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Plurilingualism and Knowledge Transmission in Maria Graham's production (1785–1845).

1. Introduction

In early nineteenth-century Britain audiences sought new knowledge from their readings. Novelty played a key role in many English productions, and many authors relied on the legacy of the Enlightenment, not only to amuse readers, but also to convey new knowledge. Letters, essays, travelogues were just a few of the literary productions that served this purpose. It was against this backdrop that Maria Graham (1785–1842), through her writings, sought to participate in the production and transmission of knowledge.[1]

During her childhood, Graham studied diverse subject — including Latin, French, and Italian, — acquiring the fundamentals that shaped her intellectual formation and later writings (Georgi 2020: 313; Gotch 1937: 67). Most significantly, it is through her plurilingual ability that Graham gained access to foreign cultures and knowledge, turning plurilingualism and translation into central tools to build her authorial identity in front of the English audiences.

Through this article, I will refer to Graham's ability to speak and understand diverse languages with the term *plurilingualism*, rather than *multilingualism*, for a diverse set of reason. Drawing on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR; 2025), *plurilingualism* refers to an individual's ability to use diverse languages, focusing on the "interconnectedness of different

[1] With the term *knowledge transmission* I refer to the practice of transmitting knowledge from one person to the other (in this case from authors to readers), without accounting for the impact that such process might have in transforming the knowledge transmitted –for instance from one culture to another (*cultural transfer*).

languages and cultures rather than on their differences",[2] while *multilingualism*[3] "considers languages and cultures as separate and somehow static entities that co-exist in societies or individuals" (2025). In line with the CEFR's definition, Steve Marshall (2022) summarizes the plurilingual perspective as one that encompasses the

> [U]se of multiple languages in interactions; languages as hybrid rather than discrete; plurilingual/ pluricultural competences as uneven and changing; the plurilingual speaker as a social agent; and the close relation between plurilingualism and mediation. (Marshall 2022: 59)

Hence, I believe it necessary to refer to Graham's ability as one that reflects the use of diverse interconnected languages, especially if we consider her contemporary European context in which nation building projects were just at dawn.

Furthermore, I will draw on Jana-Katharina Mende's definition of *hidden multilingualism* in relation to nineteenth century writings as well as on Sandra Vlasta's discussion of it (Vlasta 2023: 219–240). The term refers to *monolingual* texts produced by plurilingual speakers: travelogues, letters, and eventually, translations all fall within this category. In order to be compiled, such texts needed information gained through the use of authors' plurilingual ability, thus Vlasta considers them as instances of "hidden multilingualism" (Vlasta 2023: 233). Often in these texts, the authors' ability to use a language diverse from their native one was implicit, hence using the term *hidden multilingualism* allows to acknowledge the "processes of translanguaging within a text, despite their invisibility on the surface or at first glance" (Vlasta 2023: 233). Through this article, I will adapt Vlasta's discussion in order to address Graham's plurilingual ability, aimed not only at recognising the process of translanguaging for the sole purpose of text compilation, but also to promote the unrestricted vision of the individual's linguistic ability as per the CEFR and Piccardo's suggestions, acknowledging that such texts would not exist without the author's inherent plurilingual ability. Thus, drawing from Giulia Radaelli's understanding of *manifest multilingualism* and *latent multilingualism,* where the former denotes the explicit use of an author's multilingual ability to produce a text, while the

[2] Similarly, scholar Sabira Ståhlberg (2025) argues that: "Plurilingualism focuses on the interconnectedness and the (code-)switching capabilities of an individual. Plurilingualism is usually accompanied by competences, the result of plurilingual and pluricultural education".

[3] As Enrica Piccardo (2019) explains, in English scholarship the term *multilingualism* is often used interchangeably with the term *plurilingualism*, where *multilingualism* is used "to refer to all forms of linguistic plurality […] even when they recognize the conceptual differences between plurilingualism and multilingualism" (Piccardo 2019: 185). Further confirmation of this use has been given by scholar Jana-Katharina Mende (2023) in her edited volume on multilingualism in 19th century writing. Here, she opts for the term *multilingualism* to function "like an umbrella term" (Mende 2023: 7) and include all linguistic –isms (7).

latter, similarly to the concept of *hidden multilingualism*, indicates that the author's multilingual ability is *concealed* by a monolingual text (Vlasta 2023: 225; Gunkel 2023: 145), I will refer to Graham's plurilingual ability as *overt*, when it is clearly manifested in the text, and as *covert* when implicit.

Graham's early works, such as *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome* (1820a), already reveal traces of her plurilingualism. As she drew upon her knowledge of Italian to produce the main body of *Three Months in Rome* in monolingual English – an instance of covert plurilingualism, – Graham made an exception for its *Appendixes,* where her plurilingualism is overt, as we will see later. Her subsequent travel writings from Brazil and Chile (*Journal of a Voyage to Brazil*, 1824a; *Journal of a Residence in Chile*, 1824b) demonstrate how her ability to navigate between languages allowed her to gather and transmit first-hand information in a period of intense political and cultural transformation. These publications rely heavily on Graham's covert plurilingualism: even if it is not clear whether Graham had learned Portuguese before her visit to Brazil or while residing in the country, it is still possible to claim that she had developed the ability to understand the language in its written and oral format, while probably reaching a speaking fluency fit to act as a teacher to the daughter of the Brazilian empress, as confirmed from her private correspondences (see section 3.2).

By 1826, Lady Graham had successfully built her authorial reputation and her intellectual authority was widely recognized. After her honeymoon with her second husband in 1827, she was confined to her home for the rest of her life due to a rupture of a blood vessel. However, she never stopped writing and contributing to the production and transmission of new knowledge. Amongst her latest publications there were her successful *Little Arthur's History of England* (1835), *Essays Toward the History of Painting* (1836), *Histoire de France du petit Louis* (1836), and *A Scripture Herbal* (1842).

Previous studies have not failed to acknowledge the relevance that Graham's plurilingual ability had in shaping her experiences, and in transmitting new knowledge throughout her writings. Caroline Palmer (2015) highlights, in particular, the role of accessibility to different information and its natural consequence of shaping her discourses, especially in matters of art. As Palmer asserts, through travel writing, women's "close involvement with foreign cultural networks, facilitated by their fluency in modern languages, […] gave them the authority to express challenging new opinions on art" (Palmer 2015: 264). On the other hand, many other studies on Maria Graham have focused on her travelogues, their content, and Graham's authorial reputation (Claudia Georgi 2020; Innes M. Keighren et. al 2015), whilst others have analysed

Graham's scientific and historiographical contributions (Carl Thompson 2012; 2017; 2022). Among the vast critical literature available on Lady Graham, only a few studies have examined in depth the significance of Graham's plurilingual ability and its role in granting her access to a wide range of information and their subsequent transmission.

This paper aims to address this gap in previous scholarship by exploring the relevance of Graham's plurilingualism to access diverse type of knowledge. It wishes to add on to previous scholarship by focusing on Lady Graham's early published translations and, on the role of *plurilingualism* as a means to develop meaningful relationships with other women. To achieve these objectives, I will first consider Graham's earliest published translation in England against the wider context of translating practices in eighteenth and nineteenth century. Second, I will focus on the role of plurilingualism and its use to claim authorial reliability by introducing Graham's translations in her published *appendixes*. Third, I will take into account Graham's correspondence with Empress Maria Leopoldina to highlight the importance of plurilingualism as a means to build strong and lasting relationships amongst women. Finally, I will offer my conclusions by considering the points above mentioned.

2. The Practice of Translation and Graham's *Memoirs* of De Rocca

As Vlasta (2023) claims, translated texts were quite well spread through nineteenth century Europe, and although they would formally be monolingual, as previously mentioned, these were but a manifestation of the translator's plurilingual ability. Graham's practice of translation aligned with the trends of the time, and it is to be understood as an instance of covert plurilingualism, without which, the existence of the text would be null.

Before addressing in detail Lady Graham's first published translation, namely Albert Jean Michel De Rocca's *Memoirs of the War of the French in Spain* (1815), it is necessary to introduce the background of the translation's business upon the turn of the century. As we will see, Graham's aligned her translation practices with her contemporary tendencies, addressing, moreover, recent political events.

As Mary Helen McMurran (2010) claims "The eighteenth century represents the hinge between a premodern world of translative literary endeavour and a modern world where translation would occur alongside, almost as adjunct to literary production" (McMurran 2010: 15), hence translation represented a stepping stone for authors that wished to build authorial reliability. In turn, Catherine Fleming (2018) suggests this was the case, not only for male authors, but also

for women (Fleming 2018: 30). Fleming discusses this aspect in depth whilst addressing the translations of Eliza Haywood (1693–1756) and Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) in relation to their reputation. In fact, the latter was closely connected to the subjects of their translations and the way translators were able to justify their moral standards (Fleming 2018: 37–38). The choice of subject-matter mattered in establishing one's moral reputation, however, the ability to justify one's moral attitude was strikingly important to present one's work to the audiences, especially when such translations represented what we would consider as a business card for later productions. Hence, the subject was important not only to build authorial reputation but also to engage with what the market and the audiences demanded.

Another relevant element that determined translation was the choice of author and the work translated in relation to their language of origin. As McMurran (2010) suggests, in the British world much relevance was given to the French language and to translations from French: "The British and French were thoroughly interlocked even as they antagonized each other; their social and cultural practices and self-perception clung together because of a shared history" (McMurran 2010: 21), furthermore their developing imperial and national projects linked the two countries together "because disciplining national pride and a marked enthusiasm for acquiring each other's languages and cultural advantages were understood as essential to the transcendent goal of civilization" (21). Moreover, French was thought of as fundamentally similar to English, especially with the spread of vernacular that contributed to reinforce this belief, "students were supposed to move quickly and effortlessly from the basics to a full grasp of the language in a short time" (9).

Translations had, first and foremost, the aim to "fill a gap in the national […] market" (54) and that did not only refer to translations for prose fiction but also for non-fictional literature. However, the business of translation was run horizontally, encompassing independent translators that would work on project-based contracts with booksellers. This would also imply that the choice of text to be translated was not entirely up to the publishing house, rather it would have been considered by the translator and eventual intermediaries (59). This practice continued during the early decades of the nineteenth century when booksellers would often consult their translators and editors to decide upon their next project, whilst welcoming "translators who voluntarily took up the task, and for taking much of the responsibility" (64). Thus, such endeavours were not always beneficial for translators who often had to rush to provide the new sought translation of a book.

This rush intensified as no international copyright existed to deal with translation rights (McMurran 2010: 66). It was only by 1810 that "French authors enjoyed the right to their works no matter where they were published, and foreigners could obtain copyright in France" (66). The French-British bilateral agreement of 1852 that "agreed that a proprietor of copyright could reserve the right of translation […] if the intention was signalled on the titled page," (66) represented a very interesting change in the world of translation. As rights were retained, translators would have not been able to render any changes to the original text, as it was often the case with translations in the previous centuries. Among the variety of "infidel" translations, the most common one was *amplification,* that "included any sort of expansion of the original within or even at the border of the text" (76). Similarly, through "the rhetorical trope of *brevitas*" (79) translators would claim their right to "reduce repetitions of the same thoughts by omitting passages" (79). Although these tendencies were prevalent in eighteenth century translation practices, these would later be abandoned as the first forms of international copyright laws were enforced.

It is against such practices that Lady Graham published her translation of De Rocca's *Memoirs of the War of the French in Spain* (1815). The rendering followed the legacy of the translation practices from the previous century. As Graham's third published work, the translation seemed to function as a means to further confirm her authorial reliability and intellectual authority: she presented the English public with a translation of a contemporary text that dealt with contemporary political matters, namely episodes related to the Napoleonic wars in Spain. The act of translating such a piece reinforced her stance: she had the ability to talk politics whilst understanding her role as a translator and author. Similar to the translation practices of scientific travel writing productions performed by women during the Enlightenment, which suggested women's involvement with scientific knowledge (Martin 2014: 161), Lady Graham's translation of De Rocca's text reveals Graham's interest in politics and historiography, engaging with the world and the events surrounding her. At the same time, Graham's translation satisfied the increasing interest of the English audiences for French warfare.

In this context, the translation can be considered a sort of precedent for Lady Graham's readership to rely on. Her later involvement with the historiography and with the political vents of countries such as Brazil and Chile could have been perceived as reliable on the basis of her De Rocca's rendition. In fact, it should be noted that the contemporary events depicted in the original text by De Rocca, and in Graham's translation, were incredibly relevant in England during the start of the nineteenth century, and were essential to understand the context of her

later publications revolving around the Portuguese court displacement in Brazil (Rezzuti 2017: 99). Hence, Graham was able to use her translation of such a relevant subject-matter as a means to align to her current market's tendencies whilst also creating a coherent historical and political discourse within her published writings.

Graham's translation of De Rocca's text went through an incredibly early reprint. A second edition (1816) was needed as the first one presented diverse *Addenda* to the main text that were supposed to follow in the main narration. These *Addenda* were addressed at the start, "From the MS. Communication of the Author" (De Rocca 1815: iii) to urge the readers to take note and integrate the missing parts in the text. In the second edition, the *Addenda* were removed, and the excerpts were included in the main text, as they should have been originally. This early reprint may be interpreted as an evidence of the success of the text among the English audience, a further proof of the interest toward the abovementioned French affairs and campaigns.

De Rocca's text was first published in French both in London by John Murray, as well as, in Paris. On a note in the second Parisian French edition (1814) points out: "La 1re édition de cet ouvrage était sous presse à Londres avant l'entrée des puissances coalisées à Paris et la restauration de la famille royale sur le trône de France."[4] It is interesting to notice that a second edition in French was also published in London by John Murray, concomitantly with Lady Graham's first publication of the translation in 1815. The diverse existing editions of the text, both in French and English, suggest an increasing interest toward the subject-matter and the events narrated. Furthermore, this phenomenon aligns with the aforementioned interlocking between the two imperial powers. Although there is no evidence that Lady Graham had taken on the translation project by commission from Murray or else that she had picked the subject matter herself, it can be inferred that Murray's involvement with the production of both a French original edition and an English translation had the aim of profiting from the audiences' interests in the Napoleonic Wars. Altogether, Graham's reputation greatly benefitted from her involvement in such a project.

Lady Graham's translation of De Rocca's work is the only English rendition available today. Her translation was used for a recent edition of the book published in 1990: *In the Peninsula with a French Hussar*. In the introduction to the edited text, Philip Haythornthwaite (1990) focuses on historically contextualizing the text and its original author. Here, Haythornthwaite never mentions the name of Lady Graham, rather he refers to her as "the translator." He points

[4] My translation: "The first edition of this work was printed in London before the allied coalition entered Paris and (before) the restoration of the royal family to the throne of France".

out few inconsistencies in the translation that, in these specific cases, was performed literally. The scholar writes:

> Not unnaturally, this first English translation uses contemporary English military terms, so that 'flank companies' are mentioned, an appellation not used in French service but signifying what the French styled 'élite companies'; riflemen are also mentioned, but although the function of the French troops styled *voltigeurs* and *tirailleurs* was like that of the British rifle corps, the French did not carry rifled muskets and thus the use of the term may be slightly misleading. (Haythornthwaite 1990: 22)

In this sense, Lady Graham, is not committing any "infidelity" in her translation of the original in French. Rather, in the absence of a cultural correspondence in English, Graham provides a substitutive term that fits the culture toward which the translation is directed. Although the use of Lady Graham's contemporary English equivalent terms is recognized, Haythornthwaite does not suggest any modern English term that could replace Lady Graham's ones, as these would be non-existent.

Graham's translation of De Rocca's *Memoirs of the War of the French in Spain* inherits from the translation practices of the eighteenth century. It addressed a significant gap for the need of productions that dealt with contemporary French warfare, especially given the events related to the Napoleonic wars. However, it also functioned as a means to present the public with a woman author that, through her translation, claimed her right to talk about politics and warfare. As we will see hereafter, Lady Graham's plurilingualism allowed her, not only to translate texts and thus share knowledge from secondary sources, but it also granted her access to new information, facilitating the creation of intellectual networks.

3. Plurilingualism, Knowledge Transmission and Social Networks

Lady Graham's plurilingualism created many opportunities for her to engage with original texts in foreign languages, interact with foreigners, and build a solid network. In this section, first, I will address Graham's ability to speak and write in multiple languages as a means to access new knowledge and to transmit it to her English audience. To this end, I will account for Graham's further translating endeavours, by focusing, in particular, on the translations published in her *Appendixes* to *Three Months Passed in The Mountains of East Rome* (1820). Second, I will highlight the way in which plurilingualism allowed her to build new social connections. To do so, I will explore Lady Graham's correspondence with Empress of Brazil Maria Leopoldina and the role of plurilingualism in their relationship.

3.1. Translating Popular Italian Ballads: The *Appendixes* to *Three Months in Rome* (1820)

McMurran (2010) highlights that "translations were not necessarily written and published for those who were entirely ignorant of the foreign language, but for a community of multilingual readers" (McMurran 2010: 14). The "tradition of European multilingualism" (14) made necessary to satisfy the needs of curious plurilingual readers and of a multilingual community. Translations of whole texts, such as De Rocca's one, were widespread, however, further knowledge was often shared through *appendixes* and *addenda* that played a pivotal role in travel writings and published travel journals.

The *hybridity* of the travel writing genre allowed many authors to explore into diverse spheres of knowledge and experience in their publications. Although during the eighteenth and nineteenth century English travel writing was bound to often express the imperialistic views of its authors, it was also true that non-fictional travel publications would gather and transmit new knowledge of diverse types. From cultural, literary, political and religious knowledge, to scientific knowledge, including botanical, geological, geographical, chemical and much more. It is against such background that we should frame Lady Graham's several travel publications. Her four published journals on India, Italy, Brazil and Chile, all relate diverse types of information and reveal Lady Graham's interests in diverse fields. Collectively, these works demonstrate Lady Graham's acute awareness of her gender when navigating fields of knowledge that were ultimately dominated by men. Nevertheless, this did not stop Graham from performing her, often scientific, researches and contribute to the abovementioned disciplines.

Graham inherited the Enlightenment's approach of objectivity in providing, whenever possible, evidences for the new information gathered. It is not unusual to find in her travel publications *appendixes* that would constitute further proof to the events she narrated. These same appendixes would then be considered as a means to help her establish her reliability in front of the audiences. For example, being able to attach her private correspondence with her male acquaintances enhanced her reliability. In the *appendixes*, the materials presented comprehend, not only private correspondences, but also secondary studies published in diverse journals, newspaper excerpts, or original texts in foreign languages, – translated in English, when possible, by Lady Graham herself.

In her *Three Months Passed in The Mountains of East Rome* (1820a), Lady Graham accounted for her trip through the surroundings of Rome. It was during this trip that Graham meets painter Charles Eastlake, whose sketches have been included in her publication as etchings. In this work, Lady Graham described the places she visited, the archaeological sites, the culture and habits of the inhabitants of the little towns she came across. However, the narration digressed as attacks from *banditti* were registered in nearby towns. Lady Graham was able to offer her curious readers a testimony – by attaching a private letter – of these events, whilst building up tension within the narration.

In her *Three Months in Rome* (1820a) too, Lady Graham included *appendixes*. Through her first *appendix*, she presented the readers with a papal edict meant to enforce diverse laws for inhabitants to fight against bandits (234). Here, she openly criticised the policy adopted through a note: "This does not agree with the disarming law still in force; in fact, that law effectually prevents the people from defending themselves" (234). Meanwhile, in the second *appendix*, Graham analysed the contents of Italian school textbooks meant for children. Here she kept a critical stance, for these textbooks often included religious references that she deemed inappropriate for young children, as they would have not been able to fully grasp their meaning (241).

Most importantly, in the third *appendix*, Lady Graham introduced readers with an exclusive catalogue of contemporary Italian popular ballads and "poetry of modern Romans" (242). Here, her effort in collecting first-hand materials is evident: Graham quotes long passages from less-known ballads and songs, to then offer her own translation from the Italian. Here, her plurilingual ability is overt.

Before addressing these translations, it is relevant to highlight the way in which the poems were catalogued:

> THE popular poetry of the modern Romans may be divided into various classes. The first and largest is that of heroic ballads, which are of three kinds; namely, those founded on the legends; those containing the adventures of famous outlaws; and those on classical or romantic subjects.
>
> 2d Class. Humorous and burlesque poems.
> 3d. Lyrical ballads, sacred and profane.
> 4th. Songs and ritornelli.
>
> (Graham 1820a: 242)

Lady Graham introduced a section dedicated to *sacred ballads* (243) and one to *moralities* (249). For each poem presented, she briefly addressed the content and quoted the most relevant

passages. When quotes are present, the translation of the poem is offered in a subsequent note. The translations are often literal, in fact, Graham rarely succeeds in rendering the rhyme or the internal rhythm of the verses. For instance, the first ballad introduced is a sacred ballad: *Spiritual Rhymes upon the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the coming of the three Magian Kings. Of the Star. With the Pastoral Songs* (243). Lady Graham writes:

> This little poem begins with praises to the Virgin, and an account of Augustus, and his resolution to number the people in his empire during the peace that was on earth. Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem, and there the child is born in a stall between the ox and the ass.
>
> Il Bue, e l'Asinel fu inginocchiato
> Per riverenza del Figliuol di Dio,
> Ciascun lo riscaldava col suo fiato
> Quel puro Agnello Mansueto e pio..
>
> (Graham 1820a: 243)

The English translation is addressed through an asterisk urging the readers to acknowledge the relevant note presenting the translated verses: "The ox and the ass knelt in reverence to the Son of God, and with their breaths they warmed that pure, sweet, and holy Lamb" (Graham 1820a: 243).

In other instances, Graham addressed the title and the story of the ballad, whilst comparing the stories to ones known to the English public of the time. It is the case for the *History of Stefano Spadolini and his fellow Thieves, composed by Nicodemus Lermil,* (250) for which Lady Graham concludes her introduction by stating that: "After this follows a story not unlike that of the melodrama of the Miller and his Men, with the taking and punishment of the whole troop" (252). This comparison offers a glimpse to what was popular among the English audiences during the start of the nineteenth century that could justify Graham's choice to include, in the main narration, a story of *banditti*.

In this third *appendix*, Graham also offered a short selection of Italian *ritornelli*, popular proverbs of the visited area, of which she presented a direct translation. The English rendition of the idioms, however, does not always match the pragmatic implication of the original Italian. See for instance: "Le buone parole ungano / E le male pungano" translated as "Fair words butter no parsnips" (299). Here, the Italian idiom addresses one's common sense toward the social norms related to conversation (Giusti 1871: 164), reminding the reader that one should be aware of the way one uses words and speaks. Clearly, good words – underlying a polite behaviour – facilitate interactions, whilst being mean might provoke unwanted reactions. On the other hand,

Lady Graham's English idiom selected to render the meaning of the Italian one, refers to one's wise words and not so wise correspondent actions:

> The full expression is fine words butter no parsnips […] meaning that words alone are useless, especially flattering phrases or fine promises, and you should judge people by what they do rather than by what they say. (Quinion, 2002)

To the second idiom quoted, Lady Graham offers a translation that does not match the literal meaning of the original: "Ne freddo ne gelo / Rimare in cielo" (Graham 1820a: 299) that implies the way in which weather changes. Her translation, "'Tis neither hot nor cold in heaven," seems to refer instead to another version of the same idiom that reads as the following "Nè caldo nè gelo restò mai in cielo" (Giusti 1871: 137). Similarly, in the third idiom mentioned, "Dall' aeque chete me ne guarda Iddio / Che dalle corrente me ne guardaro Io" (1820a: 299), that refers, in general, to situations in life, Graham offers a translation that concerns, instead, specific people: "God keep me from those I trust; / I'll keep myself from those I distrust" (Graham 1820a: 299). Notice the way in which, in this thorough catalogue of Italian ballads and popular songs, we can often find misspelled terms in the Italian original text. It is hard to determine if this was due to Lady Graham's misspelled transcription or if these are *erratas* to be attributed to the printers. The third *appendix,* thus, turns out to be particularly relevant to understand Lady Graham's ability to access new knowledge, categorize it and translate it in order to transmit it to the English public. The novelty of her contribution, in fact, resides in Lady Graham's intersection of abilities, comprehending her overt plurilingualism, that plays a pivotal role in transmitting new knowledge, making the text itself plurilingual. Here, the reader is aware of the author's plurilingual ability and witnesses its execution through its overt manifestation. Finally, Lady Graham's third appendix aligns with her contemporary trends in literature by including ballads and themes that dealt with histories of criminals, whilst at the same time it aimed at offering an updated view on the themes and poems of contemporary Italians.

3.2. "*Ma bien chère amie*:" Female Friendship and Plurilingual Correspondences

Lady Graham's plurilingual ability was not only used to gain access to new knowledge, but it was also a valuable means to build strong connections and relationships with other fellow plurilingual speakers. The private correspondence between Lady Graham and Empress Maria Leopoldina of Austria (1797–1826) constitutes evidence for the precious relationship between

two European women, who shared a deep and bonding experience: being displaced in a foreign land. Originally from Austria, Leopoldina had received a complete education, that included the study of literature, languages such as German, French, Italian and Latin, painting, history, music, as well as mathematics and physics (Rezzuti 2017: 69). Once her marriage with Dom Pedro I[5] had been arranged, Leopoldina moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1816. In fact, the Portuguese court had been moved to Brazil to safeguard it from the Napoleonic invasions, however, it soon detached from the Portuguese power. Once Dom Pedro had become prince regent of Brazil in 1821, Leopoldina played a pivotal political role in pursuing Brazilian independence, and in 1822 the independence from the Portuguese empire was declared by Dom Pedro himself (Rezzuti 2017: 157).

It is against such a political background that Lady Graham visited Brazil for the first time. Her chance to meet the empress during her second visit in 1823,[6] altogether with the influence of her social network, procured her a new post in the Brazilian court as governess to Leopoldina's daughter, Maria Gloria. After a brief period spent in England, in 1824 Lady Graham returned to Brazil to comply with Leopoldina's wishes to instruct her daughter (Garcia 2010: 21). It is evident in Lady Graham's letters written before her third departure to Brazil, that she kept in high regard her new post; she wrote:

> Meantime I am diligently applying myself to acquire a perfect knowledge of the Portuguese language and to collect all the materials […] and books in Portuguese, English and French as may enable me to undertake the instruction of the Imperial Princess with the best hopes of succeeding to the satisfaction of their august parents. (Graham n.d.: MS-97 [4])

For her new role, Graham's plurilingualism and scholarly attitude must have been deeply appreciated, and her declared efforts in practicing the language and in collecting new materials were further manifested, as she stated: "I have not been able to procure elementary books in Portuguese, but I have begun a translation of one of very early lessons for my illustrious pupil,

[5] Dom Pedro I of Brazil and IV of Portugal.

[6] During her first stay in Brazil, between 1821 and 1822, Lady Graham was not able to meet the Imperial family. Instead, upon her return to Brazil from Chile, Graham's encounter with Empress Maria Leopoldina would happen on the 19th of May 1823, during Lady Graham's second visit to the country. In her published journal, she will write:

> Though I was suffering exceedingly this morning, I resolved nevertheless to attend the Empress at noon, […] I was obliged to take a quantity of opium, to enable me to do so. […] The Empress entered shortly after, in a handsome morning dress of purple satin, with white ornaments, and looking extremely well […] She spoke to me most kindly; and said, in a very flattering way, that she had long known me by name, and several other things that persons in her rank can make so agreeable by voice and manner; and I left her with the most agreeable impressions. She is extremely like several persons whom I have seen of the Austrian Imperial family, and has a remarkably sweet expression. (Graham 1824: 249)

which I mean to have printed with a good type" (Graham n.d.: MS-97 [4]). Here, Graham's plurilingual skills and creativity prospected as fundamental to fulfil the empress' wishes to successfully educate Maria Gloria.

Once back in Rio de Janeiro, Lady Graham could spend only less than one month in the Royal Palace. As Cecilia Costa (2010a) explains, Graham arrived at the estate the 5th September of 1824 and was forced to move to a friend's residence before the 12th October of the same year. This was due to certain dynamics within the Portuguese court: it has been hypothesised that the secret –but not so secret– lover of Dom Pedro, Domitila De Castro, had the intention of isolating Leopoldina from whoever could have influenced her to ask for help from her sister in Parma, Marie Louise or from her father (Costa 2010a: 11). Although their time together had been cut short, Leopoldina always considered Lady Graham as a close friend and, she would often address Graham as "Ma bien chère amie" in the letters following Graham's move from the royal palace and after her return to England in 1825. Their correspondence, that switched between English and Portuguese in 1824, later became in French, up until Leopoldina's death in 1826.

The exchange of letters between the two ladies reveals their common traits and common interests. First of all, Leopoldina saw in Lady Graham a friend from Europe, that shared with her the same experience at the Brazilian court: that of a foreigner. Both of them were displaced in a country that did not represent home for any of them. This is particularly evident in Lady Graham's unpublished account of *The Life of Dom Pedro I*, completed in 1835.[7] Second, the two ladies shared a deep interest toward scientific knowledge and research. In fact, Lady Graham had always nurtured an interest in botany and geology, the latter of which was expressed in her travel publications, as well as in her published essay on the Chilean Earthquake of 1822 in *Transactions of the Geological Society* (Thompson 2012: 333). These interests were shared by Maria Leopoldina:

> Like Graham, the Empress had a longstanding interest in science and natural history. Indeed, the creation of the Imperial Museum is attributed to her influence upon D. João VI [...] Leopoldina [...] arrived in Brazil in 1817 accompanied by the first naturalist mission officially authorised to enter Brazilian lands [...] Among the naturalists were the prominent Johann Baptist von Spix and Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius, both from Bavaria. Six months after the arrival of Leopoldina in Brazil the first Brazilian Natural History Museum was officially founded. (Medeiros 2012: 268)

[7] Of the unpublished manuscript two copies exist. The original, held in the Holland House Papers (British Library), has been copied by Samuel Allen. Allen's copy was sold to the director of the National Library of Rio de Janeiro, Rodolfo Garcia, that curated a Portuguese translation, later published in the collection *Cadernos da Biblioteca Nacional* (2010). "Yet, Samuel's copy differs much from the original, presenting several significant changes –if suggested or authorised by the author I know not" (De Sousa 2020).

Furthermore, Leopoldina and Graham's private plurilingual correspondence proves that the two ladies had built a trustful friendship and that they were actively exchanging objects and specimens:

> En ce moment, on me remet des livres qui me seront d'une grande utilité pour ma bien-aimée Maria. Le catalogue de coquillages que je vous renvoyé, vous avez la bonté, à Londres, de me procurer les général et espèces qui me manquent en me faisant savoir les objets d'histoire naturelle qu'on voudra du Brésil, pour faire l'échange. (Maria Leopoldina 10th October 1824: MS_97 [9])
>
> [Neste momento entregam-me livros que me serão de grande utilidade para minha bem amada Maria. Tereis a bondade, em Londres, de me obter os gêneros e espécies que faltam no catálogo de conchas que vos envio, comunicando-me os objetos de história natural que quiserem do Brasil, para fazer a permuta]. (Graham 2010: 259)[8]

Similarly, later letters indicate the way in which these exchanges of scientific objects and opinions kept being pursued by the two ladies. In a letter sent to Lady Graham in 1826, Leopoldina mentions her sadness in receiving the news of the death of mathematician William Cary (1759–1825), from whom she was expecting a mineralogical scale needed to weigh and examine minerals and catalogue them (Leopoldina 2nd February 1826: MS_97 [20]). In this same letter, Leopoldina mentions again the Shell Catalogue and her wishes to receive the missing specimens from India, Sri Lanka, Australia and Indonesia (Leopoldina 1826).

Further exchanges between the two ladies provide evidence for the several topics they used to discuss; for instance, Leopoldina mentions the way in which Lady Graham kept her updated on the political events that affected Europe, whilst sharing episodes of their daily lives and meetings with their common friends. The updates between the ladies were constant, however these ended upon Empress Leopoldina's death in December 1826, communicated to Lady Graham only in March of the next year (Mareschal 1827: MS-97 [26]).

As Michelle Medeiros (2012) points out, Empress Leopoldina and Lady Graham, were united together by their interest in science. If the battle against a male dominated world of science was undertaken by these ladies by pushing the limits of their possibilities, it is also true that their bond was also linked to their common education, background and curiosity toward the world. Their plurilingual correspondence which later switched to French to accommodate Leopoldina's longing to connect in what she must have considered her native language,

[8] My translation: In this moment, I am receiving some books that will be of great use for my beloved Maria. If you could be kind enough, once in London, to obtain for me the genera and species missing from the catalogue of shells that I am sending back to you, and let me know which natural history objects you would like from Brazil, in order to make the exchange.

furnishes evidence of the close relationship of the two women. Their friendship and common interests were coroneted by a mutual understanding and alliance in their endeavours.

4. Conclusions

Plurilingualism was a necessary ability to participate in intellectual discussions amongst literary circles. Lady Graham's catered for her knowledge of diverse languages to fit in with her plurilingual social connections against a wider European multilingual community. Her ability served diverse purposes, from its social necessities stemmed economic, scientific and cultural opportunities that Graham was able to take advantage of.

Although Graham's plurilingual ability in her publications was sometimes covert, it contributed greatly to build her intellectual reputation and in nurturing meaningful connections with locals during her trips. Especially, it allowed her to foster long-lasting friendships with other fellow intellectual women. Through her knowledge of French and her published translation of De Rocca's *Memoirs,* Lady Graham was able to claim her right to discuss politics and current warfare. Her choice of subject, namely an account related to the Napoleonic wars, enabled her to join an area of discussion that was considered male dominated. Furthermore, the practice of translation gave Graham the chance to assert her reliability in matters of international politics and warfare years before her journals about the secessionists Brazilian and Chilean movements were published.

Altogether, Graham's plurilingualism granted her access to other areas of knowledge that were either male dominated or physically inaccessible. Such was that case with the translation of Italian popular ballads. Here, Graham's knowledge of Italian did not grant her only physical accessibility to the sources, but also allowed her to share her newly acquired expertise with her readers. In both instances where translation have been analysed in this study, Lady Graham attentively chose subjects and topics aimed at fulfilling the increasing interest of her contemporary public: toward international warfare, in the first case, and toward histories of criminals and *banditti* in the second instance. Her awareness of contemporary trends, altogether with her plurilingual ability, enabled Graham to fulfil her readers' intellectual curiosity whilst allowing her a wider scope of exploration and research that fit her diverse interests. Evidence of the latter is provided through her exchange of letters and scientific objects with Empress Maria Leopoldina. The friendship and companionship between the two ladies, fostered by their use of foreign languages and common interests in joining the scientific intellectual discourse,

provides further evidence of Lady Graham's efforts to access areas of knowledge that were male dominated in order to share such knowledge with her network of associates and readers.

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