

## Call for papers

World Literature Studies 3/2021

### *Historiography and translation*

#### *Comparative approaches to writing translation histories*

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**Call status:** open

Translation is one of the foundational features of European culture. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century that the continent finally saw attempts to write its own history from the point of view of translation, but the roots of translation historiography run deeper. French translation historian and theorist Antoine Berman (1942–1991) was among the first Francophone scholars who argued that translation history can help us better understand the histories of European culture, languages, and literature. Unfortunately, his early death did not allow him to demonstrate the fruitfulness of his ideas in actual research. This was also the case of Anton Popovič (1933–1984), the founder of Slovak translation studies. Popovič started developing his concept of translation history in the 1970s and in time came up with a broad understanding of translation history as the concrete histories of translation programs, conceptions, and methods. Since the late 1970s, the translation scholar Jean Delisle has become one of the most prominent voices in translation history methodology. He has penned and edited several “portraits” of male and female translators as well as other histories of translation. Dirk Delabastita, Lieven D’hulst, Michel Ballard, or Henri Meschonnic (see illustrative bibliography below) have also produced important opinions on translation history and historical case studies.

Translation historiography has since become one of the most prevalent topics in translation studies worldwide. The interest is due to the still relevant sociological turn in translation studies and attempts to closely study the work of individual translators. Logically, such issues call for historical contextualization and explanation. The growing number of existing and pending research initiatives covering histories of translations into several world languages allows us to compare and confront various forms and means of translation in different cultural environments, influenced by different geopolitical factors and with different cultural and literary traditions. When looking at Slovak research in translation history (from the 1960s and the 1990s, synthesized between 2013 and 2017, and still in progress) and current Western European research, we see much common ground and many similarities in significant phenomena. This leads us to question the clear-cut models of center-periphery relations in European culture.

Reading various national translation histories in a comparative manner also reminds us that external factors have always affected literature, regardless of political regimes. This issue of *World Literature Studies* on translation history aims to bring together views from different sociocultural environments and historical backgrounds in order to shed light on the tasks of translators and the methods they employed throughout history.

### **Perspectives on the outlined topic may include, but are not limited to:**

- methodology of translation historiography: methods, possibilities and limits
- cultural xenophobia in translation history
- political interference in translation history
  - translation as state interest in multi-ethnic political units
  - cultural policy and translation
  - political events inspiring waves of popular translations
  - the impact of political events on the translation profession
  - censorship in translation history
- pseudo-translations, their functions and changes in translation and literary history
- historical development of paratexts as mediators of translation
- translation as literary event
- literary translation and its history crossing over into other fields of art and science

### **Illustrative bibliography**

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- CHEVREL, Yves et al. 2012–2019. *Histoire des traductions en langue française I–IV*. Lagrasse: Editions Verdier.
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