

Cartographic Translation: Reframing Leonardo Bruni's *De interpretatione recta* (1424)

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IN THE 1430S, the Italian humanist and chancellor of Florence, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), and the Spanish humanist and diplomat, Alfonso of Cartagena (1384–1456),¹ were engaged in a lively correspondence concerning translation theory. What came to be known as the *Controversia Alphonsiana* has long been assessed as a dispute between Bruni's humanistic and Cartagena's medieval approaches to translation,² triggered by Bruni's new translation of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and his severe critique of Robert Grosseteste's thirteenth-century Latin rendering of Aristotle.³ Cartagena and Bruni's lengthy epistolary exchange is commonly discussed as an argument over language, translation, and philosophy. And yet, refer-

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1. Cartagena, the Bishop of Burgos, was the son of a *converso*. His father was a rabbi in Burgos before the family converted to Christianity. He is considered to be one of Spain's foremost fifteenth-century humanists. Jeremy Lawrance, "Alfonso de Cartagena y los conversos," *Actas del Primer Congreso Anglo-Hispano* 2 (1993): 103–20.

2. The most comprehensive study on the *Controversia Alphonsiana* to date remains Aleksander Birkenmajer, "Der Streit des Alonso von Cartagena mit Leonardo Bruni Aretino," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 20 (1920): 129–210. For a recent discussion of Leonardo Bruni's impact on the history of translation theory, see Jane Tylus, "No Untranslatables!" in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Cassin (Princeton, NJ, 2014); repr. in *Paragraph* 38 (2015): 286–89. For a discussion of Alfonso de Cartagena's activity as a translator, see Nicholas G. Round, "'Perdóneme Séneca': The Translational Practices of Alonso de Cartagena," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 75 (1998): 17–29.

3. Bruni's treatise has commonly been considered by Gianfranco Folena, among others, "a manifesto of modern translation, well before those of Juan Luis Vives and Martin Luther." Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge, 2011), 172.

ences to geography and cartography permeate their correspondence, forming an intrinsic part of the *Controversia Alphonsiana*. In a lengthy letter sent from Florence in 1438 to Francesco Pizolpassi, Archbishop of Milan, Bruni responds to Cartagena's accusation of not being learned enough in geography:

He [Cartagena] blames me for having written that I don't agree that in Spain, the far-off corner of the world, men are engaged in more activity than they are at the center. He maintains that the world doesn't have corners and chides me as if I knew nothing about geometry. In this he greatly errs. In fact, the world has very many corners; it has as many as there are in the world. In the same way that the world has forests and ponds and mountains and plains and promontories and maritime gulfs it also has corners. In his description of Britain, Caesar says in his *Commentariis belli Gallici*: "one side lies opposite to Gaul. Of this side one angle, which is in Kent, . . . faces the east, the lower angle faces south."⁴ . . . He [Cartagena] thinks I've ignored the location and size of Spain and suggests why: he says that I have to be forgiven if, fixed in my studies, I did not care to pay attention [to geography]. As if in their description of locations and regions, Eratosthenes or Ptolemy or Pliny, fixed in their studies, were seeing them [only] with their eyes and not with their minds and intellects. . . . Our Alfonso, geometer and mathematician that he is, is a prisoner of an excessive love for his fatherland. He deems great what is small.⁵

Readers accustomed to Bruni's works such as his groundbreaking *De interpretatione recta* (1424), commonly considered to be the first early modern treatise on

4. For the English translation, see Caesar, *The Gallic War*, trans. H. J. Edwards (Cambridge, MA, 1917), 5, pt. 13:1.

5. "Reprehendit, quia scriptum fuerit a me de Hispania non esse consentaneum, ut in extremo mundi angulo plus humanarum occupationum sit, quam in medio; asserit enim mundum non habere angulos ac me redarguit quasi geometriae ignarum. In quo longe aberrat. Mundus enim permultos habet angulos; tot enim habet, quot in mundo sunt. Ut enim et stagna et montes et planities et promontoria et sinus maritimos habet mundus, sic etiam habet angulos. Caesar in *Commentariis belli Gallici Britanniam* describens inquit: 'Eius unum latus est contra Galliam. Huius lateris alter angulus, qui est ad Cantium, ad orientem Solem, alter ad meridiem spectat'. . . . Putat me situm ac magnitudinem Hispaniae ignorare et causam subdit; inquit enim ignoscendum esse mihi, si in meis studiis consistens haec attendere non curavi. Quasi vero aut Eratosthenes aut Ptolemaeus aut Plinius, cum situs regionisque describunt, oculis eas viderint ac non potius in suis studiis consistentes mente intelligentiaque conspexerint. . . . Alphonsus autem noster, cum sit geometra et mathematicus, nimio patriae detinetur amore; itaque magnam putat, quae exigua est." In Leonardo Bruni, *Lettres familières*, trans. Laurence Bernard-Pradelle (Montpellier, 2014), 2, pt. 8:2. All English translations are my own unless otherwise stated. The Latin "angulus" means both corner and angle, depending on whether it references a map or a geometric projection. In Bruni's letter, "angulus" can refer to both.

translation theory, might be surprised to find Bruni's insights on geography woven into a discussion of language, philology, and translation. Bruni was not only a "statesman and man of letters"⁶ but also, as Paul Botley has recently stated, "the most illustrious pupil of the famous Byzantine teacher Manuel Chrysoloras [who] went on to become one of the most prolific translators of the fifteenth century."⁷ The image of Bruni, the philologically-minded "civic humanist"⁸ and "indefatigable translator of Greek into Latin,"⁹ might perhaps appear in stark contrast to the image that Cartagena projects of Bruni: that of a poorly trained geographer. Unsurprisingly, then, Bruni's comments on geography have received only scarce scholarly attention,¹⁰ and they have not been discussed in the context of Bruni's broader work, especially his translation theory. As this article attempts to demonstrate, Bruni's insights into geography and translation are closely related. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin. What is more, Bruni's and Cartagena's theories of translation and mapping language correspond to different ways of visualizing and mapping space that defy clear-cut medieval and humanistic dividing lines. Viewed against the backdrop of spatial imagery, Bruni's and Cartagena's methods of translation challenge an all-too-easy binary opposition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Bruni's translation theory emerged contemporaneously with the rise of another discipline that redirected humanism: cartography. The rise of cartography was a significant early modern intervention that reframed spatial thinking, including the practice of *translatio*—a term whose original meaning of "carrying across" is inextricably tied to spatial imagery. As one of the first European readers of the newly discovered *Geography* by Claudius Ptolemy—a treatise that proved to be foundational for European geographic thinking and cartographic production from the fifteenth century on—Bruni was a careful observer of contemporary developments and transformations in the domains of geography and cartography. The disciplines of translation and cartography, this essay argues, mutually informed each other. Studied together, as interlocking building blocks, they offer new insights into

6. James Hankins in *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, trans. and intro. Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thomson (Binghamton, NY, 1987), 15.

7. Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Gianozzo Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus* (Cambridge, 2004), 5.

8. The term was coined by Hans Baron. See Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, NJ, 1955), x. See also Griffiths, Hankins, and Thomson, *Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, 15; and James Hankins, *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2000).

9. Tylus, "No Untranslatables," 286.

10. One notable exception is James Hankins, "Ptolemy's *Geography* in the Renaissance," in *The Marks in the Fields: Essays on the Uses of Manuscripts*, ed. Rodney G. Dennis with Elizabeth Falsey (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 118–27.

the multilayered processes and manifold articulations of early modern transfer, translation, and transformation.

A look at translation from the perspective of cartography reveals the aporetic moments and blurred boundaries between medieval and humanistic methods of translation. Indeed, the very core of what has been defined as Bruni's humanistic approach to translation—his belief that the good translator has to know both the source and the target language—had already been proposed by the thirteenth-century translator, scientist, and cartographer Roger Bacon, who argued that “for the translation to be accurate, the translator must know the language from which he is translating, the language into which he is translating, and the body of knowledge that he wants to translate.”¹¹ What is more, Bacon was also a groundbreaking cartographer. For him, “place is the principle of the generation of things” (*locus enim est principium generationis rerum*).¹² In his *Opus Majus* (ca. 1266–67), he explored—almost two centuries before the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Europe—the possibility of a new system of mapping by using coordinates with longitudinal and latitudinal lines.¹³ The coordinate system, usually considered the hallmark of European Renaissance cartography, was already circulating in Muslim cartography and in medieval Iberia. It is probable that Cartagena was quite familiar with it.¹⁴ What I would like to call cartographic translation, then, constitutes a critical wedge that, when driven into the juncture between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, softens the boundaries between both periods and unearths complex—and at times unexpected—areas of contact and overlap relevant for the analysis of *translatio*.

THE PTOLEMAIC TABLE AND THE SQUARING OF TRANSLATION

That the linguistic activity of *translatio* is inextricably tied to questions of space and location is a constant that traverses the theory and practice of translation from

11. “Nam ad hoc quod translatio fiat vera oportet quod translator sciat linguam a qua transfert, et linguam in quam transfert, et scientiam quam vult transferre.” Roger Bacon, *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, quoted by Botley, *Latin Translation*, 57.

12. Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, quoted in David Woodward, “Roger Bacon's Terrestrial Coordinate System,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1990): 109–22, 109.

13. *Ibid.*, 110. Only with the rediscovery of Ptolemy would Bacon's system become the dominant mode of mapping.

14. As David Buisseret notes, the Muslims occupying the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth century on “had accepted the concept of latitude and longitude at an early date.” Already in the middle of the eleventh century, Muslim astronomers composed the “Toledo tables that listed many places and their geographical coordinates based on the prime meridian of the Canaries.” David Buisseret, “Spanish Peninsular Cartography, 1500–1700,” in *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. David Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Chicago, 2007), 1069–94, 1070.

Cicero's *De optimo genere oratorum* on. For the Roman orator, the practice of translation, "of putting words together—a structure as it were—to produce the two effects of rhythm and smoothness," is comparable to the construction of the "parts of a building" in which "the foundation is memory; that which gives it light is delivery."¹⁵ From Roman antiquity on, when words for the practice of translation were first being coined,¹⁶ the theory and practice of translation have unfolded as a territorial concern.

Perhaps at no point was the shared history of linguistic and geographic transfer so palpable and complex as during the transitional period between the Middle Ages and early modernity.¹⁷ Ptolemy's second-century CE *Geography*, rediscovered and introduced in Western Europe in the last years of the fourteenth century by Manuel Chrysoloras, significantly challenged previous spatial models and modes of conceiving of linguistic translation. Leonardo Bruni was not only the author of what is commonly considered the first early modern theory of translation but also one of the first prospective translators of Ptolemy's *Geography* from Greek into Latin. In a letter sent from the papal court at Viterbo to the Florentine humanist Niccolò Niccoli, dated October 29, 1405, Bruni writes: "Besides, I would like you to send me Ptolemy's *Geography*; in fact, I will make it Latin, as I hope, during my vigils. With it, I would like you to send me the little part of that book that Chrysoloras has already translated [*transtulit*]."¹⁸ While Bruni ultimately abandoned his plan—the *Geography* was translated by Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia in around 1409 or 1410—his interest in and knowledge of Ptolemy's *Geography* significantly informed his work: not only *De interpretatione recta* and the *Controversia Alphonsiana* but also his writings on the foundation of Florence, *In Praise of Florence* and *History of the Florentine People*, in which Bruni imagines Florence as a translation, a copy, of Rome. First, however, a few words about the impact of Ptolemy's *Geography* are necessary.

James Hankins has stated that "the *Geography* of the Alexandrian scientist Claudius Ptolemaeus (fl. A.D. 127–48) became in the early fifteenth century a focal point

15. Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 1:2.

16. Antoine Berman, "Tradition, translation, traduction," *Le Cahier* 6 (1988): 21–38, 22.

17. Lorenzo Valla likened translation to conquest. For him, "translation was a form of colonization of Greek culture," whereby the new translation replaces the originals. Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*, 174.

18. "Mihi autem ut *Geographiam* Ptolemei mittas velim; his enim vigilis, ut spero, illam faciam Latinam; cum ipsa tamen eam particulam mittas, quam ex eo libro Chrysoloras transtulit." Bruni, *Lettres familières*, 1, pt. 60:10. For a detailed discussion of the introduction of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Florence, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's *Geography*: End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century," in Woodward, *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, 285–364, 290–91.

for that rich network of cultural movements we refer to as the Renaissance.”¹⁹ The work “stood alongside and was integrated into existing medieval geographic traditions,” as Sean Roberts has recently argued, thus multiplying and complicating epistemological frameworks of geography and spatial imagery. Yet “there can be little question,” Roberts continues, “that regardless of its ‘revolutionary’ character or lack thereof, the Renaissance fascination with Ptolemy’s *Geography* had a profound impact on [the material and intellectual] cultures” of the fifteenth century.²⁰

A productive trigger for the emergence of humanistic disciplines, Ptolemy’s *Geography* was discovered in Constantinople and brought to Italy by Chrysoloras.²¹ It included a world map and a set of rectangular regional maps, so-called *tabulae*,²² which were produced in Byzantium during the Middle Ages and which showed parts of the *oikoumene*, the inhabited world as known to the ancients.²³ One of the novelties of Ptolemy’s method for cartographic projection was the introduction of longitudes and latitudes, which transformed the *tabulae* into a two-dimensional grid pattern.

Returning “space” to its Latin etymon, “spatium,” and the Greek “stadion,” the geographer Franco Farinelli defines “space” as a quantifiable, linear standard interval between two geometrical points.²⁴ Thus, space projected onto the rectangular map became the point of departure and the foundation for humanists to perceive, survey, and imagine territories.²⁵ Ptolemy’s *Geography*, which reconfigured space as metrics and Euclidean geometry, offered Europeans a tool to produce maps

19. Hankins, “Ptolemy’s *Geography* in the Renaissance,” 119. See also Botley, *Latin Translation*, 13–14.

20. Sean Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 41.

21. Samuel Edgerton and Franco Farinelli, among other scholars, contend that these maps were executed according to a method of projection that served none other than Filippo Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti as the basis for the theorization of the modern vanishing-point linear perspective. See Samuel Edgerton, *The Heritage of Giotto’s Geometry: Art and Science on the Eve of the Scientific Revolution* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 108–47; and Franco Farinelli, *Crisi della ragione cartografica* (Turin, 2009), 40–49. Sean Roberts, however, is more cautious about Ptolemy’s *Geography* “as the spur to the perspective experiments of Filippo Brunelleschi and their codification in works like Leon Battista Alberti’s *On Painting*” (Roberts, *Printing*, 37).

22. Roberts specifies that “the Byzantine manuscripts, through which fifteenth-century Italians came to know the work [Ptolemy’s *Geography*], also included extensive sets of either twenty-six or fifty-two regional maps and a world map” (Roberts, *Printing*, 22).

23. The *Geography* turned into such an important document and cherished commodity that “the Florentine patrician and patron of arts and literature,” Palla Strozzi, considered it among his “most prized possessions, and his last testament went so far as stipulating that his heirs could not sell it without incurring disinheritance” (ibid., 22).

24. Farinelli, *Crisi*, 29.

25. While Ptolemy’s *Geography* was forgotten in medieval Europe, it was crucial for the Islamic and Byzantine tradition of mapmaking throughout the Middle Ages.

in a scientific and mathematical way and to calculate metrical space through the unprecedented use of scales.²⁶ David Woodward called this new perspective, which is “entirely geometrical and abstract, independent of the geographical content beneath,” the “equipollent-coordinate” perspective.²⁷ Attributing the same value to every point plotted by longitudes and latitudes constituted a novelty vis-à-vis previously used maps such as the *mappa mundi* or the navigational chart. When Bruni defends himself in his letter against Cartagena’s critique of not being a knowledgeable geographer by listing forests, ponds, mountains, plains, promontories, maritime gulfs—and, most important, angles and corners—he does so with a Ptolemaic *tabula* in mind.

Organized as regional tables, Ptolemaic maps transform the natural boundaries of an incommensurate landscape into simple geometric figures that are fitted into—and sometimes correspond with—a square or trapezoid space. Caesar, whom Bruni references in his letter to Pizolpassi, had equally reduced Britain’s natural landscape to a geometric form when he wrote that “the natural shape of the island is triangular, and one side lies opposite to Gaul.”²⁸ It is helpful to consider the process of geometric abstraction by looking closer at the broader semantic valences of the word “reduction.” As Antoine Berman has pointed out, “the activity defined by the term of ‘traductio’ is at the same time a production and a reproduction; it is not without ties . . . to reduction.”²⁹ In the early modern period, the processes of geometric reduction and linguistic translation were held together by the pivotal and polysemous root of *-ductio*. Indeed, the Italian verb for “reduction,” *ridurre*, referred to geometric patterns and linguistic translation alike.³⁰

Within the productive valence of *-ductio*, Bruni’s *De interpretatione recta* occupies a unique place: it is here that he first introduces the verb “traducere” for a process hitherto predominantly referred to as “translatio,” “interpretatio,” or “conversio.”³¹ *Traductio* belongs to a different “historical space” than *translatio*.³² Ber-

26. Farinelli, *Crisi*, 29.

27. Woodward, “Roger Bacon’s Terrestrial Coordinate System,” 119.

28. Caesar, *Gallic War*, 5, pt. 13:1.

29. Berman, “Tradition,” 35.

30. Numerous are the examples in which “ridotto” is used for “tradotto,” as, e.g., in the 1743 edition of Horace’s *Canzoniere*, which opens with the following address to the reader: “Ti pongo sotto gli occhi, amico lettore, il Canzoniere d’Orazio ridotto in versi Toscani” (I put before your eyes, dear reader, Horace’s *Canzoniere* reduced to Tuscan verses). Horace, *Canzoniere* (Venice, 1743), n.p.

31. Massimo Marassi has recently pointed out that “it is in a letter to Niccoli from September 5, 1400 or 1404, in which Bruni discusses translations of Plato that *traductio* appears for the first time.” Massimo Marassi, “Leonardo Bruni e la teoria della traduzione,” *Studi Umanistici Piceni* 29 (2009): 123–41, 125.

32. Berman, “Tradition,” 34.

man argues that the field of *-duction* proved to be “fundamental for Western thought (and reality)” as it branched out into a series of cognate activities such as “production, reproduction, conduction, deduction, induction, seduction, introduction, etc.”³³ In his book on the theory of translation, Michel Serres offers the following insights into the semantic articulations of what he terms *Duction*: “We know things only on the basis of the transformation systems of the ensembles that contain them. There are at least four such systems. Deduction in the mathematical-logical area. Induction in the field of the experiment. Production in the area of praxis. ‘Transduction’ [*traduction*] or translation in the space of the text. It is in no way absurd if we assume that they repeat the same word. That there is philosophy only as the philosophy of *Duction*—together with the necessary, but exchangeable prefix.”³⁴

Knowledge is driven, Serres argues, by transformative processes contained under the rubric of *Duction* and its fourfold articulation. In his discussion of Brunì’s treatise, Berman claims that what distinguishes *traductio* from *translatio* is not only that *Duction* “designates active processes governed by a subject” but also that—unlike “translation [which] only refers to a simple ‘movement’ or ‘passage’”—“*traductio*,” “in the sense of production, is at the same time the process and its result.”³⁵ As such, *Duction* is akin to *dux*, “an individual mind guiding the translation, as opposed to some nebulous, anonymous, or inherited version.”³⁶ The translator as *traductor*, then, is someone who guides the process of laying out a road map in all its stages, up to arriving at the finished product. Berman thus points to a paradox encapsulated in Brunì’s new terminology—a paradox that, in spatial terms, one might frame as the process of mapping as well as the product of the map itself.

When Brunì contends that “the world has very many corners; it has as many as there are in the world,” his proposition becomes meaningful when read against the backdrop of cartography: the world has as many (natural) corners as there are in the (representation of the) world on a map. Brunì’s inclusion of Ptolemy among ancient geographers is thus as significant as his disparaging (and inaccurate) comments about Cartagena’s lack of knowledge as to how to correctly assess

33. *Ibid.*

34. Michel Serres, *Hermès III: La traduction* (Paris, 1974), 9. For the English translation, see Söhnke Ahrens, *Experiment and Exploration: Forms of World-Disclosure; From Epistemology to Bildung*, trans. Andrew Rossiter (Dordrecht, 2014), 120. I slightly adapted the English translation.

35. “Désignent des *processus actifs régis par un sujet*.” “Translation ne désigne qu’un simple ‘mouvement’ ou ‘passage’. Traduction désigne une activité et l’énergie présidant à celle-ci. En outre, ce terme—comme production—dit à la fois le processus et son résultat, ce qui n’est pas vraiment le cas pour translation” (Berman, “Tradition,” 35).

36. Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*, 172.

the size and contours of objects—including the extension of territories. Cartagena's inability to "reduce" geometrically, as it were, seems to prevent him from adequately gauging the size of his own country of origin: he deems big what is actually small. In the broader context of the letter, Bruni implicitly establishes an analogy between spatial and linguistic reduction. Cartagena's inability to "reduce" geographically, Bruni seems to suggest, might prevent him from "reducing" linguistically—from adequately gauging the value and definition of words.

For Bruni, the practice of translation and the act of drawing maps constitute a joint endeavor that stems from the same concern: surveying, measuring, and preserving a well-defined territory—be it geographic or textual. In her discussion of Bruni's translation method, Jane Tylus notes that "in this act of transporting, nothing must be left behind, and all that is carried across must be transformed into the new tongue. . . . The translator must know with precision the exact value and efficacy of terms. Not to translate is to remain a beggar, a mendicant, trapped in the no-man's land between two languages and thus in exile."³⁷ References to spatial imagery alongside an emphasis on precision suggest the extent to which Bruni's translation method is centered on "numerus," number. The word "numerus"—commonly rendered in English as "rhythm"—and its compounds appear seventeen times in *De interpretatione recta* and structure Bruni's translation theory. For Bruni, each word has an exact, finite value, and no word should be left behind in the "no-man's land between two languages." Bruni claims that "in rhythmic prose [*oratione numerosa*], one must carefully observe and follow the cola, commata, and periods to precisely and squarely [*quadrate*] mark out [*finiat*] the word order."³⁸ Each single word has to be reduced to a new textual space.

Bruni thus understands translation as a transposition and preservation of a metric and well-defined space. Indeed, the translator has to "con-form himself" (interpres . . . se conformabit) to the (square) space defined by the first author: he has to "fill up the entire period with large, copious, and full phrasings" when translating, for instance, Cicero's rich and abundant prose.³⁹ Bruni likens the act of translation to "happily conjoining" words in order to form "a paved floor or inlaid mosaic."⁴⁰ The reference to the paved floor and inlaid mosaic—used by Cicero

37. Tylus, "No Untranslatables," 287.

38. Leonardo Bruni, "On the Correct Way to Translate," in Griffiths, Hankins, and Thomson, *Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, 217–29, 221. "In oratione quippe numerosa necesse est per cola et commata et periodos incedere ac, ut apte quadrateque finiat comprehensio, diligentissime observare." Leonardo Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, trans. Paolo Viti (Naples, 2004), 86.

39. Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 86, my emphasis.

40. "Hec omnia verba [in Platone] inter se festive coniuncta, tamquam in pavimento ac emblemate vermiculato, summam habent venustate" (ibid., 92). The image of words fitting together like pieces in a

in *De Oratore*—evokes the image of a flat and rectangular table, in which the inlaid pieces are joined together to create a gridded map, akin to the longitudes and latitudes of a Ptolemaic map. In describing his translation method, Bruni spatializes translation by using a terminology that suggests the preservation of a well-defined territory: the “right translation” (*interpretatio recta*) is “a great thing” (*magna res*), and the translator’s task is to “transport the grandeur” (*maiestate transferre*) of the first text.⁴¹ Conversely, a bad translator does not preserve the measures of the original author’s textual frame, thereby “threatening the first author’s grandeur.”⁴²

BRUNI’S TERRITORY OF TRANSLATION

Bruni uses the idea of translation as the transposition and preservation of a well-defined space in his other writings as well. Indeed, his work on the origins of the city of Florence, *In Praise of Florence* and *History of the Florentine People*, reveals a similar approach to *translatio*. Florence is, in Bruni’s words, a translation and a copy of Rome. *In Praise of Florence* was written between 1402 and 1405—only a few years before Bruni decided to translate Ptolemy’s *Geography*—as one of the earliest early modern examples of city portraiture.⁴³ A new type of local mapping, city portraiture gained importance in the course of the fifteenth century through “a convergence of parallel developments” among which featured the new “cartographic methods transmitted through the second-century geographer Claudius Ptolemy,” as Jessica Maier has recently pointed out.⁴⁴ Bruni describes Florence as a well-measured city that fits the criteria dictated by geometric patterns:

She [Florence] rather follows the rules of balance and measure than those of foolish and dangerous capriciousness. For she is not situated high in the mountains, so that she might be seen up there in all her splendor, but

mosaic is taken from Cicero, *De oratore*: “Quam lepide λέξεῖς compostae! Ut tesserae omnes / Arte pavimento atque emblemate vermiculato.” Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, MA, 1948), 3:171.

41. Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 78, 88.

42. “Maiestatem primi auctoris imminuit” (*ibid.*, 84). “Maiestas” has a double meaning of “majesty” and “grandeur.” It is important to note that Bruni never uses the word “original” when referring to the author of the source text but instead always speaks about the “first author.”

43. Bruni wrote *Praise of Florence* significantly before Alberti’s *Descriptio urbis Romae* (ca. 1443–55), a city view indebted also to Ptolemy’s *Geography*. As Naomi Miller notes, “although Alberti does not mention Ptolemy, his debt to the ancient geographer emerges not only in the way that physical reality is translated into a system of lines and points, distributed by means of a quadrant or astrolabe for measurement, but also in the very articulation of his *Descriptio*”: Naomi Miller, *Mapping the City: The Language and Culture of Cartography in the Renaissance* (London, 2003), 170.

44. Jessica Maier, *Rome Measured and Imagined: Early Modern Maps of the Eternal City* (Chicago, 2015), 3.

also not in the open plains, so that she would be open to all sides. With great foresight and according to the best plan, she keeps the middle. . . . Whether the river, which runs through the town center, offers more charm than profit, is hard to say. Four bridges built of square stones connect the shores on well-calculated distances from each other. It would not be possible to cross the river by a shorter way. Walking through town would not be easier if it were not divided by a river at all.⁴⁵

Geometrical criteria define the layout of the city of Florence, which “follows the rules of balance and measure.”⁴⁶ Built, as Woodward says, in an “equipollent-coordinate” manner,⁴⁷ “in the middle” between the two extreme points of mountain and valley, the city is geometrically balanced. Avoiding the manifold *capricci* of an uneven and mountainous terrain, Florence’s flat surface reveals “the best plan” as it follows the dictates of a flat, gridded map. The river Arno becomes a geometric artifice, its natural course imagined as a straight line—“the only form that does not exist in nature,”⁴⁸ as Farinelli observes—which, together with the “well calculated distance” between the bridges and streets, forms a central axis transforming the city’s bustling streets into the rectilinear and well-measured surface of a gridded map. This is exactly how Leonardo da Vinci will design his plan of Florence in 1515 (fig. 1), as he transforms the contorted course of the Arno into a straight, rectified line that starts at the city gate and traverses the gridded surface of Florence with the linearity and artifice of an aqueduct.

As Farinelli puts it, “the straight lines [*linee diritte*] derive from the existence of the table, the result of the cartographic logic that is reflected on the surface of the earth, configuring it according to its own image and likeness.”⁴⁹ Seen in this light, the adjective “recta” of Bruni’s title, *De interpretatione recta*, commonly translated as “correct,” acquires a new meaning. Viewed against the backdrop of Ptolemaic maps and the impact of geometric reduction, “recta” becomes equally meaningful as “straight-lined.” Indeed, “straight, direct, not contorted” is one of the central meanings of the Latin adjective “rectus.”⁵⁰ “Rectus,” then, evokes Bruni’s preoccupation with a “straight-lined” translation practice alongside the spatial images of a straightened course of the Arno River or the straight lines of Britain’s coast in Caesar’s description of the island.

45. Leonardo Bruni, *In Praise of Florence: The Panegyric of the City of Florence and an Introduction to Leonardo Bruni’s Civil Humanism*, trans. Alfred Scheepers (Amsterdam, 2005), 79–80.

46. My emphasis.

47. Woodward, “Roger Bacon’s Terrestrial Coordinate System,” 119.

48. Franco Farinelli, *Geografia: Un’introduzione ai modelli del mondo* (Turin, 2003), 105.

49. *Ibid.*, 22.

50. *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 2012), s.v. “rectus.”

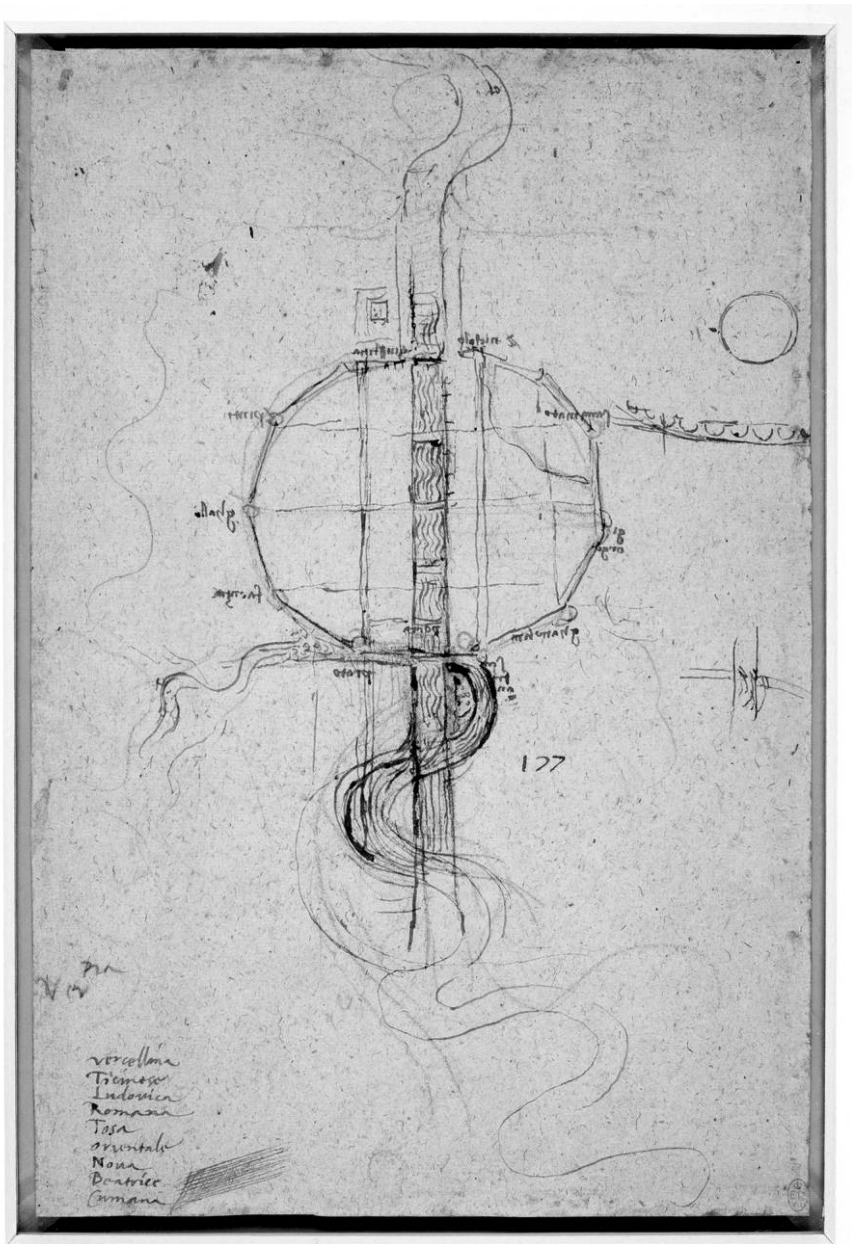


Figure 1. Leonardo da Vinci, schematized plan of Florence, ca. 1515. (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2016.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

Bruni opens the *History of the Florentine People* by saying, “The founders of Florence were Romans.” He will go on to say that “the nearness of Rome . . . limited Florentia’s rise to power”: “being under imperial rule she could not augment her borders by war, nor indeed wage war at all; nor could she boast splendid magistrates, since their jurisdiction was narrowly circumscribed and subject to Roman officials.”⁵¹ Florence could not extend beyond her boundaries because she was perceived as a copy, a translation, of Rome: “The colonizers [of Florence] seem to have *consciously imitated Rome* in their planning of the city and in the construction of buildings. They built themselves a capitol and a forum, in the *same configuration* as was found in Rome, and they had baths for public cleanliness and an arena for watching games and spectacles.”⁵² Florence emerged as a cartographic projection, a straight-lined reproduction of Rome, constructed according to rigorous metric principles: “[Sulla’s veterans coming from Rome] left the mountain and began to form settlements along the banks of the Arno and the Mugnone in the plain below [*subiecta planitie*]. The new city located between these two waterways was at first called Fluentia and its inhabitants Fluentini. . . . Then, perhaps just through the ordinary process by which words are corrupted, or perhaps because of the wonderfully successful flowering of the city, Fluentia became Florentia.”⁵³

The settlement process of the Florentine people is not dissimilar to the creation of a *tabula*, in which the “subjected plain,” contained within the framework of the two rivers, serves as a material support for the execution of the copy image of the first city, Rome. Indeed, the impact of the framework of the waterways is so powerful that the Florentine people are first called “Fluentini.”⁵⁴ With the addition of

51. “Neque sane fines augere bello poterat sub imperio constituta nec omnino bella exercere nec magistratus satis magnifici, quippe eorum iurisdictio intra breves limites clauderetur, et haec ipsa romanis magistratibus erat obnoxia.” Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, ed. and trans. James Hankins (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 1:1.

52. “Hi coloni . . . pleraque Romanae urbis loca aedificiaque aemulari voluisse. Nam et capitolium sibi fecerunt et forum iuxta positum eo situ iisdemque regionibus inter se conversa, quis romanum forum capitoliumque videmus. Addiderunt thermas publicas ad populi lavacra; theatrum ad spectacula ludorum” (ibid., 1:5, my emphasis).

53. “[L. Syllae milites] relicto monte, in proxime subiecta planitie, secus Arni Munionisque fluviorum ripas, conferre aedificia et habitare coeperunt. Novam urbem, quod inter fluentia duo posita erat, Fluentiam primo vitarunt eiusque incolae Fluentini dicti. Et id quidem nomen per aliqua tempora urbi fuisse videtur, donec crescentibus rebus et civitate maiorem in modum adaucta, sive corrupto ut in perisque vocabulo sive quod miro floreret successu, pro Fluentia Florentiam dixerent” (ibid., 1:3).

54. This etymology goes back to Pliny the Elder who, in his *Natural History*, had not mentioned the Florentines but the “Fluentini” instead. By using Pliny’s etymology, Bruni, on the one hand, corrects the Roman writer and, on the other, takes up a rare ethnonym thus powerfully locating the Florentines within a (naturally) framed geographic table. Bruni’s etymology also emphasizes that the Florentines are a translated people. Indeed, they are twice translated, both geographically and linguistically: they

the aqueduct introduced as the city's first installation, the rivers perform a double function: they serve as a measuring instrument and as an indicator of cleanliness.⁵⁵ Brunni emphasizes the cleanliness of Florence whose water is even purer than the original "chalky" water (*aqua gypso corrupta*) of Rome.⁵⁶ Unlike other Italian cities, Florence remains clean because of its pure water. "Very prudently located," Florence "is clean and swept, so that nowhere can be found anything better tended. This city is certainly unique, a city which displays nothing offensive to the eyes, nothing to irritate the nostrils, nothing dirty thrown before the feet."⁵⁷

The perfectly polished and clean surface of Florence turns the translation into an image more impeccable than the "chalky" original. For Brunni, Florence is similar to a clean and unblemished painting. Indeed, Brunni discusses painting and evokes a painting's clean surface as a pivotal image that brings spatial and linguistic translation together. Just as a good translation is similar to a portrait ("pittura"), so the model city can be compared to a surface exempt from pollution and filth.⁵⁸ If, for Brunni, Aristotle is "a supreme and superb stylist whose books possess 'the splendor and clarity of a painting', a comparison that harks back to Horace's *ut pictura poesis* from the *Ars poetica*,"⁵⁹ the good translator will likewise preserve the grandeur of Aristotle's prose as though it were a clean painting. Conversely, Brunni likens a bad translation to a desecrated, filthy picture and offers the example of a painting by Giotto disfigured and polluted with feces: "In fact, I couldn't stand it if someone threw feces on a painting by Giotto. So what do you think happens to me, when I see books by Aristotle, much more elegant than

were Romans and they were Flumentini. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA, 1949), 3:52. Here, Pliny's original "Flumentini" are rendered as "Florentini prae-fluenti Arno adpositi" (the Florentini on the bank of the Arno that flows by).

55. "There is the aqueduct that brought water to the city from sources seven leagues away" (*aqueductus, per quem de septimo lapide accepti fontes in urbem ducebantur*). Brunni, *History of the Florentine People*, 1:4. The aqueduct transports "perfectly pure water" (*ubi purissimi latices tota urbe scaturiunt*; *ibid.*, 1:5). A few sentences later, Brunni repeats that the water was brought to Florence with the help of an aqueduct seven leagues away. This Latin passage ("productis ad septimum usque miliarium arcubus") is omitted in the English translation (*ibid.*).

56. *Ibid.*, 1:5.

57. Brunni, *Praise of Florence*, 79–80.

58. The analogy Brunni establishes is encapsulated in the Italian word for portrait: *ritratto*. The word *ritratto* was used in Renaissance Italy not only for paintings and portraits; it also was, as Maier notes, "the most common label applied to city images of all types in Renaissance Italy." A cityscape was not only referred to as "map" or "view" "but rather *ritratto*, or 'portrait'" (Maier, *Rome Measured*, 3). Yet *ritratto* can also mean new, arable land: according to Farinelli, "*ritratto*" refers to "the retreat (*ri-tirare*) of water from a piece of land—be it by gradual addition of earth or artificial drainage." A portrait, then, signifies "a plane surface on which all humidity (be it the painter's colors or a photographic emulsion) has dried up" (Farinelli, *Crisi*, 87). In the sixteenth century, the word "portrait" (in France in the sixteenth-century spelling "pourtrait") referred to portraits and maps alike.

59. Tylus, "No Untranslatables," 287.

any painting, in a polluted translation?”⁶⁰ The good translator—as a producer and reproducer—creates a translation like a new painting that preserves the contours and the cleanliness of the original. What has to be preserved in a translation, according to Bruni, is the author’s “liniamenta,”⁶¹ alignments or drawn lines—what Cicero defined as “a longitude without any latitude.”⁶² Aligned in a rectilinear mode, the “lineamenta” form the grid and the framework of the translation’s *tableau*.

Franco Farinelli has suggested that in the Euclidean city, “the abstract geometric scheme determines the social content.” Once the territory is represented as flat and perceived as a table, the city “becomes a diagram in which that which exists has already colonized all the future forms.”⁶³ Indeed, within a well-delineated and measured realm, in which number, rhythm, and roundness are preserved, Bruni’s translational table is already full—no newness or foreignness can “take place.” Thus, we have Bruni’s declaration that the good translator “will avoid verbal and grammatical novelties, especially those that are imprecise and barbarous.”⁶⁴ Translation, like the contours of a projected city, consists in preserving an existing form, not in making place for the new.

CARTAGENA’S *INTERMINABILIS LATITUDO*

Bruni’s translation method as “filling up” and preserving a well-defined table stands in contrast to contemporary methods of translating promoted by Alfonso de Cartagena, among others. For Cartagena, the great strength and potential of Latin is its “ability to absorb foreign words, this *interminabilis latitudo*,” and to expand its proper boundaries.⁶⁵ Indeed, both translation models are embedded in two different, yet coexisting, epistemological frameworks of spatial thinking that straddled the fragile line between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.⁶⁶ Like Bruni, Cartagena was a translator and an astute politician, interested in questions of translation and territoriality alike. Cartagena’s inclusive method of translation, when looked at

60. “Equidem si in picturam Giotti quis fecem proiceret, pati non possem. Quid ergo existimas michi accidere, cum Aristotelis libros omni pictura elegantiores tanta traductionis fece coinquinari videam?” Letter to Pizolpassi, October 15, 1435, in Bruni, *Lettres familières*, 7, pt. 4:16.

61. Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 84.

62. Cicero, *Lucullus*, ed. Otto Plasberg (Leipzig, 1908), 36:116.

63. Farinelli, *Geografia*, 167.

64. Bruni, “On the Correct Way to Translate,” 220. “Fugiatque et verborum et orationis novitatem praesertim ineptam et barbaram.” Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 82.

65. Alfonso de Cartagena, “Liber contra Leonardum,” in Birkenmajer, “Der Streit,” 168.

66. Whenever Bruni refers to previous translators of Aristotle, he either uses the adjective “vetus” or “antiquus,” while all modern translators render these adjectives as “medieval,” a word Bruni obviously never used. Modern translations thus further reinforce the divide between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

closely, unearths the workings of an empire eager to expand its territorial boundaries. Where Bruni advocates containment, Cartagena suggests expansion. He admonishes Bruni “not [to] accuse the Latin language of penury, because it attracts Greek words or words from foreign nations just like a gradual sedimentation. Indeed, this endless extent [*latitudo*] is its particular distinction: it would be poor and truly wanting if it were enclosed within fixed boundaries. Yet its power is enormous and almost infinite, and it is capable of absorbing not only Greek, but also the barbarian and all nations of the world it wants.”⁶⁷

Contrary to Bruni, Cartagena conceives of the Latin language as an open-ended “latitude.” As Tullio Gregory recently put it, “in its *infinita potentia* [Latin] is the great vehicle of a continuous *translatio*.”⁶⁸ Latin consists of a wealth of lexemes and etymons, imported from the Greek language and other “foreign nations,” which continuously transform and update it. Challenging Bruni’s principle of a polished and unblemished Latinity that excludes non-Latin words, Cartagena asks: “Are *grammatica, logica, rhetorica, philosophia* words of Latin origin? . . . Were they and are they not intrinsically Greek, but have now been converted [translated] into our use?”⁶⁹ By using spatial imagery, Cartagena envisions Latin as an “endless latitude” (*interminabilis latitudo*) constantly incorporating foreignness into its growing lexicon, which dovetails with the expanding geographical body of its territorial conquests. In this respect, Cartagena’s spatial and translational approach is diametrically opposed to Bruni’s. While Bruni wishes to contain *translatio* within the well-defined framework of a Latinity that eliminates elements of foreign languages that would challenge its Latinate “numerus” and well-measured contours, Cartagena imagines a Latin language in expansion, just like the Spanish empire, defying the limitations of space and words.⁷⁰

67. “Nec enim Latinae linguae penuriam accusamus, quia Graecas dictiones vel etiam de nationibus peregrinis quodam alluvionis modo paulatim ad se continue trahit: immo haec est eius praecipua praeminentia, haec *interminabilis latitudo*: . . . inops namque esset et prorsus egena, si certis finibus clauderetur. Sed ingens et paene infinita est potentia eius, et nedum a Graecis sed a barbaris et universis mundi nationibus quicquid ei libet licet accipere.” Cartagena, “Liber contra Leonardum,” 168.

68. “Nella sua *infinita potentia* è il grande veicolo di una continua *translatio*.” Tullio Gregory, *Translatio linguarum: Traduzioni e storia della cultura* (Florence, 2016), 45, my emphasis.

69. “Num Latina origine sunt ‘grammatica’, ‘logica’, ‘rhetorica’, ‘philosophia’ ac ‘theologia’? . . . Nonne haec penitus Graeca fuerunt et sunt, sed in nostrum iam usum conversa?” Cartagena, “Liber contra Leonardum,” 168.

70. When in 1492 Antonio de Nebrija wrote in the prologue of his *Grammar of the Castilian Language* “that language was always the companion (*compañera*) of empire,” he was suggesting the same absorptive power and endless extensions of conquering languages—albeit with the vernacular Castilian, not Latin, as a means of territorial expansion. “On Language and Empire: The Prologue to *Grammar of the Castilian Language* (1492),” intro. and trans. Magali Armillas-Tiseyra, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 131 (2016): 197–208, 202. At the same time, Latin had a sub-

In spatial terms, Cartagena conceives of language, territory, and translation as an unfolding topography that is not defined by strict contours, as does Bruni. Cartagena's method of translation corresponds to what Woodward would term, in cartography, a "route-enhancing" way of mapping space. This manner of mapping is typical of the medieval Mediterranean portolan chart made of parchment, in which "the center is arbitrary, varying from chart to chart according to what areas need to be included."⁷¹ This chart points to the unmapped and unlimited space beyond the edges of the parchment. It stands in contrast to the "equipollent-coordinate" framework of the Ptolemaic map, in which the topographical elements are defined by an existing coordinate system that does not allow newness to enter the spatial grid. Yet Cartagena's spatial framework is more heterogeneous still. He uses as his models the geographical chapters of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* as well as the "center-enhancing" forces of the *mappa mundi* and the route-enhancing portolan chart alongside Ptolemaic maps.⁷² Indeed, Cartagena's eclectic use of maps is strategic and serves political and diplomatic purposes. In his *Allegationes*, he argues for the incorporation of the Portuguese Canary Islands under the Spanish Crown, with maps as a crucial supporting document to justify Spain's territorial expansion on the grounds of geographic proximity. The *Allegationes*, in fact, use geographic and cartographic materials as a legal document.

While the dominant cartographic imagery Cartagena uses—the portolan chart—is medieval, it is interesting to note that the argument he makes in his *Allegationes* blurs the boundaries between medieval and Renaissance cartography. Indeed, his cartographic imagery relies on the reduction of insular geography to geometry, similar to a Ptolemaic map. Cartagena claims that the islands are lined up "one after the other almost in a straight line" (*una post aliam quasi in recta linea*).⁷³ This reduction

stantial function in Spain's colonizing project. Walter Mignolo reminds us that "Latin [was] the language of learning and civility" and that Nebrija promoted the use not only of Castilian as the language of the empire, but also, especially in the conquered territories in the New World, of Latin. After all, Nebrija was the author of the influential *Introductiones latinae*, a work inspired, among others, by Lorenzo Valla's *De elegantia latinae linguae* (1435–44). See Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2003), 37–40 (citation on 37).

71. Woodward, "Roger Bacon's Terrestrial Coordinate System," 119.

72. Cartagena explicitly mentions the "mapa mundi vel charta maris" (navigational chart). Alfonso de Cartagena, "Allegationes factas [sic] per reverendum patrem dominum Alfonsum de Cartagena, episcopum Burgensem in consilio Bassilensi super conquesta insularum Canarie contra Portugalenses," in *Monumenta Henricina*, vol. 6, 1437–39 (Coimbra, 1964), 139–99, 160. Some historians of cartography believe that "from the cursory description given by Alfonso de Cartagena, it appears more probable that the map in question was Ptolemaic" and not a nautical chart. Maria Fernanda Alegria, Suzanne Daveau, João Carlos Garcia, and Francesc Relañó, "Portuguese Cartography in the Renaissance," in Woodward, *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, 975–1068, 981.

73. Cartagena, "Allegationes factas," 147.

is significant as well as symbolic: within a longitudinal and latitudinal geographic system, the Canary Islands were imagined to occupy the position of the prime meridian. They were thus considered the “zero degree” of geography: from here, the activity of mapping space as well as that of naming and translating places could unfold.⁷⁴

The extension of the Spanish dominion and the legitimate incorporation of new territory is possible, Cartagena reasons, if there is geographic contiguity and a history of *translatio imperii*. The right of the Spanish Crown to claim the Canary Islands is grounded in the *translatio imperii* of the Visigoths, who expanded their empire from the Iberian Peninsula to Africa’s northern coast, or, as Cartagena puts it, “transfretarunt”: they “crossed the strait.”⁷⁵ The transcontinental “transfretatio” of the Visigoths—whom Cartagena describes as the ancestors of the Spanish monarchs—guarantees contiguity: it is through the presence of the Visigoths, that is, the Spanish, in northern Africa that the Spanish crown can legitimately expand further into the Atlantic and claim the Canary Islands.⁷⁶ *Transfretatio* highlights the narrowness of the strait of Gibraltar and the contiguity of Europe and Africa, which, in the eyes of Cartagena, allows for an expansion that is “at once topological and linguistic.”⁷⁷

Transfretatio and *translatio* are inextricably tied to the Roman foundational terms of *auctoritas* and *traditio*, crucial instances of territorial preservation and augmentation. Berman underscores that for the Romans the “auctor”—coming from the verb *augere*, to augment and aggrandize—is the aggrandizer, the one who “adds to the original foundation.”⁷⁸ Such is Cartagena’s route-enhancing translation method: it unfolds as a lexical amplification of the original text. His translations themselves exemplify this method. They are replete with paraphrases and doublets, making the translated texts significantly longer than the originals.⁷⁹ Indeed, Cartagena’s contemporary Alfonso de Madrigal, known as El Tostado, argued that a numeric correspondence between the original and the translated language is simply not possible. In the translated language “it is necessary to put a

74. Buisseret, “Spanish Peninsular Cartography,” 1070.

75. Cartagena “Allegationes factas,” 160 n. 135.

76. The rare verb “transfretare” was used by Sallust in his *Histories* for the act of *translatio* across the Strait of Gibraltar. Aulus Gellius defended the use of “transfretare”—instead of “transgredire”—claiming that the verb “transfretare” is perfectly adequate for “the small extent of the narrow strait which flows between Spain and the Afric land.” Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 10, pt. 26:1–9.

77. Berman, “Tradition,” 28.

78. *Ibid.*, 23.

79. Włodzimierz Olszaniec, *Od Leonarda Bruniego do Marsilia Ficina: Studium renesansowej teorii i praktyki przekładu* (Warsaw, 2008), 81.

lot [of words] in the place of one, and so the translated language becomes longer than the original.”⁸⁰ The discrepancy between this translation method and Brunini appears to be stark. Instead of a well-delineated framework of well-defined Latinity, advanced by Brunini, in which words are counted, Cartagena and El Tostado understand translation as a route-enhancing method—since it is the “*fate* of knowledge to migrate from place to place, from language to language.”⁸¹

BRUNINI'S *TRADUCTIO*

By introducing a new word, *traductio*, to define the process of translation, Brunini attempted to arrest the itinerant and migratory route of *translatio*.⁸² He posits a definite frame and “numerus” for a process that for Cartagena is unlimited and incommensurate. Yet Brunini's use of *traducere* is more complex than has hitherto been acknowledged. Indeed, when we trace the word's history, an unexpected continuity from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance emerges. Scholars have long noted that it was Aulus Gellius who first used the infrequent verb “traducere” in the *Attic Nights*, but the verb did not exclusively refer to the process of linguistic translation. Berman contends that “in Rome, *traductio* never meant ‘translation,’” and Brunini's use of Gellius's past participle *traductum* as a new word that exclusively references the process of translation, is, paradoxically, an “error of translation.”⁸³

For established Brunini scholars such as Gianfranco Folena, “Brunini's invention of the neologism *traduco* . . . marked a watershed in early modern humanists' break with their medieval past.”⁸⁴ However, Gellius is not the only Roman writer to use “traducere,” and Brunini was not the first one to rediscover the word after Roman antiquity. Both Quintilian, whose *Institutio Oratoria* Brunini acquired in 1416,⁸⁵ and the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* used the noun “traductio.” For Quin-

80. “[En la traducción] es necesario poner muchos [vocablos] en lugar de uno; et así fazese mas largo el traslado que el original.” Alfonso de Madrigal, *Comento o exposición de Eusebio*, fol. xii, quoted in Roxana Cristina Recio, “Alfonso de Madrigal (El Tostado): La traducción como teoría entre lo medieval y lo renacentista,” *La Corónica* 19 (1991): 112–31, 119.

81. Berman, “Tradition,” 28.

82. It is commonly acknowledged that “Brunini seems to be the first to have used *traductio* and *traducere* to mean ‘translation’: words that would come to replace *interpretare*, *vertere*, and *convertere*, as Remigio Sabbadini has noted, and thus words that insist on the act of transporting, and even transformation” (Tylus, “No Untranslatable,” 286).

83. Berman, “Tradition,” 22, 33.

84. Gianfranco Folena, *Volgarizzare e tradurre* (Turin, 1991), 71. For the English translation, see James Albert Delater, *Translation Theory in the Age of Louis XIV: The 1683 “De optimo genere interpretandi” (On the Best Kind of Translating) of Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721)* (New York, 2014), 93.

85. Andrea Rizzi, “The Choices of Quattrocento Translators,” in *Reading and Writing History from Brunini to Windschuttle: Essays in Honour of Gary Ianziti*, ed. Christian Thorsten Callisen (Farnham, 2014), 19–34, 28.

tilian, “traductio” is a trope that is comparable to metaphor and wordplay: “There are other ways in which words are used with different meanings, either as they are, or altered merely by lengthening or shortening a vowel. This is a feeble device even as a joke. . . . Cornificius calls this traductio, meaning a shift from one meaning to another.”⁸⁶ Here, “traductio” is an intralingual stylistic device that gestures toward a change of meaning through the subtle alteration of *numerus*—of formal and stylistic aspects such as meter, rhythm, and vowel length.⁸⁷ The author of *Ad Herennium* defines “traductio” as “transplacement”: “Transplacement [*traductio*] makes it possible for the same word to be frequently reintroduced, not only without offence to good taste, but even so as to render the style more elegant, as follows: ‘One who has nothing in life more desirable than life cannot cultivate a virtuous life.’”⁸⁸ “Transplacement” encapsulates the joint endeavor of the topological and linguistic process that Bruni has in mind when he charts a translation theory that is geared toward the dominant register of number. In Roman antiquity, “traductio” circumvents the question of interlingual translation by unearthing the power of number and trope within the same language: Latin. The novelty of Bruni’s translation method and his new use of “traductio” is that the word moves from an intralingual to an interlingual realm.

Yet Bruni’s use of “traductio,” a word to which he gives new meaning, is not a mere revival of ancient Roman rhetoric within the context of Renaissance humanism. It also marks, quite importantly and perhaps unexpectedly, the presence of medieval scholasticism in early modern thought. In fact, Thomas Aquinas used the word “traductio” in several of his works, including *Contra Gentiles*. And in the margins of a fourteenth-century Venetian edition of a translation of Aristotle by Boethius can be read: “The translation [*traductio*] by Boethius of this part of *Peri Hermeneias* [*On Interpretation*] can be found in a commentary by [Gaius] Marius [Vic-

86. “Aliter quoque voces aut eadem diversa in significatione ponuntur aut productione tantum vel correptione mutatae: quod etiam in iocis frigidum equidem tradi inter praecepta miror. . . . Cornificius hanc traductionem vocat, videlicet alterius intellectus ad alterum.” Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 9, pt. 3:70.

87. My differentiation between intralingual and interlingual translation is based on Roman Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York, 2004), 138–43, 139.

88. “Traductio est quae facit uti, cum idem verbum crebrius ponatur, non modo non offendat animum, sed etiam concinniorum orationem reddat, hoc pacto: ‘Qui nihil habet in vita iucundius vita, is cum virtute vitam non potest colere.’” [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA, 1954), 4:20.

torinus]” (Traductio huius partis reperitur a boetio in commentario [Caii] Marii [Victorini] Perihermeneias).⁸⁹

Quite importantly, Berman’s definition of the scholastic term *traductio* as “the transfer or the transmission of a form” dovetails with Bruni’s conception of translation, and “it is likely that Bruni took the word ‘traductio’ from this [scholastic] context.”⁹⁰ A look at the *Summa Theologiae*, then, reveals that “traductio” appears already in a spatial sense, where Thomas Aquinas calls “traductio” Joseph’s “return to Judaea from Egypt” (ad Judeam de Aegypto traductio).⁹¹ Here, “traductio” replaces the medieval concept of geographic “translatio.” While Bruni explicitly rejects previous scholastic models of translation, his use of “traductio” serves as a link between the Middle Ages and early modernity, softening the sharp contours that typically divide medieval scholasticism from Renaissance humanism. What is more, the alleged neologisms Bruni introduces in *De interpretatione recta* turn out to be words of scholastic coinage.

The words “optimorum gubernatio” (government of the best) illustrate this quite strikingly. In her discussion of Bruni’s theory of translation, Alison Cornish points out that the concept of equivalents—that each Greek word has its perfect equivalent in Latin—is so important to Bruni that he “repeats his disdain for people who are unable to find equivalents.”⁹² Thus, Bruni rejects Cartagena’s use of the Greek “politia” instead of “respublica.” Translators have to find equivalents, Bruni argues, in the works of Roman orators, rhetoricians, and historians such as Cicero, Livy, and Sallust as well as the early church fathers Lactantius and Jerome, who never left anything in Greek: “Cicero uses ‘popularis status’ in his books; why shouldn’t I like this better than ‘democratia’? Cicero also refers to ‘paucorum potentia’ and ‘optimorum gubernatio’—what the Greeks call ‘oligarchia’ and ‘aristocratia.’”⁹³

89. Sybil Douglas Wingate, *The Mediaeval Latin Versions of the Aristotelian Scientific Corpus, with Special Reference to the Biological Works* (London, 1931), 6. Thomas Aquinas uses “traductio” for the creation of human form and matter: “et sic nullo modo per seminis traductionem anima humana incipit esse.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* (Rome, 1888), 2:86.

90. Berman refers to the passage in Bruni’s treatise, where Bruni argues that in order to translate rightly, the translator must convert himself into the first author. Berman, “Tradition,” 34.

91. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 3a.12.4.

92. Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*, 171–72.

93. “Tullius autem ‘popularem statum’ dicit in libris suis; cur non merito plus mihi debeat placere, quam dicere ‘democratiam’? Idem Tullius ‘paucorum potentiam’ et ‘optimorum gubernationem’ vocat, quas Graeci ‘oligarchiam’ et ‘aristocratiam’ dicunt.” Bruni, “Letter to the Archbishop of Milan [Francesco Pizolpassi],” in Birkenmajer, “Der Streit,” 208. Bruni makes a similar claim in Bruni, “On the Correct Way to Translate,” 228.

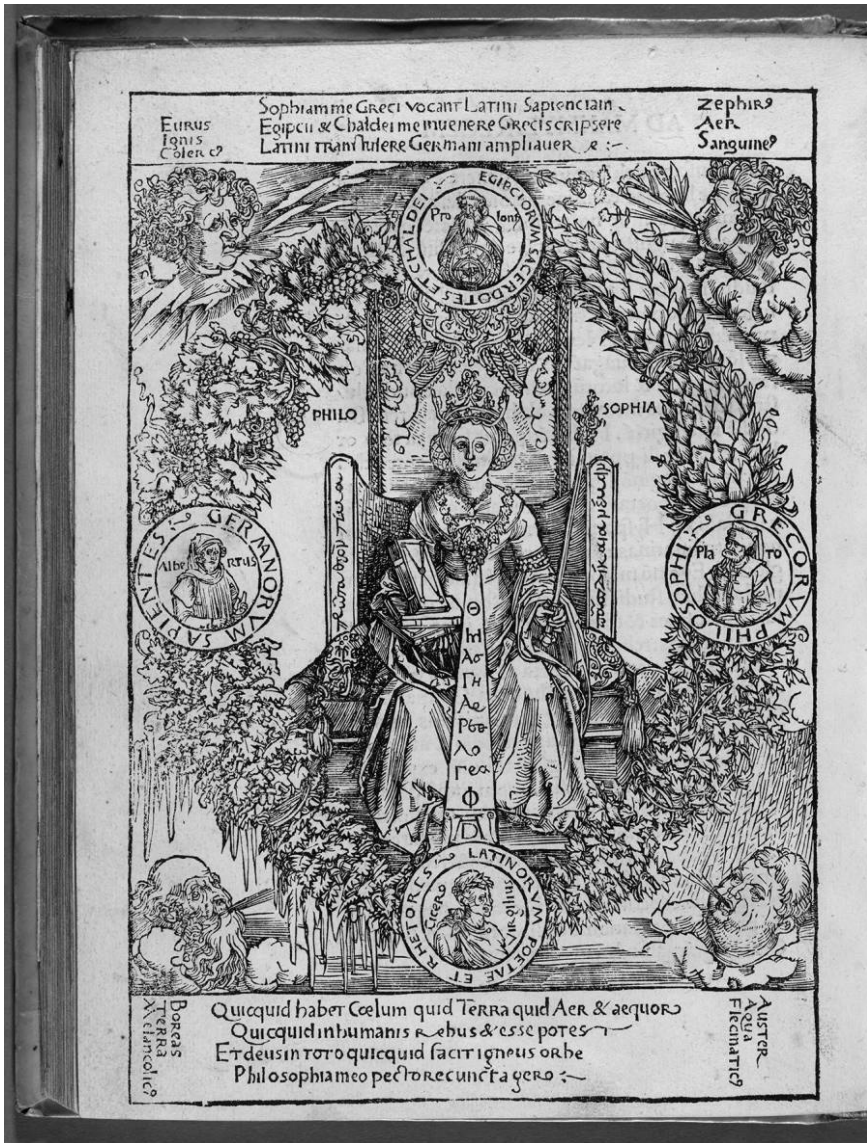


Figure 2. Albrecht Dürer, *Philosophia*. In Conrad Celtis, *Quatuor libri amorum secundum quatuor latera Germaniae* (Nuremberg, 1502). (Typ 520 02.269, Houghton Library, Harvard University.) Color version available as an online enhancement.



Figure 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Philosophia*. In Conrad Celtis, *Quatuor libri amorum secundum quatuor latera Germaniae* (Nuremberg, 1502). Detail: Ptolemy. (Typ 520 02.269, Houghton Library, Harvard University.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

Yet while “*potentia paucorum*” was indeed used by Cicero, Tacitus, and Sallust,⁹⁴ “*optimorum gubernatio*” is, paradoxically, a scholastic coinage, first used in a commentary on Aristotle’s *Politics* by Thomas Aquinas’s teacher, Albertus Magnus.⁹⁵

For his part, Albertus Magnus was the author of *De natura locorum*, a geographic and cosmographic treatise repeatedly reprinted during the early modern period. In an edition from 1514, an encomiastic epigram celebrates Albert the Great—whose fame allegedly extends across Europe in a movement of *translatio*

94. See Sallust, *War with Catiline*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA, 2013) 79:1; Tacitus, *Annals*, trans. John Jackson (Cambridge, MA, 1937) bk. 13; Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA, 2001) 12, pt. 15:4.

95. “Cum vero in praecedentibus dictum sit a nobis tres esse Rerum publicarum species rectas: regnum, optimarum, & eam que appellatur Respubl. ac tres earum transgressiones, & labes: cum regnum in tyrannidem, optimorum autem gubernatio in paucorum potentiam, Respubl. autem in popularem statum labatur.” Aristotle, *Politicorum Libri* (Lyon, 1651), 4:1. See the comments by Albertus Magnus.



Figure 4. Albrecht Dürer, *Philosophia*. In Conrad Celtis, *Quatuor libri amorum secundum quatuor latera Germaniae* (Nuremberg, 1502). Detail: Albertus Magnus. (Typ 520 02.269, Houghton Library, Harvard University.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

studii from Greece to Rome to Germany—as a conqueror alongside Alexander the Great and Pompey the Great.⁹⁶ For humanists, the scholastic philosopher Albertus Magnus came to encapsulate the knowledge of the interlocking domains of translation and spatial thinking. Indeed, in a 1502 woodcut by Albrecht Dürer titled *Philosophia* (fig. 2), Albertus Magnus is featured together with four ancient authors—Ptolemy, Plato, Virgil, and Cicero—as the final member of a movement of *translatio studii* from ancient Egypt and Greece to Rome and Germany (figs. 3 and 4). But if this were not enough, the founding fathers of Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, as well as the founding fathers of Roman rhetoric and literature, Cicero and Virgil, are here replaced by the geographer and cosmographer Ptolemy, who now presides over philosophy. Albertus Magnus thus completes a

96. Albert the Great, *De natura locorum* (Vienna, 1514), n.p.

movement of *translatio studii* that is explicitly cast under the auspices of geography.

Tylus has made the claim that with Bruni, “philosophy once again becomes powerfully transformative, as it had been with Plato.”⁹⁷ Viewed in conjunction with contemporary translation methodologies such as Cartagena’s, the transformative power of Bruni’s translation theory fully unfolds. One might call this transformative moment a philosophy of *Duction*. It brings together an eclectic methodology and nomenclature that blurs the dichotomy between the Middle Ages and Renaissance humanism, while blending spatial and translational thinking into a new form of cartographic translation.

97. Tylus, “No Untranslatables,” 288.