

PIRANDELLO'S TRANSLATION OF GOETHE'S *RÖMISCHE ELEGIEN*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FOR A STYLISTIC STUDY

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In the 1880s and 1890s Pirandello studied Goethe's *Römische Elegien* [*Roman Elegies*] in great depth. His subsequent translation was widely acclaimed by his contemporaries and is still a worthy subject of study to this day, as is testified by the abundance of recent publications about it.¹

Pirandello felt a very strong personal and emotional connection with Goethe. Besides the *Römische Elegien* he translated sections of the *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* [*Talks with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*], under the title *Conversazioni di Goethe e Johann-Peter Eckermann* [*Conversations between Goethe and Johann-Peter Eckermann*], published in the *Rassegna settimanale universale* in twenty instalments, from 9 February to 13 December 1896. These were preceded, on 2 February 1896, by an introductory article by Pirandello presenting the *Elegies*. Moreover, in 1902, years after his translation, Pirandello returned to the *Roman Elegies* and published an article in the journal *Capitan Fracassa* entitled 'Le Elegie romane del Goethe' ['Goethe's Roman Elegies'],² stimulated by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II's gift of a monument to Goethe, sculpted by Eberlein, to the gardens of Villa Borghese.³

Pirandello's admiration for Goethe never faded, as we can see from his acquisition of books about the German author even very late in his life.⁴ This passion for Goethe's work may perhaps be explained by the fact that in his youth Pirandello too had longed to be a poet. As is well known, he regarded himself above all as a poet, as he stated in one rather famous autobiographical letter, published in the Roman journal *Le Lettere* on 15 October 1924: 'Fino a tutto il 1892 non mi

1 See M. Fumi, 'Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo': nuova versione delle 'Elegie romane' di Goethe nella traduzione di Luigi Pirandello, con testo tedesco a fronte e commento (Milan, EDUCatt, 2017) and A. Aletta, '(Metrical) Form as the Soul of Poetry: The Translation of Goethe's *Römische Elegien* by Luigi Pirandello', *Pirandello Studies*, 38 (2018), 66–79.

2 Pirandello's article was published in *Capitan Fracassa* on 31 January 1902 (*Spsv*, p. 904).

3 See *Spsv*, p. 904.

4 As far as I am aware these texts are: L. Pollak, *Per il centenario della morte di Goethe* (Spoleto, Argentieri, 1932); A. Farinelli, *Goethe* (Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1933); J. W. Goethe, *Viaggio in Italia* (Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1933). See 'La biblioteca di Luigi Pirandello: catalogo alfabetico per autore', edited by D. Saponaro and L. Torsello, *studiodiluigipirandello.it* [online; accessed 14 January 2019]; accessible at >http://www.studiodiluigipirandello.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/biblioteca_pirandello.pdf<.

pareva possibile che io potessi scrivere altrimenti, che in versi' ['Until the end of 1892, it did not seem to me possible to write otherwise than in verse'].⁵

This desire was encouraged by his study of Philology and German Language during his time at Bonn University (10 October 1889–17 April 1891), where it is plausible to assume that he took classes in German and German literature, as Mathias Adank has suggested.⁶ It was probably thanks to this environment that he discovered Goethe's *Römische Elegien* and decided to translate them into his native language.

According to a letter Pirandello wrote to Jenny, he had already completed the translation by November 1891.⁷ He probably began the work in Bonn and completed it during his first few months back in Rome, as is confirmed by various pieces of evidence,⁸ but it was not published until five years later, in early 1896, by Giusti of Livorno, at a time when Pirandello already had a number of small volumes of poetry to his name.

Crafting this poetic translation required not only a thorough understanding of the German language but also, and perhaps more importantly, great familiarity with the intricacies of Italian. Pirandello undertook the arduous task of choosing the most suitable word not only in terms of meaning, but also in terms of sound and metre, in order to refine his craft in his own language. This too may explain Pirandello's enthusiasm for translating the *Elegies*, as a very worthy exercise for an aspiring poet. These elements lead us to the core question of my work, namely: are Pirandello's *Elegie romane* [*Roman Elegies*] just a 'working translation' of the Goethean text or are they a work of poetry in their own right? Can we find any constants in Pirandello's choices, which could indicate that there is an original, personal style in his translation? Only a thorough analysis of the translation can answer these questions.

THE *AUSGABE LETZTER HAND* AS THE BASE TEXT FOR PIRANDELLO'S TRANSLATION

In order to conduct this analysis I need to determine which version of the *Römische Elegien* Pirandello translated. This is not a trivial task, because we have various versions of Goethe's *Römische Elegien*, as I shall explain. Only an identification of the version he used will allow me to make a comparative word-by-word analysis

5 *Spsv*, p. 1246. The English translation of the passage from Pirandello's *Lettera autobiografica* is from L. Pirandello, *Selected Poems of Luigi Pirandello*, translated by G. Hochfield (New York, Italica Press, 2016), p. 229.

6 M. Adank, *Luigi Pirandello e i suoi rapporti col mondo tedesco* (Aarau, Druckereigenossenschaft, 1948), pp. 66–79.

7 The letter is in G. Faustini, 'Luigi e Jenny: storia di un amore primaverile', *Nuova Antologia*, 126 (Jul.–Sept. 1991), 276–305 (Italian translation, p. 296; original German version, p. 304).

8 The subject of the correct dating and its challenges is the focus of the section 'Un'ipotesi di datazione', in M. Fumi, *Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*, pp. 13–17.

between the original German and Pirandello's translation, with a view to identifying and commenting on his translation choices.

The *Roman Elegies*, a collection of love poems Goethe composed on his return from his first trip to Italy (1786–88, almost a century before Pirandello's translation), are a cycle of lyrics on mythology and love. Goethe was fascinated by Rome and its classical antiquities, so the love he recounts in his poems for a mysterious young lady is set against the background of Rome and its ruins, in such a significant way that the city itself becomes a central character of the *Elegies*. Classical Rome was also very dear to Pirandello, despite its dissonant contrasts in the late Umbertine period.⁹ Perhaps that is one of the reasons why the author chose to translate this specific collection.

The main themes of the *Elegies* are Rome, happy and requited love, the classics and mythology. These poems reverberate with lines from the Latin classics, by poets such as Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid. Originally there were twenty-four poems, composed in elegiac couplets between 1788 and 1790, but when they were published in 1795 in the sixth number of the journal *Die Horen* [*The Hours*], four were censored because of their scandalous content, thus leaving only twenty. What was considered obscene was the fact that in his *Elegies* Goethe did not speak of love in abstract or idealistic terms but confessed his own personal romantic experience: a profound, human love, certainly entwined with classicism, but very real and carnal.¹⁰ This is Goethe's so-called *classicismo naturalistico* [naturalistic classicism].¹¹ An uncensored publication, including two elegies that Goethe had never had printed, dedicated to the Greek god of fertility Priapus, did not come out until 1914, so Pirandello's translation covered only the twenty elegies available at the time.

Following Wilhelm August von Schlegel's advice, Goethe kept working on his *Elegies* after the *Die Horen* edition, especially refining the metre. This led to the presence of certain variants in the early editions. The editions published during the poet's lifetime were in the following collections: *Goethe's Schriften* (Leipzig, Göschen, 1787–90), in eight volumes (the poems were in volume VIII, 1789); *Goethe's neue Schriften* (Berlin, Unger, 1792–1800), in seven volumes (the poems were in volume VII, 1800); *Goethe's Werke* (Tübingen, Cotta, 1806–10), in thirteen volumes (the poems were in volume I, 1806); and *Goethe's Werke* (Stuttgart–Tübingen, Cotta, 1815–19), in twenty volumes (the poems were in volumes I and II, 1815).¹²

9 E. Elli, 'Una scheda per Pirandello poeta: le "Elegie della città"', in *La città e l'esperienza del moderno*, edited by M. Barenghi et al. (Pisa, ETS, 2012), vol. III, pp. 189–99.

10 See M. Fumi, 'Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo', pp. 23–25.

11 E. Pistelli Rinaldi, *Le 'Elegie romane' di Goethe e le loro fonti classiche* (Genoa, Sabatelli, 1985), p. 102.

12 J. W. Goethe, *Tutte le poesie*, edited by R. Fertonani, second edition (Milan, Mondadori, 1995), vol. I, ii, p. 1773.

From 1789 onwards Goethe began to review and reshape the whole of his literary corpus, creating the famous *Ausgabe letzter Hand* [Last Hand Edition]. It is on this version that the various nineteenth-century publications were based, starting with the Cotta edition of 1827–32.¹³ The *Ausgabe letzter Hand* was thus the most widespread version of the *Römische Elegien* in the nineteenth century. In ascertaining the exact version Pirandello used, then, we logically need to narrow the alternatives down to the two most different examples: the *Die Horen* version (A) and the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* (B), which is Goethe's *ne varietur*.

Pirandello very probably used a version derived from the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, not only because it was the version on which the editions in circulation at the time of his stay in Bonn were based, but also because it represented the author's final intention, which is an extremely important stage of the text for a philologist (such as Pirandello was at the time of his university studies). A check, however, is required, since Pirandello could also have chosen to base his translation on the text of the *Elegies*' first appearance, the version printed in *Die Horen* in 1795.

In order to determine the fundamental elements of the version Pirandello translated I first compared versions A and B, underlining the notable differences, and then checking both of them against Pirandello's translation in the 1896 Giusti edition, using an exemplar of the book in my possession.

I have gathered and documented my findings in the following table, where A indicates the first version of 1795, B is the version of the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* found in volume I of the *Weimarer Ausgabe: Goethes Werke, hrsg. im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen-Weimar* (Weimar, Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1887), and Pirandello's translation (Livorno, Giusti, 1896) is referred to as P.

In this analysis I have selected only important differences between A and B, ignoring unimportant variations such as synonyms in German that have only one possible translation in Italian, shifts in word order between A and B where in P there is a translation that respects neither order, and alterations in punctuation, though I empirically noticed a closer adherence on Pirandello's part to version B.

These are the results of my comparative study:

Elegy, line	<i>Die Horen</i> (A)	<i>Ausgabe letzter Hand</i> (B)	Pirandello (P)
[epigraph]	<i>Nos venerem tutam concessaque furta canemus,/ Inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.</i>	<i>Wie wir einst so glücklich waren!//Müssen's jetzt durch euch erfahren.</i>	<i>Wie wir einst so glücklich waren!//Müssen's jetzt durch euch erfahren.</i>
I. 6	<i>das mich versengt und erquickt?</i>	<i>das mich versengend erquickt?</i>	<i>che l'ardor mio ristori?</i>

13 Roberto Fertonani reconstructs the intricate editorial history of Goethe's poems in the introductory pages of his edition: see the 'Nota sui testi' in J. W. Goethe, *Tutte le poesie*, vol. I, i, pp. LV–LXV.

I. 8	<i>opfre die köstliche Zeit.</i>	<i>opfre die köstliche Zeit?</i>	farò sacrificio[...]/[...] del prezioso tempo?
I. 9	<i>Palläst und Kirchen</i>	<i>Kirch' und Palast</i>	chiese e palagi
I. 10	<i>Wie ein bedächtiger Mann sich auf der Reise beträgt.</i>	<i>Wie ein bedächtiger Mann schicklich die Reise benutzt.</i>	qual chi prudente voglia trar del viaggio un frutto.
II. 21	<i>Sie erfreut sich an ihm</i>	<i>Sie ergetzt sich an ihm</i>	Ella piacesi in lui
III. 1	<i>dass du so schnell dich ergeben</i>	<i>dass du mir so schnell dich ergeben!</i>	che a me così presto ti sia/abbandonata!
III. 3	<i>des Amors, denn einige ritzen</i>	<i>des Amor: einige ritzen</i>	d'amor; l'uno punge
III. 6	<i>zünden auf einmal uns an</i>	<i>zünden behende das Blut</i>	incendia ratto il sangue
III. 17	<i>So erzeugte sich Mars zwei Söhne!</i>	<i>So erzeugte die Söhne sich Mars!</i>	Così Marte s'avea figliuoli!
IV. 5	<i>aus altem Granit</i>	<i>aus altem Basalt</i>	d'antico basalto
IV. 13	<i>Eher lockten wir selbst an die Fersen</i>	<i>Eh' an die Ferse lockten wir selbst</i>	Prima attrarrem l'Erinni [...] su noi
IV. 15	<i>Rädern</i>	<i>Rad</i>	ruota
V. 3	<i>Ich befolge den Rath</i>	<i>Hier befolg' ich den Rath</i>	Qui seguo il consiglio
V. 6	<i>bin ich doch doppelt vergnügt</i>	<i>bin ich doch doppelt beglückt</i>	ma lieto al doppio sono
VI. 7	<i>Bist du unvorsichtig nicht oft</i>	<i>Bist du ohne Gedacht nicht oft</i>	Non sei spesso, imprudente,
VI. 11	<i>kaum scheint es glaublich</i>	<i>kaum scheint es zu glauben</i>	è appena da credersi
VI. 15	<i>und die Kuppler</i>	<i>und ein Kuppler</i>	ed un mezzan
VI. 17–18	<i>das war das Mädchen. So hab ich/[...] gehaßt</i>	<i>war das Mädchen. So hab' ich von Herzen/[...] gehaßt</i>	fu la giovine. In odio cordiale/ho sempre avuto
VI. 19–20	<i>Denn ihr seid am Ende doch nur betrogen! So sagte/mir der Vater!</i>	<i>Denn 'ihr Mädchen bleibt am Ende doch die Betrogenen'/Sagte der Vater</i>	Ché il padre a noi diceva: 'Alfin rimarrete ingannate!'
VII. 3	<i>auf meinen Scheitel sich neigte</i>	<i>auf meine Scheitel sich senkte</i>	sul capo pesavami
VII. 9	<i>sie klingt von Gesängen</i>	<i>sie klingt von weichen Gesängen</i>	vibrante di suoni
VII. 10	<i>als ehemals der Tag</i>	<i>als nordischer Tag</i>	piú che nordico sole

VII. 20	<i>mädchenhaft</i>	<i>als ein Mädchen</i>	come fanciulla
VII. 21	<i>O so</i>	<i>O dann so</i>	Oh allor
VIII. 5	<i>So vermisset die Blüte des Weinstocks Farben und Bildung</i>	<i>Fehlet Bildung und Farbe doch auch der Blüthe des Weinstocks</i>	Forma e colore pur mancano al fior de la vite
IX. 9	<i>Denn das gab ihr Amor vor vielen andern</i>	<i>Denn vor andern verlieh der Schmeichlerin Amor die Gabe</i>	Poiché tra gli altri doni Amore le dié
IX. 10	<i>Wieder zu wecken, wenn sie still</i>	<i>Freude zu wecken, die kaum still</i>	di svegliare/la gioja, [...] quasi
X. 3	<i>Wenn ich ihnen dieß Lager auf eine Nacht nur vergönnte</i>	<i>Könnt' ich auf eine Nacht dieß Lager jedem vergönnen</i>	s'io potessi una notte concedere a ognun questo letto
XI. 1	<i>Legt ein Dichter die wenigen Blätter</i>	<i>legt die wenigen Blätter ein Dichter</i>	depone le poche sue carte un poeta
XI. 3-4	<i>Dahin bestrebt sich der Künstler/daß die Werkstatt um ihn immer ein Pantheon sei.</i>	<i>Der Künstler freuet sich seiner/Werkstatt, wenn sie um ihn immer ein Pantheon scheint.</i>	L'artefice è lieto del suo/studio se intorno sempre un Pantheon gli sembri.
XI. 9	<i>dem holden</i>	<i>dem träumenden</i>	al sognatore
XI. 10	<i>Augen voll süßer Begier</i>	<i>Blicke der süßen Begier</i>	sguardi di dolce brama
XI. 11	<i>Sie gedenket seiner Umarmung</i>	<i>Seiner Umarmung gedenket sie gern</i>	Lieta la Dea ricorda gli amplessi
XII. 3	<i>weit von hier. Sie haben dem Römer die Erndte vollendet</i>	<i>weit hinweg. Sie haben des Römers Ernte vollendet</i>	lontano [...] falciata la messe al romano
XII. 8	<i>Ein versammeltes Volk, stellen zwei Liebende vor.</i>	<i>Sind zwei Liebende doch sich ein versammeltes Volk.</i>	Son pur due soli amanti un popolo adunato.
XII. 13	<i>Und es floh der Profane</i>	<i>Fern entwich der Profane</i>	Il profan fuggiva
XII. 14	<i>der Unschuld</i>	<i>der Reinheit</i>	di purità
XII. 17	<i>am Boden des Tempels</i>	<i>am Boden umher</i>	al suolo ivi d'intorno
XII. 21	<i>Erst nach vielen Proben, oft wiederkehrend, erfuhr er</i>	<i>Erst nach mancherlei Proben und Prüfungen ward ihm enthüllet</i>	Sol dopo molteplici prove,/[...] gli si rendea palese
XII. 25	<i>Als sie dem edlen Jasion</i>	<i>Als sie Jasion einst</i>	quando a Giason
XIII. 1	<i>wer ihm vertraut</i>	<i>und wer ihm vertraut</i>	e chi gli s'affida

XIII. 13	<i>Diese Gestalten, ich lehrte sie formen.</i>	<i>Diese Gestalten, ich formte sie selbst!</i>	Queste figure io stesso plasmai!
XIII. 17	<i>Denkst du Freund nun wieder zu bilden</i>	<i>Denkst du nun wieder zu bilden, o Freund?</i>	Pensi a crear di nuovo? Amico,
XIII. 20	<i>Nicht so altklug gethan!</i>	<i>Altklug lieb' ich dich nicht!</i>	Saccente no!
XIII. 29	<i>Blicke, Händedruck</i>	<i>Blick und Händedruck</i>	Sguardi e strette di mano
XIII. 31	<i>Da wird ein Lispeln Geschwätze, da wird ein Stottern zur Rede</i>	<i>Da wird Lispeln Geschwätz, wird Stottern liebliche Rede</i>	Divien ciancia il bisbiglio, soave discorso diviene/il balbettio
XIV. 3	<i>verbarg sich die Sonne, nicht hinter die Berge.</i>	<i>entwich, nicht hinter den Berg, uns die Sonne!</i>	sparve, non dietro al monte il sole!
XIV. 4	<i>Noch ein halb Stündchen vergeht</i>	<i>Ein halb Stündchen noch währt's</i>	n'andrà mezz' oretta, aspettiamo
XV. 1	<i>zu den Britanen</i>	<i>zu fernen Britannen</i>	tant' oltre in Britannia
XV. 14	<i>Blickte rückwärts nach mir</i>	<i>Blickte gewendet nach mir</i>	volta a guardarmi
XV. 25	<i>Noch so lange</i>	<i>Erst noch so lange</i>	Pria tanto tempo
XV. 29	<i>verweile nicht länger</i>	<i>verweile mir nicht</i>	non t'indugia
XV. 36	<i>Was du, mit göttlicher Lust, viele Jahrhunderte sahst.</i>	<i>Was Jahrhunderte schon göttliche Lust dir gewährt.</i>	qual' almo t'han serbato gaudio i secoli.
XV. 39	<i>Wenig Hütten zeigten sie dir</i>	<i>Wenig Hütten zeigten sie erst</i>	poche capanne un tempo mostraron
XV. 43	<i>Sahst eine Welt hier entstehen, dann</i>	<i>Sahst eine Welt hier entstehen, sahst</i>	Sorger vedesti un mondo; vedesti
XVI. 2	<i>Wie ich dir es versprach wartet' ich einsam auf dich.</i>	<i>Einsam, wie ich versprach, wartet' ich oben auf dich.</i>	Sola, com' io promisi, t'aspettai sopra invano.
XVI. 6	<i>Nur ein Vogelscheu</i>	<i>Eine Scheuche nur</i>	Era solo un fantoccio
XVI. 7	<i>Flickt er</i>	<i>Flickten wir</i>	Noi sú lo mettevamo
XVI. 8	<i>Ach! Ich half ihm daran</i>	<i>Emsig half ich daran</i>	ed una mano io dava sedula
XVI. 9	<i>Sein Wunsch ist erfüllt</i>	<i>des Alten Wunsch ist erfüllt</i>	Giunse or l'intento il vecchio
XVIII. 17	<i>So erscheint uns wieder der Morgen</i>	<i>Und so dämmert der Morgen heran</i>	Vien così l'alba

XIX. 5–6	<i>Immer war sie die mächtige Göttinn, doch für die Gesellschaft/unerträglich</i>	<i>Immer die mächtige Göttin, doch war sie für die Gesellschaft/unerträglich</i>	Sempre la Dea possente; ma già era ai numi incresciosa
XIX. 17	<i>Mich</i>	<i>nur mich</i>	me sola
XIX. 41	<i>besser</i>	<i>zu gut</i>	Troppo bene
XIX. 46	<i>Die Verschlungenen umschlang</i>	<i>Rasch die Verschlungenen umschlang</i>	pronta a ghermir gli avvinti
XIX. 53	<i>zwischen den beiden</i>	<i>zwischen den zweien</i>	tra i due
XX. 31	<i>und, wie jenes Rohr geschwätzig, entdeckt den Quiriten</i>	<i>und entdeckt den Quiriten, wie jene Rohre geschwätzig</i>	e svelate ai Quiriti, voi garrule, come il canneto

The data clearly illustrate how Pirandello's translation adheres to version B. We may thus reasonably affirm that Pirandello used the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* for his translation—most likely in one of its nineteenth-century editions—and did not work on the primitive version of the *Elegies* that appeared in *Die Horen*.

This is evident as early as the epigraph Goethe placed at the beginning of the collection: in A Goethe used a Latin epigraph, two lines from Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (I. 33–34); in B he changed the epigraph to a German one ('*Wie wir einst so glücklich waren!/Müssen's jetzt durch euch erfahren*'): and this is the epigraph that we find in Pirandello's version, still in German.

Goethe's revisions between versions A and B rarely encompass an entire line, but they do so in occasional instances, such as VI. 19, VIII. 5, IX. 9 and X. 3. Far more frequently, the revisions consist of substitutions of an adjective, noun or adverb or changes in word order within a single line.

In some instances Pirandello's derivation from B is evident, as when a word in P has a clear counterpart in B but not in A, or when a word present in A has no counterpart in B or P: see III. 1 (in B and P we find 'mir', 'a me' ['to me'], which is absent in A); III. 6 (in P and B there is the image of 'il sangue', '*das Blut*' ['blood'], absent in A); III. 17 (the numeral 'zwei' ['two'] is present in the *Die Horen* version only and is absent in both B and P); IV. 5 (in version A Goethe used the word 'Granit' ['Granite'], which he changed to 'Basalt' ['Basalt'] in B, so that in Pirandello's version we read 'basalto'); IV. 15 (the plural '*Rädern*' ['wheels'] in A becomes in B and in P the singular '*Rad*', 'ruota' ['wheel']); V. 3 (where in B and P there is the adverb '*hier*', 'qui' ['here'], absent in A).

In other lines the connection of P to B is more subtle. For instance: in VI. 11 (P's 'da credersi' ['to be believed'], based on B's '*zu glauben*', while A writes '*glaublich*' ['believable']); XIX. 53 (P has 'i due' ['the two of them'], based on B's '*den zweien*', while A has '*den beiden*' ['both']).

In four of the 68 cases analysed (VI. 7, XII. 3, XII. 13, XIII. 29) it would seem that Pirandello actually translated version A; but a closer look leads us to believe that he moved slightly away from text B because of his personal translation style, *independently of A*. In VI. 7 A presents an adjective ('*unvorsichtig*', as in P, 'imprudente' ['imprudent']), whereas B uses a complement, of similar meaning ('*ohne Gedacht*' ['thoughtless']); but Pirandello could have freely chosen to express the concept with an adjective, without any reference to A.

The same applies to a second case, XII. 3, 'falsciata la messe al romano' ['the grain harvested for the Roman'], where Pirandello uses a complement that mirrors the dative of version A ('*Sie haben dem Römer die Erndte vollendet*') ['for the Roman they harvested the grain'], rather than the genitive of version B ('*Sie haben des Römers Ernte vollendet*') ['they harvested the Roman's grain']. Semantically these two expressions are very close, so Pirandello's translation does not imply that A was his German original, nor does it exclude version B. Another example is XII. 13, where Pirandello omits '*fern*' ['far'], giving 'il profan fuggiva' ['the profane one was fleeing'] for the German '*Fern entwich der Profane*' ['the profane one escaped far'; B], while A also omitted '*fern*' ('*Und es floh der Profane*'), which might lead to us believe that Pirandello translated from A. It is not the only occasion where Pirandello leaves an adverb or an adjective out of his translation: he does so even in lines clearly based on version B, so this does not logically nullify B as the base text.

Finally, in XIII. 29 Pirandello translates the singular '*Blick und Händedruck*' ['look and handshake'] from B as 'sguardi e strette di mano' ['looks and handshakes'], as in A, '*Blicke, Händedruck*' ['looks, handshakes'], that is, using plural nouns. In this case too Pirandello could have made his translation choice independently of the reference text, because of the analogy with the two other nouns in the same line, '*Küsse*' and '*Worte*', 'baci' and 'parole' ['kisses', 'words'], both plural. The relation to B is closer than to A, in that the P translation uses the conjunction 'e' ['and'], as does B ('*und*'), while in A the coordination is effected by asyndeton.

We can therefore determine with reasonable certainty that Pirandello did in fact use the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* rather than the *Die Horen* version.

We still need to determine the *actual book* in which Pirandello read the German version of the *Elegies*, given the many nineteenth-century editions based on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*. Consulting the inventory of Pirandello's private library yielded no data to answer this question,¹⁴ since his collection includes not a single German version of the *Römische Elegien*. Unfortunately, I cannot at present offer a definitive solution to this dilemma, but I can formulate a reasonable hypothesis based on the available sources.

14 A. Barbina, *La biblioteca di Luigi Pirandello* (Rome, Bulzoni, 1980); 'La biblioteca di Luigi Pirandello: catalogo alfabetico per autore'.

I have studied the following German editions of the *Elegies* based on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* and published before 1891, the year Pirandello completed his translation:

Goethe's Werke, Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand (Stuttgart–Tübingen, Cotta, 1827–32), 40 volumes. The *Römische Elegien* are in volume I, 1827 (Oktavausgabe). They are completed by *Goethe's Nachgelassene Werke*, edited by J. P. Eckermann and F. W. Riemer, volumes 1–20, 1832–42; the added poems are in volumes XLVII (1833) and LVI (1842).¹⁵

Goethes poetische und prosaische Werke in zwei Bänden (in 4 tomes), edited by J. P. Eckermann and F. W. Riemer (Stuttgart–Tübingen, Cotta, 1836–37). The poems are in volume I, i. This edition is called the Quartausgabe.

Goethes Werke: Nach den vorzüglichsten Quellen revidierte Ausgabe, 36 parts (in 23 volumes) (Berlin, Hempel, 1882–97). The poems, with notes, are edited by F. Strehlke, and are in volumes I–III, 1868–70. This is the so-called Hempelsche Ausgabe.

Goethes Werke, edited by H. Düntzer, A. G. Meyer, K. J. Schröer, R. Steiner and G. Witkowski (Stuttgart, Berlin and Leipzig, 1882–97), in the series *Deutsche National-Litteratur*, edited by J. Kürschner, volumes LXXXII–CXVII. The poems, edited by H. Düntzer, are in volumes I–III (4 tomes).

Goethes Werke, edited by G. von Loeper, volumes I–III (Berlin, Hempel 1882–84): this is part of the second edition of the Hempelsche Ausgabe.

Goethes Werke, hrsg. im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen-Weimar (Weimar, Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1887–1918), 133 volumes (in 143 tomes). The *Römische Elegien* are in volume I (1887). This is the so-called Weimarer Ausgabe, with variants but no notes.¹⁶

We may be certain that despite their number these publications of the German version of the *Elegies* available before 1891 were all based on the *Last Hand Edition*. We may therefore assume that there are no (or very few) variations among them. This assumption makes the quest for the specific book less urgent, since we have demonstrated that he worked on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*; but I chose nonetheless to seek an answer, prompted by having to use a current German version to compare with Pirandello's. Identifying a text that was in circulation when Pirandello was in Bonn, singled out from the nineteenth-century editions based on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, is a necessary step if I want a text to compare the translation with in order to make a stylistic study of it.

15 The publisher Cotta also sold a pocket version of the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, in 60 volumes, between 1827 and 1842, and a *Sämmtliche Werke*, in 40 volumes (1840).

16 J. W. Goethe, *Tutte le poesie*, I, ii, 1773–74.

I perused and analysed the many nineteenth-century editions of the *Elegies*, comparing all their characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic, and their specifics. In the end, I deemed the most probable candidate to be the so-called *Weimarer Ausgabe*.

The first volume of this edition, which contains the *Römische Elegien*, was published in 1887, that is to say, not long before Pirandello's arrival in Bonn: it was thus a text available when Pirandello started his translation. It was a new edition, the most recent at the time, very authoritative ('la piú vasta fra le edizioni goethiane' ['the biggest edition of works by Goethe']),¹⁷ and also easy to carry, to manage and to work on. The *Römische Elegien* are in the first volume (18 x 11 cm, 477 pages, and just 1.7 cm thick), so light and easy to handle.

It is highly probable that Pirandello used this edition to draft his translation: this is my hypothesis, which I find myself compelled to formulate because of the need to use a contemporary German text to compare with Pirandello's. It is a reasonable hypothesis, based on the data available, but of course the question remains open and will be examined again should new data emerge. It is important to have established with reasonable certainty that Pirandello did base his translation on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, as I demonstrated above.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PIRANDELLO'S TRANSLATIONS

Having identified his probable base text, I can now proceed to analyse the translation. The intertextual analysis that I plan to make between the Goethean version identified and Pirandello's translation will enable me to understand the characteristics of the translation. By this I mean identifying the places in the text where Pirandello faithfully translates Goethe's original text (in terms of its meaning and form) and the places where he diverges from it, identifying also how this occurs and whether it occurs in a constant way within the entire poetic anthology of the *Elegie romane*.

As I shall demonstrate later, Pirandello generally proved faithful to his original, but in some cases he made more liberal choices, and these are repeated within the collection. Such decisions constitute the characteristics of his translation and enable me to answer the question of whether there is a style in Pirandello's way of translating. By analysing these features (of fidelity and divergence), I shall also be able to answer the question about whether Pirandello aimed to achieve a work of poetry himself with this translation. Then, by analysing certain Italian words that Pirandello included in his translation, choosing them from among those most similar to the ones that appear in the classical sources that underpin Goethe's verses, I shall be able to show how Pirandello's reading was aware of the quotations and wanted to make them as transparent as possible for his Italian readers.

Once I had found the German text I proceeded with the analysis of each of the twenty elegies, matching and comparing the German and Italian texts word by

17 J. W. Goethe, *Tutte le poesie*, I, ii, 1774.

word. I used Pirandello's text from the 1896 Giusti edition, because Pirandello's *quadernetti* [notebooks], where all his annotations and working translations were kept, are unfortunately lost. We know they existed because of a statement by Pirandello's close friend Ugo Fleres,¹⁸ but as things stand they are nowhere to be found. That leaves us only the Giusti edition to deal with.

This analysis leads to very interesting results, revealing the choices made by Pirandello as a poetic translator. First, it is important to note that Pirandello chose to preface his work with a sonnet that he composed and dedicated to Ugo Fleres, who provided Pirandello with illustrations for this work. The sonnet celebrates Pirandello's festive return to Rome after his time in Germany and is obviously absent in the Goethean original: its inclusion was most likely a way for Pirandello to make this work feel more his own. Remarkably, in the sonnet Pirandello underlines his spiritual affinity with Goethe by greeting Rome with the German poet's own lines.

From the metrical point of view, Goethe's elegiac couplets clearly stem from the author's desire to show a strong connection with the classical Latin metre, taking full advantage of the rhythmic characteristics of the German language. By his own admission Pirandello chose to translate the *Elegies* 'in distici italiani' ['in Italian distiches'],¹⁹ intending to follow Carducci's example, freely approximating to the rhythm of the ancient distich. The Italian poet proves to be a very able translator from German, a language he calls 'aspra' ['harsh'],²⁰ since a clear musicality is evident in the Italian text. The chosen cadence is the dactylic ('Ditemi, o pietre! parlatemi, eccelsi palagi!': I. 1), quite noticeable through the natural accents of the words, though not always regular. Pirandello favours quite long lines, of variable measure between the hendecasyllable ('D'Amore il tempio, l'iniziato accolga': I. 12) and the sixteen-syllable line ('Tuttor chiese e palagi, rovine contemplo e colonne': I. 9). At times a longer line is actually made of two shorter lines juxtaposed, for example 'In vero, o Roma, un mondo sei tu; ma pur senza l'amore' (I. 13) is actually composed of a decasyllable and a heptasyllable. Lines are generally paroxytonic, with the rare exception of a few proparoxytonic ones ('Io che il maestro sono, son giovine eterno, ed i giovani': XIII. 19).²¹

The general feeling is that Pirandello's translation adheres very closely to the original text, not only lexically but also in the placing of the words within the line and in the subdivision of the content within the structure of the poems (in almost all cases the content of the line in Italian is the same as in the corresponding German line).

18 U. Fleres, 'Ricordi romani di Pirandello', *L'Urbe*, January 1937, p. 20.

19 *Spsv*, p. 1246.

20 *Spsv*, p. 575.

21 For further insight concerning Pirandello's metre in the *Elegie romane* see A. Aletta, '(Metrical) Form as the Soul of Poetry'.

There are nonetheless some losses to translation. First of all, there are phonic losses due to the natural differences between the two languages. Other losses are generally minor in nature. For unknown reasons Pirandello did not translate certain adverbs, personal pronouns or adjectives, probably for rhythmic reasons or to respect line length. Their absence never alters the meaning of the text and may be considered insignificant.

Pirandello's hand is sometimes visible in his addition of certain adverbs, adjectives or—in some rare instances—nouns, absent in the original text. Even in these cases, though, he does not stray far from Goethe's message, despite the lack of precise agreement between the two texts. Actually, Pirandello's lexical choices amplify a characteristic already present in the original text, and often the added adverbs are introduced for rhythmic reasons or to create parallels and links within the translated text. An example is the adverb 'qui' ['here'] in the opening double distich of the fifth elegy:

Lieto e ispirato or qui sul classico suolo mi sento,
con forza più gentile parlanmi qui due mondi.

Qui seguo il consiglio, a l'opre mi do dei maggiori
con premurosa mano, sempre con nuova gioja.

(V. 1–4)²²

As may be seen, in the German text the adverb 'hier' ['here'] is present only once, in line 3:

*Froh empfind' ich mich nun auf klassischem Boden begeistert;
Vor- und Mitwelt spricht lauter und reizender mir.*

*Hier befolg' ich den Rath, durchblättere die Werke der Alten
Mit geschäftiger Hand, täglich mit neuem Genuß.*

(V. 1–4)²³

In this case the triple repetition of the adverb 'qui' by Pirandello highlights the fundamental idea that the sensations and actions described in the two distiches are only possible because the poet is in Rome, thereby emphasizing the role of the city, and creates an echo between the verses and a reference in both form and content.

22 M. Fumi, *Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*, pp. 69, 71: 'I feel happy and inspired now here on the classic soil, two worlds speak to me here with gentler force. Here I follow the advice, I dedicate myself to the works of the ancients with thoughtful hand, always with new joy.'

23 M. Fumi, *Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*, pp. 68, 70: 'Of joy I now feel inspired on classical soil, the past and the present speak to me in a louder and more amiable voice. Here I follow the advice, I browse the works of the ancients with an industrious hand, every day with new pleasure.'

Elsewhere the nouns that Pirandello inserts specify the text better, as in the case of ‘mormorando preghiere’ [‘murmuring prayers’] to translate ‘summten’ [‘murmuring with lips closed’; XII. 19], and ‘invano’ [‘in vain’] and ‘minutamente’ [‘in detail’], added to the original text in XVI. 2 and XIX. 68. Here too the Italian translator remained faithful to the meaning of Goethe’s verse.

It also happens, however, that—in some very specific instances—the Italian translation differs from the original text by a few syntagms, verbs or adjectives. Walter J. Morris and Joseph Siracusa, in their study of Pirandello’s translation work, refer to these cases as ‘errors in translation’ by Pirandello,²⁴ reflecting in particular on the case of ‘due mondi’ [‘two worlds’] instead of ‘*Vor- und Mitwelt*’ [‘past and present’; V. 2] and on other much slighter cases, in my opinion not always correctly,²⁵ to which may be added ‘l’Inglese’ [‘the Englishman’] in place of the German ‘*den reisender Briten*’ [‘the travelling Briton’; II. 9]. In these two cases Pirandello’s choices do not necessarily imply a translation error or a misunderstanding of the original text: ‘l’Inglese’ is very close to ‘*den reisender Briten*’, and ‘due mondi’ sums up ‘*Vor- und Mitwelt*’. I suggest that Pirandello probably made these choices for rhythmic reasons and to avoid an excessively long line.

Moreover, the Italian translation features some constants in style (or translation choices) applied by Pirandello. First of all, I noticed that Pirandello is quite careful in keeping the same word in Italian as in the German text at the beginning or at the end of the line: he maintains words in strong positions in 42% of the cases. More specifically, this occurs 410 times out of 980 possible cases, meaning 41.8% of the time. It is a remarkable percentage, a clear mark of Pirandello’s attention to detail. Moreover, the ‘fidelity’ percentage rises to 44.5% for the ‘initial position’, while in the ‘closing position’ the fidelity factor is only 39%. It is a marked character of Pirandello’s version. Another characteristic concerns changes to the singular or plural forms of nouns. Pirandello frequently chose to translate a German plural noun into a singular Italian noun or vice versa (see I. 9, III. 6, VI. 23, XI. 11, XII. 6). In addition, he usually reversed the order of pairs of adjectives or nouns (see II. 3, 5, 28, XI. 8, XIII. 47). The collection of romantic poetry is dedicated to the love between Goethe and Faustina, the latter being named only once but elsewhere evoked with other expressions. I noticed that Pirandello translated Goethe’s frequent references to ‘*das holde Geschöpf*’ [‘the graceful creature’] or ‘*die Liebste*’ [‘the beloved’] with ‘la Bella’ [‘the beautiful lady’; see V. 11, VI. 27,

24 W. J. Morris and J. Siracusa, *Pirandello’s Translation of Goethe’s ‘Roman Elegies’* (Brockport, NY, Department of Foreign Languages, State University of New York, 1971), p. 6.

25 ‘Pastore’ [‘shepherd’] is the correct translation of ‘Schäfer’ [‘shepherd’; III. 11] and ‘gli’ [‘them’], in nineteenth-century Italian and considering the syntax of the lines, is the correct pronoun for the German ‘sie’ [‘them’] in this case (IV. 5). See W. J. Morris and J. Siracusa, *Pirandello’s Translation of Goethe’s ‘Roman Elegies’*, p. 6.

XV. 7]. The Italian version thus creates intertextual links that strengthen the general cohesion of the single poem and of the collection. One truly 'poetic' characteristic concerns the fact that where possible Pirandello inserted rhetorical figures that were absent in the German text, with a predilection for parallels, chiasmus, hyperbaton, anastrophe and epiphraasis. (Pirandello rarely introduces polysyndeton, asyndeton, enjambement or anaphora; metonymy, synecdoche, anadiplosis and epanadiplosis are used where present in the original text.) These interventions on his part do not alter the meaning of the text but aim to create references and a formal structure of the Italian text that is as close as possible to the status of 'poetry'.

Having completed my stylistic analysis from the point of view of the form, I shall now analyse a particular aspect of the *Elegie*'s content, namely the relationship of this collection with its classical sources. This will enable us to understand Pirandello's own attitude to classical (and especially Latin) sources: by analysing the translation starting from the Italian words that refer directly to the Latin source, we can see where he recognizes the supporting source. This can be demonstrated starting from a careful analysis of the words. Goethe's constant connection to the Latin classical poets (especially Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid and Horace) is a specific feature of this poetic sequence, and in at least two distinct instances Pirandello shows that he understands Goethe's reference to the Latin classics by using the proper Latin term in the translated text.

One instance is in the closing lines of the second elegy, where Goethe confesses his passionate love for Faustina:

*Mutter und Tochter erfreuen sich ihres nordischen Gastes,
Und der Barbare beherrscht römischen Busen und Leib.*
(II. 27–28)²⁶

The 'Northern Guest' is Goethe himself, whose presence brings joy to the Roman house of Faustina and her mother. He, the 'Barbarian' in the text because of his German provenance, enjoys the love of the young girl 'dominating her loins and breasts'. Here Goethe quotes a passage from Propertius's elegies:

Barbarus excussit agitat vestigia lumbis
et subito felix nunc mea regna tenet!
(II. 16. 27–28)²⁷

Pirandello's translation is:

26 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 60: 'Mother and daughter rejoice for their Northern guest, and the barbarian dominates Roman breast and body.'

27 Properzio, *Elegie*, eighth edition (Milan, Rizzoli, 2011), p. 186: 'A barbarian marks on the bed the motion of the loins and with unexpected joy he now occupies my kingdoms!'

Madre e figlia son liete de l'ospite lor boreale,
ed il barbaro domina romani lombi e seno.

(II. 27–28)²⁸

As we can see, Pirandello translates the German '*Leib*' ['body'] with 'lombi' ['loins'], thus connecting directly to Propertius ('lumbis').

There is a similar occurrence in XV. 26. In this elegy Goethe refers to a passage of Horace's poem 'Carmen saeculare', where the sun admires Rome. Pirandello translates the German '*Hohe Sonne*' ['High sun'] with 'Almo Sole' ['Nourishing Sun'], clearly taken from Horace:

Alme Sol, curru nitido diem qui
promis et celas aliasque et idem
nascaris, possis nihil urbe Roma
visere maius.²⁹

(Horace, *Carmen saeculare*, 9–12)

*Hohe Sonne, du weilst und du beschauest dein Rom!*³⁰

(Goethe, *Römische Elegien*, XV. 26)

Almo Sole, tu indugi e la tua Roma ammiri.³¹

(Pirandello's translation)

The link between 'Almo' and Horace's 'Alme' is obvious. These two instances are clearly not coincidences. It is quite plausible that Pirandello understood Goethe's reference to these Latin classics and therefore chose to make the reference as clear as possible in his translation. This means that Pirandello read and translated the *Roman Elegies* keeping closely in touch with classical literature, in which he was well versed.

Pirandello, however, did not always catch a classical reference, or sometimes he chose not to translate the verse forging a clear link with its Latin or Greek inspiration. I found two instances where he translated the text without clearly adhering to the classical lines that Goethe had in mind. We cannot know whether

28 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 61: 'Mother and daughter are happy for their boreal guest, and the barbarian dominates Roman loins and breast.'

29 Orazio, *Odi, Epodi*, edited by L. Canali (Milan, Mondadori, 2004), p. 358: 'Nourishing Sun, you show and hide the day with your resplendent chariot, born different and the same every day, may you never see anything grander than Rome.'

30 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 116: 'High sun, you wait and admire your Rome.'

31 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 117: 'Nourishing Sun, you wait and admire your Rome.'

he failed to recognize them as classical quotations or to consult the texts concerned, or whether he deliberately chose not to follow the poet's inspiration.

One of these cases is XV. 4, where Pirandello translates the German 'Flöhe' ['fleas'] as 'mosche' ['flies']:

*Cäsarn wär' ich wohl nie zu fernen Britannen gefolget,
Florus hätte mich leicht in die Popine³² geschleppt!*

*Denn mir bleiben weit mehr die Nebel des traurigen Nordens,
Als ein geschäftiges Volk südlicher Flöhe verhaßt.³³*
(Goethe, *Römische Elegien*, XV. 1–4)

Non io Cesare avrei tant' oltre in Britannia seguito;
Floro m'avria più presto tratto in Popinia certo!

Ché assai di più la triste caligin del norte m'è in odio,
che il popolo agitato de l'australi mosche.³⁴
(Pirandello, *Elegie romane*, XV. 1–4)

Caesar here is Emperor Hadrian. The biography of Hadrian included in the *Historia Augusta* states that the poet Florus wrote the following epigram:

Ego nolo Caesar esse,
ambulare per Britannos,
latitare per †
Scythicas pati pruinas,

to which Hadrian replied:

Ego nolo Florus esse,
ambulare per tabernas,
latitare per popinas
culices pati rotundos.³⁵

32 From the Latin *popina*, 'public house, inn, tavern'. Goethe takes this word from the *Historia Augusta*.

33 M. Fumi, 'Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo', p. 114: 'I would probably never have followed Caesar to distant Britons, Florus would easily have dragged me into the Popine first! Because to me the hatred for the fog of the sad North is much more than the one for the busy people of the southern fleas.'

34 M. Fumi, 'Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo', p. 115: 'I would not have followed Caesar in Britain far away, Florus would have taken me surely to Popinia first! The sad fog of the North I despise more than the agitated people of the southern flies.'

35 *Scrittori della 'Storia Augusta'*, edited by G. Porta (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1990), vol. I, pp. 46, 48: 'I wouldn't want to be Caesar, wandering among Britons, lost among †, bitten by the Scythian cold'; 'I wouldn't want to be Florus, wandering among hovels, lost among brothels, bitten by big

Hadrian's reply mentions 'culices' ['mosquitoes'], which was possibly mistaken by Goethe for 'pulices' ['fleas'; in German 'Flöhe'], because it could have been a variant present in the Latin text he used (the two Latin words, *culices* and *pulices* being similar enough to be confused), as is suggested by Anselmo Turazza in his edition of the *Römische Elegien*.³⁶ It is unclear why Pirandello chose to translate the word with 'mosche' ['flies'], but it is probably safe to assume that he did not recognize the line's primary source.

A similar 'loss of source' occurs in XIX. 33, where Pirandello translates the expression '*die unermüdete Sonne*' ['the tireless sun'] simply as 'il sole' ['the sun'], dropping the adjective '*unermüdete*'. This adjective is a clear Homeric reference, as Homer used it extensively for the sun. We may be certain that Goethe used it deliberately, since the nineteenth elegy has a mythological subject (the story of Fame and Love) and in the text there is a clear reference to the 'path' of the sun:

*Nie hat Erd' und Himmel, die unermüdete Sonne
Hat auf der ewigen Bahn keines der Wunder erblickt.*³⁷
(Goethe, *Römische Elegien*, XIX. 33–34)

Giammai non ha la terra, né il cielo, né il sole veduto
nel suo cammino simile prodigio!³⁸
(Pirandello, *Elegie romane*, XIX. 33–34)

Note that Pirandello also chose not to translate the adjective '*ewigen*' ['eternal'], which Goethe used to refer to the sun's path.

Obviously, these two cases do not detract from the value or importance of the classical references that Pirandello so masterfully recognized and used, but they do illustrate the complex and intricate variety of the sources and quotations of the Goethean text, which constitutes a large part of its unmistakable and unique depth.

CONCLUSION

We are contemplating a translation that may be read at different levels of depth, where adherence to the original text is not unaccompanied by freer choices on Pirandello's part, the repetition of which gives the collection a unique stylistic physiognomy.

mosquitoes.' † is a *crux desperationis*, a symbol used in classical philology to indicate a gap in the text that cannot be remedied.

36 G. W. Goethe, *Elegie romane*, edited by A. Turazza (Milan–Naples, Ricciardi, 1974), p. 69.

37 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 132: 'Never has the earth and the sky, the never tiring sun seen in the eternal path any of the miracles.'

38 M. Fumi, '*Senza l'amore non saria mondo il mondo*', p. 133: 'Never has the earth, nor the sky nor the sun seen before in its path such prodigy!'

His introduction of some original rhetorical figures, and his acknowledgement of the Latin sources alongside the addition of an original sonnet at the beginning of the sequence show that in translating Goethe Pirandello wanted to create a work of poetry of his own. Pirandello's version of the *Römische Elegien* is a pleasant read to this day, as well as an accomplished work of artistic translation.

If, on the one hand, Pirandello's relative liberty in occasionally changing the number of nouns and the order of adjectives and syntagma may indicate personal poetic licence, on the other it is worth noting that the attention he paid to keeping the first and last words of Goethe's lines in their places, and to including new rhetorical figures, together with his wish to create references in his collection, repeating the syntagm 'la Bella', are characteristics that mark the *Elegie romane* as much more than just a 'working' translation, elevating it to poetry proper.

To quote Belski, 'in order to translate poetry one requires not only a perfect knowledge of one's own language and of the one one is translating from, but one must also be a poet.'³⁹ We can therefore agree that Pirandello's translation of the *Römische Elegien* is truly the work of a poet, since, to quote Morris, 'good translators, as Justus Rosenberg points out, are in themselves *rarae aves* and undergo experiences in their art no less profound than those of the original poet.'⁴⁰

My analysis has revealed several new and original elements in Pirandello's translation that help us not only to understand his way of translating Goethe but also to appreciate his philological research and extensive knowledge about the classical sources at the base of the Goethean text. We may therefore say with reasonable certainty that Pirandello was indeed aware of the complexity of the subtext and references of Goethe's work and made every effort to create an enjoyable and captivating read even through translation, which, without a doubt, still deserves recognition and an honourable place in Pirandello's work.

As I have shown, Pirandello made certain more liberal translation choices and these are repeated in the sequence; it would be interesting to investigate, starting from this study, whether these same features also appear in previous Pirandellian poetry collections (thereby indicating a poetic style) or in contemporary and subsequent ones, in order to see whether and in what ways his work in translating Goethe may have influenced the way he composed original poetry. Studies of this kind could help to shed light on the Pirandellian way of writing poetry, the literary genre that he loved first and that marked the beginning of the great author's linguistic and literary career.

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39 F. Belski, 'La ricezione di Goethe in Italia nella prima metà dell'Ottocento', in *Rapporti fra letteratura tedesca e italiana nella prima metà dell'Ottocento* (Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 1990), pp. 3–55 (p. 54).

40 W. J. Morris and J. Siracusa, *Pirandello's Translation of Goethe's 'Roman Elegies'*, p. 9.