TRANSLATION AND THE CIRCULATION OF ECONOMIC IDEAS ACROSS NATIONS

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to discuss some general problems related to the study of translations of economic texts, considered as an aspect of the more complex phenomenon of the international circulation of economic ideas. The content of this paper is heavily based on the results of the European project entitled “EE-T. Economic e-Translations from and into European Languages. An Online Platform”, which has contributed to highlight the importance of this phenomenon for the evolution of the economic science in the past three centuries.

The paper also aims to show the connections between economic translations and the processes of institutionalisation and dissemination of economic ideas. In most cases, the translation of economic works originally published in another country is far from being a purely intellectual exercise: it is the product of individuals and intellectual circles that play key roles in institutions, economic activities and politics, and is part and parcel of more complex projects involving *inter alia* social changes, reforms of

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1 An early version of this paper was used as an introduction to the Conference on ‘Translations of Economic Texts into and from European languages’, University of Pisa, 12th-14th September 2013.

2 The project was funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme – Sub-Programme Erasmus – Action Multilateral Projects 2011-2013 (http://eet.pixel-online.org). See the project portal at: http://eet.pixel-online.org. It involved eight national research groups, coordinated by the University of Pisa, producing more than 100 papers, a still increasing bibliographical database, a significant number of guides and video-lectures, making various experiments of innovative teaching based on the research materials, such as interdisciplinary classes, courses and seminars, joint papers, undergraduate and graduate dissertations, etc. Partner meetings have been organised in Lisbon, June 2012, and in Paris, February 2013. Special session have been organised and various papers have been presented at at the AISPE Conference, Florence, 21st - 23rd February 2013; at the ESHET Annual Meeting, Kingston, 16th – 18th May 2013; at the HES Annual Meeting, Vancouver 20th – 22nd June 2013 and at various other conferences.

3 Economic translations have also been the subject of recent contributions unconnected to the project. See Reinert (2011), and Borokh (2013).
educational systems, intended or actual reorientations of economic policies, political movements and political propaganda, publishing strategies, and other phenomena related to the ways in which societies organise themselves and evolve through divisions, conflicts and further reconstructions.

2. Political economy and governmentality

It is trivial to move from the remark that – at least until some cultural and scientific branches were strongly internationalised and adopted English as lingua franca – every literary genre and every theoretical and scientific discipline has been cultivated within a cohesive and geographically circumscribed community of intellectuals, in a specific institutional framework and socio-political context, and in a national language. And it is equally trivial to observe that there is no literary genre and no field of knowledge whose best or at least most popular contributions have been translated into other languages, sometimes becoming international best-sellers. This fact explains why a work’s reputation across frontiers and the number of its translations have been traditionally considered as the most significant indicators of its quality and impact.

However, the intuition that was at the root of the research project on economic translations, and that is also shared by Reinert (2011), is that for some intellectual and scientific areas translations have played for a long time a peculiar role, strictly connected to the nature and social functions of the intellectual subject they focus on. Accordingly, the history of translations is part and parcel of the history of a science, and helps to understand its nature and evolution.

This is most seemingly the case of the economic science, and to the reasons that justify their spread over societies. The Weberian approach propounded by Philippe Steiner (1998) highlights how, in the new science of political economy that originates with the Physiocrats, Smith and the spread of Smithianism in continental Europe (Steiner 2004), the economic discourse is characterised by two intertwined dimensions: a scientific and a ‘performative’ one. These two dimensions are connected to different types of rationalisation of economic knowledge: the ‘scientific’ dimension of political economy develops as a formal rationalisation, i.e. a systematisation of economic knowledge within an internally consistent and rational framework of universal principles and structured methods at a formal and abstract level. Taking as models Descartes’ (1998) Regulae ad directionem ingenii or Newton’s (1687, I. III) Regulae philosophandi, the science of political economy aims to discover rigorous scientific truths about the functioning of economic phenomena. The naturalistic umbrella under which both the Physiocrats and the Smithians place their analysis directs their efforts towards the discovery of the natural laws that structure and govern society, especially those that regulate the phenomena of production, exchange and distribution of wealth. These laws are considered the ‘physiology’, ‘anatomy’ or material foundation of society.
On the other hand, the performative dimension of political economy is connected with another type of rationalisation of economic knowledge, called material rationalisation. With its typical normative approach, the material rationalisation aims to direct private and public behaviour in the light of those segments of objective knowledge that are needed to give them consistency and sustainability over time. Its subject is not the nature of norms (such a study belongs to the ‘nobler’ domains of moral and political philosophy) but the consistency between ends and means, and accordingly the knowledge of those factual elements that are needed to obtain the desired goals. As argued by Steiner, however, the scope of material rationalisation undergoes a substantive turn with the rise of the science nouvelle de l'économie politique. To put it briefly, before the Physiocrats and Smith, the theoretical knowledge about economic facts is subordinated to, and oriented by, the discourse on the ends and duties of individuals, householders, statesmen and legislators. After them, it is the analysis of ends and duties that is subordinated to the knowledge of universal facts and principles. In pre-Physiocratic and pre-Smithian political economy, the study of economic phenomena, though rational and rigorous, proceeds by segments, those that are relevant to the discussion of the normative problems at stake. An example is Gresham’s Law: this ‘typical relation’ does not aim to be a complete monetary theory, although it is perfectly sufficient to settle questions like the sovereign right to debase money. Conversely, in Physiocratic and Smithian political economy norms and rules of behaviour result as a necessary consequence of the consistent system of natural laws that regulate exchanges, the reproduction of wealth and the growth of population. In the private sphere, such norms consist of some forms of enlightened interest, to which political economy provides a guide; in the public sphere political economy points out the limits of state intervention in the light of the natural order dominating the market sphere.

In his lectures at Collège de France of the mid-1970s, Michel Foucault found in this normative message of classical political economy an intrinsic epoch-making political meaning (Foucault 2004a; 2004b). The natural laws of exchange and population become the pillars – the a-priori principles – of a new political paradigm that Foucault called ‘governmentality’. Such public goods as social order, the provision of means of subsistence, the wealth, well-being and populousness of nations, internal and external security, and lastly the ‘politeness’ of nations – what Giandomenico Romagnosi (1835; 1836) called

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4 See Collini, Winch and Burrow (1994).

5 This aim is evident in the works of Jean-Baptiste Say, especially those aiming at popularising the principles of political economy, like the Cathéchisme d'économie politique, or the Petit volume (Say 1848). The Essai sur le principe d'utilité (Say 2003: 130-54), published as an appendix to the Cours d'économie politique pratique well illustrates this connection between economic laws and enlightened interest. See Steiner (1989).
‘incivilimento’—were no longer considered the fruit of the paternal care of the sovereign as ‘good father’ of the nation (as still suggested by Antonio Genovesi 1765-67: 262-3). They now appeared as the result of the natural laws that political economy had brought to light, analysed and eventually translated into practical rules for private and public choice. The responsibility of ‘governing’ nations switched from the visible hand of rulers to the invisible hand of natural laws. Governments could govern only through them and be their facilitators, or alternatively use them as a shield against dangerous or irrational ‘false’ ideas.

Nevertheless, ‘classical’ economists were aware of the fact that the governmentality of market laws does not enjoy the necessitous character of physical events. Human beings do not constantly act consistently with these laws; they make errors and are very often misled by partisan interests and by short-sighted goals. In the private domain, during their education and even after, they need the help of the ‘deontologist’ and of a ‘new etiquette’, dictating rules consistent with economic laws. Only adopting these rules individual interests converge towards the public interest.\(^6\) In the public domain, statesmen and legislators must willy-nilly be guided by an equally enlightened opinion, in order to avoid distributing punishment and reward that may turn useless or even counterproductive,\(^7\) or to do acts that favour their ‘sinister interest’, i.e. a rational interest that is nevertheless opposed to general interest.\(^8\) Therefore political economy, in its performative dimension, tended to produce representations and rules that were consistent with a marked-based political order. It was conceived as an ideological and pedagogical tool aiming at influencing the social construction of the market.

For this reason, political economy had since the beginning a marked institutional dimension. As research on these aspects has revealed, there are at least four converging processes of institutionalisation. The first one is educational or academic institutionalisation (Augello \textit{et al.} 1988): in the 18th century, and more intensely in the course of the 19th century, political economy becomes a subject of teaching in universities, schools of commerce, lyceums, popular and even primary schools. Depending on the level of teaching, political economy becomes a matter of indoctrination for educational and disciplinary goals, a background for a wider political and legal training, or a subject for the creation of technical expertise. In every case, the process is characterised by a strict political control over its contents.

The second process is the institutionalisation of political economy in the public sphere through academies, cultural and publishing ventures, associations, and political movements (Augello, Bianchini

\(^6\) Bentham’s \textit{Deontology} (1983) is based on this ‘pedagogic’ demonstration of the overlapping of enlightened interest and benevolence.

\(^7\) This is exactly the subject of Bentham’s \textit{Manual of Political Economy} (1793-5).

\(^8\) There is a striking parallel on this point between Say and Bentham. See Steiner (1989) and Guidi (2010).
and Guidi 1998; Augello and Guidi 2000; 2001 a; 2001b). Various associations, journals, series, publishing companies that are created in the 19th century are inspired by the tenets of *laissez-faire* or alternatively by the goals of ‘social’, ‘Christian’ or socialistic political economy. Their story sometimes runs parallel to academic institutionalisation; in other circumstances, like in France during the early decades of the 19th century, ‘social’ institutionalisation becomes a substitute for academic institutionalisation (Levan Lemesle 1986; 2004). The promoters of these ventures aim at animating the public sphere or organising political movements, either by enlightening people on their supposedly ‘true’ interests, or by fuelling their critical regard on the choices of governments.

Thirdly, there is a process of political institutionalisation of economics. Very often, on the initiative of the same groups of intellectuals that animate associations and movements, economists become MPs, ministers, top bureaucrats and leaders of political movements. Political economy becomes either *expertise* to the service of political institutions, or the background for direct involvement in legislative and governmental activity (Augello and Guidi 2002; 2003; 2005).

Finally, these three processes of institutionalisation jointly contribute to the most important of all, which may be called ‘cognitive institutionalisation’. This occurs when the principles of political economy become *common sense*, mental frames, or socially constructed representations and models of economic behaviour (Lebaron 2009), which in turn contribute to the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966), specifically the reality of market order.

3. The role of textbooks

A by-product of the process of institutionalisation of political economy – especially in the 19th century – is the proliferation of economic textbooks. As revealed by recent research on this subject, the textbooks of economics published in Europe and in the rest of the world in the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century are thousands (Augello and Guidi 2007, 2012). Such a macroscopic phenomenon requires and explanation, also in the light of the multiple ‘sub-genres’ of economic textbook, which span from textbooks for primary education – like the extraordinarily successful, and today almost forgotten, *Der kleine Volkswirth* by Otto Hübner (1852) – to catechisms (modelled on Say’s archetype) and manuals aimed at popular education, textbooks for secondary schools (often going through an impressive number of reprints and new editions), institutional textbooks for universities (again including international best-sellers, like Luigi Cossa’s *Primi elementi di economia politica* or Jevons’

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9 The case of the worldwide fortune of this textbook through its translations into Italian, French, Spanish (four editions published in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina), Portuguese (three editions published in Lisbon and Macau), Turkish and Japanese, has been studied by a panel of researchers within the EE-T project and is the subject of a forthcoming book.
Political Economy Primer,\textsuperscript{10} scientific treatises that derived from university or public lectures and were in turn recommended to students attending courses of political economy, and finally a category that can be defined ‘meta-treatises’, focusing on the methodological and foundational principles of economics and aimed at education and ideological propaganda.\textsuperscript{11}

The success of these literary genres can be explained by the wide range of publics to which they were addressed and by the key role they played in the processes of institutionalisation of political economy. Post-Smithian textbooks – together with lectures but more systematically than these – were the medium through which political economy became a cognitive framework to interpret the social reality of a market society, thus contributing to its own social construction. They provided representations and behavioural models (Lebaron 2009) that were consistent with the governmentality of political economy. They did so by communicating to people who were relatively untrained in economic science its main principles and applications. Specifically, they offered a systematic vision about economic principles, explaining their reciprocal connections. In this way they conveyed the idea of a natural order that regulates the reproduction of society and guaranteed beneficial results. Once this consistent vision was acquired, it was possible to explain how economic truths could be translated into rules or constraints for the activity of both legislators and private citizens. They indicated to legislators the limits of government intervention, and how market competition could make nations prosperous only within a precise institutional framework; And they dictated to private individuals the discipline that made their behaviour consistent with market natural laws, thus generating welfare for themselves and for the rest of society.

The division in four parts of the treatises modelled on Say’s and Mill’s examples – which became for a long time standard for textbooks – was perfectly adapted to the aims of 19\textsuperscript{th}-century political economy: an introductory part explained the place of political economy in the encyclopedia of moral sciences, and discussed its relationships with other disciplines, particularly ethics, religion and law. These preliminaries were followed by the main body of the text, whose first two parts were devoted to the theory of production and circulation. These parts explained the laws that self-regulate economic processes and indicated the limits of government intervention. Third came the theory of distribution, which explained how the various social classes participated in the national income. Typical pillars of this part were the chapters on private property as a central institution for the functioning of a market system, those on the contracts that favoured growth (like long leases in agriculture and intellectual

\textsuperscript{10} On Cossa’s success through translations, specifically on the Brazilian translation, see Guidi and Lupetti (2014), also including some remarks on the success of Jevons in the lusophone area.

\textsuperscript{11} On this classification see the introductory chapter to Augello and Guidi (2007).
property), and those on the limits to charity, on the vanity of all attempts to modify the natural laws of distribution through unions, strikes, and similar, and on the benefits of association and cooperation between producers and consumers. Of special interest was the last part, focusing on the theory of consumption, which was generally divided into two distinct sub-parts. The first of them discussed public consumption, examining the areas in which State expenditure was necessary (security, education, infrastructures), and those in which it was superfluous or harmful, inefficiently replacing individual initiative. This sub-part also illustrated the correct principles of taxation. The second sub-part, often unjustly neglected, offered an interesting overview of the characteristics and functions of private consumption. Its heart consisted of those chapters that extolled the virtues of exchange, industry, saving, providence, marriage, responsible generation and family life. This part reveals much more than the rest of economic textbooks that along the 19th century textbooks became powerful devices for pedagogical and ideological aims, at both macro and micro level. These devices recommended rules of behaviour presented as natural and beneficial to the interests of individuals and societies. But at the same time they revealed that interiorising these norms was considered indispensable for, and preliminary to, the functioning of market society. In the last resort, market norms were assumed as conditions of possibility of market laws.

4. From teaching to dissemination and transnational circulation of economic ideas

The rise of a modern publishing industry, favoured by significant technological innovations and by the organisational and commercial model of large scale-and-scope industry (Barbier 2000, cap. 3; Parinet 2004), made literary works available to a large public and generated the phenomenon of scientific and technological popularisation. Magazines and journals,12 encyclopedias and encyclopedic dictionaries,13 and whole series of manuals,14 focused on popularising the most recent discoveries of science and technology. This phenomenon paralleled other institutional innovations such as the industrial exhibitions, which played a multiple role, by showing the marvels of an ‘Age of improvement’ (Briggs 1977), codifying and professionalising technological skills, and providing a new framework for the emulation among nations.

12 Circumscribing our examples to the Italian case, we can mention journals like L’Ape delle Cognizioni Utili (Capolago, 1833-35); the Museo scientifico, letterario ed artistico (Turin, 1839-50).
13 Still sticking to Italy, see the Enciclopedia delle arti e industrie (1878-98), edited by Giovanni Sacheri and Raffaele Pareto, Vilfredo’s father.
14 See for example the Biblioteca tecnica inaugurated in 1874 in Milan by Ulrico Hoepli, followed by another series entitled Manuali (Decleva 2001: 18).
However, the dissemination of political economy was a distinct phenomenon, not comparable to scientific popularisation. Its peculiar feature was that, whereas natural sciences and technology did not need popularisation to consolidate themselves and progress, dissemination was a constitutive element of political economy, as it was part and parcel of the above described function vis-à-vis the social construction of the market, and consequently of the various processes of institutionalisation that shaped and structured such a process. In a sense, political economy was dissemination, because it was conceived as a truth revealed in order to create precise and consistent norms of behaviour.

This may explain why the dissemination of the economic science – already a strong phenomenon in the 18th century – in the 19th century developed an intense virality, crossing national borders and successfully establishing itself in different national contexts. This virality was not merely an intellectual process: first and foremost, it called for action and transformation; and it called for institutional innovation. Its messages fascinated an ever increasing number of individuals and groups of militant intellectuals, because they spoke of a form of governmentality that, more than the great political revolutions that had marked the passage from the 18th to the 19th century, seemed to solve all the contradictions, inefficiencies, and corruptions of the Old Regime, generating an age of reason, efficiency and rapid improvement. And for these reasons, the circulation of economic ideas, at least since the early decades of the 19th century, took the shape of a transnational phenomenon. It was at this level, perhaps, that the practical side revealed itself more clearly: the transnational circulation of political economy was a phenomenon of importation, adaptation and implementation not only of theories, policy strategies and recipes for national success, but also of institutions and models of social organisation. What is more, the creation of replicas of institutional models imported from abroad was rarely the fruit of isolated initiatives and limited to single episodes: it clustered instead around easily recognisable ‘institutional packages’ that aimed to reorganise society at a global level. For the sake of the present analysis, an institutional package can be defined as a coherent system of ‘devices’ or institutional and discursive arrangements (agencements) that has been successful in a certain area in promoting a new form of governmentality, and is imported in another area by individual or collective key actors, in order to foster the same form of governmentality (Guidi 2011; Augello and Guidi 2013).

In a way economic books, journals, encyclopedias, dictionaries and – with their specific doctrinal function – textbooks circulate, are translated or are imitated as tools to promote or support the imitation of these packages and conversely these institutional settings are responsible for circulating and translating economic texts and ideas. The promoters of such a circulation are actor-networks (Callon 1988; Callon, Muniesa and Millo 2007, Latour 1987, 1999) belonging to governments (reformers) or more generally to the public sphere (opinion makers, scholars, teachers, educators, philanthropists, publishers, but also chambers of commerce, economic societies, economic and social movements).
Actors are either human or non-human. To the first type belong *emigrés*, migrants, exporters and importers, leaders of movements, intellectuals. The second type is made up by devices or *angencements*, like textbooks, educational institutions, charities, associations, periodicals, etc.

There is, to make only one example, an evident institutional package that circulates across various countries, taking its origin in the systematic activities of the *école libérée française* in the first half of the nineteenth century. Indebted in their turn to some organisational models experimented in Britain some decades before (like the Political Economy Club), the French liberals took a coordinated series of initiatives to create a set of institutions that functioned as ‘devices’ in the sense above clarified: a debating society named *Société d’Économie Politique* (henceforward *SEP*) in 1842 (Breton 2001), a journal containing articles on various theoretical and applied subjects of political economy, entitled *Journal des économistes* (1841), later transformed into the mouthpiece of the *SEP*; another society for the propaganda of *laissez-faire* policies, the *Association pour la liberté des échanges* (1846), and the connected journal entitled *Le libre échange*, which was edited by Frédéric Bastiat (1846-48); a successful campaign for sending to the Parliament of the Second Republic (1848) some economists members of the *SEP* (Breton 2005); the ‘public lectures’ by Adolphe Blanqui at the *Conservatoire des arts et métiers*, by Pellegrino Rossi and later Michel Chevalier at the *Collège de France*, and by Joseph Garnier at the *École supérieure de commerce*; the publication of these lectures in the shape of textbooks (Steiner 2012); 15 lastly, the establishment by a member of the group, Gilbert-Urbain Guillaumin, of a publishing house which issued a series containing the classics of Anglo-French political economy, the *Collection des principaux économistes* (1840-48), a *Dictionnaire de l’économie politique* (1852-53), and various other series and journals that propagated liberal ideas. It was the coordination among these initiatives that made the French liberal school a powerful and irresistible movement, favouring important policy changes and, above all, a long-lasting turn in the public opinion on economic matters.

But the most striking fact is that many contemporaries, in various European countries, realised that the cause of success of the French liberals was their package of institutional initiatives. As a consequence, classical or neo-Smithian political economy was disseminated from Britain to France, and from the latter to the rest of Europe not only through the circulation of ideas and theories, but also, and maybe principally, through the adoption and replication of the institutional package connected to these ideas. The French model was imitated in Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy (Guidi 2011), Greece and possibly elsewhere. Let us consider as an example the Spanish case illustrated by Salvador Almenar (2005, 2012), Almenar and Vicent Llombart (2001), and Javier San Julian (2008, 2009). The imitative sequence is impressive: in 1856 a group of academic *laissez-faire* economists known as ‘Escuela

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15 See Blanqui (1837-39); Chevalier (1841-42); Garnier (1846; 1889); Rossi (1936-8).
económista’ founded the Sociedad Libre de Economía Política (1856-68). In the same year, a journal entitled El economista (1856-57) was created on their initiative, soon followed by other periodicals like La tribuna del economista (1857-58) and the Gaceta economista (1861-63). Soon after the campaigning branch was also established under the imitative name of Asociación para la Reforma de Aranceles de Aduanas (1859-68, with an appendix in the late 1870s). Like their French counterpart, also the Spanish liberals sent to parliament a patrol of economists, especially after the democratic revolution of 1868. Significantly, the Curso de economía política (1855–56) by Benigno Carballo, soon become a reference textbook in Spanish universities, was a miscellany of articles drawn from Coquelin and Guillaumin’s Dictionnaire and of excerpts from Jean-Gustave Courcelle-Seneuil’s Cours d’économie politique.

Similar phenomena of transmigration of economic ideas embedded in institutional packages occurred in other circumstances: for example in the 1870s, various replicas of the Verein für Sozialpolitik and its attached initiatives decreed the success of the German Socialism of the Chair not only in Europe, but also in other countries like Japan in the Meiji Era (Kumagai 2001; 2005; Nishizawa 2012).

Therefore, the performative, institutional and transnational dimensions of political economy combined themselves in the dissemination of economic ideas, decreeing the success of the latter as sources of inspiration for broader practical movements and institutional innovations that aimed at changing the course of history.

5. Translations and translators

The actor-network theory has attracted the attention of various scholars on the ubiquity and social complexity of the processes of ‘translation’ (Callon 1986). Translation is the very activity that generates an actor-network, i.e. the process through which some actors in an organisation, particularly key actors or focal actors, attract the attention of other actors starting from their universe of representations, and attract them into their network by ‘translating’ their demands of social innovation into the representation, interests and visions of the new or potential adepts. As explained by Callon, such a process of translation passes through three steps: problematisation, involvement, and enrolment. Problematisation is the focal actor’s definition or re-definition of the identities and interests of other actors, in order to become a critical touchstone for them. Involvement is the process through which other actors are persuaded to accept the definitions of the focal actor. Lastly, co-optation or enrolment occurs at the time in which involved actors accept the interests recommended by the focal actor as their own interests.

Actors, especially those emerging as focal actors, are therefore translators all along the process of construction and strengthening of a network. Again, there are human and non-human actors. Among
‘actors’ in this extended meaning there are the institutional packages that combine in systematic and significant ways human and non-human actors.

Therefore, the translation of identities, representations, interests, ideologies and practices precedes and shapes the translation as a ‘linguistic act’ and as a ‘text’. But all things considered, the process of textual translation from one language into another language is far from being heterogeneous vis-à-vis translation in the broader sense just described. This happens especially in cases, like those of economic texts, in which their content is closely connected to the processes of social and institutional innovation which accompany their translation, processes that require problematisation, involvement and enrolment to such an innovation. Translated texts are themselves non-human actors intervening at the crucial moment in which a new network is created in a new context, i.e. when national borders are crossed towards the creation of international networks or towards the replication of institutional packages in a new national area. As to translators, editors and sponsors of the translation, they are among the human actors in this process, and very often play the role of focal actors. In the cases studied by Monica Lupetti and myself, this characteristic is quite clear and constant. The Portuguese translator of Forbonnais’ Éléments du commerce (1754; transl. 1766), was José Manuel Ribeiro Pereira, a graduate in law who was soon to become secretary of the Junta da Administração (Managing Board) of the Companhia Geral do Grão Pará, e Maranhão, one of the chartered trade companies created by the future Marquis of Pombal in 1755 to foster the commercial interest of Portugal (Lupetti and Guidi 2014). The translator of Adam Smith’s Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages (1761) into Portuguese was Francisco Xavier Ribeiro de Sampayo, a magistrate who under Pombal’s ministry was appointed to various offices in the capitania of Pará and Rio Negro, in the Brazilian colonies, and wrote very interesting reports about his explorations of the Amazonian forest (Lupetti and Guidi forthcoming 1).16 Jeremy Bentham’s Théorie des peines et des récompenses (1811), which included the Manuel d’économie politique, was translated in Lisbon in 1822, following a decree of the revolutionary Cortes, and Bentham himself actively networked to promote his projects on constitution, penal code and Panopticon prison, with various leaders of the liberal movement, such as João Baptista Felgueiras and Agostinho José Freire, secretaries of the Cortes, and José da Silva Carvalho, Justice Minister. His Traité des sophismes politiques (1816) was translated in the Brazilian province of Santa Catarina (Bentham 1838) by Antônio José

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16 The translation appeared posthumously in 1816. The author of a compendium of Smith’s Wealth of Nations (1976 [1776]) which represented the first partial translation into Portuguese of this work was Bento da Silva Lisboa (1811), a brother of José da Silva Lisboa, who had been appointed ‘censor’ of the Impressão Régia (the official press of the Portuguese-Brazilian Crown), soon after the transfer of King Pedro’s court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 to escape the Napoleonian conquest of the mother-country. This translation aimed at defending the free trade policy recently adopted by the government (Almodovar and Cardoso 2012: 191-193).
Falcão da Frota, who was an active member of the newly elected Provincial Assembly, soon after the reforms that had transformed the Brazilian Empire into a constitutional monarchy (Lupetti and Guidi forthcoming 2). The already mentioned translation of Hübner’s textbook (1852, transl. 1877) was made by Francisco Augusto de Almeida, a Portuguese publicist who had emigrated to Argentina at the beginning of the 1860s, where he had founded the newspaper *El Diario de Buenos Ayres*. Back to Lisbon, Almeida had attempted a career as lexicographer, grammarian and reformer of primary education. The text was prefaced by Augusto José da Cunha, who had been member of various government councils, and was at that time Commissioner of Education (Lupetti and Guidi forthcoming 3). Finally, the Brazilian translation of Luigi Cossa’s textbook of political economy was the product of a quite obscure translator, Carlos Soares Guimarães, although it was sponsored by Joaquim José Vieira de Carvalho, professor of political economy at the University of São Paulo, who adopted this textbook for his course. After the creation of the Republic in 1889, Carvalho became a leading founder of the Monarchical Party and was elected to Parliament (Guidi and Lupetti 2014).

These translations, like many other similar works, performed the three functions of problematisation, involvement and enrolment by adapting the original texts to the horizon of expectations of the new readers. Paratextual additions like translators’ or editor’s prefaces, footnotes, appendixes, etc. pointed out the utility of these books to defend national policies, to provide national institutions with new and updated materials, and to provide a theoretical background to those fellow-countrymen who were engaged in political or social battles. They highlighted differences between what the original author intended to propagate and the national culture or the national conjuncture, often omitting passages that appeared problematic or conversely adding sections, chapters and even entire parts to adapt the book to the new context. But translations were tools for the creation of new networks and new initiatives also because they were themselves (non-human) actors. Once they were brought out, they lived as it were their own life, and ‘acted’ as propagators of projects and aggregators of people. Translations of textbooks, manuals, manifestoes, commercial treaties, regulations, for example, could be such actors in their respective contexts, and persuade people to enrol in new causes. This explains why, in the case of political economy, the translation of key texts was part and parcel of those institutional packages that crossed national borders.  

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17 It should be observed in this context that the stories of the economic translations tracked by the EE-T project converge in confirming what Sophus Reinert (2011) observed for the 18th century: at least until the beginning of the 20th century, translations are not aimed at the cultivated elite, not at members of government. Most of these people are perfectly able to read books in English and French and purchase foreign books for their private libraries. Translations are addressed at a larger public, as opinion-making tools or means for persuasion and propaganda: in a word, they are published to fuel the publich sphere (Habermas 1962). See also the various contributions to Astigarraga and Usoz (2013).
On the other hand, a prerequisite for the translation of economic texts is the linguistic competence of translators, and the latter is cultivated by human and non-human actors who make such competence available at local level. We know that this does not happen systematically, from the numerous cases in which economic texts are translated from translations (typically in the 18th and 19th centuries, from French) rather than from the originals. But the process is striking when it involves ‘new’ countries such as the ex-colonies of Latin America in the 19th century, or countries opening their frontiers to the west like Japan. Translating from English, French, Italian or German in a Spanish, Portuguese or Japanese-speaking country requires human actors who are able to translate from these languages and other actors who publish or make available grammars, methods, conversation manuals, dictionaries, or teach languages in schools and universities. Sometimes these actors are emigrés for political reasons or because of racial discrimination, who, for their training and competence are able to translate books in the language of the hosting country, as the German economists and philosophers who flew to Britain and America in the 1930s (Hagemann 2011); in other cases they are graduate students and young scholars sent to Europe from other areas with appropriate scholarships, in order to refine their studies and meet the great intellectuals of their times (Nishizawa 2012; Borokh 2012); or from one European country to another for similar reasons, as happened to Luigi Cossa, who came back from Germany with some acquired competence in reading German and with Hübner’s textbook in his suitcase, which he soon decided to translate (Guidi forthcoming); in still other cases such actors are intellectuals and cultural entrepreneurs, who entertain their networks of contacts with the intellectual milieux of their home country and promote the translation of their national literature.18 There are also – in a more technical sense – grammarians, lexicographers, language teachers, who produce the tools and competences that are required by the activity of translation. Sometimes these grammarians engage themselves in translations, as did captain Manuel de Sousa, an engineer of the Portuguese Royal Army and member of the Arcadia Lusitana who translated Fléchier, Fénélon and Molière from French and Campomanes from Spanish, and was probably the author of one of the earliest French-Portuguese dictionaries, published in 1769 (Sousa 1769); Lastly, beyond all these groups, there are whole migrant communities of workers and tradesmen, like those which arrive in the New World in the course of the nineteenth century, whose existence justifies the production of tools and methods for language learning and communication with native communities.

The products of these activities are in their turn non-human actors that play a crucial role in creating linguistic competence, such as schools, chairs and degrees of foreign languages, grammars, conversation

18 An example are publishers like the Laemmerts and the Garniers, who create their own firms in Brazil and promote very innovative series including translations. See El Far (2006: 15-26).
6. Conclusions: a tentative hypothesis

As there are translations of whatever subject and literary genre, so also linguistic competence, once it is created, is available for any kind of activity, including translation, both literary and scientific. But is economic translation just one among the many, or does it entertain a special relationship with the dissemination of linguistic competence?

A fascinating hypothesis is provided by the notion of ‘market for political economy’ coined by Claeys, Hont, Kadish and Tribe (1993) with regard to the institutionalisation of political economy. That there is a parallel ‘market for foreign languages’, connected to flows of human migration and trade relationships, is something that it is easy to admit. After all, the institutionalisation of foreign languages as academic disciplines occurs in Italy, France and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century in the Schools of Commerce and in technical schools (see Augello and Guidi 1988). The point is that language teaching, linguistic competence and economic training are equally crucial elements in the social construction of the market, and this is true not only for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as demonstrated by various dictionaries and grammars addressed to merchants since the early modern era (see Lupetti 2011; Lefèvre 2014). The teaching of foreign languages responds first to economic and social needs, and becomes only later a scholarly discipline. There is a demand for foreign languages to facilitate the circulation of labourers and commodities. Not only because people need a common language to communicate, but also because linguistic competence in another language, and translations, make it possible to access information on other countries, on their resources, activities, and institutions. Therefore an important part of the market for political economy is also the market for economic translations, which inform about ideas and institutional settings (packages) that efficiently functioned in other contexts and that, once adapted, can be useful to other countries. In this way, the market for political economy and the market for foreign languages become parts of the more extensive process of migration and adaptation of institutional packages. Both the knowledge of languages and that of economic notions and realities serve to categorise an informed participation of actors in the market and in its surrounding institutional network. They both play a cognitive function, because they contribute to socially constructing what they categorise.

Significantly, the results of the research on economic translations reveal a global or trans-regional dimension of the phenomenon of the circulation of economic ideas through translations, particularly that of textbooks and manuals. The Ottoman Empire, Japan, Russia, and massively Northern and Latin
America participate in the process of translation of economic texts often in connection to original initiatives related to the adaptation of institutional packages.

However, in the light of the cognitive function of economic translations, it would be an error to consider such a global dimension an the sign of an early process of globalisation. The plurality of source texts, even in terms of national origin, reveals that what is looked for is not the most standard and advanced international hit, but the works that are more able to describe, interpret and propagate the institutional models and the models of society that appear as the best candidates to replication and adaptation to local circumstances, in order to promote useful economic, social and political change.

The dimension that dominates is trans-regional rather than international or global. Globalisation would eventually occur, but only after a selection process that led to the more recent domination of the Anglo-American model.

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