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Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz's *England und Italien* (1785) and its British Travellee-Rewriters

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the reception and translation of the first part of Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz's (1741-1812) *England und Italien* (Leipzig 1785) in Britain. First entering the British public sphere in French translation just before the French Revolution, the work also appeared in two English translations, *A Picture of England* (London 1789) and *A View of the British Constitution* (Edinburgh 1794), the latter of which was later reprinted as *A Picture of England* (London 1797). While Archenholtz's work is known as a prime example of German Anglophilia, the article argues that the reactions of its British translators and reviewers – who are here conceptualised as “travellee-rewriters” – show that contemporary interpretations of Archenholtz's political message merit closer attention. As these reactions show, Archenholtz's *England* provided British subjects with a textual space in which to deliberate how their kingdom's constitution related to republicanism and the notion of the “free state”.



KEYWORDS

Travellee; travellee-rewriter; translation history; republicanism; Anglophilia

Introduction

This article delves into the reception and translation of Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz's *England und Italien* [England and Italy], a work which has been perceived as representing eighteenth-century German Enlightenment and “Anglophilia” (Kraus 2006, 666; Maurer 1987, 182; Rieger 1994, 16, 183). The most important contribution to this perspective has been Michael Maurer's *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland* [Enlightenment and Anglophilia in Germany] (1987), which presents Archenholtz as a publicist who spent long periods in England and was particularly impressed by the liberty enjoyed by the country's press (Maurer 1987, 217). Indeed, in *England und Italien*, Archenholtz suggested that people living in the Kingdom of Great Britain had more liberty than those of the Dutch or the Swiss republics (Archenholtz 1785, I: 8). This was due to the balance of powers in the English constitution [Staatsverfassung], which, in turn, was sustained by public spirit and liberty of the press (Archenholtz 1785, I: 9, 34, 204–205, 561).

Educated at the Cadet Corps of Berlin, Archenholtz served in the Prussian army during the Seven Years' War and was a fervent admirer of King Fredrick II (Maurer 1987, 183;

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Rieger 1994, 23–24, 94). Still, despite his Prussian sympathies, his description of England should, according to Maurer, be read as a “counter-image” to Germany – as a tableau providing a contrast to a divided country which was then mostly made up of small absolute monarchies (Maurer 1987, 188–189; see also Haikala 1985, 58). Significantly, however, in addition to functioning as a socio-political mirror for German-speaking readers, Archenholtz’s work also aroused the curiosity of his British “travellees”, who are this article’s primary object of interest.

As coined in Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* in 1992 (Pratt 2008, 8, 79, 133, 258), the term “travellee” denotes “those who participate on the receiving end” of travel. In Pratt’s post-colonial work, this means local inhabitants who appear in colonial travel accounts written by Europeans, or, as Pratt (Pratt 2008, 50, 123) also notes, who are sometimes conspicuously missing from them. More recently, Wendy Bracewell has directed attention to different types of travelleses by analysing the reactions of European writers to foreign travel accounts about their home country. Calling for attention to the active responses of “travellee-readers” who were invited to share foreigners’ views of their homeland, Bracewell (2015b, 215–227, at 217–221) notes that even in cases of agreement, such readers did not necessarily remain passive and merely internalise foreign opinions. Moreover, as Bracewell (2015a, 99–121, at 107) has shown, patriotic travelleses could also object to favourable depictions of their home country, although such cases are less usual than travellee polemics against foreign critique. This observation is, of course, relevant regarding British reactions to “Anglophile” travel writing.

I therefore ask how Archenholtz’s political counter-image *England* fared in the country which it had originally portrayed for German-speaking readers. To delineate the case from the perspective of translation history, I will look more precisely into what kind of an “after-life” *England* lead in the English language, in which it became something different from its German editions (see Williams 2017, viii–xv, at viii–ix; Munck 2019, 182, 208). Indeed, as pointed out by Bracewell in this issue (Bracewell 2024), travellee-readers first decoded travel accounts from their own perspective and then re-coded them for their own readers. Such British re-coders of *England* can, I think, be usefully considered as “rewriters”, using the terminology of André Lefevere. As I aim to show, it is important to acknowledge how Archenholtz’s original depiction of England was transformed in the British public sphere by numerous travellee-rewriters – most notably by translators, but also by printers and reviewers (see Lefevere 2017, 1–4). In fact, attention to the agency of these travelleses enables us to see that contemporaries read *England* as a republican text. This provides a new perspective on Archenholtz’s “Anglophilia” while also bringing out some hitherto unheard voices of British subjects discussing the nature of their country’s constitution in the Age of Revolutions.

Strictly taken, *England und Italien* is not a travelogue because no specific journey is being described in it. Instead, the work provides detailed descriptions of institutions and customs, illustrated by a plethora of anecdotes that only occasionally include sentences reporting the presence of the author on the scene. In his preface to the 1785 edition, Archenholtz referred to fragments already published in his own journal *Litteratur und Völkerkunde* [Literature and Ethnology], so as to explain and justify making the totality of his observations available to the public (Archenholtz 1785, I: vii; Maurer 1987, 185). In the expanded 1787 edition, he stressed that the work was indeed not a description of a

journey [keine Reisebeschreibung] but instead contained observations [Reisebemerkungen] connected with opinions, historical examples, and information sourced not only from his own memory and papers but also from other books (Archenholtz 1787, I: xi). As Maurer has noted, this method resulted in an anecdotal form drawing on conversations heard in coffee houses and stories read in newspapers, yet generally focussing on the “English constitution” (Maurer 1987, 189; see also Kraus 2006, 667). The work also displays Archenholtz’s knowledge of the works of Gibbon, Helvetius, Hume, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Raynal, as well as the novelists Fielding and Richardson (Ruof 1965, 8–9). Still, in Britain the part covering England was assumed to derive from someone who had first-hand experience of what he described.

Before examining the transformations of *England* more closely, however, I want to make the argument that *England und Italien* was both encoded and decoded as a republican text. As emphasised by Gelléri (2016, 10), the intentions of an author in presenting a country and his experiences in a particular way must always be taken into account. Archenholtz (1785, I: ix) noted that no single travel account had directed his observations, but, clearly, his work must be read as belonging to a tradition of “pilgrimages” inspired by philosophical predecessors such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Jean-Louis Delolme (see Gelléri 2016, 158; Kraus 2006, 667; Haikala 1985, 45). Consequently, the British readers who considered themselves as Archenholtz’s travellers were able to employ *England* and its reviews as a literary space in which to deliberate the republican elements in their own constitution, broadly conceived as a socio-political system with moral underpinnings. To adapt Archenholtz’s German counter-image to their own interests in the swiftly changing political circumstances of the late eighteenth century, these traveller-rewriters thus applied various re-coding strategies including criticism, selective omission, emphasis, and even covert additions (see Munck 2019, 286–287, 301–308, on politics and print in the era).

Considering Archenholtz’s British translators, publishers, and reviewers as travellers helps to appreciate the complex rhetorical layers involved in their recontextualisation of *England*. What is more, acknowledging the active role of these traveller-rewriters who manipulated the meaning of the work in Britain opens a perspective on a public sphere which fostered divergent interpretations of the country’s constitution. In other words, the traveller-rewriters re-coding *England* can be perceived as participating in a political discussion about the ideal form of government. Since they were not writing “back” to the German traveller Archenholtz but rather to other British travellers, it is important to establish the genealogy of the translations in which Archenholtz’s work circulated. This is because, in the end, not every traveller encountered the same version(s) of *England*, and neither was the work’s meaning immune to the political circumstances in which it was read.

Moreover, in order to understand the traveller-rewriters’ responses, it is crucial to keep in mind that Archenholtz’s republicanised depiction of England was originally presented to German-speaking readers as an admirable object of aspiration (see Ruof 1965, 18–19). Given that the Kingdom of Great Britain was in fact not a republic, this allowed them to hope that a similar state of things could be achieved also in various German states via reforms supporting liberty and public spirit. Indeed, Archenholtz opposed the “despotism” of absolute monarchies but still considered monarchy as a viable form of government (Maurer 1987, 217). This reflects the contemporary German discussions – revolving around the concept of the “free state” – which did not consider “republic” as

“a discrete form of government but a form of rulership” treating the people as citizens rather than slaves (Bödeker 2002, 35–52, at 45–46; see also Kraus 2006, 669–670; Rieger 1994, 100–101, 104–105, 169; Haikala 1985, 46). However, Archenholtz’s implicit encouragement of reforms did not work in the same way when transferred back to Britain, the place in which the admired state of things supposedly already existed. As the traveller-rewriters found, they could not fully agree with Archenholtz’s claims, whether or not they would have liked to see their polity as republican. If the decoder acquiesced with the idea that the Kingdom of Great Britain should indeed resemble a republic, the picture was too perfect; if s/he was happy with the actual state of affairs, it was not flattering enough.

One more point to be made relates to the impact of the foundation of the French Republic on the connotations of Archenholtz’s writing. At present, the English translations of Archenholtz’s *England* are included in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) as titles which appeared at different times in London (1789, 1797), in Dublin (1790, 1791), and in Edinburgh (1794). Yet, as I aim to show, the circulation of these transformed versions of *England* in English is best divided into two distinct stages. This makes sense because the Edinburgh publication *A View of the British Constitution* (1794) was a retranslation, and the ensuing London publication a reprint of it. In other words, there are only two different English translations of *England*, the second of which can be perceived as an “active” retranslation, since it was made in order to influence the politics of the day (see Pym 1998, 82–83).

By the same token, it becomes evident that a further rewriting strategy applied by Archenholtz’s travellers was typographical. Indeed, the Edinburgh retranslation was given a layout which muddled the structure of the work and, in contrast to previous versions, did not list the contents of each chapter. When this retranslation was subsequently reprinted in London in 1797, these changes will have made it harder to see exactly how it differed from previous versions. Moreover, in London, the Edinburgh retranslation obtained a new title page, which boasted the same title – *A Picture of England* – that had already been used in the first English translation. Nevertheless, the 1797 title page stated that the translation was “new”, and “from the Original German”. As I argue below, the latter claim was just as false as the former one, since the retranslation was based on the same French source text as the first English translation. This means that all versions of Archenholtz’s work available in English were in fact indirect translations.

Thus, the 1797 title page made two false claims: that the translation was new, and that it was based on a German source text. While these claims were clearly meant to question the quality of the first English translation, the re-introduction of its title *A Picture of England* to the London market created a sense of continuity. In political terms, the manoeuvre effectively obscured the replacement of the first English translation with the Edinburgh retranslation, which, as will be shown, had a reactionary agenda. This scheme may still confuse readers who rely on the information presented on title pages and do not compare the contents of the publications. For the illusion of new and improving English versions conceals the fact that *A Picture of England* (London 1797) is actually one step further from the original text than its source text, the French translation *Tableau de l’Angleterre et de l’Italie* (Gotha 1788) by the young courtier Louis Benoît François Baron de Bilderbeck (*Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie* 2005, I: 659). Indeed, as it seems, most traveller responses to Archenholtz can be traced back to Bilderbeck’s translation.

Reading *England* as republican text: Bilderbeck and Becket

Since none of the translations of *England* included the prefaces of the original German editions, British readers decoding the work had recourse to two interpretative aids: their knowledge of the conventions of travel writing and the paratexts of Bilderbeck's French translation. As they would have discovered from the preface addressed to Archenholtz – "A monsieur d'Archenholz [*sic*]" –, Bilderbeck had embarked on his translation project at Archenholtz's personal request. What is more, Bilderbeck declared that he had "devoured" [dévoreré] and translated *England und Italien* with enthusiasm, being convinced that other readers would likewise judge favourably of the "happy country of liberty and of patriotism" presented in the work (Archenholtz 1788, I: vii-xii). Dedicating the translation to Henri XLIII Reuss, Duke of Plauen, Bilderbeck also took the opportunity to affirm that in the current "philosophical century", a man of letters no longer had to be "a flatterer of the great" but instead a friend of deserving men on noble birth:

L'homme de Lettres, plus apprécié dans ce siècle philosophe, en sent mieux sa dignité; il n'est plus le flatteur des grands de la terre, il ne se fait plus un honteux devoir de caresser leurs vices; il est leur ami, s'ils en sont dignes, et ce sentiment, qui fait la gloire de l'un et l'éloge de l'autre, les honore également tous deux. (Archenholtz 1788, I: iv)

[The man of letters, appreciated more greatly in this philosophical age, has a greater sense of his own dignity; he is no longer the flatterer of the great of the earth, he no longer shames himself by pandering to their vices; he is their friend, if they are worthy, and that sentiment which is the glory of the one and the compliment of the other, honours them both equally.]

This celebration of merit indicated that the work aimed to bolster the status of learned professions in an aristocratic context. In fact, Bilderbeck underlined this at the very beginning of the dedication by stating: "To pay homage to virtues, to talents, to merit, is to sanctify one's writings, and to make them respectable in the eyes of one's nation" (Archenholtz 1788, I: iii). Moreover, as Bilderbeck stated, he was "interpreting" Archenholtz to his own nation, by which he meant the French (Archenholtz 1788, I: x). The only point on which he disagreed with Archenholtz was, as he put it in a note, Archenholtz's apparent acceptance of "the despotism of the English towards their brothers in America" [le despotisme des Anglais envers leurs frères d'Amérique] (Archenholtz 1788, II: 273; also 274–275, 286–287). As it appears, his translation recommended itself to British readers with similar views, since it was imported by Charles Dilly, a publisher who belonged to John Cartwright's Society for Constitutional Information and had also supported the independence of the American colonies (Becket 1789, 590–595, at 590; Caudle 2004, n.p.).

Indeed, that *England und Italien* was read as a republican text is indicated by an article about Bilderbeck's translation in *The Monthly Review*. Discussing *Tableau de l'Angleterre et de l'Italie* in this major periodical, Andrew Becket – son of a bookseller – became the first British traveller to publicly assess the accuracy of Archenholtz's claims (Becket 1789, 590; Nangle 1934, 3, 9). Becket defined the work as a travel narrative focussing on man instead of nature and noted that the author "ultimately lays before us a comparative statement of the virtues and vices both of individuals and of nations at large" (Becket 1789, 591). He added that Archenholtz's observations were "not, at all times, equally important; but this is occasioned by the nature of his work, which aims at a particular account of the people with whom he resided" (Becket 1789, 591).

As Becket and other contemporary readers will have noticed, Archenholtz did not praise everything English, but instead had a very distinctive perspective on what was best about England: that men of sufficient means had the liberty to do what they pleased as long as they did not break the law, and that they were willing to promote the common good (Archenholtz 1785, I: 2–3, 204; 1788, I: 3–4, 218). The latter aspect is clear, for example, from a passage in which Archenholtz praised the public availability of desks with writing equipment at the Bank of England, declaring that he could not help admiring such “republican measures” [republikanische Maaßregeln], or as Bilderbeck put it, “republican spirit” [esprit républicain] (Archenholtz 1785, I: 157–158; 1788, I: 170). Thus, simply calling Archenholtz “Anglophile” can be misleading if his appreciation of republicanism is ignored.

In fact, apparently wishing to agree with Archenholtz yet finding himself unable to confirm everything he read in the text, Becket expressed embarrassment about the amount of republican virtue which Archenholtz seemed to ascribe to the English. From his perspective, Archenholtz’s depiction of the English constitution republicanised a government which actually resembled absolute monarchy:

like the greater part of his countrymen (the Germans), he views it with far too partial an eye. It might be imagined, from a perusal of his book, in which our *virtue* is particularly insisted on, that Plato’s famed republic was realized among us: though it is an undoubted truth, that our government inclines much more to *absolute monarchy* than to *republicanism*, as several writers of acknowledged excellence have shewn (Becket 1789, 591, italics in original).

As Becket argued, Archenholtz did not acknowledge that while the British had “civil liberty”, their “political liberty” was “ill secured” (Becket 1789, 591; see also Bödeker 2002, 37–38). Moreover, he opined that Archenholtz had also depicted the liberty of the British press in too strong terms, attributing “a potency to it which it does not possess” (Becket 1789, 592). Further on (593), he therefore exclaimed that the picture painted by Archenholtz was “flattering and agreeable” but “very unlike the truth”.

One reason for these criticisms was that Archenholtz had depicted English lords as modest, well-disposed towards the arts and the sciences, and willing to mix with the lower orders of society (Archenholtz 1785, I: 37–39; 1788, I: 43–45; Maurer 1987, 194; Rieger 1994, 102). Displaying a different opinion, the middle-class commentator Becket defended individual merit with a rhetorical question: “Shall we fondly give to birth and fortune the praises which can belong only to the virtuous and the good – to the elegant and cultivated mind?” (Becket 1789, 593).

Evidently, Becket’s republican sentiments were at least as strong as Archenholtz’s and, as a consequence, he could not publicly accept a national portrait which he found too sanguine in this respect. In other words, while Archenholtz and Bilderbeck praised England to encourage republican virtue in continental Europe, a like-minded British reviewer such as Becket could not really do the same when writing for his domestic audience. Instead, he had to use a rhetoric of self-criticism to achieve similar ends. Such strategic downplaying of the traveller’s praise by a like-minded traveller points to a significant rhetorical dimension in socio-politically progressive traveller polemics: agreeing with a flattering description could in effect have supported conservative politics.

For this reason, it is also worth paying attention to how Bilderbeck's French translation was translated and retranslated into English, since Archenholtz's British translators will also have been aware of transmitting a republican text to new readers. As shown below, their strategies display different attitudes towards Archenholtz's work, even though in both cases the translators were travellers translating for fellow travellers. The main difference appears to have been that the first translator was uncomfortable with Archenholtz's excessive praise and thus tried to create a more realistic "picture of England", while the retranslator, uncomfortable with sections of *England* that seemed to indicate national weaknesses, made use of the work in support of the "British constitution".

Archenholtz's message and its modifications

As observed by Maurer, Archenholtz perceived *public spirit* as the characteristic virtue of the British nation. With this allegedly untranslatable phrase, he referred to the readiness of the individual to promote the common good – a "noble" trait which could not be labelled simply as "national spirit" (Archenholtz 1785, I: 204; 1788, I: 217; Maurer 1987, 204; see also Kraus 2006, 671; Maurer 2014, 47–59, at 57–58). Indeed, in Archenholtz's thinking, the ubiquity of public spirit in all orders of the British society was the reason why the kingdom's "constitution" could be perceived as republican. Invoking Montesquieu's notion of the balance of powers, Archenholtz accepted monarchy as a form of government but stressed that the power of the king had to be limited by the rule of law and that legislative power belonged to the Commons who also had the ability to decide on economic matters (Archenholtz 1785, I: 6, 561–562; 1788, I: 6, II: 283–285; Kraus 2006, 670; see also Bödeker 2002, 45). He drew attention to crime and vices as a constant "game of the passions" [Spiele der Leidenschaften], but mostly presented them as inoffensive parts of a comprehensive social system, "legitimated by liberty" [durch die Freiheit berechtigt] (Archenholtz 1785, I: 563; 1788, II: 284; Kraus 2006, 672). Thus, Archenholtz seems to have thought that allowing men of independent means to pursue their interests was not only harmless but also bound to promote the common good, since those who devoted their talents to the arts and sciences benefitted mankind as a whole (Archenholtz 1785, I: 2–4; 1788, I: 3–4; Maurer 1987, 191).

Towards the end of *England*, however, Archenholtz's descriptions grew more unflattering, and the final chapter presented a decisively negative account about the state of British sea power and the amount of public credit it required. Indeed, Archenholtz (1785, I: 555–557; 1788, II: 275–278) went as far as expressing the opinion that the English East India Company was a corrupt institution, and the related belief that the next war would destroy the British Empire (see also Maurer 1987, 213). To the readers, this suggested that even a most perfect constitution was not immune to decay.

In such a work, there were many opportunities for translators and publishers to participate in the making of political meaning. This was because in order to properly represent liberty and public spirit, both positive and negative things had to be included, and the overall message to the intended audience depended on balance and perspective. Consequently, the inclusion, exclusion or modification of individual anecdotes could play a significant role in what translations communicated. To keep track of the choices made by the translators, it is therefore vital to know the source text they were working with.

As suggested by my comparative analysis, Bilderbeck would seem to have translated mostly from the first German edition of 1785 and both English translators from his French translation. Thus, most of the added material of the much-enlarged 1787 German edition never circulated in English. One example of Archenholtz's additions to the 1787 edition is a quote from David Hume's essay "Of National Characters" which opens the second chapter of this edition but does not appear in any of the translations (Archenholtz 1787, I: 70; 1785, I: 48; 1788, I: 55; 1789, I: 49; 1794, 48; 1797, 48; Hume 1748, 1–28).

The genealogy of the translations can also be established from the passage below (also from the second chapter):

Im Jahr 1779 wurden von dem Public Advertiser im Winter täglich 12,000 Stück gedruckt, im Sommer aber nur 8000. Von dem Daily Advertiser hingegen, der fast nichts als Advertisements enthält, 20,000 täglich. (Archenholtz 1785, I: 63)

[In the year 1779, 12,000 copies of the Public Advertiser were printed daily during the winter, but in the summer only 8,000. By contrast, of the Daily Advertiser, which contains little more than advertising, 20,000 copies were printed daily.]

This was rephrased by Archenholtz in the 1787 edition:

Man kann sich einen Begriff von der Menge der englischen Zeitungen machen, wenn ich sage, daß im Jahre 1779 von einem einzigen Blatte, der Daily Advertiser, täglich 20,000 Stück gedruckt wurden, vom Public Advertiser im Winter täglich 12000, im Sommer aber nur 8000 u.s.w. (Archenholtz 1787, I: 94)

[It is possible to gain an impression of the amount of English newspapers, if I say that in 1779 from one single sheet, the Daily Advertiser, 20,000 copies were printed daily, whereas of the Public Advertiser 12,000 were printed in the winter but only 8,000 in the summer etc.]

Interestingly, while all three translations followed the wording of the 1785 edition, the first English translator changed the publication figures mentioned by Archenholtz, apparently to correct a perceived exaggeration. In so doing, this traveller-rewriter seems to have tried to bring Archenholtz's republican utopia closer to reality:

On imprima par jour, dans le cours de l'hiver de 1779, 12,000 exemplaires du *Public advertiser*, et 8000, pendant l'été; et du *Daily advertiser*, qui ne contient que des avertissemens, 20,000 (Archenholtz 1788, I: 71)

[During the winter of 1779, 12,000 copies of the *Public advertiser* were printed daily, and 8,000 during the summer; and of the *Daily advertiser*, which contains nothing but advertisements, 20,000.]

In the year 1779, 4,500 numbers of the Public Advertiser were printed every day during the winter, and 3,000 during the summer; and of the Daily Advertiser, which contains little else but advertisements, no less than 5,000 were circulated. (Archenholtz 1789, I: 65)

In the course of the winter, in the year 1779, twelve thousand copies of the Public Advertiser were thrown off, and 8000 in the summer: of the Daily Advertiser, which contains little else than advertisements, 20,000 were published. (Archenholtz 1794, 61; 1797, 61)

Based on this example and the almost complete lack of references to the years 1785 and 1786 in the translations (see Archenholtz 1794, 36; 1797, 36 for the only exception), it does seem that all translations were based – directly or indirectly – on the 1785 Leipzig edition.

The hypothesis is not entirely without caveats, since in the first chapter, the translations include a reference to a “German philosopher” which did not appear in the first edition (Archenholtz 1785, I: 7; 1787, I: 7; 1788, I: 7; 1789, I: 7; 1794, 6; 1797, 6). Yet in Bilderbeck’s translation, even though the author promises to reintroduce this philosopher (apparently Ernst Brandes, see Kraus 2006, 606) in the fifteenth chapter, the work only contains fourteen chapters across the two volumes on England. As such, it seems that Bilderbeck started to translate the new edition but, on page 25, reverted to the first edition (Archenholtz 1785, I: 20; 1787, I: 25; 1788, I: 25; 1789, I: 21; 1794, 21; 1797, 21). This move is also visible in the Edinburgh retranslation, since Archenholtz expanded one of his notes in the first chapter of the 1787 edition with the observation “Lacedämon wurde zu allen Zeiten als ein Freystaat betrachtet, obgleich Könige an der Spitze dieser so berühmten Republik standen” [Lacedaemon was always considered as a free state, although kings stood at the top of this most famous republic] (Archenholtz 1787, I: 8). This note did not appear in the first English translation, but in the retranslation, it appears to have been picked up from Bilderbeck’s French version, translated as “Sparta, which has always passed for a republic, had likewise its kings” [Sparte, qui a passé dans tous les tems pour une république, avait dependent aussi des rois à sa tête] (Archenholtz 1785, I: 7; 1788, I: 8; 1789, I: 8; 1794, 7; 1797, 7).

At this point it should also be noted that the two parts of *England und Italien* were separated when translated into English. While *England* appeared in English without *Italien*, *A Picture of Italy* translated by Joseph Trapp was printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson in 1791. Nevertheless, Trapp’s translation was clearly meant to be read in conjunction with *England*. For according to his address “To the Public”, his aim had been to “vindicate” the character of the “philosophic traveller” Archenholtz, who had been charged “of being a superficial observer” in *A Picture of England*. Trapp also noted that “an Englishman” surely felt “infinite pleasure” in beholding, “in a comparative view, the excellence of the British Constitution” (Archenholtz 1791, iii–iv). According to a reviewer writing about *A Picture of Italy* in *The Critical Review*, “some objects” had been “distorted, and others incorrectly coloured, though flattering our national vanity” in *A Picture of England*, but the author could not “be wholly wrong” in his description of Italy (Anon. 1791, 164–166, at 164). With this, the reviewer referred to the fact that Archenholtz presented England in a more favourable light than Italy, a country resembling Germany (Maurer 1987, 189).

That the Edinburgh retranslation of 1794 was prepared as a loyalist reaction to the foundation of the French Republic in 1792 is evident from a prefixed advertisement, which made direct reference to the “British Constitution” at the “juncture” of its publication. Since not only the translator but even the publisher was left unnamed, putting this version of Archenholtz’s work out into the public sphere at that particular moment seems to have been considered as hazardous. What is more, the retranslation was much shorter than its source text: it only had twelve chapters in a single volume, whereas Bilderbeck’s French translation had fourteen in two volumes. The omissions made in the retranslation might have had to do with economy, but considering what was discussed in the parts that were omitted, the motives are likely to have been political. Moreover, when the same retranslation was printed in London, it only mentioned “the booksellers” in lieu of a particular publisher, thus keeping the retranslation under the veil of anonymity. Strikingly, there also do not seem to have been any reviews of the

retranslation. Considering that Archenholtz had been perceived as stretching the truth in reviews published by 1792, critical discussion of his work in the British public sphere seems to have been initiated by those travellers who would have liked to think of the Kingdom of Great Britain as resembling a republic. In contrast, during the stage in which Archenholtz's reception was based on the Edinburgh retranslation, no such voices appeared in the press. Furthermore, as shown below, critique of the "British constitution" was also toned down in the retranslation itself.

A Picture of England (1789) and its reception in the press

A Picture of England (London 1789), consisting of the first part of *England und Italien*, was translated anonymously and published in two volumes printed for Edward Jeffery. While Archenholtz had dedicated his work to Christoph Martin Wieland and Bilderbeck the French translation to the Duke of Plauen, the first English translator dedicated his translation to Edward Fishwick, Esq. There was no preface, but the translator added some small explanatory notes, once observing that "The author here has been grossly misinformed" (Archenholtz 1789, II: 33). Another significant addition in comparison with the German and French versions was a list of persons mentioned in Archenholtz's anecdotes, printed on the title page. These individuals were mostly British political figures, but the list also includes the King of Denmark and the actress Mrs. [Frances] Abington.

The list was probably meant to attract the readers' attention and to serve as a domesticating device, but it was not a complete index of names. For example, the German scientific explorers Johann Reinhold and Georg Forster were missing from it, as well as the French journalist Simon-Nicholas Henri Linguet, a certain Mrs. Phillips, and the antiquarian Rudolf Erich Raspe. What the overlooked names had in common was that they all had negative connotations: the Forsters were known for the dispute concerning *A Voyage Round the World, in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, Resolution* (London 1777), Linguet had written negatively about Britain before being imprisoned in the Bastille, Mrs. Phillips kept a shop selling mysterious "ware which are to be met with in very few great cities in Europe", and Raspe had fled Germany after being accused of embezzlement (Archenholtz 1789, I: 12–13, 100–101, II: 113, 156, 216; Jefcoate 2009, n.p.; see also Anon. 1782, 57 on Raspe).

Furthermore, the translator also appears to have felt discomfort with Archenholtz's strong opinion of the Reformation era, since he omitted the attribute "despotique" from the "reign of Henry VIII" (Archenholtz 1787, I: 2; 1788, I: 2; 1789, I: 2). In contrast, however, s/he translated Bilderbeck's "l'esprit républicain" as "the democratical spirit" when referring to the driving force of a free state and italicised the "*spirit of equality*" constituting "the chief pride of the nation" (Archenholtz 1787, I: 8; 1785, I: 142; 1788, I: 8, 155; 1789, I: 8, 136). On page 10, s/he included only four lines of a lengthy note concerning the relative amount of liberty enjoyed by the press in England and Germany (Archenholtz 1787, I: 10–11; 1788, I: 10–11; 1789, I: 10). Further on, s/he removed most of the description of Doctor Graham's "celestial bed", probably perceiving it as risqué (Archenholtz 1785, I: 109–114; 1788, I: 120–126; 1789, I: 109). Such interventions were frequent and can perhaps be explained by a wish to make the text more palatable to the English reader. Thus, for instance, the translator removed Bilderbeck's critical notes concerning the justice of the American Revolution and abridged Archenholtz's account of debating

societies, omitting a section where an English assembly backhandedly ridiculed a Frenchman after first letting him “defend the conduct of his countrymen in regard to the American war” (Archenholtz 1788, II: 263–273; 1789, II: 185–188). The translator also appears to have been bothered by the fact – caused by Bilderbeck’s change of source edition – that the discussion of the “privilege of public remonstrances” was lacking in the French translation. Thus, s/he chose to cut one paragraph – on an instance where the sheriffs of Middlesex had refused to obey the king – from page 12 and to place it under this heading on page 29 (Archenholtz 1788, I: 13, 36; 1789, I: 12, 29).

In articles about this translation, *The Monthly Review* and *The Critical Review* both highlighted the inaccuracy of Archenholtz’s claims and the risk of being misled by foreign travellers. In *The Monthly Review*, the miscellaneous writer John Noorthouck presented examples of passages that made erroneous claims (Noorthouck 1790, 29–32, at 29; Nangle 1955, 48, 81). As he observed, errors made by “an otherwise intelligent foreigner” demonstrated “how likely we are to be misled in our conceptions of foreign nations, when described by English travellers, even of merit” (Noorthouck 1790, 31). Yet, the review concluded by quoting Archenholtz’s remarks on the demise of “English greatness”, expressing the hope that these, too, could be deemed “as farther instances of misinformed judgment” (Noorthouck 1790, 31–32). As such, Noorthouck seems to have appreciated Archenholtz’s work – including his scepticism about the future of the British Empire – but he nevertheless considered it important to call out claims that were not true, “to practise a little self-denial” for the sake of impartiality (Noorthouck 1790, 29).¹

The Critical Review directed attention to the sources used by Archenholtz, suggesting that the anecdotes might have been drawn “either from observation, newspapers, or magazines”. Referring to the mention of national pride at the beginning of the second chapter, the reviewer suspected that “pride may, perhaps, prevent us from examining the painting too closely; for if the artist should be discovered to be in an error, the detection will detract a little on the pleasure we felt on the deception” (Anon. 1790a, 203–204, at 203). This review also drew attention to the “conduct of M. Archenholz, while he was in England”, suggesting that his knowledge on the King’s Bench prison derived from personal experience (Anon. 1790a, 204). Finally, the review concluded:

On comparing the translation with the French original, we perceive that the translator has altered and suppressed several parts: he might have drawn his pen safely through others. The roads are *not* lighted within seven or eight miles of London every night, a hundred millions of bank notes are *not* in circulation, &c. &c. Foreigners must survey this picture with many allowances; and, though flattering to our self-love, we must say that it does not always present us with a faithful likeness. (Anon. 1790a, 204, italics in original)

As it appears, the reviewer noticed that the English translator had corrected and omitted some embarrassing inaccuracies but did not wish to judge him/her for this. In fact, it had been the translator who first made the question “Is London well lighted?” in a chapter abstract (Archenholtz 1789, I: iii).

By contrast, *The European Magazine* wholeheartedly approved of the picture which Archenholtz’s *England* presented, praising it in conjunction with Delolme’s *The Constitution of England* (Anon. 1790b, 117). However, this review added the assumption that the anonymous English translation was in fact an original work:

The style and language in which this professed *translation* appears, are in all respects so truly *English*, and carry with them such an air of *originality*, that we almost suspect this very pleasant and entertaining work to be a plant of English growth, rather than *an exotic* of France; but *merit*, in whatever climate it may have been produced, is, in England, equally intitled to the tribute of admiration and applause. (Anon 1790b, 117, italics in original)

Unlike his colleagues, this reviewer suspected that the book might have been a pseudo translation, written by a fellow Englishman masquerading as a French translator. Also invoking the notion of national pride, he noted that the curiosity of a foreign traveller made the breast of English patriots “glow with equal pride and pleasure” (Anon 1790b, 117). This, perhaps, serves as an explanation for the assumption that the author was English and praised his own country in the guise of a foreigner. In any case, all reviewers expressed mixed feelings about the work: on the one hand they found it a flattering depiction of national virtues, but on the other hand were unwilling to subscribe to Archenholtz’s claims, lest their readers would think they were blinded by vanity.

A View of the British Constitution (1794): the Edinburgh retranslation

What, then, were the differences between the first English translation and the ensuing retranslation, anonymously published in Edinburgh? As indicated by a prefixed advertisement, the retranslation *A View of the British Constitution* aimed to remind the public of Archenholtz’s praise without agreeing with him on every point. This time, however, not agreeing appears to have meant caution against critique, rather than embarrassment about exaggerated virtue. Considering that the retranslation was prepared after the fall of the French monarchy, it is significant that on the second page, the idea of a “revolution” in England was pushed back in time. In contrast, the first English translation had presented the same “revolution” of manners as an on-going process of change:

La révolution arrivée en Angleterre, depuis environ deux siècles, dans les mœurs ... (Archenholtz 1788, I: 2; see also 1785, I: 2)

[The revolution, which arrived in England around two centuries ago, in the manners ...]

The uncommon revolution which has taken place in England within the last two centuries, in the manners ... (Archenholtz 1789, I: 2)

The Revolution, which took place about two centuries ago, in the manners ... (Archenholtz 1794, 2; 1797, 2)

As such, it was clear from the start that the retranslation steered clear of any kind of republicanism which the British reader might have heard was then taking place in France.

The differences between the two English versions of *England* are, however, most obvious towards the end of the work. One passage which is more carefully mediated in the Edinburgh retranslation than in the first translation concerns the history of Lloyd’s Register of Shipping. In this anecdote, Archenholtz described a “large book, open to everyone” who frequented Lloyd’s coffee house in London. The first English translator transmitted the section very briefly, merely letting the reader know that the gentlemen at Lloyd’s, receiving “the earliest and most authentic intelligence” on foreign politics and commerce, “transcribe their intelligence into a book, for the inspection of the

nation at large" (Archenholtz 1789, II: 107). However, the source text (Bilderbeck's French translation) did not stop here, but continued:

On y vient par centaines en transcrire mot pour mot les nouvelles du jour, on est même tout surpris de voir des gens du commun feuilleter ce livre comme s'il leur appartenait. Ce procédé républicain n'étonne ici personne. Un citoyen, de quelque condition qu'il soit, apprend-t-il par un canal sûr, ou même par hasard [sic] une nouvelle importante, il se hâte de la rendre publique en l'inscrivant dans ce livre. (Archenholtz 1788, II: 118–119)

[They arrive in their hundreds to copy down word for word the news of the day, it is even quite surprising to see common people leafing through that book as if it belonged to them. This republican procedure does not astonish anyone here. Should a citizen, regardless of his station, learn of a piece of important news via a trusted source, or even by coincidence, he hastens to make it public by writing it down in that book.]

The vivid image of republican virtue contained in this passage was evidently considered worth close attention by the retranslator, who transmitted it carefully in an almost word-for-word manner:

Hundreds come to transcribe verbatim the news of the day; and strangers are surprized to see the common people turning over this book as if it belonged to them. This republican custom astonishes no body here. A citizen, whatever may be his condition in life, if he learns by any sure channel, or even by accident, an important piece of information, hastens to make it public by inserting it in this book. (Archenholtz 1794, 312; 1797, 312)

As such, this comparison suggests that the first English translator wished to represent what happened in and around Lloyd's more truthfully than Archenholtz. By omitting the passage in question, s/he gave Archenholtz's depiction of public spirit a more realistic air, while the retranslator seems to have liked the idea of hundreds of citizens selflessly hurrying to share their information. This, again, is an instance where an apparently republican-minded traveller downplayed Archenholtz's excessive praise for the virtuousness of British subjects. If the first translator did not wish Archenholtz to be discredited as a storyteller, s/he had no choice but to correct his most obvious exaggerations, as in the case of the publication figures quoted above. By contrast, the retranslation's main concern was not to guard Archenholtz's authority as a political commentator. Indeed, the prefixed advertisement called this into question with the following statement:

Had he composed his work with the same view which has actuated the Publishers of this translation he would no doubt have kept out many things that he has detailed without disguise. (Archenholtz 1794, n.p.)

This declaration makes it very plain that every publication of Archenholtz's *England* was perceived as an act of political rhetoric motivated by some particular "view". In fact, the Edinburgh retranslation thus not only corrected the first English translation but also omitted sections that might have had a negative effect on the national self-image. In practice, this meant that Archenholtz's attention to greed and other vices towards the end of the work became an object of censorship. Several anecdotes relating to food and drink which were included – though partly abridged – in the 1789 English translation were removed entirely in 1794. These included, for instance, an explanation for the weakness of coffee in England and the story of how the Forsters introduced Sauerkraut to English sailors (Archenholtz 1788, II: 121–129; 1789, II: 108–113; 1794, 315; 1797, 315). In the

Sauerkraut anecdote – which was still included in the first English translation – Archenholtz affirmed that Johann Reinhold and Georg Forster had recommended Sauerkraut on board *Resolution* during James Cook's second voyage, and that the government had subsequently made sure that “no ship of war, destined for a long voyage, should be unprovided with this excellent preventive [of scurvy]” (Archenholtz 1789, II: 113). Apparently, such remarks were considered as potentially harmful to the national self-image in the 1790s, perhaps because they seemed to credit foreigners for the strength of the British navy.

Moreover, a passage about Lord Baltimore's “seraglio” of “fine women” was also interrupted in the Edinburgh retranslation, while in the 1789 translation it continues with a description of Lord Baltimore's downfall, moving on to describe other whims of rich Englishmen (Archenholtz 1788, II: 178–191; 1789, II: 146–155; 1794, 340–341; 1797, 340–341). The thirteenth chapter focussing on the theatre, masquerades and debating societies did not make it to the 1794 retranslation at all, and the final chapter containing a severe critique of the corruptive effect of the East India Company on the British economy was also almost entirely omitted. The only sections which the retranslator chose to keep concerned the balance of power in the British government and some favourable remarks on the English navy (Archenholtz 1788, II: 283–298; 1789, II: 196–206; 1794, 342–346; 1797, 342–346). A passage explaining how, according to Montesquieu, the passions of “envy, jealousy, avarice, and ambition” produced “that alternate succession of good and evil which preserves the constitution of every free state” was, however, removed in 1794 (Archenholtz 1788, II: 284–285; 1789, II: 197–198; 1794, 344; 1797, 344). As noted above, what was most problematic about the final chapter from the perspective of the rewriting travellers was that in the beginning, Archenholtz declared that Britain would become bankrupt in the next war (Archenholtz 1785, I: 555–557; 1788, II: 275–278; 1789, II: 189–192; Kraus 2006, 673). This was something that the retranslator did not want the British public to read in the context of the Revolutionary Wars, while Noorthouck had still thanked Archenholtz for the warning in 1790:

This German writer is a bye-stander; we are playing the desperate game, and must abide by the result of it; whether we can make any profitable use of his observations or not, he is intitled to our thanks for his warning. (Noorthouck 1790, 32)

The conclusion of the work was also edited more heavy-handedly in 1794 than in 1789. A quote from “[Catherine] Macaulay, the celebrated female historian” was omitted, most likely due to its radically republican connotations (Archenholtz 1789, 222; 1794, 346; 1797, 346; Green 2018, 35–48). At the very end of the book, the retranslation added a warning for the British not “to alter or infringe their most valuable constitution, the guardian and preserver of all their rights”, for “then will that mighty empire fall like ancient Rome, a prey to anarchy, bloodshed and tyranny” (Archenholtz 1794, 347; 1797, 347). Formulated at the “juncture” when Louis XVI had recently been beheaded, the conservative intent of this ending was clear, and it accords with the perspective of those Scottish thinkers who were troubled by the military republicanism taking place in France (see McDaniel 2013, 193–203).

Overall, it therefore seems that while Bilderbeck's French translation as well as the first anonymous English translation spurred critical discussion in the British press, the twice-issued retranslation instead removed anecdotes that might have made the British

constitution appear weak and was not publicly assessed at all. This development sits uneasily with Archenholtz's argument about the liberty of the English press (Archenholtz 1785, I: 13; Maurer 1987, 196). It is also interesting how in the opening chapter, Archenholtz's originally francophone notion of "Das Qu'en dira-t-on" – which seems to relate to pivotal role of the sense of honour in monarchies – faded in the English translations (Archenholtz 1785, I: 3, 42; Archenholtz 1788, I: 3, 47-48). While the first English translator translated it in italics, noting that "*The opinion of the world, so formidable in other countries, is there disregarded*", the retranslator used the much plainer expression "The observations and remarks of other people are here no restraint" (Archenholtz 1789, I: 3; Archenholtz 1794, 3; 1797, 3; 3). Subtle though such rewritings are, they will have made a difference when readers of the English translations reflected on their own political standpoint in relation to the text.

Conclusion

As already observed, there was nothing "new" within the 1797 London reprint *A Picture of England* when compared with the abridged and manipulated Edinburgh publication which it reproduced. Its alleged newness consisted only of the transfer of the 1794 retranslation to the London market. Quoting the reprinted retranslation as "Archenholtz" when studying British history therefore means accepting the "translation pact" produced by Archenholtz's anonymous rewriters (see Alvstad 2014, 270–284, at 271). From this perspective, presenting eighteenth-century translations of travel writing as conveyors of the original traveller-author's voice is problematic, since it might result in mistaking the voice of a rewriter as that of the original author. A related point that seems especially important with regard to travel writing is that travellee-rewriters will have been aware of addressing an audience which was different from the original one. As shown above, Archenholtz's depiction of England was mediated in several stages between 1785 and 1797, and thus the audience as well as the publication context changed several times. Furthermore, from the perspective of geography, the trajectories stretching from Leipzig to London via Gotha and Edinburgh represent only a fraction of the work's circulation, since it was published five times in French and also translated into Dutch, Swedish and Russian (Maurer 1987, 185; Ruof 1965, xv).

What I hope to have achieved by directing attention to the British travellee-rewriters of Archenholtz's *England* is an improved understanding of the political message of a work which has hitherto been considered mainly in the broad terms of "Enlightenment" and "Anglophilia". Indeed, as Archenholtz's contemporary British decoders noticed, his depiction of England highlighted republican virtue and suggested that a monarchy could also be considered as a "free state". Furthermore, Archenholtz did not only praise England; he also included some negative phenomena in his tableau and criticised British policies in relation to the East India Company. By responding to these features of *England*, his British travellee-rewriters could take a stand on the question what kind of a country the Kingdom of Great Britain ought to be.

Unfortunately, one must admit that the alertness of eighteenth-century readers to the intricacies of the rhetoric of the time as well as their ability to contextualise various publications is likely to have exceeded our own. Nevertheless, considering *England's* translators, publishers and reviewers as rewriting travelles opens a perspective from which the

fascinating “afterlife” of Archenholtz’s work in the British public sphere can be appreciated. From this perspective, as I hope to have shown, translations of travel writing can be studied as generators of new discussions among the travellers, rather than as mere second-hand representations of their culture and society.

Note

1. This review was reprinted in *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine* 2 (1790), 456–458.

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