5 From Manuscript to Memory

Publishing and Translational Pathways of Anne Frank's Diary in Italy

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Anne Frank and her diary have been, and continue to be, fascinating objects of study in many countries, including Italy. The diary is the most translated Dutch work in the world (Vervaet 2017)[2], but it is much more than that. The story of a teenager describing her life in hiding from Nazi persecution in Amsterdam has come to be a universal icon of Holocaust literature and has given rise to numerous academic publications, journalistic articles, exhibitions, transmedia adaptations and educational initiatives—but also to ideological disputes and political pamphlets. Introducing the diary into a new country presents, and especially presented in the past, numerous obstacles that require appropriate strategies for publishing a translation that is both acceptable and engaging to the intended audience. Overcoming these hurdles has been necessary due to the diary's political significance, its complicated origins and editorial history in its home country, the sometimes daring nature of its early translations in the unsettling post-war era, and the variety of images attributed to the author, which have changed depending on how the diary was interpreted and received by the new target culture.

The principal aim of this chapter is to contribute to research on the translations of the diary by delving into the history of Anne Frank's footprints in Italy and describing the trajectory of the Italian *Diario*. The most scrutinised translations of the diary are the inaugural versions published in three major language areas: French, German and English (Barnouw 2022; Cluff 2020; *Der Spiegel* 1959; Noble 2013a, 2013b; Schroth 2006, 2014; van der Stroom 1986). We have also taken into consideration translations in other languages and cultures. Missinne and Michajlova (2019) have focused on how the diary's initial release in East Germany (DDR) helped to open the Russian market. Important pieces of information on the first Spanish-language translation and subsequent translations are offered by Fernández-Gil (2019). Spies and Feinauer (2011) discussed the first translation in Afrikaans. In a recent paper, Dagnino (2023) examined the Basque translations. Larsson-Toll (2021) covered Swedish translations, while Guść

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(2018) went through the history of the first Polish publication (issued in 1957) and its reception in post-Stalinist Poland. Engelbrecht (2018) referred to the first Czech translation, which was released in 1956, one year before the DDR edition, using the West German translation as its source text.

The present contribution is part of an ongoing research project entitled "Anne Frank's Footprints: Sociology of Translation and Reception, Digital (Post)Memory and Memory Education in a Global Perspective," coordinated by the Dutch department of the University of Trieste.[3] The first work package—led by Trieste—aims to provide a comprehensive overview of mediators and worldwide translation trajectories in Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Afrikaans. For the second work package, researchers in Bologna and Padua are investigating Second World War remembrance practices in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Japan through a peace-education lens, bringing together experts from various fields and backgrounds. In the third work package, the Rome research team is zeroing in on Anne Frank's lesser-known publications. Colleagues in Naples are focusing on literary translations and stage adaptations of the diary, the fourth work package.

Existing evidence provides a foundation for preparing an Italian chapter of the diary's historiography (see, for example, Barnouw 2022; Battocletti 2018; Bucciantini 2021; Ross 2024; Terrenato 2023). This contribution aims to bring together various strands addressed in these sources by using archival research and reviewing secondary literature to provide new evidence, with a particular focus on the first Italian-language edition and the specific context that influenced it. The research aims to investigate the following questions: which dynamics and sociocultural and political conditions shaped the context for the first Italian translation? Furthermore, what factors contribute to the unique nature of this translation?

In our view, examining the diary's journey to Italy aligns well with the aims of this volume, as it provides a paradigmatic example of a case from the Low Countries, allowing to gain a better understanding of the transfer dynamics of Dutch literature. The diary was written during the Second World War and published in the Netherlands shortly afterwards. The first Italian translation was completed in 1954, mainly as a result of a local sociopolitical and editorial initiative. This literary translation strategy was quite different from the financial and support systems offered by state-sponsored organisations, such as the Dutch Foundation for Literature (DFL; Nederlands Letterenfonds). Two predecessors of this institution, Stichting ter Bevordering van de Vertaling van Nederlands Letterkundig Werk (Foundation for Promotion of the Translation of Dutch Literature) and Stichting Fonds voor de Letteren (Foundation for Literature), were established in 1954 and 1965, respectively, following initiatives in other small countries that set up similar organisations in the 1950s to promote their national

literatures (Vimr 2020, 51). These two foundations were a first step towards the professionalisation and institutionalisation of a foreign strategy for Dutch literature (Wolters 2019, 93), which employs literary translation as a vehicle for establishing cultural diplomacy (van Doorslaer 2023, 243).[4]

The initial translations of Anne Frank's diary were released before the government established financial mechanisms for the selection, translation, and promotion of Dutch literary works. However, the current case study is well aligned with the objectives of this volume, which are to explore the people, organisations, practices, and contexts that shape the makings of translated literature, zeroing in on book translations from a lesser-translated language situated on the periphery of the world literary system. What we will provide here is a behind-the-scenes view, focusing on the numerous voices driving the diary's transfer to and within Italy.

We are convinced that few literary works are so stimulating for translation studies scholars as Anne Frank's diary, especially for those engaged with the sociology of translation. Book translating is a social practice "that requires a high degree of interaction and collaboration between an array of different agents, such as authors, publishers, translators, editors, copy editors, critics, librarians, non-professional readers" (Alvstad et al. 2017b, 4). Anne Frank's diary offers a fascinating story about agents, textual and contextual voices (Alvstad et al. 2017a), multimedia translations, imagology, and (post)memory studies.

In our description of the diary's trajectory to Italy, we will examine important aspects of the way Anne Frank's name started to circulate in Italy, explaining how the sociopolitical dynamics and editorial contexts created a successful first footprint in post-war Italy. To fully appreciate the uniqueness of the diary's initial Italian edition, parallels with its first editions published in three other languages—French, German, and English—will be drawn.[3]

Theoretical framework and methodology

This section focuses on the conceptual framework, methodology, and data employed for this study, which is mostly based on secondary literature and archival material. As stated in the previous paragraph, this case study fits within the study of literary translation policy in a unique fashion for two reasons. The first is that the mediation circuits through which the initial translations of the diary travelled have no real ties to the state or public diplomacy activities, as it was published decades before the founding of the DFL. The second reason is that, generally speaking, the DFL seeks to support mostly the translations of emerging and contemporary writers, though it also supports so-called classics (see Gentile 2022). Unlike other lesser-known works, the diary has enjoyed worldwide success since

the 1950s and has hardly ever needed financial assistance for translation. Nonetheless, the DFL translation database currently reports twenty-eight funded translations of the diary (Nederlands Letterenfonds n.d.).[5] Most of the translation grants went towards translations into non-European languages, including Chinese, Hindi, Afrikaans, and Georgian, as well as adaptations such as children's books or anthologies.

Even though there are many different ways to approach and analyse the literary transfer of the diary—including indirect translation, retranslation/canonisation, actor–network theory, centre–periphery dynamics, multimedia adaptations, reception studies, paratextual analysis, children's literature, corpus linguistics, museum translation, critical discourse analysis, censorship, and manipulation—we have decided to use a sociological approach concentrating solely on centre–periphery relationships (Heilbron and Sapiro 2007, 2018; Sapiro 2014, 2016, 2010) and on the sociological concept of agency as pointed out by Buzelin (2011, 6), who defines the agent of translation as "anyone in an intermediary position (i.e., a commissioner, a reviser, or an editor) between a translator and an end user of a translation."

This case study shares many similarities with the transnational journey of *Oorlog en terpentijn* by Stefan Hertmans (*War and Turpentine*; see McMartin and Gentile 2020), because in that case the English translation shaped translation cycles in other languages and contributed to the international success of this book. Particularly, "[t]he title's anglophone reception—including the influential review by Neel Mukherjee in *The Guardian* and the book's inclusion in *The New York Times* top ten books of 2016 list—had an important and in some cases decisive impact on publishers considering the title in other language fields" (McMartin and Gentile 2020, 287). As is often the case in the export of Dutch literature, the first translations are published in the languages of the neighbouring countries: French and German. Referring to the centre–periphery model proposed by Heilbron, "translation ratios diverge strongly across languages and are directly related to a language's dominance in the world translation system" (2020, 140), which confirms that the less a language is spoken, the fewer the chances that cultural products in that language (in this case, literary works) circulate outside the periphery.

In the case of the diary, not only was the network of agents crucial for its circulation—particularly in the first translations—but the success of the Broadway play in 1955 and the Hollywood film of 1959 also had a significant impact in Europe, where the diary had been received timidly until then (Brouwers 2002; van der Stroom 1986, 1999). Research indeed suggests that before the American success, sales figures were disappointing (Rosenfeld 1991, 248; van der Stroom 1999, 68). According to Heilbron (2020, 141), "what gets translated in peripheral languages very often depends on the selection that takes place in the centres. This is where international

symbolic capital is accrued and distributed and where the most important hierarchies of prestige are formed." Just like in the case of *War and Turpentine*, which was boosted by a positive review in a prestigious newspaper, the enthusiastic review by journalist Meyer Levin (1952) of the diary in *The New York Times Book Review* propelled the book towards worldwide success. As we will see in the following paragraphs, it was Otto Frank's network of contacts that made the diary a success in the United States as well.

Before examining the history of the diary in Dutch and its translations into Italian, a few elements should be explored that make this case study particularly distinctive. First, in the 1950s, English was not yet considered the hyper-central language it is now, at least not in Europe, where French and German played a far greater role, beginning with education: "In Western Europe English supplanted German and French from the 1950s onwards as the first foreign language taught in the Scandinavian countries and from the 1960s in the Netherlands" (Truchot 2002, 7). This might explain why the important transfer function of the diary's first French translation was crucial to its international expansion. Another aspect to consider is that, in the case of the diary, the logic that a work that has symbolic capital must also have economic capital does not fully apply. The diary obtained economic capital only after having built up consistent symbolic capital, but economic success was not expected. Indeed, according to Sapiro (2016, 90), "many authors, translators, editors and even publishers undertake projects which they know will not bring them any commercial benefit. […] Instead, they can expect symbolic profits such as recognition in the field." This was exactly the aim of the first publication and translation efforts in the Netherlands and abroad. We do not have the exact sales figures of the diary—it is estimated that it sold about thirty million copies worldwide (Blakemore 2022)—but there is no doubt that this work has acquired both strong economic and symbolic capital over the years.

To better contextualise the theoretical framework, Figure 5.1 shows a timeline of the first wave of translations.

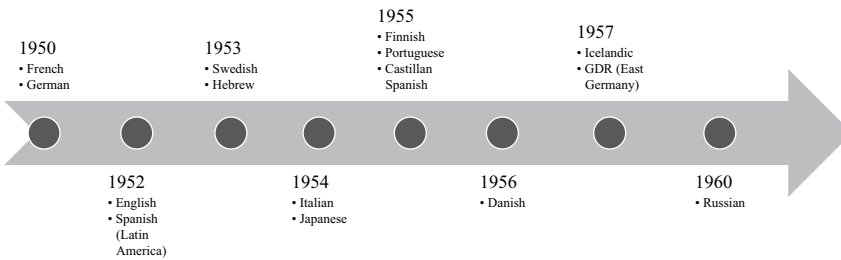

Figure 5.1 Timeline of the first wave of translations of Anne Frank's diary.[6]

It should also be considered that, at a time when Europe was emerging from a disastrous war and facing an economic crisis, Otto Frank's personal contacts played a decisive role in the circulation of the diary. His exchanges with prominent figures in the cultural and business worlds, particularly within the international Jewish community, especially in Germany, were crucial. Otto Frank fulfilled a mediating and networking role that is typically played by literary agents today, and he performed tasks that went beyond mere editorial agency, particularly during the first wave of translations. Most details on his networking activities have been obtained by the authors of this chapter through archival research at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam.[7]

As for the main aspects hindering or facilitating literary transfer, Sapiro (2016, 82) illustrates four factors that may promote or hinder the circulation of literature: political, economic, cultural, and social factors. All must be considered when analysing the literary transfer of the diary. As we will see, political factors like the lack of understanding and acceptance of the atrocities of the post-war Holocaust and the denials of genocide resurfacing from the 1950s onwards (Barnouw 1986) were the catalysts for the second wave of translations. Economically speaking, the work's global popularity[8] has led to a considerable number of translations, retranslations, and editions, especially after the copyright expired in 2015. At the cultural level, the ongoing discussion, adaptation, and reinterpretation of the diary in light of current events signify its integration into the collective memory as a crucial testimony to one of the darkest periods in Western history. On a societal level, the diary has become an integral part of school programmes in many countries, leading continuously to new educational initiatives and museum expositions. A recent example is the Anne Frank exhibition presented by the Anne Frank House (2025), which ran from January to October 2025 at the Center for Jewish History in New York City and featured a full-scale recreation of Anne Frank's hiding place.

The editorial agency of Otto Frank

It all started with Otto Frank's desire to share his daughter's diary with other people, first with friends and relatives, later with a larger public. Many studies illustrate the complex genesis of the diary in Dutch and Otto Frank's editorial interventions. Important references are Barnouw (2022), van der Stroom (1986), Kuitert (2007), and Shandler (2012), among others.

There are five different original versions to be considered, three of which were officially published. Table 5.1 presents an overview of these versions.

The first edition of the diary, published by Contact in 1947 as *Het Achterhuis* (The back house), was made up of two distinct manuscripts,

Table 5.1 Overview of the original Dutch versions of Anne Frank's diary.

Version A	*Version B*	*Version C*	*Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation version*	*Version D*
The incomplete first version of the diary	The unfinished fiction version (Anne's revision)	The classic text (1947): *Het Achterhuis. Dagboekbrieven 14 juni 1942–1 augustus 1944* (The annex: Diary entries 14 June 1942–1 August 1944). Publisher: Contact, Amsterdam. This is a compilation made by Otto Frank of versions A and B.	The critical edition (1986): *De dagboeken van Anne Frank* (The diaries of Anne Frank), introduced by Harry Paape, Gerrold van der Stroom, and David Barnouw. Publisher: Staatsuitgeverij/ Bert Bakker, The Hague/ Amsterdam	The reader's edition (1991): *Het Achterhuis. Dagboekbrieven 12 juni 1942–1 augustus 1944* (The annex: Diary notes 12 June 1942–1 August 1944), edited by Otto Frank and Mirjam Pressler. Publisher: Bert Bakker, Amsterdam

both incomplete (for the missing parts, see Shandler 2012, 29; van der Stroom 1986, 66–75) and written while the author was in hiding with her family in Prinsengracht street in Amsterdam. The first version had as its initial entry June 12, 1942, Anne's thirteenth birthday, and the final entry was dated August 1, 1944, three days prior to the family's arrest by the Germans. This manuscript was later named version A. The second version, B, was edited by Anne herself. She partly transcribed her diary entries and partly rewrote them, with the aim of producing a more book-like account detailing the experiences of the eight people in hiding. Anne initiated this work in the spring of 1944, when she was almost fifteen, and worked on both versions at the same time (Anne Frank Stichting n.d.-b). The title she gave to the fictionalised version of the diary was *Het Achterhuis*.

The two manuscripts were assembled by Otto Frank, resulting in *Het Achterhuis. Dagboekbrieven 14 juni 1942–1 augustus 1944*. This version, later named version C, is the one the world came to know, as it became the diary's first official publication. Otto Frank started by translating some passages into German, intending to share them with his German family members and close acquaintances. At a very early stage, he began to pursue the idea of an official publication (Kuitert 2007, 24). In the process of assembling the two manuscripts, between 1945 and 1946, he produced

several typewritten versions of the Dutch version, four of which were conserved (van der Stroom 1986, 85). He was assisted by friends with typing and language corrections, as the Frank family spoke German as their native language. Other friends helped with approaching potential publishing houses in the Netherlands and abroad (*Der Spiegel* 1959; Kuitert 2007, 23–24; van der Stroom 1986). Given the dismissive attitude of the Dutch publishing sector, Otto Frank also attempted to publish the diary in Germany. He therefore asked an old German acquaintance, Anneliese Schütz, to carry out the translation (van der Stroom 1986, 86).

The path to publication was lengthy, partly due to the economic crisis in the publishing sector in the immediate post-war period. The manuscript faced several refusals by other publishers before being issued by Amsterdam-based Uitgeverij Contact. Version C ended up being a highly edited text that underwent "two major phases of redaction" (Shandler 2012, 27), first by Anne and then by her father. These redactions "involved more than one language and editorial hand, and they were prepared for different readers" (Shandler 2012, 30). The whole editing process was influenced by numerous factors, including emotional ties, cultural and ethical considerations, linguistic nuances, and economic factors. Otto Frank's extensive networking combined with his business capability and marketing skills, which were previously applied to pectin production in Amsterdam, were effectively transferred to managing the diaries, as noted by Kuitert (2007, 26). This aspect emerges clearly from various letters written by Otto Frank to publishers and friends. Unfortunately, the diary was presented as a single integral work, without any clarification about its complex editing history, which later led to misunderstandings and doubts about its authenticity. As shown by later studies, Otto Frank had made changes to the text, also censuring some parts or references for personal or ideological reasons (see, among others, Cluff 2020; Lefevere 1992, 59–72; Melnick 1997; van der Stroom 1986). According to Van der Stroom, he had merged the two manuscripts with "extraordinary expertise" (op ongehoord vakkundige wijze) (1999, 67).

In 1986, to counter allegations of forgery and manipulation, *De dagboeken van Anne Frank* (The diaries of Anne Frank) was issued by the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation (known today as the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies), presenting three parallel texts—the original diary, Anne's proposed book version, and the published version C—thus evidencing all omissions and changes. In 1991, a reader's version was published. The Anne Frank Fonds, holding copyrights after Otto's death, tasked German translator Mirjam Pressler with creating version D, based on the NIOD edition. This edition reinstated omitted passages from the C version, while adjusting the subtitle to reflect the correct start date.[9]

The diary's gatekeepers abroad

It is not our intention to analyse in depth the pivotal role played by the first translations in English, French, and German for the diary's global dissemination. A discussion on the transfer function of these seminal translations within a multilingual, diachronic perspective will be the object of future research. However, to better contextualise the diary's transfer to Italy, and because translation efforts were present in Otto Frank's editorial interventions right from the start, we will briefly outline the translation dynamics that preceded the launch of the Italian translation. The Contact edition, later recognised as the classic text, was the source text for the initial translations, as well as for the Italian one. However, the translators worked on different versions or typescripts.

The first translation of the diary to be published was the French one, followed in the same year by the German translation (March and November 1950, respectively). The English translation appeared two years later, first in the United Kingdom, on April 30, 1952, and a few weeks later in the United States, on June 12, Anne's birthday (Anne Frank Stichting n.d.-a).

According to Van der Stroom (1986, 86), the French translation was most likely based on the first 1947 edition published by Contact. The German translation used as its textual basis the second typescript, edited by Albert Cauvern and Otto Frank, which was a more complete version than the official Contact version (van der Stroom 1986). The English edition had a more intricate editing history, including a first translation for the United Kingdom market that was subsequently discarded.[10] The new translation, based on the fourth or fifth reprint of the 1947 Dutch edition, was a slightly expanded version, as some passages censored by the Dutch publisher had been reincorporated (Barnouw 2022, 34). Table 5.2 shows a chronological sequence of these translations.

Table 5.2 Overview of the first French-, German-, and English-language translations of Anne Frank's diary.

Year	*Language*	*Title*	*Translators*	*Publisher*	*Place*
1950	French	*Journal de Anne Frank*	Tylia Caren and Suzanne Lombard	Calmann-Lévy	Paris
1950	German	*Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank*	Anneliese Schütz	Lambert Schneider	Heidelberg
1952	English	*The Diary of a Young Girl*	B. M. Mooyaart-Doubleday	Doubleday & Co. and Vallentine Mitchell	New York and London

The first-generation translators were non-professional, self-made mediators with no prior translation experience, often drawn from Otto Frank's personal network. Despite their lack of experience and translation expertise, these translators seemed to be deeply motivated by their role as custodians of Anne's cultural legacy. In later times, the German and French versions encountered criticism from translation scholars for mistranslations and misunderstandings, as well as from other scholars for omissions and additions (Noble 2013b; Schroth 2014; van der Stroom 1986, 86). Both translations presented numerous errors and stylistic problems, due to poor language and translation competence (Noble 2013b; Schroth 2014). Most of all, the German translator had been blamed for censuring and manipulation interventions, considered necessary to avoid offending the German readers (Rosenfeld 1991, 266–69; van der Stroom 1986, 86). It has been widely reported that the German translation systematically mitigated any adversarial references to Germans and German culture (Barnouw 2022, 30–32; Lefevere 1992; Ozick 1997; Schroth 2014; Spies and Feinauer 2011). In recent years, Mooyaart-Doubleday's translation has also come under criticism, although "few critics have gone beyond the editorial choices to analyze the translations of the text themselves" (Cluff 2020, 16). Nevertheless, these pioneering cultural emissaries—supported by Otto Frank's extensive networking and editorial activities—managed to capture the attention of publishers and ensured the diary's global success.[11]

Approximately forty years after the publication of these classic editions, two new sets of translations were generated. To face the counternarrative propagated by negationists, publishers in the three main transfer languages quickly released translations of the Dutch NIOD edition (1986): in 1988 in German (translator Mirjam Pressler), in 1989 in French (translators Isabelle Rosselin and Philippe Noble) and in the same year in English (Barbara Mooyaart-Doubleday and Arnold J. Pomerans). When in 1991, publisher Bert Bakker issued the reader's edition (version D) in the Netherlands, translations followed quite soon again: in German (1991) by Mirjam Pressler, also co-editor of the Dutch version D; in French (1992), again by Noble and Rosselin; and in the United Kingdom and United States (1997) by Susan Massotty. The publishers remained the same, except for the German publisher Lambert Schneider, who in 1955 licensed Fischer Verlag to issue a paperback edition of *Het Achterhuis*, following Otto Frank's intention to increase sales (Anne Frank Stichting n.d.-a).[12] For these second-generation translators, the social and political contexts were significantly different to those of the early 1950s. But the main difference was that the diary had become a worldwide success. Unlike the initial series's translators, who acted as cultural gatekeepers despite their limited translation expertise and use of incomplete texts, the translators of the second wave of translations were acutely aware that they were translating a bestseller authored by one of the most famous Holocaust victims.

The historical context of the diary's publication in Italy

The first Italian translation of the diary was issued in 1952 by Giulio Einaudi Editore. This publishing company was founded in 1933 in Turin by the twenty-one-year-old Giulio Einaudi, who was supported by prominent Jewish and non-Jewish antifascists, such as Leone Ginzburg, Norberto Bobbio, Massimo Mila, and Cesare Pavese. Thanks to this intellectual circle, Einaudi was known for being a prestigious and distinguished publisher right from the start. The founders of Einaudi were a group of friends united by their interest in literature and freedom. From its inception, Einaudi was based on an inseparable political and cultural intertwining. As Norberto Bobbio said, "Einaudi's ostrich [the symbol of the publisher] never buried its head in the sand"[13] (Einaudiroma.com n.d.). In the 1950s and 1960s, the publishing house began to focus on the Nazi genocide, which was considered an essential topic by the left-oriented and antifascist intelligentsia of the time (Gordon 2013, 59).

If we examine the years when the diary was published, it becomes evident that releasing such war testimonies was quite unconventional. While the immediate post-war years (1945–1947) saw a surge in publications about the war, this trend did not continue into the years between 1948 and the late 1950s. During this later period, the focus was primarily on memoirs concerning the partisan struggle. Accounts of experiences in concentration camps were rare and generally met with "distracted pietism"[14] by the public (Calimani 2015, 657). The long editorial history of *Se questo è un uomo* (*If This Is a Man*), Primo Levi's famous Holocaust testimonial, is a clamorous example in this respect (Chiaberge 2020).

Additionally, the country was in a state of great chaos: Italy needed to be rebuilt, Jews and other victims repatriated after the liberation of the camps or the end of the war had to be reintegrated into society, and confiscated property had to be returned to its original owners. The population was uncertain about the fate of the city of Trieste and the colonies that once belonged to the Italian colonial empire. Understandably, after five years of war and destruction, people wanted to move on and leave the horrors of the war period behind. Primo Levi himself said,

> At that time, people had other concerns. They had to rebuild their homes and find jobs. Rationing was still in place; the cities were filled with ruins, and the Allies were still occupying Italy. People didn't want to deal with this; they wanted something different, like dancing, having parties, and bringing children into the world. A book like mine, and many others that followed, was almost an affront, a spoiled celebration. (Levi 1997, 1382)[15]

This might be one of the reasons explaining why the Italian translation of the diary had a long journey to publication. It was only in 1954

that publishing house Einaudi unveiled the first Italian edition, seven years after its Dutch counterpart and two years after the English-language version. It was translated by Arrigo Vita and prefaced by the Italian writer Natalia Ginzburg. In the afterword published in the Italian translation of David Barnouw's *The Anne Frank Phenomenon* (2022), historian Massimo Bucciantini analyses some fundamental parts of the editorial process behind the inaugural Italian edition, which we will discuss in the next section.

The genesis of the first Italian translation

In this section, we combine Bucciantini's findings with new data obtained from archival research and expand this evidence with the knowledge we have acquired on the translation and editorial dynamics behind the diary's journeys to Germany, France, and the United Kingdom and United States. This allows us to obtain a more complete picture of the diary's early reception and adaptation of Anne Frank's narrative in Italy, confirming what we have already observed with the Dutch-, German- and English-language editions[16] regarding Otto Frank's close involvement in editorial and promotion processes, and how some steps undertaken by him were decisive.

As for the diary, "the name of Anne Frank had already been circulating in the rooms and offices of Einaudi for some time,"[17] although it is unclear since when exactly (Bucciantini 2022, 144). The first people to read the French diary, *Journal de Anne Frank*, were Einaudi collaborator Natalia Ginzburg and consultant and translator Paolo Serini. This might have happened already in 1950 (Bucciantini 2022, 144). Still, it took quite some time to introduce the book to the Italian public. At the beginning of the 1950s, the French literary agency Clairouin, enrolled by Otto Frank to operate in his name, attempted to promote the diary by contacting several major publishing houses in Italy, including Einaudi (see, for instance, their letter dated December 28, 1950, and Otto Frank's letter to Clairouin dated July 8, 1952). The contract between Otto Frank and Giulio Einaudi was signed in 1952, apparently in the second part of that year (Bucciantini 2022, 145; Maida 2023, 84). It seems obvious that this decision was encouraged by the diary's publication in the US (remember the date: June 12, 1952). Indeed, in a letter dated July 25, 1952, Clairouin's literary agent informs Otto Frank that he has insisted with Garzanti and Einaudi to "reconsider the question of an Italian publication."[18] In a letter dated September 3, the same agent communicated that Einaudi has made an "offre honnête" (honest offer).

From that moment onwards, direct epistolary contacts were established between Otto Frank and Giulio Einaudi. Frank's correspondence (in French) was mostly addressed to Giulio Einaudi, later also to

Einaudi collaborator Luciano Foà, and was essentially focused on editorial and business aspects. In his correspondence, Frank acted as a "father-businessman-editor"[19] (Bucciantini 2022, 146). He systematically signalled the new countries where the rights of the diary had been sold, and he even distributed copies of editions issued in other countries to potential foreign publishers.

But how can the gap of one year and a half between signing the contract and printing the *Diario* be explained? Was the delay due to translation problems? This does not seem to be the case. In a letter to Otto Frank dated February 7, 1953, Giulio Einaudi informed him that he had found a translator who already had translated other works for his publishing house. On May 29, 1953, Einaudi wrote that the translation was almost finished. Otto Frank does not seem to have had any correspondence with the translator, Arrigo Vita (1899–1976), but he met him and Einaudi collaborators during a visit to Turin in September (Bucciantini 2022, 147; Maida 2023, 84). Not much is known about Vita. He was a Jewish ophthalmologist who tragically lost his wife at Auschwitz (Scienza e Vergogna 2018). Vita was part of the circle of Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals living in Turin in the immediate post-war period, but already before the war, his home was a meeting point for progressive antifascists (Bucciantini 2022, 147). Being proficient in languages, especially in German, he sustained himself by working as a translator during Mussolini's racial laws, which were promulgated in 1938 to exclude Jews from public offices and higher education. In the early 1940s he started as a translator for Einaudi, particularly of non-fiction, although his role as translator could not be officially recognised. His working language was German, but he also translated from Dutch. It is unclear how he had learned this language, but he did have some experience in literary translation from Dutch: he translated the historian Johan Huizinga's *Erasmo* (Erasmus), which was released in Italy in 1941 by Einaudi (Maida 2023, 70–74).

The diary's publishing delay in Italy might have been due to two specific circumstances: the authoring of the preface and economic problems, as well as, as already mentioned, a poor interest in Holocaust literature. In his letter to Otto Frank dated February 7, 1953, Giulio Einaudi proposed to use Eleanor Roosevelt's (American) preface for the Italian edition. Instead, in a late reply on June 2—four months later—Otto Frank advised him to assign the writing of the preface to an Italian popular personality: "Don't you think it would be preferable to ask a well-known Italian figure, someone widely recognised and popular?"[20]. Following this suggestion, Einaudi's choice fell on Alberto Moravia, recommended to Otto Frank by Foà as "our best novelist"[21] (letter of October 15, 1953, quoted in Bucciantini 2022, 147). Following Einaudi's invitation on September 21, a very short reply from Moravia followed: "I will write the preface to Anna Frank's book,

which I don't have in any language. Please send it to me. However, keep in mind that it won't be long because I have a lot to do."[22] Almost four months later, on January 12, 1954, Einaudi insisted with Moravia: "It only awaits your brief preface to be published."[23] But Moravia never delivered it. Meanwhile, Otto Frank's impatience grew, also for economic reasons: more than a year after the contract was signed, he had not yet received the agreed-upon amount. Eventually, Natalia Ginzburg was chosen to write the preface. She completed it in two weeks (Bucciantini 2022, 150).

The second problem, perhaps the biggest obstacle, was the economic crisis. Otto Frank apparently did not know that Einaudi had to face "severe financial hardships"[24] in the fifties (Bucciantini 2022, 149). The crisis lasted for years, until 1957, and a future bestseller such as Primo Levi paid the consequences. *Se questo è un uomo* was issued in 1958, four years after the *Diario*, while Levi's manuscript had been approved by Einaudi's editorial committee already in 1952 (Bucciantini 2022, 150).[25, 26] The economic crisis of the book publishing industry in the immediate post-war period was not only an Italian problem. Other publishers in other countries dealt with similar difficulties. For Kuitert (2007, 22), it was a "miracle" that the Dutch diary was released in 1947, despite the enormous paper shortage. The German publishing world struggled with economic problems as well (Anne Frank Stichting n.d.-a).

It seems reasonable to suppose that Otto Frank's decisive interventions and harsh tone—he even threatened to undertake legal actions—persuaded Giulio Einaudi to have the preface produced inside the publishing house. Ginzburg delivered the text on March 3, 1954. The book was published on March 17, 1954, under the simple title *Diario*.

In the editorial history of the diary in Italy, it cannot be ignored that the main figures actively involved in the editorial handling of this work, Luciano Foà and Natalia Ginzburg, were of Jewish origin. In her essay "La Corsara. Ritratto di Natalia Ginzburg" (The corsair: Portrait of Natalia Ginzburg) about the life of Natalia Ginzburg, Sandra Petrignani (2018) highlights the pivotal role played by this writer, one of the early associates of the publishing house, who staunchly advocated for the publication of the diary. According to Battocletti (2018), before its translation, Giulio Einaudi asked for a second opinion about this work from Foà's wife, Luisa, who was struck by it and expressed her unequivocal support for its publication: "Are you crazy to have doubts? It's an exceptional text"[27] (quoted in Battocletti 2018, n.p.). Ernesto Ferrero, former director of the Turin Book Fair, confirms:

> Einaudi sometimes sought opinions from people outside the usual circle to get a different perspective. They had literary experts review scientific works, and vice versa. Natalia might have given a

> favourable opinion; it's her kind of book, after all. At that moment, Einaudi might have sought another opinion, maybe expecting a strong debate, as he valued differing viewpoints. He was always wary of unanimous agreement. (quoted in Battocletti 2018, n.p.)[28]

Einaudi's initial turbulent history with the diary would in the end reap rewards. The publisher's name has always remained linked to that of Anne Frank. This historical link is evident in the current Einaudi catalogue, which features not only Anne's writings but also various critical discussions of the diary, literary adaptations, and editions for young readers. The Einaudi brand has contributed significantly to Anne Frank's becoming a universal symbol in Italy, a key component of this country's collective memory.

The diary's reception in Italy and a never-made film

The extent to which Anne Frank's name was known among progressive groups in Turin even before the Italian translation was published, thanks to the French edition, is further demonstrated by Italian plans to adapt the book into a film. In March 1951, Ada Gobetti, wife of the famous anti-fascist intellectual and journalist Piero Gobetti, invited screenwriter Cesare Zavattini to read the French *Journal de Anne Frank*. She was convinced that Zavattini would have found in these pages a new and exciting subject for a film. A noteworthy article by Rosa Claudia Storti published in the magazine *Oggi* on January 10, 1952—two years before the Italian publication of the diary—described it as follows: "In two years of captivity, a girl has written a masterpiece. This book is the moving diary of a little Jewish girl who died in a German concentration camp in 1945"[29] (quoted in Bucciantini 2022, 153). It was evident that reviewers who were able to obtain the French edition had already acknowledged this work's potential for media coverage. Zavattini had to wait three years until the Italian *Diario* was published, since he had trouble understanding French. However, he sprang to the conclusion right at once that his friend Vittorio De Sica should make a neorealist film based on the narrative of Anne Frank. Through Giulio Einaudi's intervention (see the June 7 letter from Giulio Einaudi to Otto Frank), Zavattini reached out to Frank, sending him these poignant words (in Italian):

> Mr. Frank, it was with deep emotion that I read your daughter's diary published by Einaudi. […] Few books can be said to be so worthy of being distributed by the powerful communication medium of the film industry. There is no simpler and more universal way than this diary to say that one is against the war. I therefore believe that the figure of little Anne can come to the fore as a symbol everywhere. (quoted in Bucciantini 2022, 157–158)[30]

Zavattini had no doubts: the diary was a great example of neorealism *ante litteram* (Bucciantini 2022, 159). Otto Frank was flattered by the proposal made by this famous screenwriter, but the Italian offer came too late. Frank was already involved in negotiations with a United States film producer, having signed a contract for a stage adaptation as well. Zavattini's letter also illustrates how he instantly acknowledged the function the diary could play in a moment where coming to grips with history was hampered by a too-recent past (Loewenthal 2019, 25–26). One can only wonder what kind of image of this German Jewish girl would have been disseminated across the world by an Italian neorealist film, had the Italian translation been issued earlier.

The diary achieved immediate editorial success in Italy, selling over 20,000 copies in just a few years and garnering numerous reviews in newspapers and magazines. Positive appraisals also came from notable writers and influential figures of the time, including writer Dino Buzzati. Anna Maria Ortese's (2015) review, initially published in 1954, pointed out that "there are books that you close and others that remain open […] and books that gaze at the horizon. Anne Frank's diary belongs to the latter category"[31] (quoted in Bucciantini 2022, 154).

Uniqueness of the Italian *Diario*

In our view, three factors make the *Diario* unique in the context of the inaugural translations of Anne Frank's diary: the quality of the translation, its preface, and its cover. As for the translation quality, in contrast to the French, German, and English translators, Arrigo Vita had a scientific background in medicine and a sound experience in literary translation, having already translated the Dutch author Huizinga and several books by Carl Gustav Jung. He started as a translator with Einaudi at the end of the thirties and resumed working for this publishing house shortly after the end of the war, alongside working as an ophthalmologist (Maida 2023). Moreover, he translated directly from Dutch,[32] unlike many inaugural translations of the diary in other countries, which used the German or the English version as original text (see, for instance, Cluff 2020, 24; Missinne and Michajlova 2019; Larsson-Toll 2021; Fernández-Gil 2019, 428).[33]

Another remarkable aspect is the preface. Compared with the Dutch, German, French, and English prefaces, the Italian one looks thorough and professional, since it was written by a person who combined her editorial expertise with a deep knowledge of the diary and the history of Jewish persecution. A comprehensive analysis of the prefaces in the English, French, Italian, and German versions is currently underway by the Trieste research unit. However, it can already be observed that in the Italian preface, Natalia Ginzburg (1954) addresses all the pertinent questions: the location

of the story (the centre of Amsterdam), the time frame (two years spent in hiding in the secret annex, followed by eight months in concentration camps), the identities of the eight refugees and the friends who assisted them, as well as the author's mood, character, and intellectual disposition. Ginzburg also describes the fate of the Jewish families in the secret annex, which mirrored the tragic destiny of many Central European Jews during the Holocaust. They have the sense of persecution in their DNA, "finding perhaps in their oldest memories shattered store windows, devastated and burned-out neighbourhoods" (Ginzburg 1954, xi).[34]

Without delving further into specifics, the opening lines of Ginzburg's preface, characterised by a distinctly essentialist style, are as follows:

> Anne Frank's diary begins in June 1942. In June 1942, her life still bears some resemblance to the life of any young girl of her age. But we are in Amsterdam, Holland has been in German hands for two years, and the SS are going through houses looking for Jews. Anne has just celebrated her birthday. At the age of thirteen, she is extremely fluent in the language of the persecuted. She knows that she and her family must wear the Jewish star, that they cannot go to public places, that they cannot take the streetcar.
>
> "Since the German invasion, the good times are through," Anne writes in her diary, "but so far for the four of us, things have gone quite well." The war, the food shortages, the Germans and the danger, in June 1942 Anne sometimes manages to forget all this, living rather joyfully, eating ice cream, twirling her bike, flirting with classmates, studying Greek mythology. Until the day the whole Frank family moves into the secret annex, trying to escape from the Germans and save their lives. (Ginzburg 1954, ix)[35]

As for the cover, the presentation is very simple: a red border surrounding a rectangle in white with the author's name, "Anne Frank," printed at the top and the title, *Diario*, centred in bold. There are no other remarkable details. The book does not show a photo or picture of Anne Frank, of her diary, or of the building where she hid, unlike in the English, French, and German prefaces. The Italian title is very different from that chosen for the French and German inaugural editions, where the author's name is incorporated in the book title: *Journal de Anne Frank* and *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank*, respectively. The English title is depersonalised (*The Diary of a Young Girl*), but the name of the author is placed above it. As in the English edition, Anne Frank's name appears in the Italian edition above the one-word title. The *Diario* is listed as number 175 in a series of narratives and non-fiction works. The publisher's name, Giulio Einaudi, appears below on the cover: two words separated by the famous ostrich

logo, symbolising not only the publisher's public engagement but also its elegant style.

The Italian public got to know the author as Anna Frank. This seems to be due to a misinterpretation of Natalia Ginzburg, who erroneously thought that *Anne* was a French transposition of the name *Anna*. Although writer Italo Calvino, who had joined Einaudi some years before, signalled that the right name was *Anne*, it was too late for the publisher to change it (Bucciantini 2022, 151). That is why the name *Anne* appears on the cover of the inaugural edition, but in the foreword and in the core text, all entries are signed with *Anna*. This confusing use of the names *Anne* and *Anna* has continued for quite some time, and for many—maybe most—Italians the Jewish girl from Amsterdam remains Anna Frank.

Conclusion

Much remains to be explored regarding the first Italian translation of Anne Frank's diary. This chapter has focused on the fascinating story of the genesis of *Diario* and the unique dynamics of its translation flow to Italy. We have tried to disclose the chain of events related to the production of the initial translation. We have traced how the translation journeyed from the periphery to the centre, facilitated by the mediation efforts of a pivotal agent: Otto Frank. His extensive personal network and proactive agency—amplified by his talent for business and marketing—played crucial roles in the successful dissemination of the diary, ensuring that it reached a broad and diverse audience in post-war Italy. The Italian example is a fine illustration of Otto Frank's approach in disseminating his daughter's diary outside the Dutch borders. As clearly evidenced by his correspondence, he worked constantly and systematically to sustain and promote the migration of the diary into other countries and new language areas. He contacted publishing houses personally, with the help of friends, or through the mediation of literary agents. The first border crossing of the diary was accomplished in a central country, France, through a Paris-based publishing company: Calmann-Lévy. By assuring a good book distribution, this important French publisher launched the diary onto the world scene. It is no wonder that it did not take much time for the French *Journal de Anne Frank* to find its way to progressive antifascist circles in Turin, long before an Italian version was produced.

It was through the concerted efforts of individuals like Giulio Einaudi and Natalia Ginzburg that the diary was introduced to the Italian public, who were still grappling with the aftermath of the war and the country's fascist past. Their editorial decisions, influenced by personal and ideological motivations, were instrumental in shaping the reception of Anne Frank's story in Italy. An interesting aspect that invites further investigation is the

role of Arrigo Vita, the first translator of the diary into Italian. Not much is known about his background and his contribution to this pivotal translation effort, leaving several unanswered questions about his influence and the challenges he might have faced during the translation process.

In conclusion, the story of the first Italian translation of Anne Frank's diary is "a multi-vocal process" (Bassnett 2017, 119). It is not merely a tale of linguistic adaptation but a complex narrative of cultural mediation, historical memory, personal agency, and editorial negotiations. It invites further research into the myriad of factors that influence literary translation processes and the ways in which translated texts contribute to shape collective memory in Italy and elsewhere.

Notes

1 This chapter is the result of a joint coordinated effort on the part of the authors. For the sake of convenience, the article's sections have been divided as follows: Paola Gentile is the author of the paragraphs on the publication of the diary in Italy and the conclusion. Dolores Ross is the author of the first paragraphs on methodology, the diary's genesis in the Netherlands, and the first translations in French, German and English. All translations from Dutch, Italian, French, and German were made by the authors.
2 See for instance Onze Taal (2004) and Celine Vervaet (2017).
3 The two-year project involves Dutch studies scholars from four Italian universities: Bologna, Padua, Rome (Sapienza), and Naples (L'Orientale). It is primarily funded by the Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union).
4 Wolters (2019) explains how creating a literary foundation aligned with the Dutch government's soft power strategy. The government was eager to improve the Netherlands' reputation, which had been tarnished during the Indonesian struggle for independence. For an in-depth historical analysis of soft power efforts in the cultural sphere, see Carbó-Catalan and Roig-Sanz (2022).
5 Thirteen translations were supported by the DFL and fifteen by its predecessor the Literary Production Fund (Literair Productiefonds).
6 The first UK and US editions are based on the same text, translated by Barbara Mooyaart-Doubleday (the diary was the first translation commissioned to her), and they have been published shortly one after the other. The reason why we distinguish the first two Spanish-language translations is that they were produced by different translators and published in South America and in Europe, respectively. In 1952, a first Spanish translation was published in Argentina, perhaps not authorised by Otto Frank, translator José Blaya Lozano. The Spanish audience never had access to this translation. In 1955, a Spanish publishing house issued the first translation for the Iberian Spanish market, translator Maria Isabel Iglesias Barba (see Fernández-Gil 2019).
7 We are grateful to Menno Metselaar and Henny Brandhorst of the Anne Frank House for their assistance.
8 According to the UNESCO (2025) Memory of the World Programme, Anne Frank's diary is in the top ten of the most-read books worldwide. *Publishing Perspectives*, an online news medium for the international book industry, considers it as the most famous diary in the world (Nawotka 2012). According to *Smithsonian Magazine*, the diary "changed the world" (Christianson 2015, n.p.).

9 The complete digitised works of Anne Frank can be found at https://annefrankmanuscripten.org/nl#manuscripten.
10 This translation was in Otto Frank's possession, as disclosed in his letter dated November 4, 1947, to a certain Hirsch in Great Britain. In a letter addressed to Ms Reens, one year later (October 4, 1948), Frank explains that the English translation had been commissioned by him but was considered unsuccessful by his friends. For more information on the first translator, see Bartlett (2022).
11 Particularly, Otto Frank's letters to Rosey Pool, dated October 5, 1949, and to Ms Reens, dated October 4, 1948, testify to his intensive mediating efforts with German- and English-language publishers.
12 For the paperback edition, the original translation underwent revisions by Maria Honeit, who rectified numerous errors and imbued the language with a more "natural" feel (Anne Frank Stichting, n.d.-b).
13 Original text in Italian: "Lo struzzo che non mise mai la testa sotto la sabbia."
14 Original text in Italian: "distratto pietismo."
15 Original text in Italian: "A quel tempo la gente aveva altro da fare. Aveva da costruire le case, aveva da trovare lavoro. C'era ancora il razionamento; le città erano piene di rovine; c'erano ancora gli Alleati che occupavano l'Italia. La gente non aveva voglia di questo, aveva voglia di altro, di ballare per e-sempio, di fare feste, di mettere al mondo dei figli. Un libro come questo mio, e come molti altri che sono nati dopo, era quasi uno sgarbo, una festa guastata."
16 Not so much is known about the genesis of the first French edition. Otto Frank's correspondence on this matter seems to be rather limited and not characterised by the business style he later developed. For sure, the French translation acted as a fundamental transfer port, not only in Italy but also for the English-speaking market. It caught the attention of Meyer Levin, who then became an important supporter of the diary (Melnick 1997) and of American editor Judith Jones, who discovered the diary in Paris in a pile of rejected manuscripts and convinced her boss to publish it (Dawson 2017).
17 Original text in Italian: "Il nome di Anne Frank circolava ormai da tempo nelle stanze e negli uffici Einaudi."
18 Original text in French: "reconsidérer la question d'une publication italienne."
19 Original text in Italian: "padre-imprenditore-editor."
20 Original text in French: "Est-ce que vous ne croyez pas qu'il sera préférable de demander un personnage connu italien, connu et populaire."
21 Original text in Italian: "il nostro migliore romanziere."
22 Original text in Italian: "va bene per la prefazione al libro di Anna Frank che però non ho, in alcuna lingua. Ti prego di mandarmelo. Tieni però conto che non potrà essere lunga perché ho moltissimo da fare."
23 Original text in Italian: "Attende soltanto la tua breve prefazione per uscire."
24 Original text in Italian: "una grave crisi finanziaria."
25 Contrary to Anne Frank's diary, *Se questo è un uomo* faced opposition within the publishing house, particularly from Cesare Pavese and Natalia Ginzburg (Chiaberge 2020; Maida 2023, 83), who refers to Primo Levi's "notorious rejection by Einaudi" ("famosissimo rifiuto einaudiana") in 1947.
26 Bucciantini's account occasionally diverges from the evidence put forward by Chiaberge and Maida, although a detailed discussion of these discrepancies lies beyond the scope of this paper. Chiaberge maintains that the manuscript was resubmitted in 1955, rather than in 1952, while Maida contends that it was rejected by both Natalia Ginzburg and Cesare Pavese.
27 Original text in Italian: "Ma siete pazzi ad avere incertezze? È un testo eccezionale."

28 Original text in Italian: "Poteva capitare che Einaudi affidasse la lettura a qualcuno fuori asse perché gli interessava un parere non istituzionale. Faceva leggere di scienza ai letterati, e viceversa. Natalia avrà dato parere positivo, in fondo è un libro molto suo, e a quel punto Einaudi ne avrà chiesto un altro, magari pregustando uno di quei forti scontri dialettici che gli erano cari. L'unanimità lo metteva sempre in sospetto."
29 Original text in Italian: "In due anni di prigionia una bimba ha scritto un capolavoro. Il commovente diario d'una piccola ebrea, morta in un campo di concentramento tedesco nel 1945."
30 Original text in Italian: "Egregio signor Otto Frank, ho letto con profonda commozione il diario di sua figlia pubblicata dall'editore Einaudi. [. . .] Devo dire che pochi libri mi sembrano come questo degni di essere divulgati con il potente mezzo del cinema, perché non si può essere contro la guerra in un modo più semplice e più universale di così, e credo che la figura della piccola Anna riuscirà perciò a imporsi dappertutto come un simbolo."
31 Original text in Italian: "Vi sono libri che si chiudono, ed altri che rimangono aperti [. . .] e libri che guardano l'orizzonte. Il *Diario* di Anna Frank appartiene a questi ultimi."
32 Vita cultivated his knowledge of the Dutch language with constant care (Maida 2023, 81).
33 Future research will involve an interlinguistic textual analysis of the original diary and its first translations into English, French, German, and Italian.
34 Original text in Italian: "ritrovando forse nelle loro più antiche memorie vetrine di negozi infrante, quartieri devastati e incendiati."
35 Original text in Italian: "Il diario di Anna Frank ha inizio nel giugno 1942. Nel giugno 1942 la sua vita presenta ancora qualche rassomiglianza con la vita d'una qualunque ragazzina dell'età sua. Ma siamo ad Amsterdam, l'Olanda è in mano ai tedeschi da due anni, e le S.S. vanno per le case cercando gli ebrei. A tredici anni appena compiuti Anna conosce e parla con estrema naturalezza il linguaggio dei perseguitati: sa che lei e i suoi debbono portare la stella giudaica, che non possono frequentare locali pubblici, che non possono prendere il tram. / Dall'invasione tedesca '*i bei tempi sono finiti*', scrive Anna nel suo diario, ma '*finora per noi quattro è andato discretamente bene*'. La guerra, le privazioni alimentari, i tedeschi e il pericolo, tutto questo Anna nel giungo '42 può ancora dimenticarselo ogni tanto, e vivere abbastanza gioiosamente mangiando gelati, volteggiando in bicicletta, flirtando con i compagni, studiando la mitologia greca, fino al giorno in cui tutta la famiglia Frank si trasferisce nell' '*alloggio segreto*', per sfuggire ai tedeschi e tentare di salvarsi."

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