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*A new social media conscious approach to
Celebrity Translators: a case study of Italian
influencer Francesca Crescentini aka
Tegamini*

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I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and that it is entirely my own work.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Silvia Fini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Date: 26/08/2022

Abstract

This work aims at providing a different contemporary perspective on Celebrity Translators in the context of modern society immersed in social media and influencer culture.

The main research question is can influencer translator Francesca Crescentini (Tegamini), a translator with an active of 56 published translations and more than 170,000 followers on Instagram, be defined as a Celebrity translator? I will answer this question looking at what she has in common with Celebrity Translators like Haruki Murakami, and what on the other hand is unique about her specific case. I will pay special attention to how she fulfils some of the features of celebrity translators through her use of social media, specifically how she uses it as paratext, as a way to be in touch with her public, as a marketing tool for her translations, and as a way to display her persona.

Though Crescentini does not completely fit in the Celebrity Translator model proposed by Akashi, her visibility is especially surprising considering the Italian context, prone to translator erasure. That is why I believe she matches enough to be considered a Celebrity Translator, and possibly presents new elements for future reworkings of the definition.

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Introduction

This work aims at providing a different contemporary perspective on Celebrity Translators in the context of modern society immersed in social media and influencer culture.

The main research question is can influencer translator Francesca Crescentini (Tegamini) be defined as a Celebrity translator? I will answer this question looking at what she has in common with Celebrity Translators like Haruki Murakami, and what on the other hand is unique about her specific case.

Given the social media centred nature of this case study, my main materials will be Crescentini's content on her social media platforms (Instagram posts, stories, lives, comments; Telegram messages and audio messages) and general public statements about her work. Furthermore, I will look at previous research in the field of Celebrity Studies and Translator Studies, as well as previous research about Celebrity Translators, mainly Motoko Akashi's works, to compare two antithetic stances towards translator visibility: the Japanese context and the Italian context.

I will refer to Akashi's definition and descriptions of celebrity translators behaviour and see if their characteristics apply to Crescentini, and in what way her social media based work as content creator may modify them.

Crescentini was chosen as, per my knowledge, she is the only case of 'instafamous' literary translator, with 170,000 followers and counting, at least in the Italian context where translators are quite invisible.

Celebrity Translators' research is a relatively new research field and is mostly concentrated in countries where the translators are very much visible in general, and its main focus has so far been on translators who became famous in a traditional way, because of their academic or writing careers, without integrating new perspectives on Internet fame and micro-celebrities.

1. What is a Celebrity Translator?

Especially in the western world, the translation profession “occupies a non-human LAP [Lower Autonomy Professional] habitus” (Katan 2011, 78): most people associate the act of translating to machines rather than humans, and most translators see themselves as professionals with a middle or low social status, comparable to a teacher or a secretary (Katan 2011, 76-7). However, this is not true for eastern countries like Israel, China, Taiwan, and Japan, where a translator can even aspire to reach celebrity status (Akashi 2018a, 2). Translators working in these environments then, may have a desire to establish themselves professionally against the competition and attain a higher status through different strategies (Sela-Sheffy 2008, 610).

The Japanese context is particularly rich in celebrity translators, one above all, Haruki Murakami. This is possible because the social status of translators as professionals is high, and the risk of being invisible is considerably low (Hadley and Akashi 2015) compared to European translators. But what makes a translator a celebrity?

There are a variety of factors that contribute to the production of this translator celebrity, ranging from a translator’s talent and skills to the winning of prizes, individual persona, and fame related to other practices or features beyond translation such as authorship. There is no single factor which weighs more than the others, but it requires a critical mass of factors that lay the ground for a translator to be propelled into celebrity.

(Akashi 2018a, 244)

These factors could be divided in to two categories: external agents and internal agency. External agents that can bring celebrity status to a translator are mainly related to media attention, for example literary critics’ reviews mentioning the translator and their translation, or the publication of books of interviews and gossip related to them, which are very popular in Japan (Akashi 2018a, 5). On the other hand, there are things a translator can actively do to gain fame, other than perfecting their craft and producing high quality translations thanks to their skills, of course: communicating with readers,

either in conversation or unilaterally, is one of the most effective ways for a translator to attain and preserve a celebrity status. Participating in promotional events and book signings, as well as responding to fan emails and questions in discussion forums is very important, as it creates a sense of familiarity, and the public has the illusion of being close with the translators, which in many instances act as proxies of their favourite authors (Akashi 2018a, 53). Another important aspect seems to be whether the translator carries out other practices other than translation: “the great majority of literary translators have other roles that are related to writing practice, such as creative writing and literary criticism, which can influence their prominence as translators” (Akashi 2018a, 248). Many times, this other practice is what made the translator a celebrity in the first place, like in Murakami’s case, where his fame as a writer preceded and helped boost his reputation as a translator (Akashi 2018b, 272). Celebrity status also allows translators to reappropriate paratextual spaces, like book covers, forewords, notes, and so on, which in turn make them more visible and aliment their fame (Akashi 2018a, 247).

“What elevates a translator from *recognised* status to that of true *celebrity*, though, is the commodification process, which turns a translator’s name into a brand under which their translations are promoted and sold” (Akashi 2018a, 246). This process is usually initiated by the publisher when certain elements of the translator’s public image, like prizes they’ve won or their expertise, might benefit sales (Akashi 2018a, 248-9). Once translators become a commodity, a human brand, they become means of advertisement, and the proactive initiatives listed earlier (e.g., communicating with readers, participating in events, etc) become even more important: “the agency of translators plays an important part in shaping the commodification process” (Akashi 2018a, 247). However, as Akashi (*ibid*) points out, it seems like publishers decide to start this process only when the translator is already a celebrity in some other field.

This transformation of the individual into brand is an aspect which was once exclusive to ‘mainstream’ celebrities: once actors, singers, and the like, started endorsing products, marketers realised associating a well-known face to a product was profitable.

Commodification is at the basis of the *celebrification* process, which I will explore more in depth in the following section.

1.1. Re-defining Celebrity in the Era of Social Media: Micro-Celebrities

Social media are the culmination of the process Turner (2009, introduction) defines as *the demotic turn*: “the increasing visibility of the ‘ordinary person’ as they have turned themselves into media content through celebrity culture, reality TV, DIY web-sites, talk radio and the like.” Through social media platforms, ordinary people can enact a public performance of their private selves and thus enter a process of *celebrification* (Jerslev 2006). This democratisation of the opportunity to become a celebrity, has changed the concept of celebrity itself: traditional celebrity was based on distance from the public, which was only occasionally closed through performance and appearances at official events (Jerslev 2006, 5238). The advent of social media created an almost opposite model of celebrity, based on the constant connection with the public, and the immediacy and accessibility of said connection (ibid). What are the consequences of this contemporary variation of the *celebrification* process?

While many ‘mainstream’ celebrities (e.g., actors, athletes, musicians, etc) regularly use social media platforms, these spaces allowed the rise of “so-called grassroots influencers or micro-celebrities who were able to create a following through their engaging and relevant content” (Gretzel 2018, 1). Senft (2013, 346) defines the practice of micro-celebrity as “the commitment to deploying and maintaining one’s online identity as if it were a branded good, with the expectation that others do the same”, which, she argues, is a practice everyone, in one way or another, carries out on social media by, for example deleting unflattering photos or checking the privacy settings (ibid). Online content creators, or influencers, turn this self-branding into revenue through brands, which are increasingly relying on them as the faces of product campaigns: this is due to the cost-effectiveness of the practice (Rahmah and Ren 2019, 6), and to the bottom-up nature of influencer fame, which shapes user perception of influencers as their equals, and creates a sense of relatability and authenticity (Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson 2020, 251). Furthermore, the content produced by influencers for brand collaborations can be

featured on the creator's profile for a potentially unlimited amount of time (e.g., Instagram post), and is custom made by the creator for their specific audience (Rahmah and Ren 2019, 8), in contrast with traditional advertisement, which is released for a limited timeframe and is designed for a broader target audience (ibid).

Social media influencers' fame is often measured by the number of followers and, while academic literature has not reached an agreement on the exact numbers, influencers are mainly classified according to this data (Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson 2020, 252) into two categories, micro- and macro-influencers, and some marketers created the mega-influencer category when the profile exceeds one million followers (Gretzel 2018, 3). However, current research has argued that a better parameter to judge an influencer's 'influence' would be the engagement rate, "measured as the average number of interactions per post per 1,000 followers" (TrackMaven 2016, 4). In fact, data shows that while mega-influencers have a lot of reach, micro-influencers have much higher engagement rates (Gretzel 2018, 3), possibly because they managed to create a stronger loyalty relationship within their smaller communities.

1.2. Re-defining Celebrity Translators?

If the concept of celebrity has changed over the years, with the introduction of new technologies and platforms where theoretically anyone is given the chance to become famous, then the concept of celebrity translator should take said changes into account. In practice, this does not imply a complete overturn of the definition of celebrity translator, but more of a recalibration of the weight of social media in the equation. Social media are relegated to marginal elements in the current outline of what a celebrity translator is, while, even at present, they are valuable tools to carry out the visibility strategies described by Celebrity Translator research. In fact, translators become a commodity when they reach the status of celebrities: in the same way, users become commodities when they become influencers, or micro-celebrities. In support of the validity of this approach, I will propose a concrete example: I will show how Italian Instagram influencer and

translator Francesca Crescentini uses her platform, both as a content creator and as a translator, and how these two jobs coexist and merge at the same time.

Since, as described in section 1., context can be a major obstacle or aid for translators' *celebrification*, I will first outline the general stance of the Italian publishing industry towards translators.

2. Translations and Translators in Italy

The relationship between the Italian publishing industry and Italian translators has always been complex. Generally undervalued and underpaid (Duranti 1998, Mannoni 2012, AITI 2022), translation work has little public recognition, despite being historically undertaken in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by prominent literary figures like Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini, and Eugenio Montale (Duranti 1998, 465), and despite the almost entirety of imported media from the film and tv industry being dubbed, thus translated, in Italian before release (ibid). Suffice it to say, at this year's international editorial fair Salone del Libro in Turin, even though multiple events were dedicated to foreign authors, only 19/1,200 events were dedicated to translation and translators, a series of meetings entitled "L'AutoreInvisibile" [The InvisibleAuthor] ([https://www.salonelibro.it/programma.html?filters\[tags\]=54](https://www.salonelibro.it/programma.html?filters[tags]=54)). In the following sections I will outline the main issues Italian translators face in the industry, do a brief comparison with other countries, and illustrate the recent developments in terms of translators' recognition and visibility.

2.1. Contemporary Italian Translators' Status

The Italian book market is rich in translations, particularly from English: according to

Laviosa (2002, 41) one novel out of three is a translation from English. It would be safe to say then, that the role of translations and, by extension, translators is central in the industry. But does this centrality reflect the translator's status as a professional? Quite the contrary, according to the translators themselves.

In a survey conducted by Katan in 2011, a range of translators talked about their work experiences: three out of the four Italian testimonies quoted in the study paint an overall negative picture of the translator's world. The first (freelance, 5 years in the business) underlines how experience seems to be more important than qualifications in order to get a job, and how translation "can be learned as a trade" (Katan 2011, 71). The second (freelance, 12 years in the business) illustrates how a translator's working conditions are "less respected than those of any secretary" (ibid, 78) and feels that translators have very low bargaining power. The third (freelance, 6 years in the business) defines it as the best *and* the worst job in the world, in which you contribute to "nothing else than the history of world literature, which is a history of translation... In return of all this you get little money, little respect, many humiliations and the occasional thank you" (ibid, 83). Though it could be argued that these three statements are only representative of three entirely personal experiences, a brief look at other sources tends to support the general sentiments in evidence here.

In the Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies, Riccardo Duranti's entry (466-7) written in 1998, outlines the professional status of the Italian translator in a short passage, which can be summarized in the following points:

- low esteem for the translator's work
- low earnings
- very short deadlines
- precarious workflow
- lack of control over the finished product

- large amount of unqualified people taking up jobs at lower prices
- assignment of work based on the publishing industry's aim to save cost
- extreme fragmentation and isolation of translators as a group

He also mentions the intention to institute a National Registry of translators and interpreters to help regulate the job, create a network among translators, and demand and preserve rights for the category.

Twenty-four years later, AITI (Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti) [Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters], the first association for Italian translators, both in number of members (1,217) and year of establishment (1950), continues to raise awareness on similar issues. The purposes of association listed by AITI in its 'articles of association' (<https://aiti.org/en/articles-association#art3>) are compared to similar issues present in Duranti's outline in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Comparison between AITI's purposes of association in 2022 and Duranti's outline of the Italian translator status in 1998

AITI's purposes of association 2022	Adjacent issues raised by Duranti in Routledge 1998
to propose changes to the law aimed at recognising the legal status of translators and interpreters as professionals	• low esteem for the translator's work
to promote the standing and raise awareness of the social, cultural and economic role of	

translators and interpreters before
consumers and institutions

- low esteem for the translator's work

to protect the financial and legal interests of
its members

- low earnings
- precarious workflow
- assignment of work based on the publishing industry's aim to save cost

to promote the continuing professional
development and training of translators and
interpreters, and compliance with
professional
ethical standards

- low esteem for the translator's work

to issue its members with certification
proving that they meet professional
requirements, undertake continuing
professional development and comply with
the rules of fairness in performing their
professional activities, stating a time limit for
the validity of said certification

- large amount of unqualified people taking up jobs at lower prices

-
- low earnings

to ensure compliance with the best possible ethical and social working conditions for employed and self-employed translators and interpreters, including by drawing up model contracts

- very short deadlines
- precarious workflow
- assignment of work based on the publishing industry's aim to save cost

to promote the collection and dissemination of information about the profession

- low esteem for the translator's work

to draw up and disseminate recommendations, rules and standards on professional best practices

- large amount of unqualified people taking up jobs at lower prices

to make it easier to enter the profession through forms of mentoring, encouraging professional behaviour and a professional mindset

- extreme fragmentation and isolation of translators as a group

to promote and provide the most suitable training courses for the various professional translation and interpreting roles

- large amount of unqualified people taking up jobs at lower prices

to propose changes to laws to ensure that interpreting and translation services used during criminal proceedings in Italian courts

are provided by qualified and professional translators and interpreters in accordance with international regulations in this regard

- large amount of unqualified people taking up jobs at lower prices

Comparing the two lists from 1998 and 2022 it is clear that little has changed in the more than twenty years that separate them: to this day a National Registry of Translators and Interpreters has yet to be established, and working conditions are still far from ideal from the translators' perspective, in terms of rights, status, and recognition.

2.2. Comparison With Other Countries And Recent Developments

Despite all the situation described above, the Italian market continues to benefit from the influx of translated texts. Nonetheless, given how much emphasis is put by professionals on the translator's work being overlooked by the general public, many Italian readers can be assumed to be uninterested in whether a book is a translation into Italian or was originally written in Italian. The Diversity Report (Rüdiger et al. 2018) on literary translation can help clarify Italy's relationship with translated books compared to other countries:

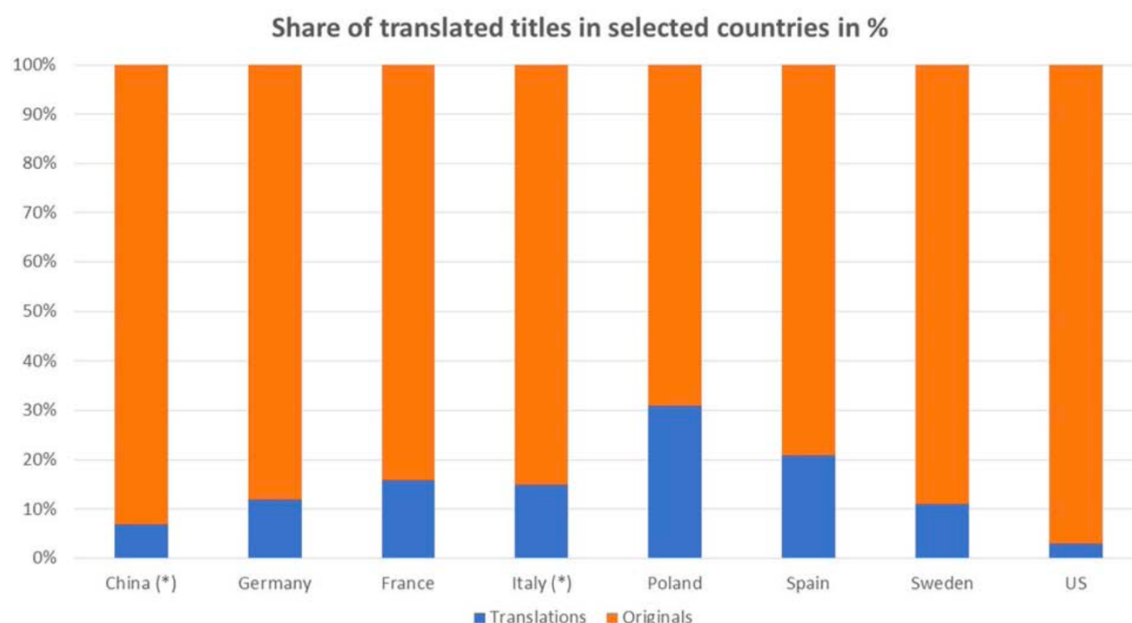


Figure 2: “Share of translated titles in the consumer book production of selected countries, latest available numbers (2016 or 2017). Sources: National publishers' associations or government data.” (Rüdiger et al. 2018, 14)

As shown in the chart, Italy is not the first country per number of translated books, but it falls in the >10% category with France, Sweden, and Germany. Spain has a significantly bigger percentage (>20%), and Poland has the highest share of translated books, with >30%.

China and the US, representing the biggest publishing industries in the chart, have the smallest percentages of translated books, falling in the <10% category with 7% and 3% respectively (Rüdiger et al. 2018, 14).

For the sake of the argument expressed in this dissertation, it is important to look at the Japanese context as well. The Diversity Report did not show any data regarding Japan's share of translated titles. However, the Japan Book Publisher Association (JBPA) released a document named “Statistics of Publishing in Japan” relative to 2017 and 2018: there is no indication on the number of translated books, but there are tables for the top ten bestsellers for both years (JBPA 2019, 8), and the books quoted in said tables are all

written in Japanese, by Japanese authors. In any case, this data certainly cannot fully reflect the Japanese publishing industry since Japan has a rich tradition of translation, beginning in the 19th century for what concerns European languages as source texts (Hadley 2018, 560), and translations heavily influenced the modernisation of Japanese literary style (Akashi 2018a, 27). Furthermore, in terms of visibility, Japan is very advanced since “Japanese publishing conventions require the translator’s name to be clearly shown on the book cover” (Akashi 2018a, 4).

Overall, the Japanese publishing industry has a multifaceted relationship with translators: as explained by Hadley and Akashi “translators’ visibility in the Japanese context can be perceived as a full spectrum, ranging from the familiar, invisible model, all the way up to the kind of celebrity status enjoyed by Murakami” (2015, 463). Some of the main aspects of translator’s visibility in the Japanese context will be described more in depth in section 4.

Regarding the translator’s visibility issue in the European publishing industry, generally, the name of the translator is featured on the cover if they are a recognized author or if the text is a new translation (Alvstad 2011, 276). Otherwise, as shown by CEATL’s legal survey on translator’s working conditions in Europe, conducted in 2021, (<https://www.ceatl.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CEATL-Legal-survey-ENG.pdf>, 21), all countries tend to mention the translator’s name on the title page of the book rather than on the cover.

In this sense, in the last years some Italian publishers are starting to overturn this tendency, giving more visibility to the translator. For example publishing house Il Saggiatore started to include the translator’s name on the cover in 2018: they announced this decision on their Facebook page with a post (<https://www.facebook.com/ilSaggiatore/posts/1680729085281128>) including the image of the cover of their edition of *At the mountains of Madness* by H.P. Lovecraft, asking what was different from their usual covers and offering a free copy of the book to the first person who would give the right answer. Looking at the answers in the comments might give a sense of how much attention the average Italian reader pays to

the presence, or, rather, the absence, of the translator's name: 5/39 users made an unrelated comment; 15/39 users noticed the change was the inclusion of the translator's name, and 4 out of these 15 users hinted at the fact that they are translators themselves; 13/39 users gave a wrong answer to the question, pointing out different details; 6/39 users critiqued the title choice, stating it was 'wrong' (the chosen translated title is *Le montagne della follia* [the mountains of madness], instead of *Alle montagne della follia*, which would be the word for word translation of the source text title). One user in particular even cared to underline "l'insostenibile leggerezza dell'inserire il nome del traduttore appena al di sotto del titolo tradotto male dell'opera" [The unbearable lightness of inserting the name of the translator just below the poorly translated title of the book] (Anteo Raffa Palummo 2018, Facebook comment, <https://www.facebook.com/ilSaggiatore/posts/1680729085281128>). In 2019, also historic publishing house Einaudi started to include the name of the translator on the back cover of their *Supercoralli* series, and the translator's biography on the flap (<https://www.einaudi.it/approfondimenti/i-traduttori-in-quarta-di-copertina-nei-supercoralli/>).

The website BIBLIT, a community for translators, keeps an ongoing list of Italian publishing houses that put the translator's name on the cover of their books (<https://www.biblit.it/idee/traduttori-in-copertina/>)

One Italian publisher in particular has started to put the translators in the spotlight, and that is Mondadori with its Oscar Vault community, which is the ensemble of its Oscar Draghi, Oscar Ink, Oscar Fabula and Oscar Fantastica series. Given the lack of precise information on the matter available on their websites and social media accounts, and the fact that it is a grouping of four different series, it is difficult to exactly point out when Oscar Vault books started to feature the translator's name on the covers. However, around 2019 the names started to appear on the back cover, above the bar code and the Oscar Vault logo, as shown clearly for the first time in an Instagram post (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B0A4S50AAb0/>). Starting from 2022 they decided to introduce the translator's biography on the flap of their books, below the author's biography, again announcing their decision on their social media

(<https://www.facebook.com/oscardondadorivault/posts/pfbid0thFm5EWMtZt2vCTxR1vUpUnJZ8RbBfcKdKx7sB5hfTUDc4TBVXbY9qt3cNZZEe9a/>). Oscar Vault continues to heavily feature translators in their social media, tagging them, interviewing them, showcasing their abilities with initiatives like *Testo a Fronte* [Parallel Text] (https://www.instagram.com/p/B_me2wMnqF9/), and in general continuously highlighting how translation is fundamental for the publishing industry:

Le traduzioni sono fondamentali: per il nostro lavoro sono davvero cruciali (sì, lo so, lo diciamo sempre "cruciali": però è proprio così), e lo sono anche per i lettori, che ne siano consapevoli o meno. Fondamentali sono quindi i traduttori, voce dell'autore nella lingua di destinazione, custodi dei miliardi di fili che legano il testo originale al proprio gemello eterozigote tradotto.

[Translations are fundamental: they are really crucial for our job (yes, we always say that, I know, but it is true), and they are crucial for readers as well, even if they might be unaware of it. Therefore, translators are fundamental: they are the voice of the author in the target language, depositaries of the billions of threads connecting the original text to its translated fraternal twin.]

(<https://www.facebook.com/oscardondadorivault/posts/pfbid021j9vQdwitHBimNZ6k2NVsTZMQvsWeHnpzmVSTXMyKgxpCbpSNGlp1XSFJmi9tmfBl>)

The names of the translators transitioned to the front cover of Oscar Vault editions around 2020, one of the first translators to be featured being Francesca Crescentini, aka Tegamini, with her translation of graphic novel *Zenobia* (<https://www.facebook.com/oscardondadorivault/photos/a.2166887076871368/2643717525854985/>).

3. Creator Translator Francesca Crescentini (@tegamini): case study

Francesca Crescentini, best known by her online name Tegamini, is an Italian content creator and translator. Born in Piacenza in 1985, she completed her bachelor and master's degree at Bocconi University in Milan in Economics for Arts, Culture, Media and Entertainment. After an internship in a public relations agency in New York, she moved to Turin and started working in the marketing department at Italian publishing house Einaudi. In 2014 she began her experience as copywriter in a digital publishing agency, stepping into the professional online communication sphere for the first time. Her blog www.tegamini.it, which she started in 2010, has won the 'best literary blog' prize at the Macchianera Internet Awards in 2018 and 2019, and she was included in the 2020 list of 10 most influential Italian book bloggers drawn up by Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* (<https://24plus.ilsole24ore.com/art/da-zodiaco-tegamini-book-influencer-guidano-lettura-social-ADMnPyH>).

She started translating as a side job in 2013 without formal training and decided to become a full-time content creator and translator in 2017. Her translations range from the *Minecraft Zombie Diaries* by Zack Zombie to *A Garden of Earthly Delights* by Joyce Carol Oates, and, more recently, *Strange Planet*, a collection of Nathan W. Pyle's Instagram comic strips, and sci-fi fantasy novels from the 'Locked Tomb' series in the making by Tamsyn Muir, *Gideon the Ninth* (2019, first published in Italy in her translation in 2020), *Harrow the Ninth* (2020, first published in Italy in her translation in 2021) *Nona the Ninth* (coming out September 2022, to be published in Italian in her translation presumably in 2023) and *Alecto the Ninth* (2023). At present, her latest published translation is Tom Gauld's children's graphic novel *The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess*.

As a content creator, she partnered with brands like Ikea, United Colors of Benetton, Netflix, and Samsung, among many others. Her main content on her blog and social media platforms is book reviews, but she also shows her everyday life and the behind the scenes of her translation work. At present, her verified Instagram account has over 170,000 followers (<https://www.instagram.com/tegamini/>). She also counts over 37,000 followers on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/tegamini?s=20>), over 19,000 on Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/TegaminiBlog>), and over 15,000 on her Telegram channel (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini>).

While handling her job as a content creator, Crescentini slips in some of her translator's struggle on her social media platforms, often hinting at the projects she is working on and, more generally, the process of translating books.

In conjunction with the coming of the summer months, she recently gave birth to her second child, and thus chose to slow down the pace of her content creator work and pause her translation activity.

3.1. Translator Career

Crescentini's activity as a translator began fortuitously in 2013, when an editor at her workplace asked her to do a translation test for a book, because there had been an unexpected problem and there was no one to do the job (Crescentini, Instagram story, June 23rd, 2022). At present, 56 of her translations have been published. Since she shares a very big part of her life, including her work, on social networks, I looked at her social media accounts to have an outline of her practice and her preferences as a translator.

Computer-aided translation tools (CAT tools) and Machine Translation (MTs) are major topics in the translation community, and since their invention there has always been debate around whether and to what extent they should be employed because "the complexity of any given language is much more than any machine can successfully deal with" (Kornacki 2018, 95). Someone once asked Crescentini if she uses any software to translate, to which she replied: "uso FancescaCrescentini.exe (ride) perché con i tipi di libri che faccio io ci vuole di più a risistemare quello che esce che a giovarne e ricavarne benefici in qualche modo" [I use FrancescaCrescentini.exe (laughs) because with the kind of books I translate, editing what comes out of it would be more of a nuisance than an aid] (Crescentini, Instagram story, December 28th 2021). I will go more in depth about the characteristics of the books she translated in section 4. During an Instagram live in May, someone asked which web translator she would recommend as a support for work:

Crescentini stated she usually refers to multiple sources, from WordReference to Urban Dictionary, and then makes a collage to build the solution she sees as the most fit, often going back to her first instinctual choice, paying special attention to the style rather than finding the ‘exact’ hair-splitting translation of a word, to offer the reader a variegated lexicon (Crescentini, Instagram live, May 13th).

Followers often ask questions about how Crescentini carries out her translation work. On June 16th 2022 someone asked what her translation process is, if she does all the text at once and then she proofreads, or if she does one chapter at a time:

Io traduco tutto e ci torno su dopo. Leggo prima perché voglio evitarmi sorprese - tipo roba che sembra marginale e al capitolo 23 diventa importantissima e mi rendo conto che devo risistemare da capo E VIA A CRISTONARE - e arrivo in fondo al meglio delle mie possibilità, tenendo traccia dei nodi spinosi. Poi riparto da capo e miglioro la forma/il tono/il ritmo, correggo, rivedo e aggiusto. Poi rileggo altre ventorcedi volte e quando sono completamente sfranta consegno.

[I translate everything and then come back to it afterwards. First, I read [the whole text] to avoid any surprises – like something that seems marginal and then suddenly becomes extremely important at chapter 23 and I realize I have to fix everything I did, AMID BLASPHEMIES – and I get to the end as best as I can, keeping track of the thorny issues. Then I start again, and I try to improve the structure/tone/rhythm, I fix mistakes, revise, and polish the text. Then I re-read everything a zillion times and when I’m utterly zonked, I submit everything.]

(Crescentini, Instagram story)

This kind of data about a translator's own methods can be useful in the investigation of translator behaviour, which has been a continuously growing research field since the 1990s when, parallel to Translation Studies, the branch of Translator Studies started to develop (Kaindl, Waltraud, Schlager 2021, 8-9). Other elements that can be analysed are, for example, cultural background and context, work conditions, public image, paratexts, personality and private life. I will go more in depth about some of these aspects of Crescentini's profile in chapter 4.

Translator Studies also investigates the relationship the translator creates with the text, the emotional aspect of translation, "attitudes and stances towards translations" (Kaindl, Waltraud, Schlager 2021, 13). On July 28th 2022 she was asked if she ever re-reads the books she translated after they come out, as a reader:

Tendenzialmente no perché se l'ho tradotto l'ho già letto all'incirca tremila volte. E poi se rileggo mi viene da continuare a sistemarlo. La traduzione è un lavoro che ha una conclusione deliberata, non fisiologica. Devi decidere a un certo punto che il libro è quello e che va bene così, o ti condanni a lavorarci potenzialmente per tutta la vita perché ci sarà sempre qualcosa che ti sembrerà di poter trasportare meglio.

[Usually I don't, because if I have translated it that means I've read it approximately three thousand times. Also, if I start reading, it makes me want to keep fixing it. Translation is a job with a deliberate conclusion, not a physiological one. At some point you must decide that the book is done and it's good as it is, or you will sentence yourself to work on it virtually forever, because there's always going to be something that you feel like you could improve.]

(Crescentini, Instagram story)

This sense of unfinishedness seems to be a sentiment often associated with translation, which is “a process of choice and, consequently, never a finished process” (Biguenet and Schulte 1989, viii).

When asked what, in her opinion, the biggest hindrance for a translator is, the thing she would rather never come across, she answered:

La comicità è sempre una grana, perché spessissimo si basa su giochi di parole o modi di dire che si trasportano fisiologicamente male. In più, la comicità funziona meglio se non perde il suo contesto - ci fa ridere l'umorismo che porta a galla l'assurdo di un tema specifico o di un "ambiente" in cui siamo immersi e che conosciamo. Ecco, certe robe smettono di funzionare o ne escono depotenziate se il pubblico ha punti di riferimento diversi (aka abita un contesto diverso da quello d'origine).

[Comedy is always big trouble, because it's very often based on word play or sayings that are physiologically bound to come out of translation wrong. Furthermore, comedy works best in its originating context – we laugh about humour that brings the absurdity of a specific topic or environment we're familiar with to the surface. Well, if the public has a different background (aka lives in a context which is different from the original one) some things just stop working or become weaker.]

(Crescentini, Instagram story)

Again, Crescentini voices a common opinion regarding translating humour, which is seen as an outright translation issue, and in recent years it has become a popular topic of research (Harrison 2013, 9).

Last but not least, Crescentini addressed the undying juxtaposition between literal ‘word-for-word’ translation and free ‘sense-for-sense’ translation, ever present in the translation field since the days of Cicero (Munday 2016, 31): on April 26th 2022 someone asked her “quando traduci sei generalmente team fidelity al testo originale o team faithfulness alla lingua target?” [When you translate, are you team fidelity to the original text or team faithfulness to the target language, generally speaking?], to which Crescentini humorously replied “lavorando e sbattendoci il muso ci si rende conto che non sono compartimenti stagni, è tutto un grandissimo lavoro di compromesso che si fa una frase alla volta, passeggiando scalzi nella valle dei chiodi” [once you start working and get a first-hand experience, it is evident how those are not sealed compartments, it’s all a big compromise you have to reach one sentence at a time, while strolling barefoot in a valley of nails] (Crescentini, Instagram story, April 26th 2022).

3.2. Content Creator Career and Micro-Celebrity status

Following academic influencer classification systems, Crescentini is considered to be a macro-influencer, since she exceeded the 100,000 followers micro-influencer threshold, but has not yet reached the one million mega-influencer milestone (Rahmah and Ren 2019, 12).

As explicitly signalled by Crescentini herself, either using the ‘in partnership with’ function that is available to content creators on platforms like Instagram, or using designated hashtags like *#adv*, some of her content is linked to partnerships with brands. Endorsing of products is a characteristic of modern celebrity status and, in that respect, influencers have developed a parallel role alongside traditional celebrities in the eyes of marketers (Gretzel 2018, 1), as illustrated in section 1.2. Not all of Crescentini’s content is sponsor-dependent, and there is a correspondence between sponsored and non-sponsored content (e.g. similarity in brands and style of clothes she buys herself and clothes gifted to her): she explained that there’s a meticulous selection, from her part, of the products she is going to show on her platforms, based on her work ethics and her personal taste, because “è molto più semplice se è un brand che tu utilizzi davvero e al

quale sei davvero affezionata” [it is easier if it’s a brand you actually use and are fond of] (Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 122). Regarding her work ethic, Crescentini stated:

Perché tu crei dei contenuti, delle cose per delle persone che ti possono guardare per i motivi più disparati. Secondo me sono importanti due componenti: il fatto informativo e anche la componente poi di intrattenimento, insomma. C’è della gente che ti guarda perché si diverte e vuole dei contenuti che la intrattengano, banalmente. In entrambi i casi è un’attenzione preziosa, ed è anche un rapporto che si crea pian piano e quindi va gestito con un grande senso di responsabilità su quello che tu dici e su quello che tu pubblicizzi. Quindi non ti associ a cose che trovi riprovevoli, anche se ti vogliono pagare.

[Because you are creating content, things for people that might watch for different reasons. I believe there are two important factors: the informative side and the entertainment one, so to speak. Some people are watching [your content] because they want to have fun and simply want entertaining content. In both instances, people are devoting to you their precious attention, and it is a slowly built relationship that must be managed with a great sense of responsibility concerning what you say and what you advertise. So, you don’t associate yourself with things you find reprehensible, even if [brands] are willing to pay you.]

(Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 122)

Furthermore, since Crescentini created a strong relationship of trust and transparency with her followers, her honesty is rarely, if ever, questioned, and it is assumed she would only endorse products she likes. For example, on her last advertisement post in her Instagram feed, a video in partnership with skincare brand Lierac Italia (https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cf9Vn6jM80j/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link), 27/28 comments consist of positive feedback, and the remaining one is asking for more information about the products shown. Looking at the comments on another ad for Italian toy manufacturer Clementoni, showing a board game about language, lexicon,

grammar and figures of speech

(https://www.instagram.com/p/CZuiMzpLhIk/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link), 38/50 commenters expressed enthusiasm and interest for the product, many of them tagging other people to show them the game, and 5/50 commenters stated they bought the game themselves, possibly under the influence of Crenscentini's endorsement (one commenter specifically uses the phrase 'influenced by @tegamini').

As mentioned in section 1.1., engagement rate is a useful parameter to get a sense of the 'influence' potential of a content creator. Italian website www.notjustanalytics.com is an open access data analysis tool designed for the analysis of Instagram profiles: in the free version, a report shows basic data like number of followers and number of posts, but also follower growth graphics and engagement rate. Scanning Crescentini's profile through www.notjustanalytics.com, the engagement rate is at 8.23%, which is deemed by the tool itself as "più alto rispetto alla media" [higher than average].

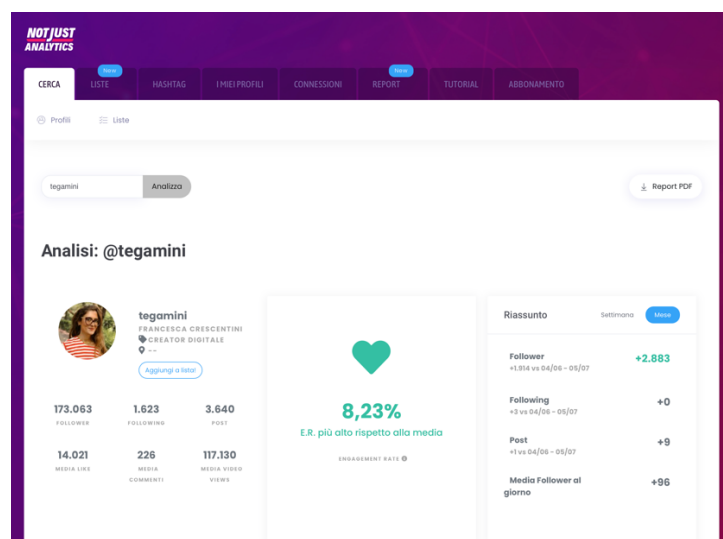


Figure 3: Analysis of Crescentini's Instagram account, @tegamini, accessed via notjustanalytics.com on August 6th 2022

For comparison, the same tool shows the engagement rate for worldwide celebrity soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo's Instagram account, one of the most followed Instagram accounts to date, is at 1.2%, "più basso rispetto alla media" [lower than average].

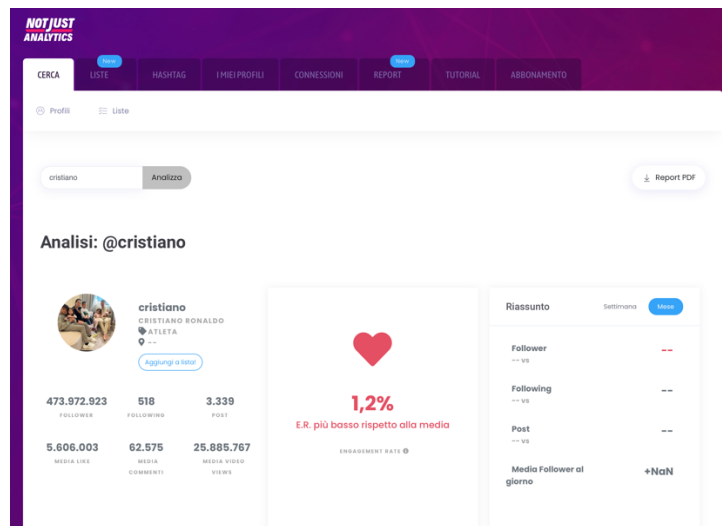


Figure 4: Analysis of Ronaldo's Instagram account, @cristiano, accessed via notjustanalytics.com on August 6th 2022

4. Is Francesca Crescentini (@tegamini) a Celebrity Translator?

To establish whether and how the definition of Celebrity Translator can be ascribed to Francesca Crescentini, I will compare her activity to recognized celebrity translators' behaviours, to see if Crescentini possesses the main characteristics attributed to celebrity translators like Murakami. Since her research outlines what a celebrity translator is and how said translators manifest their celebrity status, this chapter mainly draws on Akashi's work (2018a), trying to condense the many features of celebrity translators into four main characteristics: use of paratext, direct communication with fans, promotion of their translations, and having a public persona. Lastly, I will use Akashi's *Celebrity factors chart* (2018a, 244-6) to verify if all factors classified as "regularly/applies to all" also apply to Crescentini.

4.1. "Paratextual elements can be powerful factors that create significant translatorial visibility" (Akashi 2018a, 137)

In using the term 'paratext' I will refer to the following definition given by Genette (1997):

“paratexts are those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader.” Common forms of paratexts include all elements present on the book cover and jacket (e.g., title, subtitle, author, translator, illustrations, etc.), forewords, afterwords, notes, but also external sources like interviews with the author (or the translator), and book reviews. Studying paratexts produced by translators can be useful to identify translation strategies and issues, as well as collecting information about the translators’ work conditions and visibility (Gürçaglar 2011).

Out of the 56 books Crescentini translated, listed in her *About* blog page (<http://www.tegamini.it/about/francesca/>), none of them have a foreword or afterword written by the translator. This might be due to the fact that most of the books are targeted towards a public of children and teenagers (34/56) who might prefer to jump directly into the narration rather than read a translator’s commentary. There are also three graphic novels, six humorous guidebooks, four arts and crafts guides, and nine novels pertaining to different genres.

In terms of visibility in the paratext, Crescentini’s name is featured on 4/56 covers, 2/56 back covers and 50/56 title pages, in line with the trend of the Italian publishing industry, as illustrated in section 2.2.: Crescentini started translating in 2013 and the six books featuring her name on the cover or back cover came out in the last five years. In terms of promotional events, Crescentini participated in many book presentations as book blogger (e.g., in the past years she presented and moderated multiple events at the Salone del Libro in Turin); as a translator she participated in multiple events dedicated to translation in general, for example a talk at independent bookshop Le Notti Bianche in April 2019 (<https://www.facebook.com/events/le-notti-bianche/francesca-crescentini-tegamini-e-la-traduzione/1155688584604468/>), and in 2020 she held a virtual Q&A live session in collaboration with Oscar Mondadori Vault (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CH7cYAkndHx/>) and independent bookshop Colibrì, for *Gideon the Ninth* (full event still available on Facebook at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=371297284102963)

Despite the lack of traditional forms of translator commentary, like forewords and translator's notes, Crescentini uses other means to 'annotate' her translations, both during the process and after she is finished. In fact, in multiple instances she shared on her social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Telegram, different kinds of information and opinions regarding her work. Although the contents of her comments are coherent, the register changes slightly depending on the platform and on the temporariness of the content:

- Instagram posts

Considering the general popularity of the platform and the number of followers, Instagram is at the top of the hierarchy with more than 170,000 followers. Posts are permanent, unless they are manually deleted by the owner of the profile

(https://help.instagram.com/289302621183285/?helpref=search&query=how%20do%20I%20delete%20a%20post&search_session_id=fca6ee6f9ac55a4059dcc3fb74ea15ee&sr=1)

so, Crescentini keeps her usual informal but polished register. For example, in this post for the publication of *Gideon the Ninth*

(<https://www.instagram.com/p/CHw7c6SJCjj/>) she wrote:

"I think the most unexpectedly enjoyable thing about being published has actually been talking to translators. I feel like GIDEON must be an unfairly difficult book to translate, so I'm really grateful you're even making the attempt...". Ecco, non posso nascondere di aver talvolta provato l'impulso di rispondere alle mail di Tamsyn Muir con SUL TUO CUORE INVITEREI CINQUEMILA CHIODI A FAR FESTA*, ma la verità è che sono felicissima di aver lavorato a questo libro e sono ancor più contenta di vederlo finalmente approdare sugli scaffali della nostra coraggiosa penisola in un'edizione così splendidamente tamarra. Non dico di essermi tramutata in toto in una Nera Vestale del Sepolcro Sigillato o di aver conquistato il titolo onorario di Baronessa di Tisis -

anche se son convinta di poter rivaleggiare con Coronabeth Tridentarius in fatto di orecchini -, ma non c'è abitante delle Nove Case che io non continui a portare con me. È un romanzo di un'improbabilità corroborante, bizantino e grezzissimo, pieno di ossa, interiora, roba che va in malora, poteri pazzi, confusione, secchi di sangue, duelli complicati, segreti, antichi rancori, sentimenti intricati e gente irascibile. REVERENDA FIGLIA, DIPINGIMI LA FACCIA.

Insomma, festeggiamenti per l'uscita di [#Gideon](#), grazie a [@oscarvault](#) per avermelo affidato (e per aver accudito bene anche il testo, oltre al meritevole involucro) e incoraggiamenti vivissimi a chi deciderà di cimentarsi con i misteri della necromanzia e con le gesta di Gideon e Harrow. Tamsyn spiega poco, ma spalanca mondi, spezza cuori e fa divertire come raramente mi è capitato. Voi datele fiducia, che da qualche parte vi porta. Se poi qualcuno volesse organizzare una baracconata di cosplay, io ci sono... sempre che arrivi indenne alla fine del secondo volume della trilogia. 🤩👁️👉

* pag. 57, Gideon Nav a Harrowhark Nonagesimus.

[[...] Well, I can't pretend sometimes I had the impulse of answering Tamsyn Muir's emails with YOUR HEART IS A PARTY FOR FIVE THOUSAND NAILS*, but truth is I'm so happy I worked on this book and I'm even happier to see it on the shelves of our brave peninsula in such a chavvy edition. I'm not saying I turned into a Black Vestal of the Locked Tomb or that I conquered the honorary title of Baroness of Tisis – even though I'm sure I could compete with Coronabeth Tridentarius' earrings collection -, but I still carry with me each and every resident of the Nine Houses. It is a novel of fortifying improbability, byzantine and coarse, full of bones, entrails, things going to ruin, crazy powers, chaos, buckets of blood, complex duels, secrets, ancient resentments, intricated feelings, and irritable people. REVEREND DAUGHTER, PAINT MY FACE.

So, celebrations for the publication of #Gideon, thanks @oscarvault for entrusting it to me (and for carefully looking after the text, as well as the wrappage), and massive encouragements to whoever will engage with the mysteries of necromancy and Gideon and Harrow's deeds. Tamsyn explains very little, but she flings worlds open, breaks hearts, and

entertains in a way I've rarely seen. Trust her, she will bring you somewhere. And if someone would like to arrange a circusy cosplay meeting, I'm in... given that I survive the translation of the second book of the trilogy. 🤖👊

*page 57, Gideon Nav to Harrowhark Nonagesimus]

Sometimes, when the book is still a work in progress, Crescentini is forced to be less specific, but still shares her opinions in similar fashion, perhaps with less filters since her comments are not explicitly tied to a book yet. For example, in this post's caption (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPYkEvKp1Nj/>) she shared a list of different events of her daily life and included a passage about her translation in progress:

[...] 📖 Sono contenta perché nel libro che sto traducendo i personaggi si parlano in continuazione e i dialoghi sono sempre stati una delle mie cose preferite da rendere. La rottura di balle è che mi sento in dovere di aggiungere delle connotazioni un po' meno generiche a tutti i vari "he/she said" perché se no ci ammazziamo di noia. Insomma, forse sono meno pigra dell'autrice. E METTICI ALMENO UN "ESCLAMÒ" DI TANTO IN TANTO SANTO IL GRAAL.

[📖 I'm pleased because the characters of the book I'm translating are always talking to each other and dialogues are one of my favourite things to translate. The real pain in the butt is that sometimes I feel like I must add expressions less generic than "he/she said" or everyone will die of boredom. Well, maybe I'm less lazy than the writer. COME ON, USE "HE/SHE EXCLAIMED" EVERY NOW AND THEN, HOLY GRAAL.]

- Instagram stories and lives

Instagram stories disappear after twenty-four hours unless they are saved in the 'highlights' section of the profile that uploaded them

(https://help.instagram.com/1660923094227526/?helpref=hc_fnav).

Instagram lives follow the same principle, they can be saved on the profile as a video, but disappear as soon as they end

(https://help.instagram.com/272122157758915/?helpref=hc_fnav). The

temporariness of this type of content, stories in particular, allows Crescentini an even more informal register compared to posts, and she seems to be more focused on the struggle of the translating process, possibly because she is still in the midst of it:

[...] Ho l'ansia per questo fumetto che sto facendo perché è impestato di rotture di coglioni. Ed è anche un caso di estrema difficoltà di gestione dell'italiano che lievita rispetto all'inglese e c'è pochissimo spazio. Credo verrà indetta una gara di moccoli tra me e chi dovrà impaginarlo, proprio col tabellone. Tegamini in vantaggio, ha smadonnato 6000 volte! Rimonta del team impaginazione, siamo arrivati al settecentesimo balloon che non ci sta, eeeeeh! Colpo di scena! Quelli della revisione si licenziano in blocco e vanno a bere!

[I'm worried about this comic I'm doing (translating) because it's full of pains in the ass. And it's also a very difficult case of Italian increasing the original English word count and there's very little space. I think there will be a blasphemies competition between me and whoever will do the layout, scoreboard and all. Tegamini takes the lead, she swore 6,000 times! The layout team is making a comeback, it's the 700th balloon that doesn't fit, yeeeeeh! Plot twist! The revision team quits, and they go for drinks!]

(Crescentini, Instagram stories, 22nd March 2022, 22:00 ca)

While stories have a maximum duration of 15 seconds, Instagram lives are not limited in time, and allow Crescentini to go more in depth about the issues she faces in the translation process in structured discussions. For example, in May 2022 I tuned in with my personal account during an extemporary Instagram live

she made to kill time (Crescentini, personal communication) and asked: ‘Poi l’hai finita la traduzione del fumetto infernale?’ [Have you finished translating that hellish comic?]. Crescentini answered:

L’ho finita e devo fare la revisione. Sto andando avanti ed è una rognà, una rognà proprio apocalittica. E tra l’altro sarà una di quelle cose che anche quando tu te le revisioni poi ti torna indietro impaginato, e più o meno nei tre quarti dei casi bisognerà di nuovo rimetterci le mani perché non ci sta, è troppo lungo. L’italiano lievita. Non so di quanto esattamente perché non è misurabile, però l’italiano tende a occupare più spazio dell’inglese. Potete immaginare che gioia è quando hai dei balloon disegnati che hanno quello spazio lì, e quello spazio lì è, non è che puoi dire “sì, scusa, qui non è che possiamo metterci-“ no. È magnifico, è magnifico.

[I finished it and I have to proofread it. I’m getting through it and it’s a pain, an apocalyptic pain. And, what’s more, it is one of those cases when even when you proofread it, it comes back to you in layout and in three quarters of the cases you have to rework it again because it doesn’t fit, it’s too long. Italian increases the word count. I’m not sure how much exactly, cause it’s not measurable, but Italian usually takes up more space than English. You can get an idea of the joy coming from drawn balloons that limit the space you can use, and it’s that space only, it’s not like you can say “yeah, sorry, could we put-“ no. It’s marvellous, it’s marvellous.]

(Crescentini, Instagram live, 13th May 2022, 22:40 ca)

- Telegram channel messages

Crescentini’s telegram channel is, as described by her, a place “per sgallinare insieme” [to quack together] (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/7>) and to “raccoliere e rendere ‘trovabili’ tutte le assurdità che dissemino in giro” [collect and make the absurdities I disseminate all over more accessible](ibid). The reach is significantly smaller: the channel is public and the link to access it was shared

multiple times, still, the number of subscribers is, at present, around 15,000. The smaller crowd, in conjunction with the Telegram channel structure, where the owner sends messages and the subscribers can comment on it together with them (<https://telegram.org/blog/filters-anonymous-admins-comments#channel-comments>), simulating a private group chat or forum, might contribute to the perception of the environment as more 'domestic' compared to other social media. Here is where Crescentini vents her emotions without filters, even using stronger language, and fully opens up about the trials and tribulations a translator has to face while working on a text. The channel was opened while Crescentini was in the process of translating *Harrow the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir. The book translation unfolds through her Telegram messages:

- February 4th 2021

In the comments, a subscriber asked about her progress in translating *Harrow the Ninth*:

"Sto invocando le sacre ossa di Pelleamena Novenarius."

[I'm evoking the bones of Pelleamena Novenarius]

(<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/8>).

- February 5th 2021

In the comments:

"*Harrow* mi sta mettendo addosso un male di vivere che non vi spiego."

[*Harrow* is giving me a sense of angst I can't even begin to explain]

(<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/9>).

- February 17th 2021

Audio message:

"[...] sto cercando di finire sto cazzo di libro (ride) scusate il francese ma veramente, sto arrancando. Sono alla fine e poi devo fare la rilettura, quindi è proprio un periodo un po' devastante."

[I'm trying to finish this *fucking* book (laughs) pardon my French, but seriously, I'm plodding on. I'm at the end, then I have to re-read it, so it's a slightly devastating phase] (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/30>).

Audio message in the comments:

“è sempre Harrow, sì. Le Nove Case... le voglio demolire una per una! (ride)”

[it's still Harrow, yes. The Nine Houses... I want to demolish them all, one by one! (laughs)] (ibid).

- February 21st 2021

Audio message in the comments:

“[...] a un certo punto mi sono trovata a dover scegliere tra ‘figlio di puttana’ e ‘figlio di troia’, sempre detto dalla ottima Gideon. Alla fine ho scelto ‘figlio di troia’ che era più bello, più incisivo (ride).”

[At some point I had to choose between ‘son of a bitch’ and ‘son of a whore’, coming from the excellent Gideon, as per usual. In the end I chose “son of a whore” because it was prettier, more cutting (laughs)] (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/34>).

- February 25th 2021

“Sto ringraziando la me stessa di qualche mese fa che ha negoziato la consegna della prossima traduzione che devo fare per fine maggio. Senza questo gesto di inconsapevole lungimiranza ci sarei probabilmente rimasta secca.”

[I'm thanking my past self from some months ago because she negotiated the submission of the next translation I have to work on for the end of May. Without this act of unaware foresight, I would have probably dropped dead] (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/39>).

- February 28th 2021

“Vado avanti con *Harrow* che ho quasi finito. Mi sta cascando la faccia.”

[I'll carry on with *Harrow*, I'm almost done. My face is falling off]

(<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/45>).

- March 8th 2021

“[...] la mia mente è ottenebrata dalle battute finali di questa traduzione e non so più chi sono, dove mi trovo o perché.”

[My brain is clouded by the last lines of this translation and I don't know who or where I am or why anymore] (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/77>).

- March 24th 2021 (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/90>):

[...] M'è tornata indietro la revisione di *Harrow* e devo spulciarmela. Il revisore, comunque, mi ha detto che "gli interventi sono stati minimi". Grazie al cielo. L'editor è felicissimo e di conseguenza pure io sono felice e non mi sento una verza mentecatta.

[I got back *Harrow*'s revised version and I have to go through it. Anyways, the proof-reader told me that "there were minimal changes". Thank heavens. The editor is delighted and consequently so am I, and I don't feel like a foolish savoy cabbage.]

In the comments:

“Anche perché ho consegnato con un disclaimer lungo così:
AMICI SE CI SONO DELLE RIPETIZIONI È PERCHÉ L'AUTRICE È
RIDONDANTE LASCIATELA FARE”

[Also, because I submitted it with the longest disclaimer:
HEY FRIENDS IF THERE ARE REPETITIONS IT'S BECAUSE OF
THE WRITER BEING REDUNDANT LEAVE HER BE] (ibid).

Overall, these ways of creating paratexts for translations are, for what concerns posts and messages produced *after* the publication of a book, comparable to Q&A websites set up by Japanese publishing houses for celebrity translators like Murakami (Akashi 2018a, 71). As far as content referring to translations *in progress*, it seems to be a modality unique to Crescentini, possibly due to her role as a content creator. Even though she decided to use her social media to generate income, Crescentini treats her profiles like a diary, and this reflects on the content she posts: “una parte di lavoro lo faccio perché sono un essere umano che è portato naturalmente per condividere delle cose, quindi io quelle le condivido” [part of the work I do comes from me being a human naturally prone to share things, so I just share those things] (Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 116). This creates an access to the behind the scenes of her translations and makes the public more aware of what goes into translating a book.

4.2. Some celebrity translators “exert themselves to make direct contact with readers and, as a result, create a sense of intimacy” (Akashi 2018a, 74)

Much like Murakami, Crescentini created a connection with her fanbase through her other-than-translation career. Murakami’s novels are filled with details about the food and music taste of the protagonists: since some of these elements are recurrent, fans have started to associate the characters’ taste with Murakami’s taste, creating a unique communication channel between the writer and his fans. (Akashi 2018a, 19). Similarly, Crescentini shares her content on social media, including aspects regarding her personal taste, like clothes, furniture, movies, tv series, and, of course, books. Through comments on her posts and direct messages, she interacts with her fans, gives advice, and further expands on her personal opinions regarding the things she shows. Crescentini also makes extensive use of the question sticker available on Instagram stories (https://help.instagram.com/151273688993748/?helpref=search&query=question%20sticker&search_session_id=7098ee66cf26520e08ddbd36afbd1483&sr=0), which she usually entitles “Bla?Bla!”, leaving a free theme for anyone who might want to ask her a question, and then she proceeds to answer publicly to a varying number of questions. Communicating via direct messages with her fans is of the utmost importance, since it

creates what she calls ‘invisible engagement’. In her interview with Azzolin (2019, 118), conducted via Instagram direct voice messages, Crescentini stated:

[...] se tu imposti tutto il tuo lavoro, la tua presenza sul fatto che “che bello! Parliamoci! Uno scambio! Siamo tutti qua, siamo tutti veri!” e poi non caghi nessuno, scusami per il francese; se poi non parli a nessuno e non consideri nessuno ovviamente non stai facendo un lavoro coerente che ha senso. Quindi se tu ti rendi disponibile in un certo modo a condividere delle cose, poi devi anche sostenere la parte di scambio e di conversazione che è preziosissima perché è tutta attenzione che ti viene dedicata, tutto tempo che ti viene dedicato. E il tempo è la cosa più preziosa in questo tipo di lavoro.

[If you base your work on a “this is great! Let’s talk! It’s an exchange [of ideas]! We’re all here, we’re real!” concept, and then you don’t give a shit about anyone – pardon my French –; if you don’t talk to anyone and you neglect people, you’re clearly being incoherent, and your work doesn’t make sense. So, if you are somewhat open and share some things, then you must also uphold the exchanges and conversations’ side, which is so precious, because that’s all attention that is given to you, that’s time devoted to you. And time is the most precious thing in this kind of job.]

Altogether, Crescentini’s relationship with her public is comparable to a combination of celebrity translators Haruki Murakami and Kishimoto Sachiko. Murakami places a lot of importance on direct communication with his readers, both as a writer and as a translator, making his publishers set up websites where readers can post comments and ask questions, to which Murakami personally answers, and exchanging emails with his readers (Akashi 2018a, 71), as already mentioned in section 4.1. In the same way Crescentini communicates with her public through her social media, both visibly through the comments on her posts, and invisibly through direct communication. Because of the platforms she uses, Crescentini’s communication style also resembles that of Kishimoto since they are both active on social media, though Kishimoto’s use of Twitter is mainly centred around her work as a translator and essayist rather than communicating with her

fans (Akashi 2018a, 63). Most importantly, they are similar in the way they present to the public, creating a sense of transparency and relatability: Kishimoto uses her other-than-translation career as an essayist to share episodes of her daily life using her own voice (Akashi 2018a, 61), much like Crescentini shares her own life and likings as a content creator on social media, as illustrated in section 3.2., in her unique voice, which she cares to keep consistent even when she is paid to sponsor a product: “se si sceglie di appoggiarsi ad un'altra persona bisogna rispettarne lo stile, i modi, i codici e il linguaggio che sono già stati creati” [If you choose to rely on someone else you must respect the style, the ways, the code, and the language they have created] (Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 123). Thus, they both create a window from which their fans can observe them and relate to them as people rather than just professionals.

4.3. “When a translator is a celebrity, he or she can similarly function as a marketing tool to promote the translation” (Akashi 2018a, 8)

As illustrated in section 3.2., Crescentini’s work as a content creator involves the endorsement of products in partnership with brands. Evidence about her paratextual use of social media as a translator was also given in section 4.1. but there is an additional aspect where her job as content creator meets her job as a translator: Crescentini often uses her social media platforms to showcase books she translated that recently came out, possibly in agreement with the publishing house.

For example, on October 6th 2020: she posted a photo of two books she translated on her Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/p/CF_ymNXJoOg/), Tom Gauld’s *Department of Mind-Blowing Theories*, a collection of Gauld’s comic strips about scientists, published by Oscar Mondadori Vault, and Anna James’ *Tilly and The Bookwanderers*, published by Garzanti, the first volume of a fantasy series for children about a girl going on adventures with book characters from classics, like Alice in Wonderland and Anne of Green Gables. The post has a total of 2,062 likes and 18 users commented on it: 14/18 commenters interacted positively showing interest in one or both books, and 3 of them complimented

Crescentini's work as a translator. While Garzanti did not mention Crescentini anywhere on their social networks when announcing the book (https://www.instagram.com/p/CF_9uhlpZcE/, <https://twitter.com/garzantilibri/status/1309077618579234816?s=20>, <https://www.facebook.com/garzantilibri/posts/pfbid02yrbeziCUpF48ZEEfqDs2ciR1yK5Wn2Jr9s4fWSQYXWRX2rBeYNv13aCp4MRvxku9l>), this was consistent with this publisher's behaviour towards translators, which is quite traditional. On the other hand, Mondadori's Oscar Vault is an Italian series of publications which has chosen to give more prominence to translators, as illustrated in section 2.2., and this reflects both on the presence of Crescentini's name on the cover of the book, and on their social media interaction with her, tagging her in the Instagram post where they announced the publishing date (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CFwPn9cnCPu/>), and later on in June 2021, when the book was nominated for the Will Eisner prize for Best Humour Publication, they made a post emphasizing again both the book and Crescentini as a translator (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CFwPn9cnCPu/>), writing in the caption "[...]per noi aveva già vinto tutto. Cioè, Tom Gauld + Tegamini = 🔥🔥🔥" [it was already a winner for us. I mean, Tom Gauld + Tegamini = 🔥🔥🔥].

Most recently there was another instance where Crescentini publicised her work as a translator, together with that same publisher. On September 11th 2022, the day before her latest work, the translation of another book by Tom Gauld, *The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess*, came out, Oscar Mondadori Vault posted a photo of the book cover on their Instagram page (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CeLoMpVsztP/>), tagging her profile, including #tegamini in the caption, writing out that she was the translator, and praising the author's work but also Crescentini's. On May 31st she sent out a message on her Telegram channel, sharing the Amazon link to the book (<https://t.me/CuoriniTegamini/296>). Then, on June 21st, she published a photo on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CfEJ4hTr7VJ/>), and a tweet sharing the Instagram post (<https://twitter.com/tegamini/status/1539201984217096192?s=20>). Crescentini also updated the list of her translation works on her blog's *About* page (<http://www.tegamini.it/about/francesca/>) to include the book. Looking at the Instagram

post, with a total of 4,119 likes, 37 users left comments: 37/37 people left positive feedback, 7/37 people either bought or expressed the intention to buy the book because of Crescentini's involvement and 2/37 commenters explicitly complimented Crescentini for her work as a translator.

Comparing these instances with the behaviour of other celebrity translators, described in Akashi (2018), Crescentini's self-promotion activity seems to be a stand-alone case: most celebrity translators leave the promotion campaign to the publishers, be it interviews, in-person events or Q&A websites, the exception being younger translators like Echizen and Kishimoto who, similarly to Crescentini, use their social media platforms to publicize their work. As illustrated above, Oscar Mondadori Vault, who often works with Crescentini, promotes her translations and her image as a good translator. This, however, is true for all translators working with Oscar Mondadori Vault, because of their will to change the tendency of the Italian publishing industry to leave translators in the background, as shown in section 2.2.

Crescentini's choices might originate from her own job satisfaction, being proud of the books she has worked on and wanting to show them off to her followers in the same way she shows other parts of her life. It might also be dependent on deals with publishing houses, deriving from her status as content creator with an already well-formed following on social media, which allows her to reach a large public, and, at the same time, turn her promotion of a translation she produced into new content for her creator profile, killing two birds with one stone.

4.4. "Characteristic of celebrity translators is their possession of public personae associated with their works, which is promoted through the media" (Akashi 2018, 74)

For the sake of this argument, I will use the term 'persona' with the following definition in mind: "a celebrity translator's 'persona' is a public personality formed through their

image as presented by the media including translators' own social media, publishers' promotional activities and interviews. The translator's persona is often associated with the works he or she produces" (Akashi 2018a, 45). Thus, personae can be used to promote translators' work and make them more visible. For example, as described by Sela-Sheffy (2010, 133), in the Israeli context building a persona is a fundamental tool for translators wanting to emerge, because even though there are multiple translators who can be classified as celebrities, translation is not an officialised profession. Celebrity translators in Israel are conceptually closer to artists: their status revolves around their public personae, mainly shared via traditional media like interviews and essays, which tend to evoke an image of bohemian living, not caring about the monetary aspect of the job because they consider it more of a vocation, an inevitable call to action to spread knowledge that was inaccessible to the public until they translated it (Sela-Sheffy 2010).

On the other hand, in the Japanese context, having an artistic persona does not seem to be as important as in Israel: the main characteristics that publishers promote through media are the expertise and talent of the translator, like in Shibata Motoyuki's case, where his public image is heavily centred around his high academic profile (Akashi 2018a, 67). There are also occasional extra layers, for example, as illustrated in section 4.2., Kishimoto Sachiko's image as a talented translator goes hand in hand with her image as an ordinary person (ibid), or Murakami's peculiar writing style crossing over from his novels to his translations (Akashi 2018a, 74).

In Crescentini's case, social media are the primary device to discern what characteristics define her persona, both because of her job as content creator and because she views social networks as a prolongation of real life:

[...] io vedo il mondo digitale, quello che facciamo online come un'estensione di quello che siamo. Cioè io sono convinta che non è che si vada online con una personalità diversa rispetto alla propria, o che ci si deve comportare elaborando una personalità alternativa. Perché non

è quello, non fa niente di buono questa cosa. Anzi da spazio forse alle cose peggiori che si vedono online perché si pensa che non ci siano regole, che non ci siano responsabilità e quindi vengono fuori delle cose orrende, violente, bruttissime e che fanno solo del male, in generale.

[I see the digital world, what we do online, as an extension of what we are. I mean, I'm convinced you don't go online with a personality that is different from your own, or that you must act according to an alternative personality you deliberately designed. Because that's not it, nothing good comes out of that. On the contrary, it makes room for the worst things you witness online, because people think there are no rules, no responsibilities, and what comes out of it are horrible, violent, ugly things that generally hurt people.]

(Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 120)

Looking at her pictures and reading her posts, Crescentini comes across as a playful and eccentric person (e.g. wallpaper with giant colourful parrots <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbFL7pVLsBY/>, plasma globe-induced hair <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaK01dQrtXv/>), a loving mother and wife (e.g. multiple posts with photos of her children, husband and cat, <https://www.instagram.com/tegamini/>), and a successful content creator (e.g. participating at events, collaborating with famous brands <https://www.instagram.com/tegamini/>), and translator (e.g. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CfEJ4hTr7VJ/>). Crescentini is also renowned for her articulated writing style and extensive vocabulary, which she is not afraid to use in a context like social networks, where everything tends to be oversimplified:

Secondo me non dobbiamo pensare che comunicare su internet significhi semplificare dei messaggi o rendere le cose più stupide e più banali. È sicuramente uno degli effetti collaterali, ma secondo me è un problema che insomma, è tra il fruitore e chi butta giù le cose [...]. Però secondo me da persona che crea contenuti, a me non sembra che

l'offrire delle cose magari più lunghe da leggere, più complesse debba per forza essere un handicap diciamo.

[In my opinion, communicating online does not necessarily mean simplifying the messages or making things more stupid and trivial. Sure, it's one of the side effects, but I personally see it as an issue between the user and the person writing things down [...]. But, as a content creator, I don't necessarily think of providing longer and more complex texts as a handicap, so to speak.]

(Crescentini in Azzolin 2019, 117)

It could be argued that these characteristics might even have influenced what books she was entrusted by publishing houses, since she worked on multiple books pertaining to the comedy genre, and books for children and teenagers, some of which characterised by a creative use of language (e.g. *The Unbelievable Top Secret Diary of Pig*, *Tilly and the Bookwanderers*).

4.5. Celebrity Factors Chart

To have an overview of the characteristics of celebrity translators that apply to Crescentini, I referred to Akashi who compiled a table of factors “that lay the ground for a translator to be propelled into celebrity” (2018a, 244). Akashi’s table includes factors which apply to 4 different levels of celebrity translators (recognised, Media Active, Celebrity, Super Celebrity) (ibid): down below I recreated an analogous table, only including the factors referring to the Celebrity category which were classified as “regularly/applies to all”. I compiled the table with reference to Crescentini’s case study, indicating whether every characteristic occurs (Y) or does not occur (N).

Figure 5: “Regularly/applies to all” Celebrity Factors Chart observed in Crescentini’s case study

The translator’s name attracts readers	Y
Having produced translations of high quality	Y
Having translated works by famous authors	Y
Having won translation prizes	N
Being known for particular translation strategies	N
Being known for particular literary genres	Y
Translating serious literature	Y
Translating from the English Language	Y
Writing/translation skills regularly mentioned in the media	Y
Being known for cultural contributions (introducing foreign literature, entertainment provider)	Y: she has won the Premio Fiesole Narrativa Under 40 “per la brillante attività di blogger e promotrice della lettura” [for her brilliant activity as a blogger and for promoting reading]
Being famous outside translation	Y
Receiving regular media coverage (interviews, critics’ reviews etc.)	Y
Being regularly included in translators’ gossip books	Does not apply: there are no such books in the Italian context
Having been promoted/ advertised by publishers	Y
Writing essays/articles (translation related)	Y: see paratextual use of social media

Writing essays (personal accounts)	Y: see use of social media as a diary
Writing essays/articles (literature related)	Y: book blogger activity
Anthologies	N
Having adopted a persona	Y
Freedom in the choice of source text	Y
Having own website/ social media	Y
Having one-way communication with readers via social media	Y
Having direct communication with readers via the internet*	Y
Having direct communication with readers at public events	Y
Participating in major literary festivals	Y
Participating in small literary festivals	Y
Participating in promotional events	Y
Having particular tastes in foreign authors	Y

*This was marked as “occasionally/applies to some” but was included because it is one key factor in the relationship between Crescentini and her readers.

Even though not all of the listed features apply to Crescentini’s case, the vast majority of them does, though in some case through different declinations compared to the celebrity translators described in Akashi’s study.

Conclusions

During this dissertation my aim was shedding a new light on the combination between new kinds of celebrity status, such as micro-celebrities or influencers, and the concept of celebrity translator. A combination embodied in the figure of influencer translator Francesca Crescentini. This research topic was chosen because of a gap in Celebrity Translators studies, which originally relegates social media to a marginal role in the translator's acquisition of celebrity status. Though Crescentini does not completely fit in the Celebrity Translator model proposed by Akashi, her visibility is especially surprising considering the Italian context, prone to translator erasure. That is why I believe she matches enough to be considered a Celebrity Translator, and possibly presents new elements for future reworkings of the definition.

The main limitation in this study was the fleeting nature of my main materials: since social media content is everchanging, and in some case it disappears after a certain amount of time, I could only analyse data that I was able to access and collect myself, oftentimes via means of screen recording and screenshotting. If another research of this kind had to be carried, I would suggest setting a precise and limited timeframe for the collection of data.

This work offers some potential research opportunities in the field of micro-celebrity studies and Celebrity Translators studies, and proposes a new perspective on ways to increase translator visibility through social media, which is a tool accessible to anyone.

If virtually anyone can become a micro-celebrity, does that mean that any translator could virtually become a celebrity translator through conscious use of social media? And would that be feasible in any given context?

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