

Historiography and translation

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Even though the first major and thorough synthetic works on translation in the European cultural space were published only at the beginning of the 21st century, their conceptions and principal ideas had been developed and discussed much earlier. Interestingly enough, it seems that in recent years translation history and historiography have become some of the most recurrent topics in translation studies in Europe and throughout the world. The interest is due to the still relevant sociological turn in translation studies and attempts to closely study the work of individual figures of translators. It only follows that such issues call for historical contextualization and explanation. The growing number of existing and pending research initiatives which cover histories of translations into several world languages allows us to compare various forms and means of translation in different cultural environments, influenced by different geopolitical factors and with different cultural and literary traditions. When examining historical research and its most current findings, we see much common ground and similarities in significant phenomena, which leads us to question clear-cut models of center-periphery relations in culture. Reading various individual translation histories published in this issue of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES* in a comparative manner also reminds us that external factors have affected literature at all times and regardless of political regimes. The fact of translation is without any doubt one of the foundational features of culture around the globe.

This issue focuses on translation history. It aims to bring together research and views from different sociocultural environments and historical backgrounds and shed light on the tasks of translators and the methods they employed throughout history. In the studies several recurring themes offering specific insights into translation history can be found. Examples of such include the person of the translator as agent of history, the always pressing issue of translating literary classics, translation as literary transfer in time and space, the relevance of area studies for translation history, or non-translation and non-acceptance of concrete literary works in the target culture. A number of studies also discuss new methods of researching translation in history, namely those from digital humanities which bring to the fore tools for collecting and analyzing large amounts of historical data.