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# Translating English Fictional Names

## An Analysis of Anthroponyms in the Italian Translations of *The Lord of the Rings*

## Abstract

*This paper highlights the pivotal role played by proper names in fantasy literature and examines the techniques employed by the Italian translators of J. R. R. Tolkien's* The Lord of the Rings *in the translation of anthroponyms.*

*Notwithstanding the vast number of neologisms found in fantasy literature and the challenges they pose to translators, fictional names typical of such genre still play a marginal role in Translation Studies. The aim of this paper is to identify problems and trends relating to the translation procedures adopted in the Italian translations of one of the most representative works of the aforementioned genre.*

*The second and latest Italian translation of* The Lord of the Rings *(2019-2020), published fifty years after the first one (1970), was the prompt for this investigation focusing on a sample of translatable anthroponyms. Source and target names were analysed and classified in order to identify translation trends characterising the two Italian translations. The results of the investigation show a higher tendency towards adaptation in the previous translation and a preference for more source-oriented techniques in the newest one.*

## 1. Introduction

Even though literary translation has consistently attracted attention since the birth of Translation Studies, there still remain some aspects requiring further investigation. In particular, the translation of fictional names found in fantasy literature seems to play a marginal role in scholarly studies, possibly on account of some degree of resistance to the inclusion of this genre in the literary canon. Translation problems posed by fantasy literature, alongside other genres such as science fiction, "have been largely ignored in translation studies, or have been handled as peripheral issues" (Loponen 2009, 165). Neologisms populating fantasy works, which appear to be underinvestigated in the field of onomastics as well (see Zangrandi 2017), require particular attention and the adoption of specific techniques in the translation

process. Their peculiarities and complexities arise from the crucial role they assume in the text: they are the result of an intentional process carried out by the author and constitute key elements for the creation of what should be perceived by the reader as a "possible world" (see Doležel 1998; Pavel 1986).

This paper discusses the procedures adopted in the Italian translation of proper names found in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, one of the most representative works of the fantasy genre. In order to carry out an empirical investigation, a sample of translatable anthroponyms was selected with the aim of assessing the translation techniques adopted by the Italian translators in relation to the word-formation processes underlying the source words and identify translation trends in the two target texts. This investigation was prompted by the recently published new Italian translation of the work (2019-2020), appearing some fifty years after the previous one (1970) and twenty years after the revision of the latter (2000).

## 2. Retranslating *The Lord of the Rings*

Unlike the source text, there can never be a single, final target text. Firstly, language change requires the production of new translations replacing the 'outdated' ones, and secondly, as pointed out by Eco (1995), translation is a form of interpretation, hence a translated text represents only one of the many possible interpretations of the source text.

Notwithstanding these premises, retranslating a literary text that is well-established in the target culture is at times a difficult task, considering that readers hardly accept a version differing from the one they are used to. The tendency to hold on to a specific translation mostly emerges when it comes to onomastics: for instance, the appearance of the original name *Han Solo* in the French rendition of one of the episodes of the *Star Wars* film series was not welcomed by the audience, forcing the production to reintroduce the more familiar *Yan Solo* (Grass 2018, 122). As it often happens when it comes to change, the new Italian translation of Tolkien's trilogy has stirred intense debate among readers (Scattolini 2020).

*The Lord of the Rings* was first published in the United Kingdom between 1954 and 1955 at the hands of the publishing company Allen & Unwin which, despite the author's intention, opted to divide the work into three volumes for economic reasons. It made its first appearance in Italy twelve years later, in 1967, when Astrolabio published the first volume of the trilogy, *La compagnia dell'anello (The Fellowship of the Ring),* translated by Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca. The full work was published in 1970 by Rusconi, which maintained Alliata's translation but entrusted Quirino Principe with revision. Publication rights passed on to Bompiani in 2000: the new edition was based on the previous one, with further revision carried out with the help of

the Società Tolkieniana Italiana, an Italian society committed to studying and disseminating Tolkien's works in Italy. This version is the one considered for this study since it was reprinted several times and can be referred to as the most popular edition of Alliata's translation. Ottavio Fatica was recently entrusted by Bompiani with a new translation, published between 2019 and 2020.[1] Heated discussions, based on published excerpts and interviews granted by the translator, started to populate online channels even before the new edition was released, mostly discrediting the work of retranslation promoted by Bompiani and showing the 'conservatism' characterising most readers.

Whilst the response of long-standing readers may be fairly predictable and an investigation of the influence of patronage in a Lefeverian sense (see Lefevere 1992) is beyond the scope of this paper, the renewed status of literary translators is worth addressing. Thanks to the media, the invisible figure discussed by Venuti (1995) seems to have risen to a position of prominence: before the new edition was released, the name of the new translator and some of his translation choices, concerning onomastics in particular, were already known by most of the Italian readers of Tolkien's works. Fatica's voice found a place in what Genette (1987) categorises as epitext, which comprises elements of the paratext such as messages conveyed through the media. In an interview given before the release, Fatica discussed the lacunae and mistakes found in the previous translation, the need to preserve the variety of languages and registers of the source text, and his translation choices concerning proper names. In particular, he tackled the problems posed by those names having a specific etymological origin not to be neglected during the translation process (Lipperini 2018).

Principe, editor of the previous translation, defines the negative response to the new publication "a sort of revolt on the part of many Tolkien readers" (Savelli 2020, 11, translation mine), and the proper names differing from those in the previous edition seem to play an important role in this "revolt."

## 3. Fictional names

According to Viezzi (2004), fictional characters and places are tightly bound to their eloquent name, which may affect their destiny, emphasise specific features, or trigger certain reactions or associations in the reader. An example is *Guglielmo da Baskerville* in Eco's *Il nome della rosa (The Name of the Rose),* whose name exemplifies the character's role by containing a reference to the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and, consequently, to *Sherlock Holmes,* so that

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[1] *La compagnia dell'anello* was published in October 2019, *Le due torri* in May 2020, *Il ritorno del re* in July 2020.

readers can associate the character to the well-known detective. Moreover, as suggested by Wilmet (1991), onomatopoeic sounds, synaesthesia, or homonymy with a common noun may also underlie the author's onomastic choices.

Lexical units denoting creatures, places, and other elements in fantasy novels play an even more crucial and complex role within the text, as they contribute to the creation of a fictional world and, consequently, a fictional culture. Loponen (2009) suggests the use of the term *irrealia* in studies focusing on fantastic literature: as opposed to *realia,* that is the elements binding a text to a certain culture, historical period, or geographical location, *irrealia* are fictional *realia* which contribute to defining the setting of fantasy novels. Since all proper names in this literary genre serve a narrative purpose, providing the reader with interpretative keys, onomastic choices concerning *irrealia* are never random.

Grass (2018) distinguishes four types of fictional names:

- existing names;
- names imitating existing names;
- meaningful names;
- pure names.

The use of existing or potentially existing proper names contributes to creating the *effet de réel* theorised by Barthes (1968), who points out the importance of details in modern literary realism. The aim of meaningful names is to show distinctive traits through connotations, whereas pure names are characterised by a seeming absence of semantic content. The latter, however, can be identified with reference to a language existing within the narrated world. Tolkien's works are full of references to linguistic systems created and codified by the author himself with the aim of assigning them to the different populations inhabiting his fictional universe. As explained in Appendix F to *The Lord of the Rings,* most anthroponyms and toponyms have a meaning in the aforementioned languages and are the result of a translation process undertaken by the author himself, as they are "translations of older names" or "alterations of Elvish names" (Tolkien 2007, 1134). The name of the river *Brandywine,* for example, is derived from Elvish *Baranduin,* composed of *baran,* meaning "golden brown," and *duin,* meaning "(large) river." In addition to fictional etymology, certain names can be traced back to archaic stages of real languages such as Old English, as in the case of the anthroponyms *Theoden* and *Éomer,* the former from Old English *þeóden*, meaning "the chief of a þeód, a prince, king," and the latter from *eoh*—"a war-horse, charger"—and *mære*—"great, excellent" (Bosworth 2014). As suggested by etymology, the

former is a king and the latter a great commander.

Meaningful names can be further classified according to the morphological structures first proposed by Zimmer (1981) and later by Manini (1996):

- transparent names;
- transparent composite names;
- semi-transparent composite names.

The first type comprises all those names displaying a transparent form that can be traced back to a common noun, whilst the second type comprises all transparent names composed of two meaningful elements. Finally, a semi-transparent composite name consists of two elements, only one of which can be traced back to a common noun. A fourth category was added by Manini in order to include the following instances of manipulation:

- transformations;
- portmanteau names.

Transformations are obtained through orthographical, phonological, or morphological adaptation, whereas portmanteau names are created by means of blending.

### 3.1 The translation of fictional names

Besides presenting translators with the same challenges posed by other text units, fictional names are possibly among the most complex elements to deal with due to their implications and pivotal role within the text: they serve a narrative purpose and should be translated accordingly. Whenever translation of proper names is addressed, the first issue emerging is that of translatability or untranslatability. In this respect, the past tendency to translate proper names seems to have given way to a foreignising approach, as proper names are often found unaltered in target texts. Of the two methods first theorised by Schleiermacher in 1813 (see Schleiermacher 2021) and later by Venuti (1995), foreignisation, as opposed to domestication, allows translators to preserve otherness instead of adapting elements of the source text to the target culture.

In examining the procedures adopted in the Italian translation of anthroponyms in *The Lord of the Rings,* the present study adopts the classification proposed by Ballard (2001) and Grass (2018) with regard to the translation of proper names.

Ballard mainly distinguishes between borrowing and literal translation. Preservation of the original form of a name can be referred to as borrowing, which is the process through which lexemes of a language enter the lexicon of another language. As it often happens in language contact, borrowing undergoes processes of phonetic and graphic assimilation when the source word is adapted to fit the target language. Most names found in fantasy literature are neologisms created *ex nihilo,* seemingly lacking semantic content and thus requiring to be transferred to the target text by means of borrowing, sometimes adapted through transliteration, transcription, or assimilation. With regard to names in *The Lord of the Rings,* however, precise indications regarding their pronunciation are provided by the author in Appendix E to the book, therefore phonetic and graphic assimilation is not necessary.

Literal translation is adopted when proper names are transparent and can thus be traced back to a common noun: this procedure involves translating "the word that underlies the proper name into the TL" (Newmark 1981, 71). The processes usually adopted in the translation of transparent names can be summarised into the two categories proposed by Grass (2018), namely calque and adaptation. Calque occurs when "the morphemic constituents of the borrowed word or phrase are translated item by item into equivalent morphemes in the new language" (Crystal 2008, 64) and it can be adopted in translation also in a hybrid form, by translating solely the constituents with semantic content. Where calque is not appropriate or possible, the translator can have recourse to adaptation, that is a creative transfer of the source meaning. For instance, the toponym *Longbottom* was translated as *Pianilungone* in Alliata's Italian translation of *The Lord of the Rings*. The target word is a creative adaptation of the calque "piano lungo," in which "piano" conveys the sense "low-lying land," provided by the OED under the headword "bottom" (2021), and the adoption of the augmentative suffix *-one* results in a comic, fairy-tale effect in line with the typical onomastics of Hobbits and the places they inhabit.

## 4. Fictional names in *The Lord of the Rings*

The editor's note opening the 2000 Bompiani edition of *The Lord of the Rings* explains why anthroponyms and toponyms represent a major problem in the translation of the work. Principe points out, for instance, how Hobbit names, which may generally be associated with a bourgeois, fairy-tale or comic environment, are clearly distinguished from names recalling Nordic and chivalric lore belonging to characters such as Elves. The same occurs with names identifying the lands inhabited by the former and the latter. According to the editor, the allusions conveyed by onomastics should be preserved in translation with no exception; nevertheless, he acknowledges the impossibility to practise such a prescriptive method in literary translation.

Notwithstanding the presence of the nouns *bag* and *sack,* the Hobbit surnames *Baggins* and *Sackville-Baggins* are left unchanged in the Italian translation so as to avoid "strident clashes" (Principe 2000, 21, translation mine). This choice favours sound but sacrifices semantic content, and, besides confirming the fact that translation losses are inevitable, shows how difficult it is to maintain a consistent procedure in the translation of literary onomastics.

Translators of *The Lord of the Rings,* however, are somehow lucky since numerous indications provided by the author himself with regard to proper names are available. In addition to those concerning word-formation processes found in Appendix F to the work, Tolkien provided specific notes to translators: first published as *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings* in the posthumous volume *A Tolkien Compass,* edited by Lobdell (1975), they are now found under the original title *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings* in Hammond and Scull's publication entitled *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion* (2005). These notes were written after the publication of the first translations, the Dutch one (1956-1957) and the Swedish one (1959-1961), in order to inform the publisher Rayner Unwin that the author did not agree with the translators' choices concerning proper names. *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings* only covers translatable onomastics, that is transparent and semi-transparent names, and is divided into three sections, concerning the translation of "Persons, People, Creatures," "Places," and "Things" respectively (Hammond and Scull 2005, 750-782). Each section consists of a list of names in alphabetical order accompanied by the author's commentary, where the meaning of each name is illustrated and possible ways of translating it are suggested. Moreover, it is clearly stated that all the names not included in the list "should be left entirely unchanged in any language used in translation" (2005: 750-751).

Despite the author's explicit indications, the surnames *Baggins* and *Sackville-Baggins* appear unaltered in both Italian translations for the reasons explained by Principe, but most transparent names underwent translation processes.


### 4.1 Analysis of a sample of anthroponyms and their translations

This section discusses the techniques adopted by the two Italian translators of *The Lord of the Rings* in the translation of anthroponyms by means of an investigation of source names and their Italian equivalents.

In order to carry out the analysis, a sample of anthroponyms was selected from the synoptic table drawn up by the Società Tolkieniana Italiana,[2] a document collecting translatable proper

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[2] https://www.jrrtolkien.it/download/tabella-ordinata-alfabeticamente-per-nome-delloriginale-di-john-ronald-reuel-tolkien/. Last visited 09/06/2021.

names of characters, places, events, and other *irrealia* in *The Lord of the Rings* alongside the respective target words appearing in the version of Alliata's translation revised by Principe, henceforth called "Alliata-Principe," and the new translation by Fatica. Non-English proper names (in Elvish languages, Old English, etc.) are not included in the table since, as instructed by the author, they should not be translated.

The anthroponyms to be analysed were selected by applying the following criteria:

- they consist of a first and last name belonging to Men from Bree[3] and Hobbits (of all the characters in the novel, these are more consistently given transparent names);
- they appear in different forms in the two translations;
- only the anthroponym belonging to the family member having a more prominent role in the plot was selected where the same last name is shared among several characters.

Table 1 shows the selected anthroponyms in alphabetical order alongside the respective equivalents found in the two Italian translations.

| Tolkien | Alliata-Principe | Fatica |
|---|---|---|
| Barliman Butterbur | Omorzo Cactaceo | Omorzo Farfaraccio |
| Bill Ferny | Billy Felci | Bill Felcioso |
| Carl Cotton | Carlo Cotton | Carl Cotton |
| Elfstan Fairbairn | Elfstan il Paloide | Elfstan Bellinfante |
| Fredegar Bolger | Fredegario Bolgeri | Fredegario Bolger |
| Gorhendad Oldbuck | Gorhendad Vecchiobecco | Gorhendad Vecchiodaino |
| Harry Goatleaf | Enrico Lanicardo | Harry Caprifoglio |
| Hugo Bracegirdle | Ugo Serracinta | Ugo Pancieri |
| Mat Heathertoes | Mat Diterica | Mat Piedibrugo |
| Meriadoc Brandybuck | Meriadoc Brandibuck | Meriadoc Brandaino |
| Milo Burrows | Milo Rintanati | Milo Covacciolo |
| Peregrin Took | Peregrino Tuc | Peregrino Took |
| Robin Smallburrow | Robin Tanabuca | Robin Cunicolo |

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[3] Bree is a fictional village in *The Lord of the Rings*.

| Rowlie Appledore | Rowlie Melodoro | Rowlie Meladoro |
|---|---|---|
| Samwise Gamgee | Samvise Gamgee | Samplicio Gamgee |
| Sancho Proudfoot | Sancio Tronfipiede | Sancho Pededegno |
| Tobold Hornblower | Tobaldo Soffiatromba | Tobold Soffiacorno |
| Tom Pickthorn | Tom Caprifoglio | Tom Piccaspini |
| Willie Banks | Willie Acclivi | Willie Scarpati |

**Tab. 1:** Sample of anthroponyms and respective Italian translations

### 4.1.1 Barliman Butterbur

As explained in *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings*, the innkeeper of Bree bears a name suited to his role as an ale-brewer: *Barliman* is a compound created by combining the altered spelling of "barley," which metonymically refers to beer, and "man." In order to reproduce the compound in the target language, Alliata-Principe resorted to a calque, in which the position of the nouns is inverted so as to obtain the anthroponym *Omorzo*, which was retained by Fatica. The surname *Butterbur* comes from the common name of the species *Petasites vulgaris,* chosen "to fit the generally botanical names of Bree" (Hammond and Scull 2005, 754). Tolkien provides a brief description of the plant and invites translators to adopt the corresponding denomination in the target language, preferably if it contains the semantic equivalent of "butter." The version by Alliata-Principe presents a neologism combining the word "cactus" with the derivative suffix *-aceo,* taking into account Tolkien's notes suggesting the possibility to use the name of another "fat thick plant" as an alternative to literal translation (2005, 755). Contrarily, Fatica adopted the Italian common name of the plant chosen by Tolkien, "farfaraccio." In both cases, the comic, fairy-tale connotations of the source word are retained, although any reference to butter is lost.

### 4.1.2 Bill Ferny, Harry Goatleaf, Mat Heathertoes, Rowlie Appledore, Tom Pickthorn

Like the innkeeper, all the Men from Bree are given last names derived from botanical species. *Ferny* was translated as *Felci* (a literal translation of "ferns") by Alliata-Principe and, more accurately, as *Felcioso* by Fatica, who included an adjective ending. Moreover, Fatica retained the first name *Bill* in its original form, whilst it appears as *Billy* in the previous translation.

The name *Goatleaf* refers to "a kind of honeysuckle, esp. Lonicera caprifolium" (OED 2021), a species commonly referred to as "caprifoglio" in Italian, the name chosen by Fatica. Alliata-Principe's version, *Lanicardo,* is a neologism including reference to a different species, the thistle ("cardo"). Alliata-Principe adopted the Italian name *Enrico* to translate the first name

*Harry*, following the author's suggestion to use a similar, popular name in the target language, whereas Fatica preserved it unchanged.

*Heathertoes* appears as *Diterica,* a blend including "dita" ("toes") and "erica" ("heather"), in Alliata-Principe. Fatica chose "piedi" ("feet")—possibly intended as the poetic form "piè di" ("feet of")—instead of a literal translation of "toes" and another Italian term for "heather," creating the composite name *Piedibrugo.*

According to the author's notes, *Appledore* is an archaic term for "apple-tree," survived in certain English place names, and the reference to the apple tree should be retained in translation. The information provided by Tolkien can be verified by consulting *Bosworth-Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary,* in which the sense "apple-tree" is presented under the headword "æppelder" (Bosworth 2014). In order to adhere to the form of the source word and preserve its sound, both translators created a compound ending in *-doro.* Reference to the tree is accurately preserved by Alliata-Principe in *Melodoro,* whilst it is lost in the compound *Meladoro* chosen by Fatica, which refers to the fruit instead.

*Pickthorn* is a compound including the noun "thorn," a "spike or prickle" or a "plant which bears thorns" (OED 2021), an element maintained by Fatica in the compound *Piccaspini* and lost in Alliata-Principe's creative transfer *Caprifoglio*, which makes use of the Italian equivalent of "honeysuckle."


### 4.1.3 Elfstan Fairbairn, Milo Burrows, Robin Smallburrow, Willie Banks

In all these Hobbit names, the untranslatable first name was retained unaltered in translation. *Fairbairn* was accurately translated as *Bellinfante* by Fatica and is found as *il Paloide* in Alliata-Principe, who resorted to a reference to a Hobbit species instead of translating the source name.

Even though the surnames *Burrows* and *Smallburrow* include the same element, no consistent procedure was adopted by the Italian translators. According to the OED, "burrow" denotes "a hole or excavation made in the ground for a dwelling-place by rabbits, foxes and the like" (2021). The semantic content is retained by both translators, but Alliata-Principe opted for two creative transfers, *Rintanati* and *Tanabuca,* and Fatica selected the nouns *Covacciolo,* in which the plural form is not retained, and *Cunicolo,* both denoting small animals' dwelling-places.

With regard to *Banks,* Alliata-Principe opted for the poetic form *Acclivi,* in line with the consistently elevated style which characterises this version of the text. According to Savelli (2020), a tendency to lower the linguistic register can be identified in Fatica's translation, as

exemplified by the choice of the near-synonym "scarpata," which was turned into *Scarpati* by making use of the plural morpheme typical of Italian surnames.

### 4.1.4 Carl Cotton, Sancho Proudfoot, Tobold Hornblower

In these examples, first names underwent domestication or graphic adaptation in the translation by Alliata-Principe, where they are Italianised as *Carlo, Sancio* and *Tobaldo,* and were restored to their original form in Fatica's version.

The transparent compound *Proudfoot,* whose constituent elements can be traced back to an adjective and noun, appears in the Italian translations in the form of two different calques. Both the structure of the compound and the comic connotations were retained by Alliata-Principe in the neologism *Tronfipiede,* created by combining "tronfio" ("boastful") with *"piede"* ("foot"), whereas a different technique was adopted by Fatica. The elements of the compound appear reversed and refined in his translation, *Pededegno,* obtained by combining the archaic form "pede" (from Latin *pes, pedis)* and "degno" ("worthy"). The repetition of the letter *d* produces an alliteration effect.

The compound *Hornblower* became *Soffiatromba* in the previous translation and *Soffiacorno* in the latest one. The verb "soffiare" ("to blow") appears in both versions, but the noun "horn" is translated as "tromba" ("trumpet") by Alliata-Principe and more accurately as "corno" ("horn") by Fatica.

### 4.1.5 Fredegar Bolger, Hugo Bracegirdle

These are two examples of Hobbit names in which the first name was Italianised in both translations: *Fredegar* appears as *Fredegario,* whereas *Hugo* underwent a process of graphic assimilation and became *Ugo.* The procedures adopted to translate the last names *Bolger* and *Bracegirdle,* however, are different.

The surname *Bolger* was Italianised by Alliata-Principe through a domesticating process resulting in the surname *Bolgeri,* even though, according to the author's notes, translators are required to leave the surname *Bolger* unchanged due to the absence of semantic content. Fatica retained the original form and consistently made use of the same technique in transferring non-transparent surnames.

Different techniques were adopted by the translators to transfer the surname *Bracegirdle* into the target text. As explained in *Nomenclature,* the semantic content refers to "the hobbit tendency to be fat and so to strain their belts," thus requiring an equivalent meaning in the target word, such as "Tight-belt, or Belt-tightener/strainer/stretcher" (Hammond and Scull

2005: 754). The translation by Alliata-Principe presents the calque *Serracinta,* which preserves the structure of the compound and its comic connotations, while Fatica resorted to a domesticating strategy by creating the surname *Pancieri,* which sums up the concept in a single word ("panciera," meaning "girdle") and presents the morpheme -i, typical of Italian surnames.

### 4.1.6 Gorhendad Oldbuck, Meriadoc Brandybuck

As explained by Tolkien, the Welsh name *Gorhendad* should not be translated. Like *Meriadoc,* a name belonging to one of the main characters in the novel, it appears unaltered in both translations.

The surname *Oldbuck,* borne by Meriadoc Brandybuck's forefather, is a compound created through the combination of the adjective "old" and the noun "buck," the latter from Old English *bucc* ("male deer") or *bucca* ("he-goat"). *Vecchiobecco,* the calque created by Alliata-Principe, is based on the second etymological sense proposed by the author. Such a decision raises some issues: since "becco" means both "beak" and "male goat" in Italian, the adoption of this noun may compromise the transmission of the original sense, in case the reader associates the signifier with a bird's beak rather than with a goat. Furthermore, the same noun appears in its original form in other proper names in Alliata-Principe's version, which lacks consistency: the toponyms *Buck Hill, Buckland,* and *Bucklebury* are translated as *Colle Buck, Terra di Buck,* and *Buckburgo* respectively, and the anthroponym *Brandybuck* as *Brandibuck,* distinguished by a simple graphic adaptation (*y* is replaced with *i*). The semantic content is thus lost.

Fatica opted for the first etymological sense in choosing the target name *Vecchiodaino* for *Oldbuck* and consistently retained the noun "daino" ("deer") in the other names containing the element "buck." *Buck Hill, Buckland,* and *Bucklebury* are found as *Coldaino, Landaino,* and *Borgodaino* in the new translation. The surname *Brandybuck,* which combines the first element of the toponym *Brandywine* with the second one of the surname *Oldbuck,* appears as *Brandaino* in the new translation. Fatica preserved the semantic content of the source word and adapted the compound elements, "brandy" and "daino," so as to avoid the repetition of the letter *d.*

### 4.1.7 Peregrin Took

Alongside his cousin Meriadoc Brandybuck, Peregrin Took plays a prominent role in the story. He is known especially by his nickname *Pippin,* Italianised as *Pipino* by Alliata-Principe, probably owing to association with the name of king Pipino il Breve (Pepin the Short), and restored to its original form by Fatica. Notwithstanding the author's indication to keep it "in form and spelling" (Hammond and Scull 2005, 764), his full name *Peregrin* underwent a process

of adaptation in both versions, acquiring the suffix *-o* as in the archaic Italian equivalent of the English adjective and noun "peregrine"—"travelling; wandering," "a pilgrim; a traveller in a foreign country" (OED 2021).

The phonetic adaptation applied by Alliata-Principe to the surname *Took,* which became *Tuc,* conveys information about the correct pronunciation, whereas it appears in its original form in Fatica's version. Both translators consistently adopted the same procedure when translating the associated toponym *Tookland,* found as *Tuclandia* in the previous translation and as *Tooklandia* in the latest one. Alliata-Principe adopted the same form in the translation of *Tuckborough,* which became *Tucboro* through an attempt to partly retain the original pronunciation, whilst it is found as *Borgo Tuck* in the latest translation. Readers of Alliata-Principe's version might be led to believe that the place name *Tucboro* is somehow connected to the other names including the element "tuc;" however, this is not the case since the source name includes the element "tuck" rather than "took."

### 4.1.8 Samwise Gamgee

Samwise's pivotal role in the story might be the reason why the different anthroponym appearing in the new translation has bewildered readers. His last name *Gamgee,* as well as his nickname *Sam,* is left unchanged in both versions, but *Samwise* underwent two different translation processes. It is considered as a non-transparent anthroponym by Alliata-Principe, who retained it resorting to graphic assimilation of the letter *w*, changed into *v* to adapt it to the target language. Since Tolkien did not include this name in *Nomenclature*, it should be preserved unchanged according to his instructions. However, the name is not devoid of semantic content, and its etymological origin is explained in Appendix F to *The Lord of the Rings*. Contrarily to what one could think, the anthroponym *Samwise* does not combine the name Sam and the adjective "wise:" it is a modernisation of Old English *samwís*, meaning "dull, foolish" (Bosworth 2014), used to convey the sense "halfwise, simple" (Tolkien 2007, 1136). Fatica made use of this piece of information to create *Samplicio,* which recalls the archaic name *Simplicio* and conveys the character's naivety through association with the adjective "semplice" ("simple"). Like the source word, it can be abbreviated to *Sam.*

### 4.2 Translation trends in the analysed sample

In order to identify translation trends in the sample of anthroponyms analysed in section 4.1, first and last names were separated and classified according to the underlying word-formation processes and the translation procedures adopted by the Italian translators.

A systematic comparison of the translation procedures is illustrated in Table 2. Source names are presented in alphabetical order and classified according to the typologies proposed by Grass and Manini: names lacking semantic content are grouped under the label "existing/pure," whilst meaningful names are found under "transparent names," "transparent composite names," and "semi-transparent composite names." The procedures adopted by the Italian translators were classified with reference to the categories proposed by Ballard and Grass as follows:

- Borrowing: untranslated name;
- Adapted borrowing: untranslated name with graphic adaptation or minor changes;
- Calque: literal translation;
- Adaptation: creative transfer.

| Types of anthroponyms | Tolkien | Alliata-Principe | Fatica |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Existing/pure** | *Bill* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Bolger* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Carl* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Cotton* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Elfstan* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Fredegar* | Adapted borrowing | Adapted borrowing |
| | *Gamgee* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Gorhendad* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Harry* | Adaptation | Borrowing |
| | *Hugo* | Adapted borrowing | Adapted borrowing |
| | *Mat* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Meriadoc* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Milo* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Peregrin* | Adapted borrowing | Adapted borrowing |
| | *Robin* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Rowlie* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Sancho* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Tobold* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Tom* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Took* | Adapted borrowing | Borrowing |
| | *Willie* | Borrowing | Borrowing |
| **Transparent names** | *Appledore* | Adaptation | Adaptation |
| | *Banks* | Calque | Calque |
| | *Burrows* | Adaptation | Calque |
| | *Butterbur* | Adaptation | Calque |
| | *Ferny* | Adaptation | Calque |
| | *Goatleaf* | Adaptation | Calque |
| **Transparent composite names** | *Barliman* | Calque | Calque |
| | *Bracegirdle* | Calque | Adaptation |
| | *Fairbairn* | Adaptation | Calque |
| | *Heathertoes* | Calque | Adaptation |
| | *Hornblower* | Calque | Calque |
| | *Oldbuck* | Calque | Calque |
| | *Pickthorn* | Adaptation | Calque |
| | *Proudfoot* | Calque | Calque |
| | *Smallburrow* | Adaptation | Calque |
| **Semi-transparent composite names** | *Brandybuck* | Adapted borrowing | Calque |
| | *Samwise* | Adapted borrowing | Adaptation |

**Tab. 2:** Procedures adopted in the translation of the analysed anthroponyms

The distribution of the translating procedures listed in Table 2 is presented in Table 3, which shows the number of occurrences of each procedure in Alliata-Principe's and Fatica's sample. As a result of the separation of first and last names, the anthroponyms under investigation are 38 in total. Borrowing and adapted borrowing are equally distributed in Alliata-Principe's sample, in which we find 11 instances of the former and 11 of the latter, whilst a higher number of source names appear unaltered in the new translation (18 in total). Fatica resorted to adapted borrowing only 3 times.

The anthroponyms in Alliata-Principe's translation include 7 calques and 9 adaptations, whilst calque is the prevailing procedure in Fatica's sample, where 13 target names are calques and only 4 are the result of a creative transfer. These data suggest a preference for borrowing and literal translation in Fatica's translation, as opposed to a higher tendency towards adaptation in Alliata-Principe's version. In particular, existing and pure names lacking semantic content appear to be mainly preserved in their original form in the newest translation, possibly in view of the phenomenon of globalisation that has made Italian readers more tolerant towards Anglicisms and foreign names. The 2000 edition considered for this investigation is based on the 1970 translation by Alliata, originating in a time when domestication of proper names was a much more common strategy and fantastic literature, studded with neologisms, was not as widespread as it is nowadays. With regard to transparent names, a tendency towards literal translation and greater attention to the word-formation processes applied by the author appear to emerge in Fatica's version, where several names creatively adapted by Alliata-Principe are literally translated *(Butterbur, Goatleaf, Pickthorn*, etc.). Moreover, Fatica's strategy appears more consistent, if we consider names such as *Brandybuck* and *Oldbuck,* which, as explained in section 4.1, present issues in Alliata-Principe's translation. Overall, Fatica's approach to the translation of anthroponyms seems to be more source-oriented, as far as the analysed sample is concerned.

| Translation procedure | Alliata-Principe | Fatica |
|---|---|---|
| Borrowing | 11 | 18 |
| Adapted borrowing | 11 | 3 |
| Calque | 7 | 13 |
| Adaptation | 9 | 4 |
| **Tot** | 38 | 38 |

**Tab. 3:** Distribution of translation procedures in the analysed sample

## 5. Conclusion

The present study considers onomastics as a crucial element of fantasy literature and investigates the problems posed by its translation, highlighting the need for translators to be aware of the word-formation processes underlying fictional names. A comparison of the target names chosen by different translators offers the possibility to shed light on the procedures

adopted and to understand how translation approaches change through time, following the diachronic development of the target language and culture.

The analysis presented in this paper focuses on a sample of anthroponyms found in *The Lord of the Rings,* a milestone in the fantasy genre: the procedures adopted by the Italian translators were examined and classified with the aim of identifying translation trends. Results show how the newest translation appears to favour borrowing and calque over adaptation, the latter more widely used in the previous one. The fewer instances of adapted borrowing found in Fatica's sample, in which unaltered source names are preponderant, may be explained by a higher tolerance toward foreign words exhibited by the target language. The reduced resort to adaptation techniques in favour of literal translation identified in the newest version of the target text suggests a greater attention paid to the author's choices, in line with the evolution of Translation Studies. At present, translators seem more willing to accept the cultural otherness of the source text and retain it in the target text (see Cavagnoli 2010), rather than cancel it through the "insidious domestication" denounced by Venuti (1995, 17). Fatica's translation, however, is not to be considered final or better than the one by Alliata: both target texts are tightly bound to the time and culture in which they were produced, and further versions are likely to be published in the future in view of the passing of time which makes the practice of retranslation necessary. As suggested by Ricœur (2004), we need to abandon the dream of the perfect translation and welcome different interpretations of a source text.

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