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TOPONYMS IN RETRANSLATION: OTTAVIO FATICA'S *MIDDLE EARTH*

Abstract: The fact that Tolkien's stories were primarily linguistically inspired is evidenced not only by his meticulous attention to anthroponyms and toponyms to ensure they fully described characters or places, but also by the musicality and connection between sound and the named object. The toponyms in *The Lord of the Rings* create a political and geographical world: the locations in the novel, reprised and quoted in the various languages of the peoples of *Middle Earth*, refer to a shared history and make the fictional world more vivid and real. For Tolkien, anthroponyms and toponyms were so crucial to the correct experience of his universe that he devised a guide for translators. Given its status as a literary classic, *The Lord of the Rings* has undergone numerous retranslations. This contribution aims to investigate the retranslation of place names by examining the two Italian versions: the first by Vittoria Alliata and Quirino Principe, published in 1970; the second by Ottavio Fatica, published between 2019 and 2022. The contrastive analysis of this contribution aims to: 1) explore the different interpretation introduced by the retranslated toponyms; and 2) understand how toponyms reflect the translation strategies of the two translations.

Keywords: Retranslation, Toponyms, Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*.

1. *Introduction*

In his Foreword to the second edition *The Lord of the Rings* (henceforth: *TLOTR*), Tolkien explained that his stories were «primarily linguistic in inspiration».¹ This is supported by the meticulous care in creating anthroponyms and toponyms whose musicality and sound matched the settings and characters. To guide translators in reproducing those properties, he also wrote the *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings* (or *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, first published in *A Tolkien's Compass*, 1975).

TLOTR can be rightfully considered as a literary classic. It has therefore been translated and retranslated into other languages. Retranslation is a complex phenomenon: rather than being solely governed by their chronological

¹ JOHN R. R. TOLKIEN, *The Lord of the Rings*, London, Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. 2005³, p. xxiii.

order of appearance, the textual profiles of (re)translations respond to a number of different reasons and settings and involve more than the usually debated source-oriented vs target-oriented dichotomy.² Retranslations might be intended to question and modify the source text (in accordance with a revised scholarly understanding, for example) or to support its canonical meaning (which is in turn informed by the target culture's environment).³

Retranslations can be described as reformulations of what it means to be 'close' or 'faithful' to a source text originating from another given language and culture, at a particular period, throughout time and in that language and culture.⁴

In terms of linguistic and idiomatic elements – the focus of most literary reviews – form, style, rhythm, register, and genre-specific specifications are all vulnerable to change throughout time. But ageing is also a cultural and translational process.⁵ This covers the shifting literary norms and reader expectations, as well as the various strategies and approaches used in translation and the role of the different agents in the translation process. In order to reach a wider audience, these factors compel publishers to request revisions or retranslations of canonical literary works in order to adjust to what they regard as the readers' taste. So, there is also an ideological component to the ageing of translations.

The retranslation of classic fantasy novels shows two tendencies. The first one is known as the «retraduction correctrice»⁶ or 'correcting retranslation', which frequently seeks to correct errors in the first translation that resulted from length constraints or incoherence. The second one is the «retraduction modernisante»⁷ or 'modernising translation', which attempts to replicate the various registers of the original text and return to more colloquial language.⁸

One of the most difficult fictive elements to retranslate is a name, as the translator must come up with creative solutions. Nevertheless, new names are challenging for readers as well, who must become used to them. Given

² KAISA KOSKINEN, OUTI PALOPOSKI, *Retranslations in the age of digital reproduction*, «Cadernos de Tradução», XI (2003), pp. 19-38, p. 20.

³ LAWRENCE VENUTI, *Retranslations: The creation of value*, «Bucknell Review», XLVII (2004), 1, pp. 25-38.

⁴ KRIS PEETERS, GUILLERMO SANZ GALLEGO, MONICA PAULIS, *Dubliners retranslated: Re-accentuating multivoicedness*, in *The art of translation in light of Bakhtin's re-accentuation*, ed. by S. Gratchev and M. Marinova, London, Bloomsbury 2022, pp. 9-44.

⁵ PIET VAN POUCKE, *Ageing as a motive for literary translation. A survey of case studies on retranslation*, «Translation and Interpreting Studies», XXII (2017), 1, pp. 91-115.

⁶ VIVIEN FÉASSON, *La retraduction en fantasy: phénomène marchand ou littéraire?*, «Parallèles», XXXV (2023), 1, pp. 125-136, p. 130.

⁷ Ivi, p. 131.

⁸ Ivi, p. 132.

the importance of names for Tolkien, retranslating *TLOTR* is no easy task. Studies on the Italian retranslation of *TLOTR* are beginning to surface,⁹ but none of them deals with toponyms. This contribution thus intends to further the research on the matter by focusing specifically on toponyms and contrasting the Italian translation of *TLOTR* by Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca and Quirino Principe – published in 1970 and later revised and edited – and the translation by Ottavio Fatica – published between 2019 and 2022. The goal is to: 1) explore the different interpretation introduced by the retranslated toponyms; and 2) understand how toponyms reflect the translation strategies of the two translations.

The article is organized as follows: Section 2 will focus on the function of toponyms in general and in *TLOTR* in particular; Section 3 will introduce the possible strategies to translate names and toponyms; Section 4 will feature the analysis of retranslated toponyms; Section 5 will present the conclusive remarks.

2. *Toponyms in TLOTR*

Toponyms serve the purpose of connecting people to their surroundings, and this function can work on four main levels:

- (1) Descriptive: names often originate simply from the geographical features of the landscape. Toponyms emphasize the characteristics of a given place thought to be remarkable and important by a certain culture, reflecting its interests.¹⁰ This does not entail that people who use that name later on would still understand its meaning.
- (2) Possessive: in the case of endonyms (i.e., names used by the local community), place names are markers of the territory and the boundaries of a community. This reflects the deep symbolic significance of the human division between ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’. In the case of exonyms (i.e., names used by a local community for geographical features outside their territory), they indicate the network of relations existing beyond the boundaries of a community’s territory. Exonyms are not symbols for

⁹ GLORIA MAMBELLI, *Translating English Fictional Names: An Analysis of Anthroponyms in the Italian Translations of The Lord of the Rings*, «Iperstoria», XX (2022), pp. 383-401; MARCANTONIO SAVELLI, *Translating Tolkien. The thin line between translation and misrepresentation. An Italian case-study*, «Journal of Tolkien Research», XI (2020), 1, Article 3. available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/journaloftolkienresearch/vol11/iss1/31>.

¹⁰ PETER JORDAN, *Place Names as Ingredients of Space-Related Identity*, «Oslo Studies in Language», IV (2012), 2, pp. 117-131, p. 125.

appropriation; rather, they help to integrate a foreign spatial feature into the cultural sphere of a community, thus avoiding exclusion and alienation.¹¹

- (3) Structural: Toponyms contribute to the mental structuring of space. Sometimes, they are in fact the only identifier of a geographical feature. Thanks to toponyms, spatial structures can be described but also shaped and modified: the concept of Dalmatia, for instance, exists just by virtue of the name, which nonetheless marks a concept rich in contents.¹²
- (4) Emotional: Toponyms promote the formation of space-related identity by supporting emotional connections between humans and a certain place, but this affects only those who are well-acquainted with it.¹³ A toponym has the power to «recall all the contents of a space-related concept [...] sights, persons, events, smells, and sounds associated with this place and let “the feel of a place” arise».¹⁴

Like places in the real world, places in the fictional world need to and must be named. The toponymy of Middle Earth reveals the effort of reproducing the historical, cultural, and linguistic processes which create toponyms in the real world, thus working on all the four levels mentioned above. The structural function of toponyms is ensured by the published maps in *The Hobbit* and *TLOTR*¹⁵ thanks to which Tolkien's Middle Earth is a fully geographically-realized secondary world.

Tolkien's toponyms in the Common Language and in all languages of Middle Earth are designed linguistically to function at the descriptive level. In Middle Earth, place names usually consist of two terms: a general term that describes the type of location and a specific term that restricts the type to a single place.¹⁶ If the generic comes first, each term is usually written as a separate word (e.g. Amon Amarth, or Mount Doom in the Common Language, 'amon' meaning 'mountain'); but if the specific comes first, the terms are almost always written solid as a single orthographic word (e.g. Baranduin or Brandywine river in the Common Language, 'duin' meaning 'river'; Mordor, 'dor' meaning 'dry land').

¹¹ ID., *Role of Place Names in Relating People and Space*, in *Relating People and Space in Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*, ed. by S. D. Brunn and R. Kehrein, Cham, Springer 2019, pp. 2037-2051, p. 2040.

¹² JORDAN, *Role of Place Names...*, cit., p. 2046.

¹³ ID., *Place Names as Ingredients ...*, cit., p. 129.

¹⁴ ID., *Role of Place Names...*, cit., p. 2048.

¹⁵ BJÖRN SUNDMARK, *Mapping Middle Earth A Tolkienian legacy*, in *Maps and Mapping in Children's Literature: Landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes*, ed. by N. Goga and B. Kümmerling-Meibauer, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company 2017, pp. 221-237.

¹⁶ JOHN ALGEO, *The Toponymy of Middle-Earth*, «Names», XXXIII (1985), 1-2, pp. 80-95.

Contact between languages and cultures can have an impact on the vocabulary, grammatical structures, and other characteristics of both languages; borrowed words and impacted conceptualizations are just two examples of this contact-induced convergence.¹⁷ In his fictitious, multicultural society, Tolkien replicated this tendency and established the possessive level of toponyms. Middle Earth toponyms are either translated or borrowed from one Middle Earth language onto another. The majority of the names are in Sindarin, or Grey Elven; some of the most significant, however, are in Quenya, or High Elven. This distinction reveals the relative importance of these two made-up languages. Phonetically derived from Finnish and Greek, Quenya served in Middle-Earth civilization the same function as Latin: it was an older, formal language. Quenya was rarely used in Middle Earth at the times of *The Hobbit* and *TLOTR* but widely employed in the old ages of *The Silmarillion*. Sindarin, phonetically based on Welsh, is the spoken language of the Third Age, thus at the times of the events in *TLOTR*.¹⁸ Toponyms of Middle Earth change phonetically, and sometimes places are renamed as a result of historical events.¹⁹ Tolkien's works are full of references to the linguistic systems that he created and codified with the aim of assigning them to the different populations of his fictional universe.

Locations are given multilingual names and linked to far-off historical occurrences, which gives the fictional universe and space a more authentic feel.²⁰ In translation, this world and its toponyms need rebuilding. This is where the emotional function of toponyms is built for the target readers as they grow acclimated to the toponyms they first encountered while reading the story. Therefore, when considering the emotional level of toponyms, retranslation poses a further challenge. When the goal of the new target text is to draw a neat line from the previous translation(s), toponyms may be one of the means of such change, thus forcing readers to rethink their emotional relationship with the fictional places.

The next section will introduce the strategies for translating toponyms and the problematic aspects of retranslating them.

¹⁷ JARNO RAUKKO, *Names in contact Linguistic and social factors affecting exonyms and translated names*, in *Socio-Onomastics: The Pragmatics of Names*, ed. by T. Ainiala and J. Östman, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company 2017, pp. 93-125, p. 95.

¹⁸ BRADFORD LEE EDEN, *Elves*, in *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, ed. by M. D. C. Drout, London Routledge 2007, pp. 150-152, p. 150.

¹⁹ ALGEO, *The Toponymy of Middle-Earth*, cit., p. 82.

²⁰ ROBERT T. TALLY, *Tolkien's Geopolitical Fantasy: Spatial Narrative in The Lord of the Rings*, in *Popular Fiction and Spatiality: Reading Genre Settings*, ed. by L. Fletcher, London, Palgrave 2016, pp. 125-140, p. 127.

3. *Toponyms in translation*

In Translation Studies, proper names have been studied as «culture-specific items» or «culture-bound linguistic expressions».²¹ There is consensus on the fact that the translation of names depends on their function. Newmark²² holds that, as a rule, names should not be translated when they have no connotation in the text, with the exception of names that are known in the translated form in the target language. In communicative translation, however, connotated names should be translated: «a name in a source text is enmeshed in the lexicon of that language and acquires ‘meaning’». ²³ Furthermore, in fictional texts, names tend to have an informative function, however subtle it may be.²⁴ This is the case of *TLOTR* toponyms, also in light of Tolkien’s indications (see Section 2).

The analysis in Section 4 will rely on ten procedures used when translating names:²⁵

1. Rendition: the meaning of the name is rendered in the target language, with more or less precision (using hypernyms, for instance);
2. Copy: the name of the source text is repeated in the target text without any orthographic modifications;
3. Transcription: the name is transcribed in the target language’s equivalent characters. Other changes, such as adding letters or changing their position, might be made to enhance readability;
4. Re-creation: the name is created anew so as to generate a similar effect in the target language;
5. Substitution: another formally and/or semantically unrelated name is used in place of the name from the source text;
6. Deletion: the name is omitted from the target text;
7. Addition: further information is added to make the source-text name more appealing and comprehensible for the intended audience while simultaneously reducing ambiguity;
8. Phonological Replacement: the source language name is replaced with a

²¹ NEGIN ILKHANIPOUR, *Translation Metamorphosis: a process-oriented approach to onomastics*, «Perspectives», XXII (2014) 2, pp. 271-281, p. 271.

²² PETER NEWMARK, *A Textbook of Translation*, London, Prentice Hall 1988, p. 214.

²³ THEO HERMANS, *On Translating Proper Names, with Reference to De Witte and Max Havelaar*, in *Modern Dutch Studies: Essays in Honour of Peter King*, ed. by M. Wintle, London, Athlone 1988, pp. 11-24, p. 13.

²⁴ CHRISTIANE NORD, *Proper names in translations for children: Alice in wonderland as a case in point*, «Meta: Translators’ Journal», XLVIII (2003), 1-2, pp. 182-196, p. 185.

²⁵ LINCOLN FERNANDES, *Translation of names in children’s fantasy literature: Bringing the young reader into play*, «New Voices in Translation Studies», (2006), 2, pp. 44-57.

- name from the target language that sounds similar;
9. Conventionality: accepting a name's pre-existing translation. Conventionality is frequently applied to place names as well as historical or literary figures.

As retranslation becomes required or desired, names are among the considerations that need to be carefully considered. Through toponyms, the distinctiveness of the new translation could be reinforced. If the purpose of the retranslation is to correct errors (see Section 1), toponyms may be changed to provide a clearer semantic meaning; if the goal is to modernise, toponyms may reflect the increased awareness of language and registers. The following section will investigate the strategies used to translate and retranslate *TLOTR* toponyms.

4. *The analysis*

4.1. *Italian Retranslations of TLOTR*

In 1967, the publishing house Astrolabio released the first volume, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, translated by Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca. The operation was not successful and the publisher did not proceed with the remaining (already translated) books. Only in 1970 did the publisher Rusconi finally print the complete work (introduced by an essay by Elémire Zolla that is quite controversial today) extensively revised by the editor Quirino Principe.²⁶ Thus, the first full Italian translation predates Tolkien's *Guide*.

Publisher Bompiani purchased the publishing rights in 2000, retaining the Rusconi version but revising it with the help of the Società Tolkieniana Italiana (for this analysis, the tenth edition [2002] was used).²⁷

In 2019, Bompiani released the retranslation of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The decision to retranslate Tolkien's masterpiece was ideological: retranslating *TLOTR* was necessary in order to acknowledge Tolkien as a classic author.²⁸ Another strong motivation was to «free – finally, one might say – Tolkien from the limitations of an uninspired confinement to a particular literary genre» (translation mine).²⁹

²⁶ SAVELLI, *Translating Tolkien...*, cit.

²⁷ <https://www.jrrtolkien.it/2018/04/29/tradurre-il-signore-degli-anelli-lintervista/>

²⁸ «Siccome tutti i classici della letteratura sono periodicamente ritradotti, se Tolkien lo si vuol far percepire come classico, dopo 50 anni va ritradotto». <https://www.jrrtolkien.it/2019/10/30/esce-oggi-la-nuova-traduzione-della-compagnia-dellanello/>

²⁹ <https://www.jrrtolkien.it/2019/10/30/esce-oggi-la-nuova-traduzione-della-compagnia-dellanello/>

The work was entrusted to the translator whose portfolio was better suited to the task. Ottavio Fatica, the experienced Italian voice of Kipling and Melville, was awarded for many translations including Edward Lear's *Limericks* (thus demonstrating his ability to provide creative translations, when needed). Fatica approached Tolkien as any other author: he believed that paying Tolkien too much respect would detract from the output and ultimately weigh his work down.³⁰

Consequently, the retranslation was driven by a clear editorial project and entrusted to a well-known translator who brought his own authorial beliefs to the project.

Not much is retrievable today about the criteria that guided Principe's revision. However, due to a recent controversy concerning the translation of *TLOTR*, Alliata shared her own translation strategy. To convey Tolkien's style, inspired by epic poems and mediaeval tales, she tapped into Dante's rhetoric, assuming its familiarity among Italian readers.³¹ Her language aimed to echo the elevated style of Italian literature and aspire towards epic grandeur.

The next section will illustrate these different translation approaches in relation to toponyms.

4.2. *Retranslated Toponyms*

The toponyms that Fatica retained from the Alliata-Principe edition, demonstrating conventionality (see Section 3), will not be included due to space constraints. Toponyms found in Elvish languages, Old English, and languages other than the Common Language are also omitted since, as Tolkien advised, they should not be translated. As a result, the analysis will concentrate on the toponyms that underwent retranslation. A limited number of examples highlighting critical instances of the translation strategies will be selected due to the number of occurrences. The full contrastive list of translated names, however, is retrievable on the AIST website.³²

³⁰ «Non c'è verso di abbordare Tolkien senza paraocchi: e si avverte sempre qualcosa di stonato in chi ne prende a priori le difese, come in chi si limita a denigrare ad oltranza. Così gravata, l'opera naviga in zavorra [...] [Tolkien]: uno scrittore in mezzo a tanti altri più o meno, meno e più bravi di lui con i quali spartire giocoforza mercato e quotazioni, truisimi e pregiudizi, plausi e botte. Altrimenti è condannato a rimanere chiuso nella nicchia degli adoratori: per quanto vasta, sempre un altarinio». OTTAVIO FATICA, *Fidarsi del racconto: ritradurre* Il Signore degli Anelli, «I Quaderni di Arda», II (2021), pp. 23-43, p. 26.

³¹ ORONZO CILLI, *Giù le mani da Tolkien. Sì alla poesia, no all'ideologia*, «il Giornale.it», 13 Gennaio 2019, https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/gi-mani-tolkien-s-poesia-no-allideologia-1628045.html?fbclid=IwAR1ma56c7h8K2OeOwcbKNts18YwTrX87CFCuJ89unXhSnuy7c_3TesuubLE

³² <https://www.jrtrolkien.it/download/tabella-ordinata-alfabeticamente-per-nome-dellorigina->

Ex. 1

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Great Road	Grande Via	Grande Strada

The Great Road is the ancient road that runs from the Grey Havens to Rivendell. Both editions use rendition: the nouns ‘via’ and ‘strada’ are the two possible translations of ‘road’. There is, however, a seemingly slight difference. In Italian, ‘via’ is preferred to ‘strada’ in case of large connection routes; moreover, ‘via’ (unlike ‘strada’) indicates «roads created with no human intervention» (Treccani).³³ Conversely, ‘strada’ indicates the most important arteries linking urban centres. Therefore, we see two different ways of understanding, interpreting and therefore translating the features of Middle Earth’s main road, giving readers two distinct mental images. From an expressive standpoint, which is still important in the feelings evoked by names, ‘via’ sounds more elegant than ‘strada’.

Ex. 2

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
High City	Alta Città	Città Alta

High City identified Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor. Rendition is the technique used in both target toponyms: the premodifier ‘high’ and the noun ‘city’ are translated using their correspondents, ‘alta’ and ‘città’ respectively. The word order is crucial, though, since in Italian the premodifier normally comes after the noun and variations immediately become connotated. Therefore, Alliata-Principe’s toponym is more formal-sounding than Fatica’s.

Ex. 3

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata / Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Hobbiton	Hobbiville	Hobbiton

Hobbiton is a village in the Westfarthing of the Shire where Hobbits live. Tolkien instructs that «the village name should be translated by ‘hobbit’ and an element meaning ‘village’».³⁴ Principe did not alter Alliata’s original translation, whose re-creation technique foreshadowed Tolkien’s indica-

le-di-john-ronald-reuel-tolkien/

³³ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/via2/>

³⁴ TOLKIEN, *Guide to the Names...*, cit., p. 187.

tions. Fatica, in one of the rare instances where he opted not to translate a toponym, used copy.

Ex. 4

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Northfarthing	Decumano Nord	Quartiero Nord

The Farthings were divisions of the Shire. As Tolkien specifies, the noun ‘farthing’ in this toponym is «used in its original sense ‘fourth part, quarter’». Tolkien is aware that this noun is connotated: «to English ears the application to the divisions of the Shire [...] is comical. [...] This tone can hardly be reproduced, but related words could perhaps be used».³⁵

The noun ‘decumano’ in Alliata-Principe refers to an east-west road in a Roman city which, combined with the perpendicular north-south oriented street named *cardo*, formed the grid of the typical Roman city.³⁶ Fatica opts for the noun ‘quartiero’, an archaic variant of ‘quartiere’ meaning ‘the fourth part’.³⁷ Fatica’s choice has the benefit of being comprehensible, a little archaic, and semantically accurate.

Ex. 5

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Rivendell	Gran Burrone	Valforra

Rivendell, an Elven outpost in the Misty Mountains, is the Common Speech translation of Imladris(t), i.e. ‘deep glen of the cleft’. Tolkien tells translators to «[t]ranslate by sense, or retain, as seems best».³⁸

Alliata-Principe’s toponym is an example of re-creation, as the adjective and the noun are semantically unrelated to the source toponym. Fatica’s toponym is a rendition, as it is a compound of ‘val’ (valley) and ‘forra’ which refers to a deep canyon with near vertical walls that is typically generated by intense regressive erosion brought on by the stream of water running within it. This translation respects all visual representations of Rivendell. Alliata-Principe’s toponym is perhaps less precise, but a pattern starts to emerge in which creating an archaic resonance is more important than meaning.

³⁵ Ivi, p. 184.

³⁶ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/decumano/>

³⁷ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/quartiere/>

³⁸ TOLKIEN, *Guide to the Names...*, cit., p. 190.

Ex. 6

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Buckland	Terra di Buck	Landaino

Buckland is a small but densely populated sliver of land ruled by the Brandybuck family. This toponym featured in Alliata's first *Astrolabio* translation as 'Terra di Bucco', with rendition of the noun 'land' and phonological replacement of 'Bucco' to make it sound more Italian. Following Principe's revision, 'Buck' – using copy – replaced the final part of the toponym. Fatica translated using rendition, following Tolkien's indications regarding the origin of the name Buck: «either Old English bucc 'male deer' (fallow or roe), or bucca 'he-goat'»³⁹ and his translation guidelines: «the element 'buck' should be translated».⁴⁰ Consequently, the new toponym is 'Landaino', a recreation coming from the crasis of the nouns 'Landa' (an archaic noun meaning 'plain')⁴¹ and 'daino' (deer).

Ex. 7

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Bree / Bree-hill	Brea / Colle Brea	Bree / Collbree

Bree is the village to which Frodo and his Hobbit friends arrive after escaping the Shire. The toponym Bree should be kept, in Tolkien's guidelines «since it was an old name, of obsolete meaning in an older language».⁴² In Alliata-Principe the toponym Bree underwent phonological replacement, and the related toponym 'Bree-hill' was completed with rendition ('colle' is the Italian translation of 'hill'). Fatica followed Tolkien's instructions and left Bree unaltered using the technique of copy; the second toponym was re-created using compounding of 'colle' and 'Bree'.

Ex. 8

<i>TLOTR</i>	Alliata-Principe	Fatica
Mirkwood	Bosco Atro	Boscuro

The compound toponym Mirkwood, adopted after Sauron's arrival, was inspired by historical Germanic geography and legend. According to

³⁹ Ivi., p. 180.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ricerca/landa/>

⁴² TOLKIEN, *Guide to the Names ...*, cit., p. 180.

Tolkien, it should be «[t]ranslate[d] by sense, if possible using elements of poetic or antique tone».⁴³ Alliata-Principe's rendition of the toponym uses the literary adjective 'atro' (black). Fatica's recreation uses crasis to join the noun 'bosco' (wood) and the adjective 'scuro' (dark), thus preserving the semantic meaning of 'mirk' more closely but losing formality.

4.3. *The reception of retranslated toponyms*

Among the different agents in the translation process are those who commission the retranslation on the one hand, and the addressees on the other. Therefore, the analysis of *TLOTR* retranslated toponyms has to consider these agents, however briefly.

The promoters of the retranslation (see Section 4.1) were aware that changing the already familiar anthroponyms and toponyms would be a challenge for readers. Wu Ming 4, founder of AIST, said:

A thorny issue is related to toponymics and names. For fifteen years in Italy we have been accustomed to name places and characters in a certain way (also in the dubbing of Peter Jackson's movies). It will be hard to face the new rendition of some of them.⁴⁴

This prediction proved true. Shortly after the first anticipation of the retranslation of *The Fellowship of the Ring* came out, fantasy blogs and forums – included the AIST website – started to fill with comments whose tone ranged from disappointed («Sicuramente mi dispiace per i nomi a cui ormai mi sono affezionato e che vivono di vita propria, li [sic] sarà dura andare oltre!»)⁴⁵ to outraged («Se per quarant'anni chiami qualcuno con un nome è impossibile cambiare»)⁴⁶. Some users would have preferred the use of footnotes in the first place («Io ho sempre pensato che i nomi avrebbero dovuto rimanere in originale con al massimo una nota in calce con la traduzione. Sarebbe stato molto meglio, tradurre i nomi propri secondo me è sbagliato»)⁴⁷.

As Anje Müller Gjesdal argues, «approaches based on critical toponymy demonstrate the role of place names and place name giving in creating at-

⁴³ Ivi, p. 190.

⁴⁴ <https://www.wumingfoundation.com/giap/2018/06/tolkien-la-strada-prosegue-ancora/>

⁴⁵ 'I'm certainly sorry for the names I had grown fond of and which live a life of their own. It will be hard to keep going' (translation mine).

⁴⁶ 'It's impossible to change when you call someone a certain name for forty years' (translation mine).

⁴⁷ 'I've always thought that the names should have been kept in the original language with a footnote. It would have been better. I think translating names is wrong altogether' (translation mine).

tachment to a place».⁴⁸ As seen in Section 2, the function of a toponym unfolds also on an emotional level. There is a strong link between toponymic memorability and evocation. Thus, people remember place names because of what those places mean to them and the images they evoke, through real experiences, knowledge of historical events, or media and cinematic portrayal.⁴⁹ The Italian reception of the new toponyms extends such emotional attachment to fictional places as well.

First-time readers of Fatica's translation will predictably be less impacted by the change, whereas the core of Tolkien's Italian hard supporters will cling onto the familiar names and the affects they evoke. The re-naming practice forced readers to identify with a new affective dimension in open contrast with the previous one. Therefore, many readers refused the new names. While the 'old' toponyms evoked positive emotions, the 'new' ones only stir negative ones. It is relevant to notice that the comments are not based on a qualitative analysis of the toponyms – similarly, the style of Fatica's translation was rarely discussed by blog commenters, probably due to insufficient mastery in the source language and lack of critical knowledge on translation. The criticism related to the choice of retranslating the toponyms regardless of their semantic accuracy or precision confirms the impulsive response connected to the emotional link to the 'old' toponyms.

5. Conclusions

The first goal of the analysis was to explore the different interpretations introduced by the retranslated toponyms. Fatica said that his translation approach was not influenced by the literary status of Tolkien as a fantasy author. Furthermore, the retranslation was ideologically contextualised in the attempt to detach Tolkien's work from labels and limitations of genre. Therefore, Fatica's toponyms do not try to be overly formal (see Ex. 2); the foreignness of Middle Earth is conveyed by the use of linguistic mechanisms normally unknown to Italian toponyms (see the crasis in Ex. 6 and 8) or by the use of selected archaisms (see Ex. 5). Middle Earth is to be perceived as a foreign country, but its features are still understandable. Fatica's

⁴⁸ ANJE MÜLLER GJESDAL, *Travelling toponymy: The contribution of place names to the textual representation of place and memory in Abdellah Taïa's Une mélancolie Arabe*, «Borderlands Journal», XVIII (2019), 1, pp.111-132, p. 117.

⁴⁹ DOMINIC MEDWAY, GARY WARNABY, *What's in a name? Place Branding and Toponymic Com-modification*, «Environment and Planning», XLVI (2014), pp. 153-167.

translation is at the same time modernising, as it does not overtly relies on archaisms, even for toponyms, and correcting (mostly with regards to style and registers). His toponyms carefully preserve the structural and descriptive function of toponyms.

In her translation of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Alliata created toponyms that could sound distinctively Italian (see Ex. 6). Although some toponyms changed after Principe's revision, this tendency is still visible (see Ex. 7). An archaic resonance is evident in the word order (Ex. 1 and 2) or in the register (see Ex. 8). The sound of the toponym is privileged over its descriptive function.

The second goal of the analysis was to understand how toponyms reflected the translation strategies of the two translations. The overview reveals two distinct tendencies. Fatica's toponyms are mostly translated through rendition, showing the interpretative effort of reproducing the meanings of the source-text toponyms as closely as possible. This suggests that the strategy was aimed at presenting a descriptive and structural idea of Middle Earth. This assumption is supported by the toponyms that Fatica translated for the first time (whose thorough investigation could not be included in this paper): most of them served to fill the blanks in the map of Middle Earth; others were reprised from the English source text to make up for Alliata-Principe's omission.

Alliata-Principe's toponyms tend to be more formal and closer to Italian toponyms in terms of word order and sound, sometimes at the expense of semantic accuracy. This suggests that the strategy was aimed at producing toponyms that sounded familiar to the Italian reader and plausibly belonged to a fantastic mediaeval dimension – according to the cultural expectations of Italian readers – thanks to their evocative archaism. This is coherent with the strategy explained in Section 4.1.

The analysis of the retranslated toponyms of *TLOTR* also highlighted two aspects worthy of deeper analysis connected to retranslation of toponyms. The first aspect concerns the influence of translatoriality and confidence to act (thus pertaining to the translator) on the decision of retranslating toponyms in the first place.⁵⁰ Fatica shaped his strategy around his critical ideas on the author on the one hand and on the linguistic features of a given literary genre; his decision to modify the majority of toponyms indicated that he was not limited by the influence of the first translation.

The second aspect concerns the emotional connection to toponyms, which affects readers' expectations on their retranslation. The notion of af-

⁵⁰ KAISA KOSKINEN, *Translation and Affect: Essays on sticky affects and translational affective labour*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins 2020, p. 40.

fective valence forms every aspect of translation, from analysis to strategy and decision-making,⁵¹ and translators and publishing companies have their hopes regarding the reception of the translation. The negative criticism for retranslation of *TLOTR* was heavily influenced by the new toponyms (and antroponyms), which suggests that the emotional attachment to a familiar toponym should become one of the aspects to consider in a translation strategy to facilitate a positive reception.

As new definitions informed by a polyglot and intertextual notion of retranslation perceive the existence of retranslations in relation to other translations of the same text in various languages,⁵² the analysis could therefore extend to how Tolkien's retranslated toponyms were accepted in other languages and contexts.

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⁵¹ Ivi, p. 47.

⁵² VITOR ALEVATO DO AMARAL, *Broadening the Notion of Retranslation*, «Cadernos de Tradução», XXXIX (2019), 1, pp. 239-259, p. 254.

