Frederick Burwick and James C. McKusick, eds. *Faustus. From the German of Goethe. Translated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford Univ. Pr, 2007) liv + 343 $170.00

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Literary business can resemble a detective story, as Frederick Burwick and James C. McKusick's edition of *Faustus. From the German of Goethe. Translated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge* proves, a thrilling account of the interlocking mechanisms of translation, adaptation, literary competition, collaboration, and, eventually, forgetting. The editors offer overwhelming evidence that assigns the authorship of a known yet hitherto anonymous translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's canonical drama *Faust*, published by Thomas Boosey and Sons in 1821, to Coleridge. As early as 1971, Paul M. Zall compiled evidence that, despite his claims to the contrary, Coleridge was involved in a rendition of *Faust*. Although Zall received encouragement, the project remained unfinished for over three decades until Burwick and McKusick turned their attention it, gathered further supporting textual evidence and applied the scientific tool of stylometric analysis.

   The transfer of a major text from one language, or rather culture, into another is anything but a simple or straightforward process. Among other things, this edition illustrates the goings-on of literary businesses shortly after 1800. Coleridge translated Schiller's *Wallenstein* as well as numerous poems, was strongly influenced by German philosophy, and traveled and lived in Germany. A renowned mediator between English and German culture, he took an interest in Goethe's dramatization of the grand metaphysical fight between good and evil. However, because the evidence suggests that he abandoned his initial attempt at translating in 1814, his involvement

with one of Germany's great canonical texts was seen as a passing fancy, while the English 1821 edition by the publisher Boosey was relegated to the margins of anonymous authorship. McKusick and Burwick's volume not only provides convincing evidence for naming Coleridge as the translator but also maps out and contextualizes early English translations of *Faust* as well as their publication history and thus offers fascinating insights into reception processes.

Gestating from the 1770s onwards, Goethe's *Faust* appeared in print in 1808, Germaine de Staël was the first to make part of it available to English readers, when she included passages in her famous account of contemporary Germany, *De l'Allemagne* (1810), which was issued in English in 1813. This selection was followed by another in 1820, when Johann Heinrich Bohte, a German bookseller in London, issued a series of enormously successful drawings by Moritz Retzsch, in fact illustrations of Goethe's *Faust*, which Cotta had published in Germany in 1816 and again in 1820. In Bohte's English edition, the captions to the twenty-six plates were translated by George Soane. Given the success of Retzsch's plates, a rival publisher, Boosey, issued his own version but had the drawings engraved by Henry Moses. Thus, one of Germany's best-known plays made its way into Britain through visual material, while the complete text was slow to follow foot.

As both English editions were quickly sold out, Boosey decided to reprint the plates, albeit with a more substantial portion of Goethe's text. Rather than recycle the brief anonymous translations by "a German in humble circumstances" (whom Burwick and McKusick identify as Daniel Boileau), he commissioned a new book that would contain not only the engravings but also a substantial part of Goethe's drama in translation, about half the play in blank verse with prose summaries of the other half. This translation, whose author is extremely likely to have been Coleridge, appeared in September, 1821, albeit without naming its creator. In comparison with other early translations, Coleridge's is superior, not only because of his poetic skill but also

because of his immense knowledge about German literature, theology, and philosophy. Verbal echoes from Goethe reappear in his other writings, for example in *Remorse*, thus revealing his unacknowledged familiarity with *Faust*. Further attempts to render this increasingly popular text in English followed his. While the 1821 edition by Boosey was in the making, Soane had started to work on a longer translation, too, which was supposed to be published by Bohte but in fact never moved beyond the proof stage. We know of its existence because the page proofs were sent to and reviewed by the *London Magazine* towards the end of 1821; in June, 1822, Goethe himself received these proofs and published Soane's translation of the dedication to *Faust* in *Kunst und Altertum* in 1823. A further attempt at translating passages of Goethe's drama was undertaken by John Anster, which appeared in *Blackwood's* in June 1820, followed by a complete translation in 1835. Apparently, Coleridge and Anster met several times to collaborate on the translation, as verbal echoes prove. Although this method of creation is far from the Romantic ideal of the original genius, it was not out of the ordinary.

Why should Coleridge choose not to get the credit for translating a literary text of consequence? Coleridge may have been worried about the moral and religious views expressed in the play. . Moreover, he may not have wanted to lend his name to a less than complete translation; he may also have felt that by supplying a text that would merely accompany Moses's illustrations, he was in fact doing a hack writer's work. A further reason may be that he had already been commissioned by Murray, who in 1814 had promised him £100 upon completion of a *Faust* translation, which he then abandoned, and, therefore, may not have wished to attract more attention than necessary. His own comments are misleading. If some sources—such as notebook entries, letters, even a detailed proposal he drew up--prove that he was engaged with translating *Faust* in 1820/21, others, like the *Table Talks*, testify to the contrary ("I never put pen to paper as translator of Faust.")

Burwick and McKusick's elegant narrative is supported by thorough research into published and unpublished material. While the focus remains on the story of an anonymous author, who is dragged into the limelight, unmasked as Coleridge, and posthumously exposed to the glare of publicity, other side-stories, which are just as interesting, emerge. For example, Francis Hodgson and William Lamb (the husband of the notorious Caroline Lamb) are established as the probable translators of the English edition of Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1813), identified on the basis of a pencil annotation in the copy held by the Johns Hopkins University Library. Burwick and McKusick's knowledge of literary and cultural interactions, of side-tracks, of the *dramatis personae* involved, is impressive, and so is their ability to match up seemingly loose threads, to weave them into a colorful and alluring tapestry.

The volume issued by Oxford University Press contains supporting materials beyond the 1821 *Faust* translation published by Boosey: The highly informative introduction, which turns Anglo-German literary relations into a veritable detective story, is followed by Coleridge's translation and the plates in Moses's engravings. Furthermore, the volume contains other relevant translations: the passages from *Faust* in Staël's English version of *De l'Allemagne* (1813), Soane's 1820 translation of the captions for Boosey, likewise, the anonymous 1820 translations for Bohte, which were Boileau's, Anster's 1820 rendition from *Blackwood's*, and a translation by Francis Leveson-Gower (1823), which sadly achieved fame because it was, as Henry Crabb Robinson took care to inform Goethe, "a disgrace." All translations, brought together to facilitate cross-referencing, are preceded by short prefaces and biographies of their translators. Even though Percy Bysshe Shelley was not part of the network concerned with the publication of the plates, his own translations, written around 1815, would deserve inclusion.

The volume ends on a twenty-page essay with a stylometric analysis, a method used to determine the authorship of anonymous texts. McKusick uses the University of Leeds' *Signature*

software system to compare the 1821 Boosey edition with Coleridge's *Remorse* and others of his plays as well as with other renditions of *Faustus*. By looking both at word-length and at functional keywords, he corroborates the hypothesis that Coleridge was the translator of the 1821 *Faustus*.

One of the great merits of this edition is that it offers valuable insights into literary transactions from a comparative perspective. While the identification of an anonymous translator as a famous, canonized poet is a major literary find, Burwick and McKusick's edition is a powerful reminder that a history of Romantic translation is long overdue—and for which their volume is a model *par excellence*,