | translator | writer
- Edward FitzGerald | military | revolutionary | traveller
- Fanny Burney | playwright | writer
- Félicité Brissot de Warville | translator
- Helen Maria Williams | novelist | poet | salonnière | translator | writer
- Henri Grégoire | civil servant | cleric | politician | writer
- Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre | abolitionist | engineer | military | philosopher | spy | traveller | writer
- Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville | abolitionist | entrepreneur | pamphleteer | politician | translator | writer
- Jean-Baptiste Say | economist | entrepreneur | professor | translator | writer
- Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière | politician
- Jean-Pierre Rabaut Saint-Etienne | cleric | politician | writer
- Joel Barlow | diplomat | entrepreneur | journalist | poet | politician | translator | writer
- John Hurford Stone | entrepreneur | publisher | writer
- Joseph Priestley | philosopher | scientist
- Marie-Jeanne Roland de la Platière | revolutionary | salonnière | writer
- Marie-Joseph Chénier | playwright | poet | politician
- Mary Wollstonecraft | novelist | philosopher | translator | traveller | writer
- Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud | jurist | politician
- Thomas Paine | journalist | philosopher | revolutionary | writer
- William Godwin | journalist | novelist | philosopher | writer

Notes

"I was at Helen's last night; I believe she has a party almost every night – 30 or 40 or 50, chiefly English" (Joel Barlow, in Bour, 2013)

Helen Maria Williams hosted a salon which functioned as an important meeting point of Parisian Girondins and visiting British radicals between 1792 and 1793 – the latter signifying the advent of both a Jacobin disfavouring of salon culture and Williams's exile from France. In that year, however, the salon hosted numerous republican leaders, French or international – including, for example, Francisco de Miranda and Jérôme Pétion. Hosting with her lover and fellow publisher at the 'English Press' at rue de Vaugiraud, John Hurford Stone, the salon also had significant publishing and networking functions for British and American writers. Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, visited Williams early upon her arrival to Paris, and described meeting 'french company at her house'. We see in this way anglophone politically committed writers being introduced both to the cosmopolitan revolutionary elite and to one another as they arrive in Paris. The salon is notable for thus introducing willing translators to local radical networks, and it could therefore be seen as both an axis of Anglo-French radicalism in the early 1790s, and, because so directly connected to the 'English Press', as a social wing of the radical publishing networks which often paralleled it.

The salon represents an interesting, 'revolutionary' variation on the ancien regime form: non-aristocractic, but centred on female sociability; cultural, but also decidedly political in character.

See:
Madeleine B. Stern, 'The English Press and Its Successors: 1793-1815', in The Bibliographical Society of America 74:4 (1980), pp. 307-359, 315-17

Mary A. Favret, 'Spectatrice as Spectacle: Helen Maria Williams at Home in the Revolution', in Studies in Romanticism 32:2 (1993), pp. 273-295

Isabelle Bour, 'A New Wollstonecraft: The Reception of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman and of The Wrongs of Woman in Revolutionary France', in Journal for 18th Century Studies, vol.36, no.4 (Nov 2013), pp.575-587.

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Fig. 8: Agent record for the Helen Maria Williams Salon (organization).

8. People and organizations are also tagged according to "roles" (see fig. 9), which include professions such as "librarian," "civil servant," and military officer," alongside political alignments ("abolitionist," "revolutionary") and other intellectual categories ("salonièrre,"

"poet"). This tagging system offers a useful way to navigate the various affiliations of people and organizations, although more transparency around why some categories have been chosen and not others would be valuable. Separate categories for "freemason," "freemasonry," and "masonic lodge" feel redundant, whereas scholars of radical writing in the British context will find the absence of "dissenter" from the list of roles surprising. Minor quibbles aside, the ability to search Agents by occupation or affiliation is a valuable tool for exploring patterns in which groups were involved in translating radical works.

Fig. 9: Roles according to which Agent records can be filtered.

9.   While the current scope of *Radical Translations* is already an enormous undertaking, its focus on exclusively radical texts necessarily limits its findings about the role of translation during the revolutionary period, and the fact that the project is still in progress complicates an evaluation of its selection criteria. The project's capacious definition of "radical" ensures that texts that might otherwise be excluded are represented. However, when expected texts are absent, it can be difficult to determine whether they are still to be added or have been deemed insufficiently radical. For example, the record for Stéphanie Felicité

de Genlis lists her as the author of two source texts—the anti-slavery periodical *La Feuille villageoise* (1790/1795) and the educational work *Zelié ou l'Ingénue* (1781), which was adapted into the play *The Child of Nature* by Elizabeth Inchbald in 1788. That there are only two is striking: between 1780 and 1830, there were at least 150 English-language translations of Genlis's works published in Britain, Ireland, and the United States (truly a bibliographer's nightmare). While Genlis may not have had the radical credentials of some of the other writers she is listed as having known on her profile, such as Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft, the emphasis on female education in her works and their translations fits the project's inclusion criterion of "extend[ing] democratic and egalitarian ideas." Figures such as Genlis, whose writing exists alongside more radical interventions in women's education as well as explicitly counterrevolutionary writers, provide context vital for understanding the interventions of radical writers and translators, and highlight how radical writing is part of a spectrum of political debates and philosophical commitments.

10. The wealth of material is made more accessible through visualizations. In addition to the smaller timelines included in the Resource and Agent tables, the website has a Timeline feature, which provides a quick visualization of textual and political activity by country between the publication of Thomas Moore's *Utopia* in 1516 and 1823, showing the long tradition of radical writing in Europe. Source texts are indicated by yellow squares, translations are indicated by blue squares, and political events are represented by blue circles. Clicking on one of the squares or circles brings up a preview of a resource or an event with a list of other events, source texts, and translations associated with the same

country during that year. The timeline can be filtered by country and type of event. As a
tool for both visualizing and accessing the data, the timeline is simple and effective. The
layout draws clear links between events and texts; for example, the flurry of translations
published in Italy during 1797 and 1798 follows a year with fourteen political and military
events, including state formations, popular uprisings, and Napoleonic invasions. Although
Italy produced relatively few source texts during these years, the sharp spike in published
translations is eye-catching and offers an obvious starting point for understanding Italian
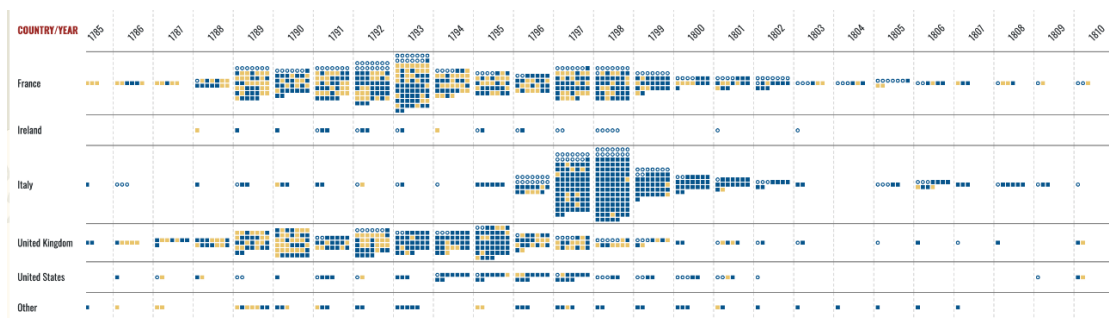contributions to the circulation of radical texts and ideas during the revolutionary period.

Fig. 10. Timeline showing events and the publication of source texts and translations between 1785 and
1810.

11. Overall, *Radical Translations* represents a much-needed resource for exploring the
transnational circulation of revolutionary thought before, during, and after the French
Revolution, one that I am eager to explore in more detail in relation to my own research.
Although, at times, the data model leaves users wanting more details about the way a
translation was published in a periodical or the history of an organization to which a radical
writer belonged, it is nevertheless an invaluable resource for exploring the rich field of radical
writing in English, French, and Italian that traversed national and linguistic boundaries.

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