



BRILL

SIGNS & MEDIA 2 (2022) 34–53



SIGNS & MEDIA

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Il nome della rosa's Translations in the Chinese Language

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Abstract

In 1980, Umberto Eco's first novel *Il nome della rosa* was published in Italy and has quickly had global resonance, entering China by the late 1980s. Since then, six translations have been published in the Chinese language, including two issued by Taiwanese translators. It is interesting to observe how each version is able to refract the socio-cultural contexts of the translators, depending on the aspirations and cultural images created in the different periods and geographic areas. We need also consider that, especially in the case of Eco's novels, the translators had to not only deal with the different needs and expectations of their readers but also imagine a 'new model reader', just as Eco did. Therefore, this paper aims at confronting the six different translated versions, by identifying the new model readers imagined by the translators, considering their own expectations, knowledge, and cultural context.

Keywords

Il nome della rosa – model reader – translation – negotiation of meanings

1 Introduction

Umberto Eco (1932–2016) is internationally recognized as being one of the most influential intellectuals of our time, having published countless studies on many issues such as semiotics, communication, aesthetics, and so forth, a significant portion of which has been translated into many different languages.

Still, he is also renowned for his narrative production, and in particular for his first novel, *Il nome della rosa* (1980, En. tr. *The Name of the Rose*, 1983), which notably enjoyed sudden international success.

Since its publication, *Il nome della rosa* won the Italian Strega prize, and received the attention of international readers, critics, and academic circles by being translated in over fifty languages. The publishing world is convinced that Eco found the magic formula for a successful novel, and international academia is interested in challenging the novel with countless interpretations. Moreover, the novel was popularized and adapted into a movie directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud and starring the '007 detective' Sean Connery. Even recently, in 2019, it was re-adapted into a television miniseries, created and directed by Giacomo Battiato for RAI, and distributed internationally. *Il nome della rosa* was surrounded by such loud rumours that it was quickly transformed into a 'cult classic'. That is why in Europe, as well as in the US and Japan, it became one of the best-selling books ever published, staying at the top of the sales charts for weeks, and eventually selling more than a million copies in hard cover and more in paper back.

Therefore, it should not be surprising that its worldly fame, including the movie's success, has echoed in China since the early 1980s, as soon as Deng Xiaoping launched the Open Door policy in 1978. A few years later, *Il nome della rosa's* English version started its travel into China, and was finally translated into Chinese in 1987. However, 1987's two translations were not the only ones. Up to now, there are as many as six different translations of *Il nome della rosa* published in China and in other contexts that use the Chinese characters (which is an impressive result for such a short period of time).

The first two translations appeared almost simultaneously in mainland China in 1987: the first was announced by Wang Ban (王斑) in the first official review of the English version of the novel published in the journal *Foreign Literature* (外国文学, *waiguo wenxue*) (56), and appeared in seven consecutive issues (4 to 10) from May to October 1987 in the same journal. This translation was created by Min Bingjun (闵炳君), entitled 玫瑰的名字, *Meigui de mingzi*, and subsequently collected into one volume published by the China Drama press (中国戏剧出版社, *Zhongguo xiju chubanshe*) in 1988. The second 1987's edition, instead, was translated by Lin Tai (林泰), Zhou Zhongan (周仲安), and Qi Shuguang (戚曙光), with the title 玫瑰之名, *Meigui zhi ming*, and was published by the Chongqing press (重庆出版社, *Chongqing chubanshe*).

Of remarkable significance was also the 1983 translation by the Taiwanese scholar Xie Yaoling (谢瑶玲) for a Taiwanese audience, published in complex Chinese characters in Taiwan by the Crown press (皇冠文化出版, *Huangguan*

wenhua chuban). This translation had such a resonance that it was republished in 1993 and later edited in simplified characters and published in the PRC in 2001 by the Writers press (作家出版社, *Zuojia chubanshe*).

The next translation, published in 1995 by the Jilin People press (吉林人民出版社, *Jilin renmin chubanshe*), is a unique case: the translator Lin Zhouqi (林周戚) abridged the Lin Tai, Zhou Zhongan, and Qi Shuguang edition (1987) with very few changes, and substituted the term 'name' with the term 'chaos' (乱, *luan*) in the title: 'The chaos of the rose' (玫瑰之乱, *meigui zhi luan*). This version actually represents the less popular edition in China.

We should point out that these first four translations were based on the English edition by William Weaver, and each of them shows different degrees of manipulation of the intended meaning of the text. In particular, the first two editions, published in mainland China and Lin Zhouqi's edition, each eliminated some parts and sections of the original novel, and magnified others by adding notes.

Following the increase of cultural and academic dialogue with foreign countries, the professionalization of local translators, the specialization of the local publisher, and the 'new' readers' cultural context and expectations – in both China and Taiwan, through the Shanghai Translation press (上海译文出版社, *Shanghai yiwén chubanshe*) and the Taiwanese Crown press – invited Italian specialists to re-translate the novel. As a result, two new versions of *Il nome della rosa* appeared for Chinese language readers: the edition translated by Professor Shen Emei (沈萼梅) and Liu Xirong (刘锡荣), published by the Shanghai Translation press in 2010; and the edition translated by Ni Anyu (倪安宇), published in complex Chinese characters in Taiwan by the Crown press in 2014. Although these two editions were translated from the original Italian edition, it is still inevitable that there are some manipulations of the intended meaning of the novel, even if to a different degree compared to the previous ones.

As Eco (2003) argues, in fact, translation always comes after interpretation, because every act of reading and understanding presupposes an interpretation taken. The translator has to consider the cultural contents and choose a more or less domesticating (or more or less foreignizing) strategy. He reminds us that a translation always has losses (saying less than the original) and gains (saying something more), because there is a negotiation of meanings between the text and the translator that necessitates some form of manipulation of the intended meaning of the text. Hans-Georg Gadamer tries to show the structural identity between interpretation and translation, putting them under the sign of the compromise:

The translator is often painfully aware of his inevitable distance from the original. His dealing with the text is like the effort to come to an

understanding in conversation. But translating is like an especially laborious process of understanding, in which one views the distance between one's own opinion and its contrary as ultimately unbridgeable. And, as in conversation, when there are such unbridgeable differences, a compromise can sometimes be achieved in the to and fro of dialogue, so in the to and fro of weighing and balancing possibilities, the translator will seek the best solution – a solution that can never be more than a compromise.

GADAMER, 1975: 388

Moreover, Eco points out that the translator's negotiations – or compromises, in Gadamer's terms – address certain readings of the text according to the meanings highlighted by the translator (2003: 247). Accordingly, Wang Ning (2010: 7) explains this translator's role as being 'a dynamic interpreter and a creative representer who will complete the unfinished task of the author. In this sense, the translator's function is comparable to the author's'.

Therefore, translators of *Il nome della rosa*, similarly to all translators in general, had to go through the following steps: first, they judged *Il nome della rosa* to be a work that could fit the local audiences; then they became the intimate readers of the novel, or the first 'empirical readers' who have to deal with the text in relation with the language, culture, ideology, and poetics of their concomitant socio-cultural context (Lefevere, 1994: 124); and, last, they had to re-write the novel imagining a model reader that lives in their own temporal and spatial context. The outcomes of their interpretation and negotiation of meanings reflect the characteristics of that specific socio-cultural environment into the original text, refracting the target language and cultural context into the source context (Damrosch, 2003: 281–283). Thus, the text becomes the result of the different translators' manipulations of the novel, magnifying or minimizing some of the novel's contents.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to compare the 'model reader'¹ imagined by Eco, with the ones imagined by the Chinese language translators of *Il nome della rosa*. In particular, we will attempt to better understand the manipulations of the novel's translations published in China and Taiwan, focusing on those translations which either display a more remarkably different model

1 The model reader, according to Eco (1979: 7), is a possible reader the author has to rely upon to organize a text. In his own words, the author 'has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses. To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them'.

reader compared to the one Eco had in mind, or aspire to resemble the author's model reader as much as possible.

2 The Late 1980s Translations: From 'a Tale of Books' to a Detective Novel Rich in Historical and Philosophical Contents

Il nome della rosa is a novel full of passages, quotations, unfinished periods, stumps of books, and is a sort of pastiche of different literary genres. Behind a captivating and enthralling detective plot about a novice Adso and his spiritual guide Guglielmo, who investigates a series of murders, the heterogeneous structure of the novel actually conceals infinite levels of reading, advocating Peirce's concept of infinite semiosis (Hutcheon, 1998: 172), and stressing the importance of the reader's cultural framework, individual interpretation, and cooperation in the production of meanings.

The novel begins with a sort of preface, dated 5 January 1980, titled 'Naturalmente, un manoscritto', in which the author enlists the motivations that brought him to publish this novel, while highlighting his doubts on the historical authenticity of the text he found and is about to offer to his readers. This preface thus has the aim of inspiring doubt toward the historical and linguistic 'truths', that are (un)solved by the acknowledgment that there are no final truths thanks to the discovery that events are fortuitous, and the signs' meanings are plural and may lead to the infinite semiosis. Moreover, Eco enriches the novel with all the signs that refer to the possible medieval world that he had imagined, including extensive descriptions of the religious disputes, the historical contexts, the architectures, the monastery's everyday life, and so forth. Finally, he intertwines the novel with various quotations from medieval sources, in such a way that Adso's story works as 'a tale of books' (Eco, 1980: 15).

Therefore, behind the detective plot, Eco imagined a 'model reader' who would enjoy the novel not only for its suspense but also for its encyclopaedic historical and philosophical contents, its 'detectable' twines of quotes, and its openness to multiple interpretations, requiring the reader to play with it, searching for the historical characters, places, facts, and quotes throughout the pages of the novel.

Before being translated into Chinese, the novel had already been introduced in China by some scholars. In 1981, even before the English translation by William Weaver came out, the famous Lü Tongliu (吕同六, 1938–2005) wrote the very first critical review of the novel in 1981. He described the novel as 'a new experiment toward "the openness of the new artistic forms"' that 'breaks the *chuanqi*'s (传奇) and historical novel's genre conventions, draws a new track, and courageously mixes the techniques of the modern detective

novel' (Sun Hui, 2015: 15). In 1983, Luo Ning (罗宁) (1983: 93) reported the international resonance of the novel and depicted it as 'a novel about a religious dispute, in which the story is arranged around a murder in a monastery, with a twisted plot and an abundance of historical data'. According to Ge Bian (戈边) (1984: 270), the novel

describes the life of a group of melancholy friars in a monastery. The book contains theological discussions and allegorical stories. It also writes about a beautiful village girl seducing a monk who is a novice, and the murders of the monk and the mystery of the investigation.

Finally, in 1986, Wang Ban (1986: 59) reviewed it as 'a detective novel richer in philosophical significance than ordinary detective novels'.

By the time the novel was finally translated into Chinese in mainland China in 1987, the general idea on *Il nome della rosa* was of a new detective novel with a twisted plot rich in historical data and philosophical significance. What seems to be missed is the intertextuality of the medieval sources as well as the semiotic significance, and it is no wonder the editors and translators of both 1987's Chinese versions of the novel interpreted it in a similar way.

Before confronting the translators' interpretations and strategies, we need to consider each translation's paratext – that is, prefaces and/or postscripts, notes, and illustrations – since it can be seen as

a *threshold* ... a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that ... is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies).

GENETTE, 1997: 2

Moreover, it should be noted that the habit of inserting paratext into translations matches the tradition of nineteenth-century Chinese translations of foreign novels.

In the Chongqing press's translation, there are four long prefaces added by the editor at the beginning of the volume: an 'Introduction of the contents' (内容简介, *neirong jianjie*); an 'Editor explanation' (出版说明, *chuban shuoming*); a 'Summary of the story' (故事梗概, *gushi genggai*); and a 'Index of the main characters' (主要人物表, *zhuyao renwu biao*). In particular, these prefaces aim at promoting the novel to their readership by publicizing its popularity in the entire globe. The editor first describes the success of the English edition by quoting the most astonishing reviews of the international journals, provides

some information on the translator of the English version of the novel William Weaver, and finally suggests some interpretative keys. She or he states that ‘this is a work that can be read as a detective, historical and philosophical novel’, and that the book’s title that contains the sign ‘rose’ (rich of symbolic meanings) ‘can be interpreted by any reader according to his/her personal understanding of it’ (Eco, 1987: ‘*Chuban shuoming*’). In addition, the editor finally provides some information on the medieval background of the novel and summarizes the main passages of the detective plot, revealing the identity of the murderer and the solution of the mystery as it was common in the detective novel tradition of ancient China (公案小说, *gong’an xiaoshuo*) (Benedetti, 2017: 194).

In the China Drama press’s translation, instead we only find a short ‘Synopsis’ (内容提要, *neirong tiyao*), and a ‘Letter from the author to the translator’ (作者致译者的信, *zuozhe zhi yizhe de xin*) at the beginning of the volume. Furthermore, there is ‘The translator postscript’ (译后记, *yihouji*) at the end of the volume, which describes the novel as ‘a detective story with a strong academic nature’ (Eco, 1988: 480). Although the second edition paratext says very little compared to the first edition, the uniqueness of the ‘Letter from the author to the translator’ signed by Eco assumes a certain significance because it provides a sort of an authoritative outlook to this edition. In fact, this translation was the most read and popular up to the new century.

Beside these texts, both the translations are rich with footnotes in which the two translators provide information on the historical events, characters, religious orders, and places of the European medieval world forming the background of Eco’s novel. Among them, there is a curious and puzzling footnote contained in the Chongqing press edition. Here the translator explains the significance of the name of the famous horse ‘Brunellus’ (Brunello in the Italian’s original) that appears many times in the novel: ‘this name is similar to the name of a notorious thief (大盗, *dadao*) in Western Europe’ (这个名字跟西欧一臭名昭的大盗的名字相近) (Eco, 1987: 17). Unfortunately, I couldn’t find any reference that associates Brunellus with a Western European thief. Therefore, this information could be erroneous or at least says something more than the original novel.

Last, both the translations contain illustrations interspersed through the novel at irregular intervals, which are different for contents and style. In the Chongqing press’s edition there are seven illustrations designed by Qiao Nan (乔楠), whilst in the China Drama press’s version there are eleven illustrations designed by Li Ni (李倪). It should be pointed out that illustrations have extensively accompanied Chinese traditional fiction for centuries, ‘embellish[ing] the text with attractive, sometimes symbolically significant or even gripping but not necessarily realistic, glimpses of the events narrated’ (Hegel, 1998: 172).

Regarding the translators' interpretations and strategies, we can see that both the translators seem to share the same interpretation of the novel, and to adopt similar strategies, maybe because they both translated from English, or maybe because they were influenced by the previous Chinese reviews of the novel. The most relevant and significant manipulation of the intended meaning of the novel, shared by both translators, is the complete removal of the author's preface 'Naturalmente, un manoscritto', which instead was included in the English edition. This elimination completely cuts out the author's construction of the doubts on historical and linguistic truths, and Eco's own definition of Adso's memoirs as 'a tale of books' (Eco, 1980: 15). However, it may be interesting to note that the translator of the Chongqing press's edition actually decided to preserve and translate the preface's title: '自然，是一部手稿, *ziran, shi yibu shougao*', filling a blank page before the 'Index of the main characters'.

Yet there are other significant omissions in the two translated texts. The Chongqing press's edition seems only to lack of the last sentence of the novel '*stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus*', which was in the Latin language in both the Italian and the English editions. The Chinese translator decided to end the text with the punctuation mark ';', which was maybe meant to suggest a cut.

The China Drama press's edition, instead, considerably cut out many other sentences or parts, marking them with points of ellipsis '.....'. The translator explains in the postscript attached at the end of the volume (Eco, 1988: 480), and in a footnote (Eco, 1988: 132), that his omissions were meant to increase the novel's intelligibility for the Chinese readers. Here is a list of the contents that were originally included in the 1983 English translation, but omitted in the Chinese China Drama press's translation (the pages where the cuts should have taken place are reported in the following list):

1. References to some important historical events and offices, such as the 'Council of Vienne' (En. tr.: 25; Ch. tr.: 33), and the medieval 'Inquisition' (En. tr.: 21–22; Ch. tr.: 25).
2. References to medieval toponym, religious orders, characters, and objects, such as Guglielmo's reference to the libraries that were important in the Middle Age (En. tr.: 24; Ch. tr.: 31); the digression on the Franciscan order (En. tr.: 33–35; Ch. tr.: 44); the description of Adelmo's working place which includes a detailed description of the vellum used at the time as a material for writing on (En. tr.: 50; Ch. tr.: 81).
3. Theological disquisitions and philosophical discussions, such as Adso's apocalyptic vision while observing the portal of the monastery's church

(En. tr.: 29–31; Ch. tr.: 40), and the reference to Areopagite's theories (En. tr.: 52; Ch. tr.: 86).

4. Most of Salvatore's speeches which was a strange combination of multiple European languages, including Latin, an Italian dialect, and Provençale, as the translator points out in the footnote n.1 (En. tr.: 31–32; Ch. tr.: 41).
5. The author's quotes in other European languages and dialects but Latin, such as those included in Guglielmo's speeches (En. tr.: 81; Ch. tr.: 51).

As we can see, the translators' negotiations of meanings, through the significant elimination of the author preface and other cuts, domesticated *Il nome della rosa* in a way that considerably magnified the novel's new artistic form of the detective plot, rich in historical data and philosophical contents, just as it was interpreted by the novel's first reviewers. It is interesting to note that the translators adopted these strategies in a period in which crime fiction returned back in vogue in China. In 1980, after a period of a total rejection of detective fiction for political reasons, Chinese crime aficionados could read again local *gong'an* novel, and European, American, Japanese, and even Soviet detective fiction. In 1980–1981, Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie were ubiquitous again. However, we need to wait for 1984 for the real explosion of the genre and the arise of specialized magazines and publishing houses (Kinkley, 2000: 241–293).

3 The Last Two Translations: A Postmodern Novel and 'a Metaphor for All Books'

By the early 2000s, Eco's other novels, such as *Il pendolo di Foucault* (1988) and *L'isola del giorno prima* (1994), and some semiotic works, such as the *Trattato di semiotica generale* (1975) and *Interpretation and overinterpretation* (1992), were available in the Chinese language. Therefore, the reputation of Eco and his most famous novel, *Il nome della rosa*, significantly grew in China from the first decade of the new century. During these years, significant academic studies were published² and various intellectual circles showed their appreciation toward the innovations of Eco's novel.³ *Il nome della rosa* is now considered a postmodern novel, 'a work about "interpretation"' (Ma Ling, 2004: 134–135), and 'a metaphor for all books, because behind all the books are endless books' (Liang Wendao, 2009).

Following this increasing interest, the publishing houses of mainland China and Taiwan started to reconsider the earlier translations because they were

2 See the pioneer works of Ma Ling (2003a; 2003b; 2004).

3 See Ge Fei, 2003; and Liang Wendao, 2009.

translated from the English version and were no longer suitable to meet the 'new' readers' needs and expectations. This is not particularly surprising since the readers' cultural context and expectations have consistently mutated. In these years, in both mainland China and Taiwan, the academic and intellectual dialogue with foreign countries increased, a localized postmodernism became the dominant literary current, and the study of foreign languages (not only English) was strongly encouraged in universities. This allowed China to better understand foreign literature in their original language, and to contribute as a dynamic actor in the atlas of world literature (Wang Ning, 2016a).

In particular, two publishers pioneered this new approach to translation: the Shanghai Translation press, and the Taiwanese Crown press. In the specific case of *Il nome della rosa*, both publishing houses invited Italian specialists to re-translate the novel. The Shanghai publisher relied on Shen Emei, an Italian professor at the Beijing Foreign Studies University and a professional Italian literary translator, who is used to collaborating with Liu Xirong, professor at Beijing Language and Culture University, for proofreading and smoothing the Chinese language. The Taiwanese publisher, instead, relied on Ni Anyu, a professional translator who is renowned for having translated most of Italo Calvino's works. Shen Emei's translation was released in 2010, whilst Ni Anyu's was published in 2014 in two volumes.

Compared to the previous translators, Shen Emei's and Ni Anyu's interpretation and negotiation of meanings display a completely different approach. Their interpretative and translation process took a long-term close reading of the novel, and an intense study of all the additional references they could find, attempting to resemble, to a certain extent, Eco's work in constructing the novel's codes.

On the one hand, Shen Emei (2010) tells us that she formed a 'translation group' with Gabriella Bonino, the Italian specialist for China Radio International, and two other Eco translators: Guo Shicong (郭世琮) for *Il pendolo di Foucault*, and Liu Yueqiao (刘月樵) for *L'isola del giorno prima*. In 2007, they all met Eco while he was visiting China, and discussed their interpretation and translation problems. After that, Shen Emei personally received from the author an annotated and simplified special edition of *Il nome della rosa*, used by Italian high school students. Moreover, she consulted some field experts to better understand and translate the specific vocabulary used in the novel. For instance, she asked a civil engineer to help her to translate the lexicon used to describe the monastery's and library's architecture, and a Chinese medicine doctor for the herbs' proprieties. And last, she even went to the Beijing's Old Summer Palace to walk through the maze designed by the Italian architect

Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766) in order to experience the panic and anxiety caused by getting lost in a maze.

On the other hand, Ni Anyu (2014: 20) recounts the long time she spent in interpreting Eco's similitudes and metaphors, and in searching for the proper names, the toponyms, the books' titles, and the quotes' sources, declaring that it generally took eight hours to translate 300 characters. But she also refers to her satisfaction once the work was done. In later occasions, Ni Anyu defines the translator's task as a responsibility 'of positioning her/himself as an actor, understanding the script, the story that the play writer wants to tell, and the meaning of each character in the story', in order to 'say almost the same thing, as Eco would have said' (Okapi, 2014). She also revealed her translating approach that is mostly based on an exhausting search for the most suitable Chinese terms and expressions to translate Italian. In her own words, 'Chinese [or the target language] is the real threshold for translation' (Udn, 2020).

Although the two translators shared similar attitudes and propositions, the final texts are very different, not only in terms of the translations themselves but also in the translators' editorial choices. The main differences concern the use of the notes in the text, the translation of the Latin quotations, and the paratext.

Shen Emei decided to add explicative footnotes throughout the text, even if the editor required her to limit their number in consideration of the page length of the book. On the other hand, Ni Anyu chose to place all the notes in a separated volume, titled 'The annotation's volume' (注解本, *zhujieben*), whilst the main text is titled 'The new translation's volume' (新译本, *xin yiben*).

Another significant difference in the editorial choices regards the translation of the Latin quotes. Shen Emei used two different approaches: the long quotations are translated into Chinese and inserted into the main text, but they use a different typographic font in order to distinguish them from the other parts translated from Italian. On the contrary, the short quotations are directly inserted into the main text in the Latin language while the Chinese translation is provided in the footnotes. On the other hand, Ni Anyu translated almost all the Latin quotations into the corpus of the text, and left just few of them in the original language.

Regarding the paratext, Shen Emei's edition does not include any paratext, whilst Ni Anyu's contains a long paratext, consisting of three prefaces at the beginning of the first volume: 'The best international reviews!' (各界一致最高评价!, *geshiyizhi zuigao pingjia!*), 'The translator's preface' (译者序, *yizhe xu*), and 'Zhang Dachun's reading guidance' (张大春导读, *Zhang Dachun daodu*). In addition, the second volume – 'The annotation's volume' – also contains Eco's *Postille a 'Il nome della rosa'* (1983), also translated by Ni Anyu.

This paratext is meant to not only promote the novel by emphasizing the novel international resonance but also guide the reader in her or his

interpretation. In the preface, Ni Anyu briefly suggests two possible 'reading levels' of the novel: the first is for the inexperienced readers who may look for the '*fabula*' (故事, *gushi*), and enjoy it as a detective novel; and the second level is appropriate for the most voracious and experienced readers who may enjoy the novel for all its insights. The translator additionally recommends that these voracious readers search for a reading key in the conspiracy theories hypothesized in Eco's second novel, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (Eco, 2014a: 19).

The second preface written by Zhang Dachun particularly stands out. Zhang Dachun is a popular contemporary writer and literary critic in Taiwan, and his interpretation provides an authoritative reading to this edition. Moreover, it also serves as a significant promotion of the novel, especially considering the minor role of Italian literature in Taiwan.

Actually, Zhang Dachun's preface was new neither to Taiwanese readers nor to Chinese readers, since it was not only first published on 17 July 1989 in the Taiwanese newspaper *China Times* (中国时报, *Zhongguo shibao*), and then attached to all the editions published in Taiwan, but was also added to the edition cured by Xie Yaoling that was re-edited in simplified characters and published in mainland China in 2001 by the Writer press.

In this preface, Zhang Dachun underlines a few key points of the novel, such as Eco's semiotic narrative strategies that give shape to 'a far more complicated network than the maze-library that conceal the "forbidden knowledge" (远比书中隐藏「禁制知识」的迷宫图书馆更为复杂的网络)', and 'the realistic rhetoric that often represents his approach on the doubts and the ridicule toward the "reality" (其写实性修辞，往往就是他对「真实」疑窦和嘲诮的表现)' (Eco, 2014a: 21–22). From these key points, Zhang Dachun infers that 'we can fundamentally suspect that the author's discovery, copying, and translation of the Melk's manuscript (梅尔克手稿, *Meierke shougao*) is entirely fictional' (Eco, 2014a: 22).

Eventually, Zhang Dachun suggests the ideal way to read the novel:

Just turn to any page and keep reading until you fell asleep. After experiencing this kind of situation several times, if it still doesn't arouse any interest in you for its detective, historical, philosophical, or highly ironic art, please watch the TV show "Hundred Victory" – a TV show that is most suitable for people with no brain power to develop a sense of self-superiority.

ECO, 2014a: 22

In this way, the paratext of Ni Anyu's version presents the novel in a different perspective compared to the 1980s translations, a perspective that includes the meta-fictionality of Eco's preface 'Naturalmente, un manoscritto' and the

complicated network of the novel's intertextuality. To better comprehend the terms in which the two translators attempted to imagine a model reader that resembles Eco's, we will now dig into Shen Emei's and Ni Anyu's translation choices.

4 Shen Emei's Translation Choices versus Ni Anyu's

The following section collects and compares some significant translators' choices as exemplifications of their translation strategies.

The first example is the opening sentence of Adso's narration – that is, the biblical quotation from John 1:3 – immediately recognizable for most of the Western readers due to their familiarity with Christianity, but considerably less so for Chinese readers that may not have the various passages of the Bible in their immediate knowledge. However, we need to consider that this quotation may be well-known by the Chinese and Taiwanese Christian communities, and also by non-Christian Taiwanese since the Christian church has played an important role in education in Taiwan (Zhai and Woodberry, 2011: 311–312).

Aiming at remaining faithful to the original intertextuality, both the translators chose the canonical Chinese translations of the Bible, however they selected two different versions: Shen Emei chose the Chinese Union Version (和合本, *hehe ben*) which represents the predominant translation of the Bible used by Chinese Protestants, first published in 1919. Ni Anyu instead preferred the Studium Biblicum Version (思高本, *sigao ben*), which is the predominant translation used by Chinese Catholics, first published in 1968. We must point out that Ni Anyu added a note at the end of the quotation revealing the source, whilst Shen Emei did not. Here is the passage in question:

Original text	Shen Emei's translation	Ni Anyu's translation
In principio era il Verbo e il Verbo era presso Dio, e il Verbo era Dio.	太初有道，道与神同在，道就是神。	在起初已有圣言，圣言与天主同在，圣言就是天主。 ²⁴ ²⁴ 必见新约圣经，〈若望福音〉1:1–3。
Eco, 1980: 19	Eco, 2010: 13	Eco, 2014a: 30; Eco, 2014b: 109

Looking at the terms employed in each translation, we can suppose that some of them may also activate different connotations in the reader's mind due to her or his own cultural experience. For instance, Shen Emei's selection includes the character '道, *Dao*', which represents a very complex sign with an extraordinary depth of meaning for an experienced reader of ancient Chinese thought. The translation chosen by Ni Anyu instead employs '圣言, *shen yan*', which does not recall any local philosophical concepts.

The religious lexicon certainly represents one of the main differences between the translators. Among the religious key terms, the translators' approaches to translate 'Dio' undoubtedly differed due to their use of the two different secondary sources: the Protestant sources for Shen Emei and the Catholic for Ni Anyu. In fact, Shen Emei translated 'Dio' as 神, *Shen*, as it can be seen in the above Bible quote, but she more often employed the terms 上帝, *Shangdi*, and, rarely, 天主, *Tianzhu*. Ni Anyu instead only referred to 'Dio' as *Tianzhu*.

These different choices can be explained by the centuries-old dispute on the translation of key theological terms and concepts in Chinese. From the late 1500s, in fact, 'Europeans used Chinese to write about their religion' (Zhao, 2010: 165). The most significant problem was indeed how to render the term 'Deus' in Chinese. The very first translation was '*Tianzhu*' used by Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), but the well-known Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) first introduced '*Shangdi*', which was the term for 'supreme deity' or 'highest deity' in the theology of the Classical texts. In fact, Ricci proposed a cultural equivalence that would allow terms of the Confucian canon to translate key Catholic concepts. The controversial dispute on the translation of the term 'Deus' in Chinese continued throughout the centuries, and eventually led two Popes to issue edicts (in 1704 and in 1742) to forbid the use of any terms other than *Tianzhu* to refer to God in Chinese. From that moment forward to the present day, the Chinese Catholic Church has only used *Tianzhu* to refer to the Catholic God. On the contrary, the Protestant missionaries, who emerged as the leading teachers and interpreters of Christianity nearly two centuries after the initial Jesuit expeditions into China, used to translate 'Deus' as both *Shen* and *Shangdi*. In this way, *Tianzhu* became a key point distinguishing Catholic practice in China from that of Protestant Christianity (Zhao 2010: 165–170).

The translations of other religious terms follow the same approach. Terms such as 'Anticristo', 'eretico', and 'indemoniato' are translated by Shen Emei as they occur in the Bible's Chinese Union Version, whilst Ni Anyu chose to translate them as they occur in the Studium Biblicum Version. The following passage shows their respective choices for terms, underlined in the text:

Original text	Shen Emei's translation	Ni Anyu's translation
<p><i>L'Anticristo</i> può nascere dalla stessa pietà, dall'eccessivo amor di Dio o della verità, come l'eretico nasce dal santo e l'indemoniato dal veggente.</p> <p>Eco, 1980: 494</p>	<p>敌基督可以由虔诚本身萌生，由对上帝和真理过度的挚爱产生，就如同异教产生于圣人，妖魔产生于先知一样。</p> <p>Eco, 2010: 548</p>	<p>假基督可以因悲悯而生，因对天主或真理的狂热之爱而生，就像异端分子原为圣人，魔鬼原为预言家一样。</p> <p>Eco, 2014a: 500</p>

It may be interesting to point out that some of these choices may also activate different connotations in the reader's mind if she or he is familiar with ancient Chinese culture. In particular, the translations of 'eretico' – translated as 异教, *yijiao* by Shen Emei, and 异端分子, *yiduan fenzi* by Ni Anyu – may imply different meanings. Bearing in mind that Chinese traditional doctrines have always been more tolerant, *yijiao* may simply recall other religions, or schools of thought. *Yiduan*, instead, may be related to Confucius's saying 'To delve into strange doctrines can bring only harm (攻乎异端，斯害也已！)' (Confucius, 2007: 22).

Besides the religious terms, the translation of the proper names for people and places also represents a significant difference between both the translators, leading them to present different interpretations.

The two translations of the blind librarian's name Jorge da Burgos, whose reference to the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) has been largely established, exemplify the translators' different approaches. Shen Emei translated it as 布尔戈斯的豪尔赫, *Buergesi de Haoerhe*, which seems to align with Eco's construction of the character's name since Shen Emei employs the translation, recognised both in China and Taiwan, for Borges's personal name 豪尔赫, *Haoerhe*. Ni Anyu's translation, instead, not only has no clear reference to Borges, but it also changes the name's grammatical structure, transforming it to 佐治·达·勃尔戈斯, *Zuozhi da Boergesi*. This kind of translation tends to adhere to the Italian syntactical form of the name, 'transliterating' the letters to the Chinese character, but it loses part of the meaning of the name Jorge 'from' Burgos.

About toponyms, we can find both common and different approaches. For instance, both the translators chose to translate 'Cataio' as 中国, *Zhongguo*. Eco employed the name 'Cataio' to craft the novel's medieval world since 'Catai' was the name known for China in the medieval Europe, the same used by Marco Polo who altered 'Khitan' (契丹, *qidan*): the name of the northern populations from Mongolia and Manchuria. The term '*Zhongguo*', instead, is

recent also in China, adopted to denominate China not before the nineteenth-century. Therefore, both the translations differ from the original medieval world of the novel, but help Chinese readers better comprehend the novel.

Other toponyms, instead, were managed differently by the two translators and within each translation. For instance, Shen Emei translated 'germani', which in Eco's novel refers to the Germanic peoples, as 日耳曼+人, *rierman + ren* (Eco, 2010: 42), choosing to adopt the translation of the medieval toponym. However, when GERMANI (in capital letters in the original) occurs as one of the European medieval regions that compose the geographical map of the library's design, Shen Emei preferred to translate it with the modern toponym for Germany 德国, *deguo* (363), emphasizing the characters with a different font style to adhere to the stylistic choice of the original novel. The same approach is used also for other toponyms such as 'Anglia': Shen Emei translated it as 盎格鲁, *anggelu*, when the original novel employs it to refer to the '*Historia anglorum*' and 'autori dell'Anglia' (351), but as the modern toponym 英国, *yingguo*, for the library's room (363). Shen Emei's different choices can be explained by the context in which the terms are used in the original novel. In particular, when these terms occur to refer to regions of the world that compose a geographical map, Shen Emei's choice to use the modern toponym helps the reader to understand the geographical references of the library's design.

Ni Anyu, instead, adopted a different approach: she generally preferred to use the word *rierman* in both cases (Eco, 2014a: 53, 329), and typographically enhanced the latter instance with bold font, followed by the transcription of the term in capital Latin letters between parentheses, sticking with the source text. However, she managed 'Anglia' differently: she translated *anggelu* when it occurs in the title '*Historia anglorum*', but 英, *ying*, when it comes to 'autori dell'Anglia' (319), whilst she again chose *anggelu* (in the bold font followed by the Latin transcription in capital letters between parenthesis) for the library's room (329). Thus, we can see that Ni Anyu generally propended for the medieval terms, though she sometimes opted for the modern ones.

Beside these choices, there is another key passage of *Il nome della rosa* that was treated significantly differently between the two translators, the one in which Eco tries to subvert the excessive passion for the 'truth' by using his ironic style in order to legitimate the function of comedy. In the original text, Guglielmo says 'far ridere della verità, *fare ridere la verità*' (laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh*). We can see that Eco stresses this concept by altering the syntax of the second sentence and emphasizing it with the use of italics. It is interesting to note that Shen Emei tries to reproduce this syntactical change, translating it as 嘲笑真理, "使真理变得可笑", *chaoxiao zhenli, 'shi zhenli biande kexiao'*, and emphasises the second sentence by using quotation marks.

Ni Anyu, instead, repeats the same sentence twice: ‘嘲笑真理，嘲笑真理; *chaoxiao zhenli, chaoxiao zhenli*, maintaining just the stylistic change of format with bold fonts, but losing the modification of the syntax of the original.

5 Conclusions

Since the initial publication of *Il nome della rosa* and since travelling into Chinese contexts, it required an adjustment to the needs and expectations of its new readers, with new ‘model readers’ being imagined by the book’s translators. The six translations published in less than forty years differ from each another in few or many aspects, but we can find some common trends according to the period of the translations.

In the late 1980s, a period in which there were copious translations of foreign novels, the first translators of *Il nome della rosa* had to confront the English edition of the novel. The promotion of the novel through the paratext, and the translators’ abundant cuts of periods and paragraphs tended to attenuate the text to fit their readers’ needs, leading to the magnification of the novel’s ‘detective plot’ with an abundance of historical and philosophical contents. In particular, the elimination of the author’s preface ignores some key concepts of Eco’s novel, such as its postmodern attitude. As a result, *Il nome della rosa* has been read and interpreted in this way for many years. The losses were particularly evident, and thus arose the need to re-translate the novel in a more mature period, when the attention to the original texts took precedent.

The two experienced readers and translators of Italian literature that took on this task had to face the original novel and a new kind of reader, one who is more familiar with foreign literature and postmodern literature in general. They were asked to attempt to reproduce the same model reader Eco had in mind: one who could enjoy the novel not only for its detective plot but also for its semiotic narrative strategy that uses a realistic rhetoric to doubt and laugh at the truths, for its reconstruction of the religious and medieval world, for its intertextuality, and so on. Although the two translators adopted different translation choices, we saw that they each managed to recreate ‘almost’ the same effect of Eco’s original work, balancing the translation’s gains and losses.

It seems remarkable that *Il nome della rosa* has become a world classic also in the Chinese and Taiwanese markets. It is generally considered a must-have book in everyone’s bookcase. Thus, it may be necessary to follow up the new life of Eco’s novel and see whether and how it will influence the academic and literary lives within all the cultural contexts which use Chinese characters.

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