Introduction

Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia

Just as the Tower of Babel collapsed because its builders were dispersed by the diversity of tongues, the House of the European Community would surely fall if deprived of its army of interpreters: for who would know the differences between cod, *kabeljauw*, *morue* and *bacalhau* (the most dedicated gourmands excepted) and be able to smooth over rival national claims to fishing rights and sauce preparations but the dedicated translators and interpreters of the EU?

If communication between languages and cultures is an assumed and accepted fact in our contemporary world, it was by no means self-evident in the past. Yet all major cultural exchanges in history involved translation: be it the rendering of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Pali into Chinese during the early medieval period; or the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic in the early medieval, and the subsequent translation of the same texts from Arabic into Latin during the high medieval centuries; or the more recent translations of Western texts into Japanese and Chinese that marked the modernization of those two East Asian civilizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

All the same, it was Europe that represented the scene of the most sustained and intense cultural transfers throughout its long history, a process marked by an enormous effort in translation: of religious, scientific, political and literary works from a large variety of vernaculars into Latin and vice versa, and of vernaculars crossing national and linguistic boundaries.

The essays in this book, which emerged out of a series of workshops on cultural exchange funded by the European Science Foundation, are concerned with what might be called the cultural history of translation, especially in early modern Europe, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. The idea that translation has a history is an old one, but until quite recently this history was an academically marginal activity, pursued on the fringes of literary and religious history.

Studies of comparative literature, for instance, have long been concerned with the reception of famous authors in other countries, such as Ariosto in France, Cervantes in England or Richardson in Germany.[1] Literary studies of the Renaissance focused on translations from the classics into the vernacular, like the versions of Plutarch by Jacques Amyot or Thomas North, together with a few famous translations from one vernacular to another, like John Florio's English version of Montaigne.[2] Studies of the Reformation noted the importance of translations of the Bible by Luther and his followers in England, Denmark, Sweden and elsewhere.[3] Alternatively, following the model of comparative literature, they discussed the influence of Luther in France or Erasmus in Spain.[4]

To give translation a more central position in academe was the aim of the movement for Translation Studies in the later 1970s. Two ideas discussed at this time are particularly important for the cultural history of translation. Earlier books on the art of translation were generally normative, but the focus of Translation Studies – like that of sociolinguistics – was and is descriptive, stressing what translators actually do rather than what they should do. In the second place, where earlier studies had focused on the source, such as Ariosto or Calvin, the new studies – like the theory of 'reception' and the history of reading – focused on the audience, viewing translations as 'facts of the culture which hosts them' and as agents of change in that culture.[5] Cultural exchange was viewed from a new perspective, that of the horizon of readers and their culture, whether we call it the 'host culture' or the 'target culture'.[6]

In a famous early map of the new field, James Holmes distinguished between theoretical and descriptive studies of translation, but allocated little or no space to history. The early years might be described as the 'theoretical moment' in Translation Studies, a time of an emphasis on systems associated with Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury.[7]

Since that time, however, what might be called a 'historical turn' has begun, a growing awareness of the historicity of what a recent study calls 'constructed – and often contingent – linguistic equivalences'.[8] Some leading figures in the new field, notably Antoine Berman, Theo Hermans, Lawrence Venuti, Anthony Pym and members of the Göttingen school such as Wilhelm Graeber and Geneviève Roche, take history seriously.[9] The

[1] Cioranescu (1938); Fitzmaurice-Kelly (1906); Beebee (1990).
[2] Matthiessen (1931); Highet (1949), 104–26.   [3] Stolt (1983).   [4] Moore (1930); Bataillon (1937).
[5] Holmes (1972); Toury (1995), 7–19, 24, 27.   [6] Liu (1995), 26–8.
[7] Basnett (1980); Munday (2001).   [8] Liu (1999), 5.
[9] Berman (1984); Hermans (1985); Graeber and Roche (1988); Venuti (1995); Pym (2000).

FIT (Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs) has set up a Committee for the History of Translation, and a Directory of Historians of Translation has been published.[10]

Even today, though, workers in this field have less to say about the contrasts between cultures than between individual translators, less about long-term trends than about short-term processes, and less about the history of practice than about the history of theory.[11] It is hoped that the essays in this volume (by ten contributors who between them speak nine native languages) will do something to fill these gaps.

In any case, the turn towards history within Translation Studies has not yet been matched by a turn towards the study of translation on the part of historians, even cultural historians. A second aim of this volume is therefore to encourage a dialogue between workers in Translation Studies and in cultural history. Central to such a dialogue is the notion of translation between cultures as well as between languages, in other words the adaptation of ideas and texts as they pass from one culture to another. This notion informs the chapters by Burke, Hsia, Baldwin and Pallares-Burke in particular.

A third aim of the volume is to complement existing work on the history of translation by compensating for absences. Where earlier work privileged literary translation, this volume privileges non-fiction, the transmission of information and knowledge from one language to another. One chapter focuses on political texts (Baldwin), another on historical texts (Burke), a third on periodicals (Pallares-Burke). Where earlier work on religious texts privileged the translation of the Bible and of the writings of the reformers, in this volume Eire focuses on the diffusion of works of piety (examined from an international viewpoint), while Kowalská views the Czech Protestant Bible from a Slovak perspective. Four chapters (Demidov, Günergun, Nicolaïdis and Pantin) are concerned with the translation of works of science or 'natural philosophy', as it was generally known in the early modern period. They contribute to the understanding of the role of interlingual translation in that larger movement of the 'making of natural knowledge', the translation of local knowledge into universal science.[12]

So far as different languages are concerned, earlier work has concentrated on translations from Latin and Greek into the vernacular.[13] This volume, by contrast, emphasizes translations between vernaculars and also

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[10] Delisle and Woodsworth (1995).
[11] On the history of theory, Kloepfer (1967); Kelly (1979); Ballard (1992); Robinson (1997).
[12] Golinski (1998).   [13] Bolgar (1954); Schweiger (1830–4).

the neglected yet important topic of translation from the vernaculars into Latin (Burke). The contributors (especially Demidov, Günergun and Nicolaïdis) examine European peripheries as well as centres and extend their researches to the world beyond Europe (Hsia).

Earlier studies of translation have concentrated on printed translations, though the history of interpreting has been studied by some scholars, including one of the participants in our workshops, Dejanirah Couto.[14] However, three contributions to this volume (once again, Demidov, Günergun and Nicolaïdis) emphasize the importance of manuscripts in the so-called 'age of print', especially in the eastern half of Europe.

There remains much work still to be done on the cultural history of translation. The purpose of this volume is to make better known what has been done already, to offer a few more contributions to encourage readers to enter this fascinating field.

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[14] Couto (2001).

PART I

Translation and language

CHAPTER 1

Cultures of translation in early modern Europe

Peter Burke[1]

> Translation is always a shift not between two languages but between
> two cultures   (Umberto Eco)

This essay has two aims: to present a general survey of translating in early
modern Europe and to discuss translation between languages in the context
of translation between cultures. Differences between cultures as well as
languages reduce what has been called the 'translatability' of texts. A major
problem for anyone translating comic literature, for instance, is that the
sense or senses of humour of different cultures, 'cultures of laughter', as
they have been called, are very different. Jokes fail to cross frontiers. In
similar fashion they often go stale over the centuries or become unintelli-
gible, like the references to the horns of husbands in Shakespeare, which
may have had Elizabethan audiences rolling in the aisles of the Globe, but
are greeted with silence today.[2]

I

If the past is a foreign country, it follows that even the most monoglot of
historians is a translator.[3] Historians mediate between the past and the
present and face the same dilemmas as other translators, serving two masters
and attempting to reconcile fidelity to the original with intelligibility to
their readers.[4]

For example, should one speak of the 'policy' of a medieval king? The
word does not occur in medieval texts. It was not necessary, since a
medieval king did not have to convince voters to elect him by presenting
them with a programme for future action. A policy in the sense of some

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[1] I should like to thank my colleagues in the ESF project on cultural exchange, the Royal Library in The
Hague, The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, Mark Goldie of Churchill College and Aleka
Lianeri of Darwin College for helping me in different ways in the writing of this essay.
[2] Unger, Schultze and Turk (1995).   [3] Cohen (1997), 297.   [4] Evans (1994).

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principles or strategies underlying everyday political action, from doing justice to extending his realm, he may have had, but a policy in the modern sense of programme is an anachronistic concept.

Again, can a historian speak of 'propaganda' for Louis XIV? In its political sense, the term was coined in the late eighteenth century in order to compare techniques of political persuasion with techniques of religious conversion as practised by the Catholic Church and its institutions 'for the propagation of the faith' (*de propaganda fide*). On the other hand, writers and artists in the service of Louis not only glorified the king in general but justified particular actions such as the expulsion of Protestants from France in 1685.[5] I would therefore argue that to speak of 'propaganda' for Louis is culturally appropriate even if it is technically anachronistic. It is a free translation but not an unfaithful one.

The term 'cultural translation' was originally coined by anthropologists in the circle of Edward Evans-Pritchard, to describe what happens in cultural encounters when each side tries to make sense of the actions of the other.[6] A vivid example, famous among anthropologists, is Laura Bohannan's account of how she told the story of *Hamlet* to a group of Tiv in West Africa and heard the story 'corrected' by the elders until it finally matched the patterns of Tiv culture.[7]

Working as they often do in situations where the cultural distance between themselves and their informants is unusually great, anthropologists are well aware of the problem of untranslatable terms (some of which, like 'totem' and 'taboo', they have introduced into European languages) as well as the more general problem of communication between natives of one culture and natives of another. They are becoming increasingly conscious of both the linguistic and the wider cultural problems involved in turning conversations with informants into their own academic prose.[8]

The concept of cultural translation has recently been taken up by a group of literary scholars concerned with the translatability of texts.[9] It may also be used to refer to visual images (discussed by Hsia below) and to everyday life. It has often been suggested, from August Schlegel through Franz Rosenzweig to Benvenuto Terracini, Octavio Paz and George Steiner, that understanding itself is a kind of translation, turning other people's concepts and practices into their equivalents in our own 'vocabulary'. As

[5] Burke (1992).
[6] Beidelman (1971); a critique in Asad (1986); cf. Pálsson (1993), Kissel (1999), Howland (2001); and Rubel and Rosman (2003).
[7] Bohannan (1971).   [8] Sturge (1997); Tihanyi (2004).   [9] Budick and Iser (1996).

Paz puts it, 'learning to speak is learning to translate' (*aprender a hablar es aprender a traducir*).[10]

Within contemporary Western culture, for instance, most people do not understand the technical language used by lawyers, doctors and many different kinds of scientist. This was already becoming a problem in the seventeenth century, when the Dutchman Adriaan Koerbagh published a dictionary of legal terms in the vernacular in order to help ordinary people avoid being manipulated by the lawyers.[11] The task of translating law or medicine in the sense of taking legal or medical ideas across linguistic as well as social frontiers is even more difficult.[12] So is the translation of gods, to be discussed below in the context of Christian missions in Asia and the Americas.[13]

Translation implies 'negotiation', a concept which has expanded its domain in the last generation, moving beyond the worlds of trade and diplomacy to refer to the exchange of ideas and the consequent modification of meanings.[14] The moral is that a given translation should be regarded less as a definitive solution to a problem than as a messy compromise, involving losses or renunciations and leaving the way open for renegotiation.

In the case of the early modern period, the idea of negotiated translation seems particularly appropriate to the mission field. Christian missionaries had to decide how far they could go in adapting (or as was said at the time, 'accommodating') the Christian message to the culture in which they were working. In China, for example, Matteo Ricci discovered that if he dressed as a priest no one would take him seriously, so he dressed like a Confucian scholar instead, thus 'translating' his social position into Chinese. He allowed the Chinese whom he converted to pay reverence to their ancestors in the traditional manner, arguing that this was a social custom rather than a religious one. He translated the word 'God' by the neologism *Tianzhu*, literally 'Lord of Heaven', and allowed Chinese Christians to refer simply to *Tian*, 'Heaven', as Confucius had done (further discussion below, pp. 39–51).

In Rome, the Jesuits were accused of having been converted to the religion of the Chinese rather than converting them to Christianity. What appeared in Beijing to be a good cultural translation looked more like a mistranslation in Rome.[15] Other missionaries refused to go so far as Ricci, keeping their traditional black robes and also the Latin word *Deus*,

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[10] Glatzer (1953), 255; Terracini (1957), 39; Paz (1971), 7; G. Steiner (1975), 1–48.
[11] Israel (2001), 187.
[12] On law, Liu (1999) and Legrand (2005); on medicine, Chen (1999). On justice as itself a kind of translation, White (1990).
[13] Assmann (1996).   [14] Pym (1993); Eco (2003).   [15] Gernet (1982).

glossing rather than translating it (below, p. 48). These conflicts offer the most vivid early modern examples of the problems of both interlingual and intercultural translation.

Another way of discussing cultural translation is to speak of a double process of decontextualization and recontextualization, first reaching out to appropriate something alien and then domesticating it. Interlingual translation may be regarded not only as an instance of this process but also as a kind of litmus paper that makes it unusually visible – or audible. It may be illuminating to attempt to look at the process from a double viewpoint. From the receiver's point of view it is a form of gain, enriching the host culture as a result of skilful adaptation. From the donor's point of view, on the other hand, translation is a form of loss, leading to misunderstanding and doing violence to the original.

II

In any history of cultural exchange, translation between languages is obviously of great importance. The relation between linguistic translation and cultural translation has recently been the concern of a number of perceptive studies focused on the movement of ideas such as liberty, individualism and democracy from the West to China, Japan, West Africa and elsewhere.[16] The focus of these studies on translation between continents is no accident. The greater the distance between the languages and cultures involved, the more clearly do the problems of translation appear. All the same, this approach may usefully be extended to cultural exchange within Europe.

The translation of texts was central to the great cultural movements of early modern Europe, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. In the Renaissance, for instance, translations from the classics (including translations from Greek into Latin) take pride of place, but translations of major works of vernacular literature, from the *Orlando furioso* to *Don Quixote*, were also influential. In the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, as we shall see in Eire's chapter (below, pp. 83–100), translations of Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Luís de Granada, Roberto Bellarmino and others played an important role. The spread of the Scientific Revolution (discussed below, pp. 161–217) can to some degree be measured by the translations of Galileo and Newton, and that of the Enlightenment by those of Montesquieu and Locke.

[16] Liu (1995); Sakai (1997); Schaffer (1998); Howland (2001).

Translations from the classics, like translations of major works of vernacular literature, have often been studied. Hence this chapter, like the rest of the volume, will concentrate on what has tended to be neglected, translations of non-fiction written either in the vernaculars of early modern Europe or in neo-Latin (studied in more detail below, pp. 65–80). A definitive study, if such a thing is possible, will have to wait until a census has been made of all the translations produced in early modern Europe, a task beyond the powers of a small team, let alone an individual.

What can be done here is to place these texts in their cultural context, including the systems or 'regimes' of translation prevalent in this period, in other words the rules, norms or conventions governing its practice, both the ends (or 'strategies') and the means (the 'tactics' or 'poetics').[17] The following overview of these regimes, or as I prefer to call them, the 'cultures of translation', in early modern Europe offers provisional answers to the following six large questions: Who translates? With what intentions? What? For whom? In what manner? With what consequences?[18]

III

Who translates? The thousands of translators in Europe in this period may be classified in various ways. For example, most translations were the work of individuals, but teamwork can also be found at this time, as it had been in the Middle Ages (in Toledo, for instance, and also in the Swedish monastery of Vadstena). Thus the German publisher Zacharias Palthen organized a team to translate the works of Paracelsus into Latin (below, p. 173), while the poet Alexander Pope employed a team of collaborators to help him translate Homer.[19]

Collaborative translation was especially common in the case of the Bible, not only because the text was so long but also by reason of the responsibility involved in interpreting the word of God. The English Authorized Version and the Czech Kralicy Bible as well as a Dutch, a Danish, a Swedish and a Finnish Bible produced in the early modern period were all the work of committees of scholars (in the English case, six 'companies', two based in Oxford, two in Cambridge and two in London). The establishment of these groups followed the model of the famous Septuagint, the seventy-two scholars who were supposed to have assembled in Alexandria in order to translate the Old Testament into Greek.

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[17] Pym (1998), 125–42. [18] Lambert (1993). [19] Pantin (below).