

Larisa Schippel and Cornelia Zwischenberger (eds.). *Going East: Discovering New and Alternative Traditions in Translation Studies*. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2017, 535 p., ISBN: 978-3-7329-0335-1

Going East: Discovering New and Alternative Traditions in Translation Studies is a collection of contributions compiled and edited by Larisa Schippel and Cornelia Zwischenberger, as a follow up of the homonymous symposium organized in Vienna, in December 2014.

As the editors specify in the Introduction to the volume, the reason behind this initiative is to do justice to Translation Studies in Eastern Europe which seem to have been living in the shadow of Western European and North American achievements and approaches, which have for a while been visibly placed at the forefront of the domain (for reasons that are, as this volume demonstrates, not connected to the value of the ideas put forth in Eastern Europe, but rather to the restricted international circulation of the languages in which the materials were produced and, consequently, to their reduced accessibility). It thus very well fits together with and adds significantly to what other recent publications on the topic of Translation Studies in Eastern Europe have brought to the readers' attention (e.g. Baer 2011, Vajdová 2013, Looby 2015, Lungu-Badea 2015, de Bończa Bukowski and Heydel 2015, Ceccherelli et al. 2015, etc.).

What the volume as a whole seeks to highlight (and does successfully) is the national specificity of Translation Studies in various countries in Eastern Europe. To this end, it is divided into two parts: the first – *Nationally-Framed Histories of Translation* – brings together seventeen chapters offering a rather broad perspective of the discipline in the geographical areas targeted. The second – *Pioneers and Trailblazer Thinkers* – contains five contributions in which the perspective is narrowed down and focus is placed on Eastern European individual personalities who “served as role models and who, in most cases, are either relatively unknown in Western translation theory or are simply underrated” (p. 15). Many of them, however, had a say in paving the way to the birth of what is traditionally considered the Translation Studies discipline, in the early 70s.

The first part opens with two contributions which address aspects of Translation Studies in Romania. Magda Jeanrenaud, in *Can We Speak of a Romanian Tradition in Translation Studies?*, attempts, firstly, at establishing whether it is at all possible to speak about a specificity of Translation Studies in Romania and then, if the

answer is affirmative, to pinpoint what defines it. To meet these objectives, the author concentrates on three moments that she considers relevant to Translation Studies in her country: the 1960s, the 1980s and the post 1995 years. In the 1960s, a number of texts written by various scholars as a reaction to George Mounin's *Problèmes théoriques de la traduction*, proved that their main interest was, at that point, in the practice of translating literary texts. Two decades later, when Translation Studies as a discipline had been newly born in Europe, Romanian scholars continued to dedicate most part of their attention to literary translation practice (with subsequent distancing from theoretical approaches) and issues of fidelity of target texts to source texts (so that continuity seems to be what characterized interest in translation in the 1960s to the 1980s Romania). After 1995, however, Romanian scholarship switched, under the pressure of the "center", to embracing the major themes of reflection at a European level in such a way that the focus on translation practice as its previous identifiable specificity disappeared, without leading to the emergence of a new characteristic feature.

Georgiana Lungu-Badea, in *Translation Studies in Romania. Their Synchronic and Deferred Relations with European Translation Studies. A Few Directions of Research*, offers insight into the alignment or non-alignment, as the case may be, of Romanian Translation Studies with Western, Central and Eastern European lines of research. She proceeds by outlining the major types of Translation Studies works produced in her country, in consonance with the Central and Western European tradition: normative studies (rooted in contrastive linguistics and having an obvious didactic dimension), theoretical reflections on the translation phenomenon and on the translator's status, translation criticism, history of translation works (offering both a synchronic and a diachronic approach to translation-related issues), translation theory works (with a special emphasis on some that tackle untranslatability, the limitations of Romanian as a target language as well as its potential to compensate for them, the translator's own limitations and the readers' interpretive ability). More recently, aspects such as un/translatability and inter-culturalism, the metalanguage of Translation Studies, the relation between translation, Translation Studies and cultural studies, the sociology and the recent history of Romanian Translation Studies, difficulties of translating various genres have proved productive areas of investigations for authors of PhD theses, articles and books alike. Scientific events dedicated to Romanian Translation Studies (organized in the country or abroad) have also increased in number and scope. Lungu-Badea rounds off her presentation of research

directions in the field under scrutiny by suggesting that the future of Translation Studies is not one of Western and Central European ideas only, delivered in English, French or German, but one of ideas made known in national languages of peripheral areas of the old continent, as well (Romanian included).

The next two contributions bring Czechoslovak Translation Studies to the fore. Jaroslav Spirk's *Czechoslovak Translation Studies: Depreciated Legacy or Inspiration for Today?* contextualizes the 20th century Czechoslovak Translation Studies against the mainstream paradigms of the field, more specifically, against Descriptive Translation Studies, the Manipulation School and Skopos Theory. Particular attention is dedicated to the works of Jiri Levý and Anton Popovič who, by integrating in their early conception of Translation Studies aspects that did not pass unnoticed in research in any of these directions, anticipated future developments in the field, both in the Czechoslovak space and beyond it.

Jiri Levý's writings are also at the core of Zuzana Jettmarová's *Czech Translation Theory and the Western Mainstream*. The author insists on his contribution – overlooked or underrated by many and not always correctly understood and interpreted – to the growth of Western mainstream Translation Studies. In particular, she details on and clarifies some of the ideas that Levý shares with Russian formalism, Western positivist descriptivism and functionalism.

Translation Studies in Latvia in the 80s and from that decade on are Jānis Sīlis' concern in *Paradigm Shift in Latvian Translation Studies (1984-1993): on the Background of Seventy Years of Translatological Research in Latvia*. The author emphasizes the switch, in the early 90s, from research heavily influenced by the ideology of the epoch and therefore, drawing almost exclusively on ideas promoted in the "socialist camp", to opening towards Western opinions, made possible, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, by the Latvian scholars' now having access to materials in libraries across Europe and working in international research teams. The change of paradigm in Latvian Translation Studies also presupposed, according to Sīlis, a movement away from approaching translation problems from either a linguistic or a literary theory perspective to discussing, most of the times, in an applied rather than theoretical manner, much more varied topics such as translation methods as determined by the source text type, intercultural aspects of the translation process, methods of training translators and interpreters, etc.

Ideas promoted in former socialist countries are present in the next two contributions as well. In *The Semiotic School of Tartu-Moscow: the Cultural 'Circuit' of Translation*, reference is made to notions such as cultural act, text, semiotic system, translation, intersemiosis, autocommunication, used by representatives of the

Tartu-Moscow school. The author, Evangelos Kourdis, discusses the relevance of these concepts in the process of translating culturally-loaded utterances from Greek into Peruvian Spanish and from Mexican Spanish into Greek.

The reception in Italy of Mikhail Bakhtin, one of the resounding names associated with the Tartu-Moscow school, is the topic addressed by Emilia di Martino and Antonio Perri in *The Westernization of an (Academic) Hero. Bakhtin, Translation Ethics and the Loss of 'Easternness'*. The authors' expressed opinion is that, on the one hand, Bakhtin's reception lies in between the North-American academia praising him as "the hero of dialogism and autonomy, the man who promoted such concepts as creolization and polyphony" (p. 170) and the French semioticians and philosophers criticizing him for being "a conservative, monologic and essentialist thinker" (p.170). On the other hand, the way his ideas are interpreted in Italy – a multifaceted and sometimes contradictory conciliatory association of the two Bakhtinian (or maybe pseudo-Bakhtinian, possibly Voloshinov's) topics of individual ethics and historical, social dialogic interchange supposedly identifiable in any translation process – are the consequence of the fact that the Italian academia represent a buffer zone between the European center and the peripheral Eastern tradition in which Bakhtin lived and developed his thinking.

A number of the following chapters are dedicated to Translation Studies in Russia. In *Going Criss-Cross: After the Cross-Cultural Perspective in Russian Translation Studies*, Natalya Reinhold starts from the assumption that, in a country whose official language is very dynamic and shows "stylistic, historic and social openness" (p. 192), Translation Studies are themselves challenging. So is talking about this field. As the author demonstrates, the angles from which it may be approached vary quite widely. Of these variety of perspectives, she attempts a development of the following (the ideas are not exhaustive, but surely represent a valuable starting point for anybody interested in knowing more about these topics): the peculiarities of the study of translation and translation theories in Russian universities (with an obvious tendency of the Russian academics to take on a semiotic and (post)structuralist approach to Translation Studies); the limited access of the Russian readership to foreign (mostly Western European) Translation Studies literature and its being facilitated via PhD theses on works in the USA, France, Canada, and Great Britain; current Translation Studies projects in Russia; topics discussed at recent scientific events focusing on the history of translation (reasoning) (from which she draws conclusions on the current state of research in Russian Translation Studies); the

setting up of the Institute of Translation in Moscow, serving as a supporter of advanced, pioneering research.

Nune Ayvazyan and Athony Pym, in *West Enters East: A Strange Case of Unequal Equivalences in Soviet Translation Theory*, discuss concepts such as “adequacy”, “exactness” and “full value” which fueled debates on how literary texts should be translated, in the Soviet Union, during the first half of the 20th century. These are paralleled to the general concept of “equivalence” (and some of the forms it may take), as it was understood and used by Western Translation Studies scholars, primarily during the second half of last century. The conclusion is drawn that the East – West terminological differences in terms of correspondence between the original and the translated texts were leveled in the early 70s, seemingly facilitated by the development of machine translation in the Soviet Union.

Larisa Schippel’s *Translation as Estrangement: Andrei Fedorov and Russian Formalists* puts under the lens preconditions in the Soviet space of the 1920s and 1930s that represented fertile ground for the later development of modern Russian Translation Studies. She discusses such preconditions as: the translation activity at the two very active publishing houses Academia and Vsemirnaya Literatura (whose editorial plans included the translation into Russian of a great number of foreign texts), the translator training workshops organized at the request of the publishing houses (as a consequence of their dissatisfaction with some of the translations they were planning to print), the activity of translators’ professional associations within the Union of Soviet Writers, intensive debates on principles and criteria for assessing the quality of literary translations, and the debut of translation-related scholarly reflection and research. In connection to the last, Schippel reviews some of Andrei Fedorov’s main ideas, grounded in the theoretical premises of the Formal School. Prominence is given to topics such as means/ methods in the translation of poetry, accuracy/ precision vs. imprecision in translation, the relationship between the various translation techniques used for rendering a text from one language into another, the necessary components of a linguistically-grounded translation theory, etc.

More details about the history (unfortunately not very long) of the two Russian publishing houses – Vsemirnaya Literatura and Academia (only touched upon by Schippel in the previous article) – are provided by Tatiana Bedson and Maxim Schultz, in their contribution titled *Translation Strategies in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s*. The authors highlight the landmarks in the life of these institutions, paying attention to the work of their founders (with special emphasis on Maxim Gorky’s) and main decision makers, to the editorial plans and, most importantly, to the views on

translation (expressed at meetings, workshops and in the guide books for translators some of those affiliated with the publishing houses produced) that ultimately influenced the content of the books published.

Tatiana Yudina's interest lies in instruments translation cannot do without – dictionaries. In *Zweisprachige Wörterbücher in der russischen translatorischen Tradition*, she discusses the importance of bilingual dictionaries in the field of Translation Studies, focusing on both the Soviet and the current Russian space. The link between the social advancement of certain segments of the Russian population, a general decrease of the Russians' language skills and the subsequent growing demand for translation and interpretation services on the one hand, and the obvious need for bilingual dictionaries, on the other, represents the scaffolding of her contribution.

The readers' attention is kept in the area of the former Soviet Union in the following two contributions. As the title indicates, in *History of Ukrainian Thinking (from the 1920s to the 1950s)*, Oleksandr Kalnychenko takes them on a three decades journey through translation-oriented preoccupations in Ukraine. He starts from the 1920s and early 1930s, when attempts at developing a translation theory proper were first made in the country and when the wealth of translation reviews and translation criticism helped elucidate quite a number of translation problems (Derzhavyn's functionalist approach to translation and Finkel's thoughts on self-translation are paid special attention to). He moves on with the period between the early 1930s and the mid-1950s, marked by a decline in translation practice and criticism and dominated by literalism, to conclude with the years between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, characterized by a revival of translation activities and of critical thinking around translation issues (Mykola Lukash, with his theory of "unique items" of the target language is chosen as worthy of attention in this last period).

Part of such critical thinking was oriented towards translations from Russian into Ukrainian, a topic developed in Philipp Hofeneder's *Sowjetische Translationskultur*. In particular, the author speaks about the translation strategies imposed by the Soviets so as to "construct the Ukrainian culture and language as fragmentary, incomplete and heterogeneous when compared to Russian via translations" (p. 15).

The section continues with two chapters devoted to smaller translation cultures – the Slovene and the Polish ones. In the first, *Reflection on Translation in a Translation-Oriented Culture*, Martina Ožbot refers to various periods in the Slovene history when reflections on translation crystallized: the Reformation, when

debates, of a non-theoretical or pseudo-theoretical nature, were carried on around the problems translators encountered in the translation process (especially of religious texts); the 19th century, when the initial reserved attitude towards the translation of literary texts as barriers to the development of original, creative literature was compensated for by translation having come to be viewed as “necessary elements of culture and an indicator of cultural development and connectedness to the wider literary world” (p. 372); and the 20th and 21st centuries, when a variety of mainly applied, descriptive aspects of translation have been tackled either in individual works or in proceedings and journals published under the auspices of professional translators’ associations.

In the second chapter, *Children’s Literature and the Theory of Translation in Poland*, Monika Woźniak talks about the translation of children’s literature, an endeavor which has enjoyed a much more central role and better reputation in Poland than in a lot of other countries (as the author explains, firstly, because Poland has had a very long and solid tradition of adapting foreign children’s literature to the audience at home and secondly, because well-known “adult” writers have turned towards children’s literature as well and translated in the field). The extension of translation in the area under scrutiny has, quite naturally, given birth to broad discussions on the process. Though, as Woźniak points out, few original interpretations and theories have come out of these discussions, quite a number of topics have been covered: from wide-ranging ones such as fidelity to the source texts or their lexical-semantic, cultural and aesthetic transformations in the process of translation to much narrower matters such as the translation of proper names, pronouns, diminutives or culture-related items. The author enlarges on some of these.

The first section of the book closes with Christina Schäffner’s *Socialist Translation Studies – Theoretical Justification and Implications for Training*. She speaks about the system of “language mediation” (as translation was called) in the German Democratic Republic, starting from the observation that this system was made up of people, institutions, and publications in charge of shaping the translation profession in close connection with the only ideology considered valid at the time – Marxism-Leninism. To this end, translation theory (here illustrated with examples pertaining to the Leipzig school of translation) was conceived in a way that viewed translation as embedded in a superordinate communicative act, determined by social class and ideology. The translators’ job was, consequently, besides finding linguistic equivalences (and more importantly than this), applying *Parteilichkeit* in their work, i.e. openly showing their commitment to the socialist ideology and

making it clear that they were adjusting their discourse to an audience that had political convictions similar to theirs. Translator training was planned and provided accordingly.

The second part of the volume, dedicated to prominent figures in Eastern European Translation Studies, opens with three contributions focusing on Polish scholars. Thus, Piotr de Bóncza Bukowski, in *Roman Ingarden and Polish Translation Studies*, explains how the echoes of Polish philosopher Ingarden's phenomenological approach to literary works reached into his views on translation (expressed in the essay "On Translation", whose content is discussed here) as well as into a number of later works produced in the area of Translation Studies in Poland. De Bóncza Bukowski details on some examples of the latter.

Kasia Szymańska's *Stanisław Barańczak: Between Autonomy and Support* sheds light on the interconnectedness of Barańczak's theories of translation and his literary translation practice, insisting especially upon the ideas contained in his first theoretical text on literary translation, misunderstood and consequently, misinterpreted and underrated by academic criticism as analytically unhelpful and believed to be revisiting some elements of what had already become clichés in Translation Studies (e.g. domestication and foreignisation, fidelity or infidelity of translation in relation to the source text, etc.), though praised by some (for, for instance, the suggested "new interesting line of study oh [his] translations as "meta-utterances" that are created in order to comment on the original poetics" (p.453)).

Adrian Wojtasiewicz's work as a translation theoretician, enlarged upon in Małgorzata Tryuk's *Olgierd Adrian Wojtasiewicz*, has also been received with mixed criticism – positive at the time his *Introduction to the Theory of Translation* (1957) was published, as the first academic work produced in the field, in Poland and reserved half a century after its publication, for reasons of "timeliness of the postulates and theoretical assumptions" (p. 481) he made. However, despite the latter, Wojtasiewicz's pioneering work in Polish Translation Studies (for example, his views on language, his opinions about natural and artificial languages and the translation types that arise from the difference between the two, about linguistic and cultural untranslatability) as well as his having laid the foundations of translator and interpreter institutionalized training cannot be but praised. This is what Tryuk does in her chapter.

The contribution brought to Translation Studies by the Slovak scholar Dionýz Ďurišin is discussed by Libuša Vajdová in *Are There Some Small "Chinas" and "Indias" in Europe?* She speaks about his points of view by paralleling them to suggestions made in mainstream Translation Studies. Some of the aspects she insists on

are: his rejection of the hypothesis that translation is a kind of transfer and his seeing it instead as the result of meta-creation – the re-creation of the original; consequently, his view of the translation as “an independent expression of the original work” (p. 491); his challenging the source – target (text, culture, readership, etc.) unidirectionality and the importance he places on the target texts and the translators themselves in the process of meaning creation; his emphasis of the needs that have to be considered in this process as being those of the receiving context; his understanding of domestication in translation as being due to the fact that translated texts “substitute literary works missing in the receiving context and bring aesthetic and ideatic messages from abroad” (p.503), etc. The chapter concludes with some observations of interliterary communities, created on the basis of shared elements which very frequently transcend geographical delineations and bring together elements from spaces most distant from each other (hence, the title of Vajdová’s contribution).

Ukrainian scholar Viktor Koptilov’s academic portrait, as sketched by Iryna Odrekhyvska in *In the Realm of Translation Studies in Ukraine: Re-visiting Viktor Koptilov’s Translation Concept*, rounds off this section and the volume itself. Undeniably the founder of Translation Studies in Ukraine, in the mid-1960s, Koptilov mapped the discipline into five interdependent areas (general translation theory, partial translation theories, typological translation theories, translation criticism and translation history) and theoretically framed each of them. At the methodological core of his theory, there is the concept of “translational analysis” and the notion of “translateme”, which he elaborated on. From among other issues which Koptilov tackled, defining the object of literary Translation Studies, translation pedagogy and the translator’s identity made visible in his/her stylization of the target texts produced stood out. Odrekhyvska provides details of all these aspects of Ukrainian Translation Studies that Koptilov’s name is tightly connected to.

The wealth of ideas succinctly hinted at above recommend *Going East* as a volume whose range is quite wide: not only does it cover a multitude of Translation Studies aspects, but it also brings together discussions of these aspects in quite a number of Eastern European countries. Moreover, diachronic perspectives combine with synchronic ones to provide a pretty minute description of relevant phenomena, theories, approaches and personalities.

Talking about a diversity of topics inevitably goes hand in hand with making reference to significant published work in the domain investigated. The collection edited by Schippel and Zwischenberger is thus a rich and valuable bibliographic resource for

scholars interested in the main theme of their volume (since, in many of the contributions, links between research rooted in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world are established, the book is also useful in providing bibliography circumscribed to the latter as well).

The resources described or just hinted at are, nevertheless, difficult to access by novices in the domain of Translation Studies. It takes a background in it (and in some adjacent fields, such as semantics, semiotics, aesthetics, the philosophy of language, etc.) for one to be able to take full academic advantage of all the content of the chapters. If this prerequisite is met, reading this book is illuminating and enjoyable.

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